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Moneta: The Abject Mother in Keats' *The Fall of Hyperion*

Moneta: Keats'in *The Fall of Hyperion* Şiirinde Zelil Anne

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Abstract

In July 1819, Keats began to compose *The Fall of Hyperion*, an allegorical poem about the Titans vanquished by the Olympian deities, concentrating upon the fall of Hyperion. Yet, Keats grew frustrated with the poem's progress and left it incomplete in September 1819. In this fragment, the poet-narrator encounters Moneta, the goddess of memory, who guides him to draw a boundary between genuine poets and pseudo-poets. The poet-narator's confrontation with Moneta lies at the centre of this unfinished poem. Therefore, this article explores the poet-narrator's relationship with Moneta by employing the Kristevan theory of abjection. Moneta is a pivotal character around whom the discussion of the abject coheres since she simultaneously incorporates the abject and that which expels the abject. Moneta represents the attempt to expel the abject because she as a mentor guides the poet-narrator to maintain boundaries between poets and dreamers. Nevertheless, she also emerges as a smothering maternal figure for the poet-narrator. The poet-narrator journeys into Moneta's "globed" mind that "enwombs" the tragedy of the Titans to recount their story (*Fall* I.245, 276-7). This journey is regarded as a venture into the realm of the abject maternal body. During this journey, the death-bearing visage of the maternal muse appears. Thus, the poet-narrator confronts the abject as he descends into the pre-linguistic realm where the abject emerges through the sickening collapse of borders. This paper argues that the poetic voice is choked and the poem remains incomplete owing to this confrontation with the abject mother that swamps the symbolic.
Keywords: Keats, *The Fall of Hyperion*, Kristeva, the abject mother

Öz

Keats, 1819'un temmuz ayında, Olymposlu tanrılar tarafından yenilgiye uğratılan Titanları anlattığı ve Hyperion'un düşüşüne odaklandığı alegorik bir şiir olan *Hyperion'un Düşüşü*'nü yazmaya başlar. Fakat, 1819'un eylül ayında, şiirin ilerleyişi Keats'i düş kırıklığına uğratır ve eseri yarım bırakır. Bu parçada, şair-anlatıcı, bellek tanrıçası olan ve ona hakiki şairlerle sözde şairler arasında bir sınır çekmesini öğütleyen Moneta ile karşılaşır. Şair-anlatıcının Moneta ile karşılaşması, bu bitmemiş şiirin merkezinde yer almaktadır. Bu yüzden, bu makale, şair-anlatıcının Moneta ile ilişkisini, Kristeva'nın zelil kavramını kullanarak irdelemektedir. Moneta, zelil tartışmasının etrafında döndüğü ana karakterdir çünkü Moneta aynı zamanda hem zelilin kendisini hem de onu savuşturmaya çalışan faili temsil etmektedir. Moneta zelili kovma çabasını temsil etmektedir çünkü şair-anlatıcının kılavuzu olarak, şairler ve hayalperestler arasındaki sınırları idame ettirmesini ona salık verir. Buna karşın, Moneta aynı zamanda şair için yutan anne figürü olarak da ortaya çıkar. Şair-anlatıcı, simgesel dil öncesinden gelen anne figürünün sarmalayan bir küre gibi betimlenen zihnine, zihninde bir rahim gibi barındırdığı söylenen hikayeyi anlatabilmek için yolculuk yapar (*Fall* I.245, 276-7). Bu yolculuk, zelil olan anne bedeninin diyarına gitme cüretidir. Bu yolculuk sırasında, anne figürü de olan esin

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perisinin yüzü ölüme doğru giden ölümcül bir çehre gibi görünür. Böylece, şair-anlatıcı zelil ile karşılaşır ve sınırların iğrenme uyandıran kayboluşundan ötürü zelilin ortaya çıktığı, simgesel öncesi alana iner. Bu çalışma, simgeseli yutan zelil anne figürü ile karşılaşmadan ötürü, şairin dilsizleştiğini ve şiirin de yarım kaldığını öne sürmektedir.
Anahtar sözcükler: Keats, *The Fall of Hyperion*, Kristeva, zelil anne

