
UNIT 33 KEATS: *HYPERION*: A FRAGMENT-I

Structure

- 33.0 Objectives
- 33.1 Introduction
- 33.2 John Keats
 - 33.2.1 Life of Keats
 - 33.2.2 Friendships
 - 33.2.3 Keats's poetic ambition
- 33.3 *Hyperion: A Fragment*
 - 33.3.1 Dates, structure of and models for *Hyperion*
 - 33.3.2 Why Keats used Greek mythology
 - 33.3.3 Comparison of *Hyperion* with other long poems of the younger Romantics
- 33.4 Glossary
- 33.5 Exercises
- 33.6 Let's sum up
- 33.7 Bibliography
- 33.8 Answers to Exercises

33.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will introduce you to *Hyperion: A Fragment*, a long poem by John Keats, the youngest British Romantic poet of the second generation. The poem is usually referred to as *Hyperion*.

After reading the unit, you will be able to appreciate

- The factors in Keats's life that help us understand his poetry.
- The social and political context which shaped Keats' ambitions as well as *Hyperion: A Fragment*
- We have given a list of books at the end which you may want to consult to enhance your knowledge of Keats and his *Hyperion*.

33.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section we will 1) explain some critical terms, and 2) introduce the critical method we have used in these units on Keats.

- 1) The way a poet arranges his material is as important as the context of his life and the history of his times.

The arrangement of material is called the *structure* of the poem. A reading of the poem that takes the poet's life into account is called *biographical criticism*. A reading that takes the history of the time into account is called *historical or cultural materialist criticism*. Together, biographical and historical readings *contextualise* the poem.

A reading that does not consider the context is usually called *textual criticism*. This can be useful because a poet is a technician who uses the tools of poetry, such as length of lines and verse form, to enhance the meaning and pleasure of reading. Some guidelines have been given in the glossary (1.4). M.R.Ridley's *Keats's*

Craftsmanship, mentioned in the bibliography, is an excellent aid to a textual reading of Keats's poetry.

Some of the more recent essays offer another kind of textual criticism in which etymology or history of a word is analysed. Examples of these have been included in the bibliography. This kind of reading combines textual and historical criticism.

It is best to use textual criticism as an additional tool to contextualised criticism to ensure a balanced and reasonably accurate understanding of it.

- 2) We have concentrated on historical and biographical readings of the poem because Romantic poetry is more consciously autobiographical than any poetry in England before this time.

Keats was a qualified doctor but only wanted to be a poet. How this affected *Hyperion*, what it is about, when did Keats write it, why he left it unfinished, and why he recast it as *The Fall of Hyperion* a few months later are issues that help us to understand the poem. How Keats's *Hyperion* compares with other Romantic long poems also deepens our understanding of the poem.

To follow the discussion, you must first become familiar with the poem. Read 2.2.1 in Unit 2 where the poem has been summed up. Then read *Hyperion: A Fragment* which is appended to these units. Use the glossary as you read. After that, read the rest of Unit 1 and then read the poem again. Once you have followed the poem and the discussion, answer the questions and then check your answers with the answers given at the end of the unit.

33.2 JOHN KEATS

John Keats was born on 31 October 1795 into a lower middle-class family. His father managed a livery stables in Moorfields, London. His maternal grandmother owned the inn where Keats was born. He was the eldest of four children. When they were orphaned after the death of their mother, Keats, at fourteen, became the head of his family. He was never rich and made little money from his poetry.

Keats attended Clarke's school in Enfield. In 1810, he was apprenticed to Dr. Thomas Hammond, quarrelled with him in 1813, joined St. Guy's hospital in 1815, and became a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries, i.e., a doctor, in July 1816. In December 1816, Keats abandoned medicine for poetry.

There was little difference between butchers and many surgeons at the time. Keats's own superior was a more like a butcher who left Keats to take care of his bleeding and tattered patients. Keats became familiar with suffering, disease, and death which he wrote of sympathetically and knowledgeably in his poems.

Keats began taking mercury for a sore throat, the start of consumption (tuberculosis) in October 1817. Then his youngest brother, Tom, got consumption and Keats nursed him until Tom died on 1 December 1817. After Tom's death, Keats realised that he, too, was probably in the last stages of consumption for which there was no cure at that time.

