

Miltonic Elements and Romantic Traits in Hyperion

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Abstract: This article is an attempt to have a multidimensional and multilingual approach to Hyperion, a critically acclaimed epic by John Keats. It tries to explore the imprints of Romanticism, Miltonic technique of epic writing and similarities with Chhayawad and Keats' very personal approach to the subject.

Key Words: Paradise Lost, Ramcharitmanas, Chhayawad, William Wordsworth, Charles Darwin etc.

Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that slowly shaped itself into an era by the contemporary social, political and economical conditions of the 19th century which was a time of tremendous change in almost every aspects of human life: John Keats, the well-known second generation romantic poet has written Hyperion in blank verse. This long narrative poem is based on the Greek myth and has been fragmented into three parts which deal with the theme of:

Beauty, Truth and Knowledge

Keats has given a special emphasis on Evolution which was the spirit of the age. In *Hyperion*, Oceanus the god of sea in his philosophical speech says to Saturn:

And first as thou wast not the first of powers

So art thou not the last; it cannot be:

Thou art not the beginning nor the end

(Hyperion book 2 ,22-24)

In this speech *Oceanus* illuminates that evolution is inevitable. This very fact has been corroborated by Charles Darwin the great naturalist and biologist of 19th century England. In his book *On Origin of Species* he claimed that there was a continual struggle for existence in Nature in which only the fittest would survive. His famous quotation is:

Struggle for existence and survival for the fittest.

He was also a reader and admirer of the romantic poetry. The first book of *Hyperion* describes sorrowful story of the fallen, defeated and dethroned Titans by the Olympians who had challenged the authority of Titans, the sons and daughters of Ge (earth) and (Oranus or Coleus) Heaven, Saturn the chief of the Titans is provoked by Thea, to think about the restoration of power.

Almost all the titans were defeated one Hyperion, the god of sun and husband of Thea. At the book 1 Hyperion is sent to earth by his father Coleus.

Book 2 is mainly concerned with the powerful oration of Saturn and the philosophical oration of Oceanus the god of sea. Oceanus says that 'evolution is the universal law of nature but is neglected by Encladus the giant creature. Cylmene, the subordinate goddess and daughter of Oceanus corroborates his opinion. In book 3 the poet deviates from the story of the Titans and shares his own sorrow. He thinks of the death of the Tom his brother and then he sings about Apollo the Olympion god of poetry and music.

John Milton was praised by the Romantic poets like William Wordsworth, John Keats etc. Some, Miltonic influences are there in *Hyperion* which are as follows. There are some similarities between Milton's *paradise lost* and Keats' *Hyperion*.

1. Both the poems are considered as epic poems.
2. Blank verse has been used in *Hyperion* And *Paradise Lost* since blank verse is the only writing technique that provides full liberty to write epics.

In the prologue of *Tamburlaine* Christopher Marlowe says in favour of blank verse against rhyming wits:

The jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits and such conceits clownage keeps in pay

3. *Hyperion* deals with the story of fallen and dethroned Titans, *Paradise Lost* deals with the story of fallen angels.

4. Epics are generally written on the subject of wars or the story of great warriors and here both the books deal with war.

5. Exaggeration is always is always apart of epic poetry, whether it is exaggeration of physique or story. In most of the epics poems physical exaggeration is present no matter the epic is Indian or English. Because, as Shakespeare's works and his fame easily transcends time and the physical borders of the countries in the same way the soul of Romanticism, liberty of thought, expression and love for nature easily transcends the borders and English Romanticism finds its counterpart in Hindi *Chhayawad*. In *Hyperion* Keats describes the physical structure as:

By her in stature the tall Amazon

Had stood pigmy's height

(*Hyperion* 27-28)

In *Paradise Lost* the physique of Satan is described as

In bulk as huge

As when the fables same of monstrous size

Titanian, or earth born, that warred on Jove

Bariareos or Typhoon, whom the Den

By ancient tarsus held, or that sea beast leviathan

(*Paradise Lost*, 97-101)

In a great Indian epic *Ramcharitmanas*, Tulsidas describes the monstrous sieze of *Kumbhkaranaas*:

Tkkxk fuflpj nsf[k, dSIk

ekugqj dkyq nsg /kjh cSIk

Jaga nisicharDekhiyekaisa

ManhunkaaluDehdharibaisa

(the monster arises as the horrible death has arisen)

(*Ramcharitmanas Lanka Kand*)

6. Like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, Saturn the chief of the Titans is also an impressive orator. Nevertheless his oration is not so impressive as Satan. When Saturn is revitalized by the present agonizing situation of the Titans and Thea's words, he says:

But cannot I create?

Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion? Another world,

Another universe to overbear and crumble this to naught?

Where is the another chaos? Where?

(*Hyperion*, 141-145)

These words of Saturn create a captivating impression on the minds of the fallen angels in his first speech in *Paradise Lost Book 1*.