In February 1820, Keats vomited blood, a sign that tuberculosis had destroyed his lungs. In August, he wrote that "A winter in England would I have no doubt, kill me, so I have resolved to go to Italy" (Gittings 387). The next day he wrote to Shelley, who had invited him to Pisa, saying that "There is no doubt that an english [sic] winter will put an end to me, and do so in a lingering and hateful manner, therefore I must voyage or journey to Italy" (Gittings 387-88). He "went to Italy in pursuance of



John Keats

Keats's letters will help you to understand him and his poetry better. There are several collections of Keats's letters, one of which is mentioned in the bibliography.

33.2.1 Friendships

Keats may have been unfortunate in money, but he was lucky in his friends. Apart from affection and admiration, they gave him money or a home to stay in when he needed it. One of them, Joseph Severn, nursed him as he lay dying in Italy. Many of them shaped his ideas. Among these were:

- 1) Charles Cowden Clarke: Cowden Clarke, the son of Keats's headmaster, introduced him to classical mythology which fascinated him. Keats experimented with Greek mythology in several poems, basing long narrative poems, such as *Endymion* and *Lamia*, on its stories. In the shorter lyrics, such as the odes, he used Greek gods, goddesses, and artefacts as symbols or poetic shorthand. The Ode "On a Grecian Urn," for example, is a meditation on a Greek vase. Apollo, the Greek god of poetry and the sun, is probably the most important deity in Keats's work. He stands for poetic perfection and became a personal symbol for Keats who wrote hymns and odes in praise of him. Apollo is one of the protagonists or chief actors of *Hyperion*.
- 2) Leigh Hunt: Keats's adult friendships show us that he was consistently on the "liberal side," i.e., his friends were Radical rather than conservative. Of these, Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt, were "two of the most embattled liberal journalists of the day" (Dickstein 176). Hazlitt's continuing influence enriched Keats's understanding of poetry and politics. His association with Hunt varied much more but was decisive in his poetic career. We have therefore discussed it at some length.

Hunt was a Radical publisher and poet. Radicals favoured a democratic rather than a monarchic form of government. After the French Revolution, English politics were

more or less simplified into those for revolution and those against it. Revolutionaries, reformers, and all who wanted structural and institutional change were called Radicals. The opposition was referred to as conservative, legitimist, monarchist, or most often Church and State. The conservative, monarchist English government believed that Radicals threatened the stability of the state.

Hunt was jailed because he had written critically of the Prince Regent, then the head of State. Visiting Hunt in jail or showing sympathy for him in other ways was a way of making one's Radicalism public. Byron, for example, visited Hunt in prison even though they did not know each other. Keats had praised Hunt's poetry and politics in three poems, "On Leigh Hunt's poem 'The Story of Rimini,'" the sonnet "On Receiving a Laurel Crown from Leigh Hunt," and "Written on the Day that Mr. Leigh Hunt Left Prison," all published in the 1817 volume of his poems. In December 1817, Hunt named Keats in his article, "Young Poets." This ensured that Keats was known as a Radical from the start of his career as a poet. It affected the reception of his poetry.

For many decades after the French Revolution, reviewers judged a poet by his politics, not his ability. Conservative reviewers mocked Keats's social position, saying he was of the "Cockney School of Poetry," a surgeon's apprentice, and a "suburbanising" versifier because he lived for some time in unfashionable Hampstead Heath. They assumed that poets must be educated in universities and that a man of Keats's class could not be a poet. All these were political condemnations as is made quite clear in Lockhart's jibing comment that Keats belonged to the "Cockney School of Politics, as well as the Cockney School of Poetry" (Briggs 484. It is not very certain whether the critic was Lockhart or some other person but Lockhart is assumed to be the author of the anonymous *Endymion* review).

Lockhart also levelled the most serious political charge against Keats, one that could have endangered Keats's life. He said that Leigh Hunt's "bantling," Keats, was guilty of "sedition" (Dickstein 177). Any criticism of Church and State was considered sedition. It was punishable, often by death. The political oppression of the period was terrifying, and the working class and non-aristocrats like Keats were especially vulnerable to the anti-sedition laws. Just as Blake began to write in a mythology of his own invention to obscure his strong Radical views, Keats tried to avoid trouble by writing in indirect forms like the allegory. 1819, the year Keats wrote *Hyperion*, was the worst year for political repression till then. Its worst event from the Radical point of view was the Peterloo Massacre in August 1819. All the younger Romantics marked this event by writing poetry about the issues involved. Between August and October, Keats wrote the second *Hyperion*.

We have discussed *Hyperion* as a political allegory in 2.2.4.

33.2.2 Keats's poetic ambition

Keats's views on poetry are in his letters and some of his poems. Most readers agree that he had mature and sensitive opinions on poetry and poets. Some of his phrases have become usual critical descriptions. For instance, the phrase "egotistical sublime" used for Wordsworth is from Keats, as are "the true voice of feeling" and "the finer tone," both titles of well-known books on Romantic poetry. We have included here some of his views relevant to *Hyperion*.

- 1) Keats did not think that poetry should be merely pleasant. The poet should understand and participate in others' sorrow. In one of his earliest poems, he said that the subject of poetry should be "the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts" (*Sleep and Poetry* 125-126). By 1819, he had begun to equate sorrow and wisdom. You will learn about the relevance of this to *Hyperion* in 2.2.4.

- 2) The style of his poetry should be peculiar to him and not influenced by his literary heroes, especially Milton. Easily adopting another's identity was a problem for Keats. He had to struggle to find his own style.
- 3) Keats wanted to be a great poet, remembered among the "mighty dead."
- 4) For this, he would have to write a long poem which, he said, was "a test of Invention" (Gittings 27). All great poets had written long poems. It was a step to fame, and lovers of poetry would like a poem with "images so numerous that many are . . . found new in a second reading" (Gittings 27).

But a long poem, Keats believed, required great knowledge. In 1817, he planned to read for about five or six years before writing a major poem. Then early in 1819, when he realised that he did not have even a year of working life left, instead of reading copiously, he began to write copiously. He produced so much good and varied poetry in 1819 that it is often called his *annus mirabilis* or year of miracles. *Hyperion: A Fragment* was written towards the start of this turbulent year, *The Fall of Hyperion* towards the end. Both are incomplete.

The difference between the two poems has been discussed in 2.2.8.

33.3 *HYPERION: A FRAGMENT*

33.3.1 The dates, structure of and models for *Hyperion*: Now we would discuss the poem step-by-step

Keats began to write *Hyperion* shortly before Tom died. He divided it into books, as Milton had divided *Paradise Lost*. After writing two and a half books of 357, 391, and 136 lines respectively, he abandoned it in March or April 1819. *Hyperion* is in blank verse, that is, it is in unrhyming iambic pentameter lines, the same verse as Milton had used in *Paradise Lost*.

We need to consider two questions. 1) Why did Keats begin on an epic poem? 2) Why did he stop work on it?

- 1) Why did Keats begin on an epic poem? Keats's ambition to write a long poem is closely linked with the events of the time. Periods of radical, rapid, and violent change seem to demand epics. Poets record and analyse the events of their time and frequently invented new styles for this, as Milton had done in the seventeenth century which was the last period of violent and radical change in England. Like the other Romantic poets, Keats admired Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) and wished to mark his age in a similar way.

But in some ways Wordsworth, author of *The Excursion*, was a more relevant model for Keats. Milton was a poet of reason and did not "think into the human heart" like Wordsworth, said Keats. Wordsworth had lived through the French Revolution and its aftermath and had written a long poem on the problems it had raised for poets, in particular. His was a more useful example for the early nineteenth century than Milton's. (For Keats's other views of Milton, see 2.2.4 and 2.2.5.)

Epics are long narrative poems, most often about war. *Hyperion* narrates the result of the war between two orders of gods, the Titans and the Olympians. According to Greek mythology, a set of gods does not remain in power forever. The giant Titans replaced their parents (see *Hyperion* 2.206-210). The Titans have now been overthrown by the Olympians. This is Keats's focus. He is interested in the radical difference between the past and present immortals.