What though the field be lost

All is not lost, the unconquerable will

And study of revenge Immortal hate

And courage never to submit or yield

(*Paradise Lost*, 106-109)

Invocation to the Muse is also there in both the books. In the beginning of book 3 of *Hyperion*, Keats says:

O leave them, muse! O leave

Theme to their woes;

For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire;
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips and antheing a lonely grief

(Hyperion, Book3-6)

In *Paradise Lost* book 1 Milton invokes in similar fashion:

I thence invoke
Thy aid to my adventurous song.
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount which it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme

(Paradise Lost,book 1:12-16)

8.Epic similes are present in both the epics.The famous epic simile in *Hyperion* which describes the tall Oak trees as:

Green rob'd senators of mighty woods
(Hyperion 74)

Epic similes are present in abundance in *Paradise Lost* when Satan is described as:

In bulk as huge as Leviathan

9.For being an epic protagonist, the protagonist must be noble by birth like Satan in *Paradise Lost*. In *Hyperion*, Saturn, *Hyperion* and rest of the Titans are also noble by birth. This very statement has been corroborated by Coleus the father of Titans:

For I have seen my
Sons most unlike gods.
Divine ye were created and divine
(Hyperion 328-329)

Louis Cazamian writes about *Hyperion*:

Hyperion is an epic poem in which Keats competing with Milton on footing of equality set out to relate the celestial resolutions of pagan my theology as did Milton the Christian circle of *Paradise Lost* and regained.

Scarcely outlined as it is already arresting by vastness of conception which it promises by its vision by its gigantic and primitive world,this work stands out in wonderous majesty”

In Hyperion, Hyperion is a god of sun possessing vast powers even though he was not authorised to disturb the fixed timings of for the day to begin or for the change of seasons. Oceanus in his philosophical speech says:

We fall by course of nature's law, not force

Of thunder or of Jove

In this speech Oceanus clarifies that nature is supreme, this trait which considers nature to be suprimies romance.

In, *The Prelude* Wordsworth says that he and his soul has been brought up by beauty and by fear of nature:

Fair seed time had my soul and

I grew up foster alike by beauty and by fear

Rousseau, gave a famous call which shows the importance of nature:

Return to nature

Humanization of nature is another characteristics of Romantic poetry.

In Hyperion eats describes the Oak trees as:

As when, upon a traced summer night

Those green rob'd senators of mighty woods,

Tall Oaks, branch -charmed by the earnest stars

(Hyperion 73-75)

In, Chhayawad, could be considered as Hindi Romanticism. Nirala, the great Hindi nature poet humanizes nature as:

fnolkolku dk le;]

Eks?ke; vkleku ls mrj jgh gSA

Okg ijh lh

/khjs& /khjs&?khjs

Diwasavsan ka samay

Meghmayasman se utarrhihai

Vah Sandhya parisi

Dhiredhiredhire

At the evening time, the evening is descending like fairy from the cloudy sky, slowly slowly slowly.

Self- representation is an inseparable part of Romantic poetry. In *Hyperion* Keats laments over the death of his brother and says:

O leave them muse! O leave them there woes;

For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:

A solitary sorrow best befits thy lips and antheing a lonely grief

(*Hyperion* book, 3-6)

Self- representation is also there in *The Prelude*:

Oh many a times have I a five years child

In a small mill race severed from his stream

In *Chhayawad* we also find self- representation, when Mahadevi Verma says:

eSa uhj Hkjh nq%[k dh cnyh

ifjp; bruk bfrgkl ;gh

meM+h dy Fkh feV vkt pyh

Main nirbharidukhki badly parichayitnaitihasyhiumadikalhithimitajchali.

I am like sorrowful cloud of water, this is my history and introduction I was hovering yesterday and finished today.

An acute sense of imagination is found in *Hyperion* which is hallmark of Romanticism. The beauty of Sun is described as:

Two wings this orb possessed glory, two fair agent wings,

Ever exalted at the God's approach

The Romantic imagination is also there in the boat episode of *The Prelude*, when Wordsworth says:

My boat went having through the water like swan

(*The Prelude* Book -1, 286-287)

Beauty has always been a subject of great admiration in Romanticism no matter, whether the beauty of nature or the beauty of a woman.

In *Hyperion*, book-3 Keats wants to write something about *Apollo*. He wants that the whole environment should prepare itself to listen to his song which he is going to

write in honor of Apollo. Keats in his famous poem Ode on a Grecian Urn has written:

Beauty is truth, truth beauty that is all
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know
In Hyperion Oenus says:
For 'tis eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might

(Hyperion 228-229)

When Keats wants to make the whole environment prepare for the song of Apollo, he describes the beauty of a young maiden as:

And let the maid blush keenly,
As with some worm kiss surprised
(Hyperion book 3, 21-22)

Sumitranandan Pant, the great poet of Chhayawad describes the assistance of a woman as a dive in the holy river of Ganga and says:

rqEgkjs Nwus esa Fkk izk.k lax esa ikou xaxk Luku

rqEgkjh ok.kh esa dY;k.kh] f=os.kh dh ygjksa dk xku

Tumharechhune me thapran sang me pawan ganga snan

Tumharivani me Kalyani, trivenikilahron ka gaan.

The poet finds the touch of a woman like a dive in the holy river Ganga and her voice like song of the flow of Kalyani and Triveni.

In conclusion it could be said that, Greek myths have been framed in a Romantic framework with the help of Miltonic technique of epic writing.

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