- 2) Why did Keats stop writing *Hyperion*? Keats was the most stringent and honest critic of his own work. As early as May 1818, he said that he had “run away from both Milton and Wordsworth.” He admired the two poets but he did not want to imitate them. Later in 1818, he began *Hyperion*. By May 1819, he was very critical of its “Miltonic intonations” (Gittings 292).

He knew that *Hyperion*'s “false beauty” came from its “many Miltonic inversions” but that it also had the “true voice of feeling” (Gittings 292). Yet he couldn't see the difference clearly enough to separate the true from the false. This is partly why he abandoned it altogether.

Between August and October 1819, Keats began and dropped *The Fall of Hyperion* which is also called the second *Hyperion*. Keats's decision to rewrite the story of Hyperion shows that it still interested him. What he had failed at was the narrative design or how he should tell the story and in what vocabulary and rhythm. Why he did not finish the second *Hyperion* is beyond the plan of this syllabus, but the bibliography guides you to those who have written about this.

For the difference between the *Hyperions*, see 2.2.8.

33.3.2 Why did Keats use Greek myth?

We have already seen that Apollo was Keats's personal symbol of perfect poetry. It seems appropriate that he should be the hero of his epic. Some reasons why Keats used Greek myth are given below.

- 1) Keats admired Wordsworth's *Excursion* in which he praised pagan mythology. We have already seen that Keats thought Wordsworth was a better model for him than Milton. One reason why *Paradise Lost* could not be a model for Keats's long poem was that Milton was a staunch Christian. Keats, however, was an atheist like many Radicals of the time. The *Excursion* probably helped him to decide that a non-Christian, pagan mythology was acceptable in a modern epic.
- 2) Lord Elgin, a British diplomat, had just deposited the statuary he had stolen from Greece in the British Museum where it lay about chaotically but open to the public. Keats was among those who saw the Elgin Marbles. His descriptions of the fallen Titans as motionless and disordered is said to be an accurate description of how the Elgin Marbles appeared at the time (see e.g. *Hyperion* 2.33-35).
- 3) Keats did not have an “aristocratic” education which would have acquainted him with Greek and Latin literature or the classics. Some critics feel that Keats tried to compensate for the lack of an “aristocratic” education by showing his familiarity with books in general and Greek mythology in particular in his poetry. *Hyperion* is an instance.
- 4) The most important reason was the idea of change inherent in Greek mythology. Even the gods were subject to change. An order of gods could be replaced by another. It was the perfect metaphor for the political and cultural changes sweeping through institutions and people's thinking at the time. Keats has Oceanus tell Saturn, “. . . as thou wast not the first of powers, / So thou art not the last . . . / Thou art not the beginning nor the end” (*Hyperion* 2.188-190)

33.3.3 Hyperion compared with other Romantic long poems

Keats's *Hyperion*, Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam* and Byron's *Don Juan*, long poems by the second generation of English Romantic poets, are often compared with each

other. We will see whether this is useful for reading *Hyperion*, or whether some other comparison, such as with Blake's later long poems, is more fruitful.

Like *Hyperion*, *The Revolt of Islam* is based on a story from Greek mythology while *Don Juan* is based on a European legend of more recent times. All three poems are from a personal or subjective perspective. All three are unfinished. All three can be read as political poems.

The Revolt of Islam and *Don Juan* are largely commentaries on contemporary politics from liberal, Radical view points. *Hyperion* is less openly political. Shelley and Byron were aristocrats while Keats was closer to the working class. Keats's use of Greek mythology to evade censorship almost obscures his politics, much as Blake's personal mythology did, but that does not mean it is absent. Blake and Keats belonged to more or less the same social class. We have seen that it was dangerous for people of their class to be openly Radical.

It is usually the case that works from the same social class will have more in common than those grouped according to the writers' ages.

33.4 GLOSSARY

This section has an explanation of some words and terms in *Hyperion*.

After the first four items, phrases and names are listed as they appear in the poem. After the first four entries, the Book number is given at the head of that section of the list. The line number is given in brackets.

Hyperion (title):	Titan. God of the sun
Immortals:	The usual term for Greek gods and goddesses.
Olympians:	The new order of gods
Titans:	The defeated gods

Book I

Saturn (4):	Chief Titan
Naiad (13):	Water nymph
"infant world" (26):	The events of this story are supposed to have taken place when the world had been newly created
Amazon (27):	Belonging to a race of giant women
Achilles (29):	Greek hero of the Trojan war and Homer's <i>Iliad</i>
Memphian sphinx (32):	Egyptian sphinx, a mythical creature with the body of a lion, wings, and the face of a woman
"unpractised hands" (62):	Jove is new to the job of hurling thunderbolts, hence the reference to his "unpractised hands"
Thea (96):	Hyperion's consort
Olympus (146):	Mountain home of the Olympians
"the rebel three" (146):	Jove, Poseidon, Hades. The Titans call them rebels because they have defied the authority of their parent gods. Jove's Greek name is actually Zeus. Keats has used the Roman name for him. Jove is god of the sky. Poseidon is the god of the sea, and Hades is the god of underworld. They are the chief Olympians with authority over sky, sea, and earth. The three are brothers
"Not heard . . ." (187):	Keats emphasises that the violent dethronement of the ruling gods is unprecedented. Most writers of the period spoke of the French Revolution in similar terms

- Zephyrs (307):** Spring breeze. Usually singular
- Tellus (246):** Titan. Goddess of the earth. "Briny robes" in this line refers to the oceans which seem like the earth's skirts
- nadir (276):** The point of the heavens diametrically opposite to the zenith. The heavens were said to have two poles
- zenith (277):** The highest point of the sky which was perceived as an inverted bowl by the ancient Greeks
- "hieroglyphics . . . fled" (277, 281-283):** A reference to the Rosetta Stone covered with Egyptian pictorial language discovered by Europeans in the early nineteenth century. The hieroglyphics had not been deciphered in Keats's time
- Cælus (307):** Father of Hyperion and Saturn, now only a voice. He belongs to an earlier order of gods than the Titans
- "earth-born / And sky-engendered" (309-310):** The Titans were the children of Tellus, the earth goddess, and Cælus, the sky god
- "Now I behold . . . In men who die" (332-335):** See 2.92-97 for a similar description of Saturn. Keats shows that the Titans' fall is more than a fall from power. With their fall, they have become subject to human emotions. They have lost the virtues that made them superior to mortals

Book II

- clenched, clench'd:** Keats has spelt the word with all its letters the first time but dropped the last "e" the second time. Like Milton, Keats shortened sounds for enhancing the meaning. The shorter "clench'd" here creates the onomatopoeic effect of teeth snapped shut
- "Heaving in pain . . . convuls'd" (27-28):** Keats's descriptions of pain and disease are powerful and immediate. He probably relied on his medical experience for them
- Mnemosyne (29):** Pronounced Ne-moss-in-nce. Goddess of memory and mother of the muses who were patrons of the arts and learning. She is the only important Titan who is not at the Titan conference. She tells Apollo later that she is an "ancient Power" who has left her peers for the sake of the new beauty Apollo represents. In fact, as she also tells him, she has nurtured his gifts of music etc.
- "Scarce images of life. . ." (33-34):** Descriptions like this remind one that Keats had seen the Elgin Marbles lying in disorder in the British Museum
- "Of Druid stones . . ." (35):** Probably a comparison with Stonehenge on the Salisbury Plain
- Iäpetus:** Father of Atlas, Prometheus, and Epimetheus
- "enormous Caf . . ." (53-55):** The assumption here is that a woman's labour pains are more severe when a son is born than when a daughter is born. Biological information of this kind dates the poem. It also tells us about its notion of manliness, namely, that men were physically

- "Ganges sacred isles" (60):** powerful and manifested this power from the time they were babies in the womb
References to Egypt and India point to Europe's conquest and colonisation of Africa and Asia which began to gain momentum in the early nineteenth century
- Enceladus (66):** Titan. Close to Saturn. According to Apollodorus, in the war with the Olympians, "Athene threw a vast missile at Enceladus, which crushed him flat and became the island of Sicily" (quoted in Graves 1.132)
- Oceanus (75):** Titan. God of the sea
- Thetis (75):** Consort of Oceanus
- Clymene (2.76):** A confusing figure in Greek mythology who sometimes appears among the Titans and sometimes among the Olympians. According to one story, she and the Titan, Iapetus, were the parents of Prometheus, the first man. According to another, she became pregnant by the Olympian, Zeus. If Keats knew these conflicting stories, he simply ignored them. His Clymene is a nymph, that is, a minor immortal
- Themis (76):** Mother of the Fates
- "disanointing" (98):** In ancient times, when a king came to power, he was anointed with a sacred oil. "Disanointing" describes Saturn's loss of kingship
- "utterless thought" (120):** Keats has used this phrase to show that the gods did not communicate in the language of mortals but in other ways. It is a device to show the difference between immortals and mortals
- "untremendous might" (155):** Saturn refers to the power of the Olympians as "untremendous might" to infuse some courage into the Titans. Though he says that the Olympians' power is small compared with that of the Titans, the fact is that they have been defeated by the Olympians. We get the impression that Saturn is full of empty bluster
- "What can I then?" (157):** Saturn cannot control the Titans any longer. This is another sign of his loss of power
- "unseen parent" (158):** Coelus
- "locks not oozy" (170):** Oceanus' hair ("locks") is not wet ("oozy") as it would have been had he come straight from the ocean. The defeated Titans have fled from the areas they controlled.
- "complain'd" (249):** Spoke
- "hectic" (250):** Feverish
- "an island of the sea" (275):** Possibly Delos where Apollo created music
- "A living death . . . sounds" (281):** "Living death" is an oxymoron. Like Oceanus, Clymene acknowledges that the Olympians are superior in their skills and beauty. The Titans must be displaced. The loss of their power is like death, but since they are immortals they cannot actually die
- "the over-wise" (309):** Oceanus
- "the over-foolish" (310):** Clymene. Enceladus is being sarcastic about Oceanus and Clymene

Memnon (374):

Warrior who fought Achilles and is mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*. A statue, supposedly of Memnon, in Egyptian Thebes used to utter a sound like the note of a lyre every sunrise__Keats speaks of sunset__until it was repaired with modern materials

Hyperion

Book III

Delphic harp (10):

Apollo's temple was in Delphi. As the god of poetry, he carried a lyre. Keats calls it a harp

"Father of all verse" (13)

Apollo

Delos (24):

Island home of Apollo

"Apollo is *once more* the golden theme" (28):

once more is in reference to the many poems on Apollo Keats had written before this. Self-reference is common in Romantic poetry and is the basis of Romantic irony: *golden* is probably a reference to Apollo's being god of the sun. It could also refer to the fact that in Keats's poems, Apollo has golden sandals, bow, and lyre. Traditionally, they are of silver

"the Giant of the Sun" (29):

Hyperion

"his mother fair" (31):

Apollo's mother, Leto

"twin-sister" (32):

Apollo's twin-sister, Artemis. Goddess of the moon and chastity

33.5 EXERCISES

These exercise are to help you assess how well you have mastered the context of Hyperion. Try and answer them on your own and then check your answers against those given at the end.

Q.1 *Some dates*

i. When was Keats born? When did he die?

ii. In which year did he write his greatest poetry. What is it called?

iii. When did Keats commit himself to poetry?

iv. When was his first collection of poems published?

Q.2. *Some biographical information*

i. What profession did Keats train for?

ii. What did he die of?

iii. Which social class did he belong to?

iv. What was Keats by political conviction?

v. Which of his friends introduced him to Greek mythology?

Q.3. *Keats and poetry*

i. What sort of poet did Keats wish to be?

ii. What, according to him, should be the subject of poetry?

iii. Why did he wish to write a long poem?

iv. Which earlier poem did Keats take as his standard?

v. What were the relative merits of Milton and Wordsworth as models for Keats's poetry?

Q.4. i. How many versions of the Hyperion story did Keats write? What titles did he give them? What did he call them? What are they usually called by readers?

ii. When did he stop work on them?

iii. What is their verse form?

Q.5. What is an epic?

Q.6. What is the most important reason for Keats's using Greek mythology to express contemporary issues?

Q.7. Which Romantic poet is Keats best compared with and why?

33.6 LET'S SUM UP

Romantic poetry was consciously autobiographical. Keats's poetry is no different. That is why we have considered how his poverty, illness, Radicalism, friends and poetic ambition influenced the emphases of his poetry. Keats was also a very literary poet, that is, he deliberately drew attention by reference or imitation to ideas and styles that he had picked up from books. We have tried to show how important his letters and other poems are for understanding *Hyperion*.

33.7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

This list of books is in three parts:

- 1) The works referred to in Units 1 and 2
- 2) Other articles and books that you may wish to read
- 3) Journals that specialise in articles on Keats, Shelley and the Romantics. You may wish to discover what critics have said about Keats on your own. These journals carry recent criticism.

We have given a short explanation of what each book or articles in this list is about.

Biographies of Keats have not been listed but there are several lives by, e.g., Douglas Bush, Aileen Ward, and Walter Jackson Bate. Robert Gittings has written an illustrated life of Keats which is quite moving.

Works cited:

Briggs, Harold F. *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Keats*. New York: Modern Library, 1951

[This is the edition of Keats's poetry we have used for these units. It includes some letters by Keats and reviews of his works]

Dickstein, Morris. "Keats and Politics" in *Studies in Romanticism* 25 (Summer 1986): 75-181

[Dickstein's article is the basis of the forum on "Keats and Politics" in this issue of *Studies in Romanticism*]

Gittings, Robert. Ed. *Letters of John Keats: A Selection*. 1970; rpt. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1970

[The standard collection of letters by Keats and his correspondents is edited by Hyder Rollins. Gittings' selection has only Keats's letters but all the important ones are here]

Graves, Robert. *Greek Myths*. 2 vols. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955. Rpt. 1960

[A lively, scholarly guide to Greek myths. You may, however, find some other dictionary of classical allusions or companion to English literature more useful. Make sure that you use a reliable one from, say, the Oxford or Cambridge University Presses]

Additional bibliography

Bewell, Alan. "Keats's 'Realm of Flora.'" *Studies in Romanticism* 31 (Spring 1992): 71-98

[Bewell is good on the social implication of Keats's imagery. For instance, he relates the kinds of gardens Keats liked writing about to "suburban" as a term of class abuse for Keats]

Bradley, A.C. "The Long Poem in the Age of Wordsworth" in *The Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. Oxford UP,

[An old but sound essay on why the Romantics attempted long poems]

Bromwich, David. "Keats's Radicalism" in *Studies in Romanticism* 25 (Summer 1986): 197-210

[More specifically about Keats's Radicalism than a general study like Everest's. Useful]

Bush, Douglas. "Keats and His Ideas." In *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism* ed. M.H.Abrams (New York, 1960) 326-329.

[A reliable account of Keats's concern with poetry and the role of the poet]

Butler, Marilyn. "Myth and Mythmaking in the Shelley Circle." *ELH* 49 (1982): 50-75

[A study of how and why the younger Romantics used mythology. Butler argues that they created their own myths from the ancient ones. She relates their mythmaking to the political events of the time, especially censorship, Radicalism, and atheism]

Devine, Philip. "Ode to the Nightingale Among Poets." *Asian Age* 31 October 1995

[An American "working class" view of Keats. The writer identifies with Keats's social and educational background as well with the times Keats lived in. Devine makes poetry and Keats come alive by showing how contemporary he is]

Everest, Kelvin. *English Romantic Poetry: An Introduction to the Historical Context and the Literary Scene*. Milton Keynes: Open UP, 1990

[A crisp account of the age. Everest does not deal with Keats very much but gives a very good idea of the period and its poetry. Highly recommended]

Homans, Margaret. "Keats Reading Women, Women reading Keats." *Studies in Romanticism* 29 (Fall 1990): 341-370

[A gendered analysis of Keats's readership and who he thought should read his poetry. Homans argues that Keats did not want women to read his poetry]

James, D.G. "The Two Hyperions." In *Keats: A Collection of Essays*. Ed. Walter Jackson Bate. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964

[A standard and sound essay of 1948]

Jones, Elizabeth. "The Suburban School: Snobbery and Fear in the Attacks on Keats." *Times Literary Supplement* October 27, 1995 (no.4830): 14-15. Full version in *Keats-Shelley Journal* 45 (1996)

[An analysis of the language used in adverse criticism of Keats to show the political and social biases against him. This is a good example of contextualised criticism]

Keach, William. "Cockney Couplets: Keats and the Politics of Style." *Studies in Romanticism* 25 (Summer 1986): 182-196

[Not directly about *Hyperion* but gives you a good idea of how the style that a poet adopted became the reason for class-based attacks on him]

Levinson, Marjorie. *The Romantic Fragment Poem*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1986

[An study of the Romantics' iconoclastic approach to poetry and poetic forms. May be read along with MacFarland]

McFarland, Thomas. *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981

[Much painting and writing of the early Romantic period focused on architectural and other ruins. McFarland's study is about this phenomenon. It is relevant to *Hyperion* because Keats's description of the fallen Titans was based on the partially ruined statues of ancient Greece known as the Elgin Marbles. McFarland may be read along with Levinson.]

Matthews, G.M. *Keats: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1971

[A collection of reviews and opinions on Keats, primarily in the nineteenth century. The late G.M. Matthews' introduction is probably the finest survey of Keats criticism up to 1971 and for many years after]

Muir, Kenneth. "The Meaning of 'Hyperion'." *Essays in Criticism* II (1952): 54-75. Rpt. in *John Keats: A Reassessment*. Ed. Kenneth Muir (Liverpool 1958) 102-122

[Muir has a good analysis of Keats's politics and verse]

Ridley, M.R. *Keats's Craftsmanship*

[Still among the best analyses of Keats's technique]

Shelley, P.B. "Adonais"

[Shelley's elegy or lament for Keats, along with his Preface, is the start of the quite untrue story that Keats got consumption because he was miserable at the reviews of *Endymion*. But it also shows the sympathy Keats got from his fellow poets and Radicals]

Stillinger, Jack. *The Poems of John Keats*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978)

[A standard edition of Keats's poems]

Useful journals:

Keats-Shelley Journal

Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin

Studies in Romanticism

33.8 ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

- Q.1. i. a. 31. 10. 1795
 b. 23. 2. 1820
 ii. a. 1819
 b. *annus mirabilis*
 iii. 1816
 iv. 1817

- Q.2. i. The medical profession. He was a trained doctor.
 ii. Consumption or tuberculosis
 iii. Lower middle class
 iv. A Radical
 v. Cowden Clarke

- Q.3. i. A great poet, one who would be remembered among the "mighty dead."
 ii. The suffering of the world, or what he called "the agonies, the strife Of human hearts."
 iii. a. It was "a test of invention"
 b. All great poets had written long poems
 c. It was a step to fame
 d. Readers liked poems with numerous images so that at a second reading, they discovered new things.

iv. Milton's *Paradise Lost*

- v. a. - Milton and Wordsworth had both written long poems about the rapid and major changes during their times, but Wordsworth's was more relevant to Keats since they were near contemporaries
- b. Wordsworth had thought into the human heart, said Keats, while Milton was a man of reason
- c. Keats's admiration for Milton had resulted in "Miltonic inversions" and "Miltonic intonations" which Keats described as "false beauty"
- d. *Paradise Lost* was a Christian epic, while the pagan mythology Wordsworth praised in *The Excursion* was more suited to Keats's atheism.

- Q.4. i. a. Two
- b. *Hyperion: A Fragment* and *The Fall of Hyperion*
- c. Keats called them his two "Hyperions"
- d. Readers usually refer to them as the first and second *Hyperion*. The first is mostly called just *Hyperion*.
- ii. He stopped *Hyperion* between April and May 1819. He began and stopped *The Fall of Hyperion* between August and October 1819.
- iii. Both poems are in blank verse, i.e., in unrhymed lines in the iambic pentametre. Milton had used this verse for *Paradise Lost*.

- Q.5. i. a. An epic is a long narrative poem
- b. It has several simultaneous stories
- c. It is centred on war
- d. Epics usually appear at times of quick, violent, and drastic social change.

Q.6. Keats's poem is about how one order of gods is replaced by another. The idea of change was inherent in the ancient Greek conception of the world and even the gods were subject to it. This made it a good vehicle for his ideas which were about the pains and knowledge caused by change.

Q.7. Blake. Blake was a Christian and Keats an atheist but there are many similarities in their work. Both were from the lower middle class; both were inclined to Radicalism; both were vulnerable to the anti-sedition laws; both therefore obscured their political biases in mythological machinery.