Introduction

Keats aspired to compose *The Fall of Hyperion*, but he grew disillusioned with the progress of the poem and therefore left it incomplete. In July 1819, he began to write *The Fall* only to abandon it in September 1819. This poem is about the fall of the Titans, particularly the fall of Hyperion. Cast as an allegorical dream, *The Fall* is based on the conflict between poets and dreamers. Keats's poet-dreamer approaches the shrine of Moneta, the goddess of memory, and shares her tragic vision of the fall of the Titans. In his encounter with Moneta, the poet-dreamer swings between genuine poets and pseudo-poets that are seen as futile, fanatic, savage dreamers. He aspires to be a genuine poet who strives to train the sensuousness of his style and to discipline his poetic self in a phiolosophical and ethical way. He seeks not to succumb to the lure of dumb enchantment in the realm of pre-linguistic realm which defies symbolic signification; therefore, he attempts to repress this alluring call by means of employing a stylistic discipline. The poet-dreamer believes that the poet "should renounce the luxurious and the exquisite as being phantasmal, and that he must not remain indifferent to the cares and miseries of his fellow men" (Bate, 2014, p. 172). He also believes that "suffering is necessary for the self-realization of the poet" (Barnard, 1987, p. 129). Keats strives to write *The Fall* as an allegory untainted by the luxuriant voluptuousness and sensuousness of fanatic dreamers. In a letter of July 1819, Keats says he has "of late been moulting: not for fresh feathers & wings: they are gone, and in their stead [he hopes] to have a pair of patient sublunary legs" (2002, p. 314). He wants to have a chastened and disciplined style. This seems to be connected with his struggle not to be an egotistical poet, one of those "self-worshippers" (*Fall* I. 207[1]) who, unwearied by the agony of their fellow beings, soar on the wings of poetry for their own sensual delights. He aspires to be a down-to-earth poet with sublunary legs that fasten him to the solid ground of his new poem that is informed by ethical concerns. Hence, *The Fall* is characterised by this desire for "self-discipline" (Sheats, 1983, p. 233). Similarly, Barnard (1987) argues *The Fall* dismisses "Keats's earlier dreams of Beauty as luxuriant and self-indulgent, taking him back to the fundamental questions about the role of poetry" (p. 129). Resolved to be a genuine poet, the poet-dreamer enters Moneta's brain to tell the tragic tale of the deposed Titans. The distinction between poets and dreamers is translated into the twofold nature of Moneta. She emerges both as a mentor who urges the poet-dreamer to dissociate himself from savage dreamers, and as a maternal figure with whom the poet-narrator merges. The aspiring poet asks Moneta to train him and help him discipline his style. However, the poet-narrator's imagination is "arrested" once he enters Moneta's vision (Newey, 2001, p. 81). Therefore, Moneta's bivalent character is fundamental to the discussion of the difference between poets and dreamers. She not only enables the poet to maintain the boundary between genuine poets and pseudo-poets, but also emerges as the medium through whom the boundary between subject and object is obliterated.

This study deploys the Kristevan theory of abjection to examine the relationship between the poet-narrator and Moneta. It asserts that the Keatsian difference between genuine poets and pseudo-poets corresponds to the Kristevan distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic. The Fall oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic although the poet attempts to repress the semiotic and to locate the poem in the realm of the symbolic. This conflict between the semiotic and the symbolic is reflected in the poet-dreamer's relationship with Moneta. She is viewed as a muse comforting and terrifying the poet-dreamer at once, as a mentor and an admonisher, as an intimidating goddess and an image of death. This paper argues that Moneta is the abject mother and that the poet-dreamer, under her sway, relapses into the semiotic realm where there is no distinction between self and other. As a result, the poet-dreamer becomes an abject figure, neither a subject nor an object. Because of the collapse of the boundary between the infant-poet and the

[1] Quotations are given in line numbers from *John Keats: The Complete Poems* edited by J. Barnard (1986).

mother-muse, symbolic language is choked. The abject mother-muse swamps the infant-poet, which causes the poem to remain incomplete.

Moneta's bivalent nature is fundamental to the Kristevan interpretation in this article. She represents the attempt to expel the abject because she as a mentor guides the poet-narrator to maintain boundaries between poets and dreamers, who, she says, are "distinct / Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes" (*Fall* I.199-200). Nevertheless, she also emerges as a smothering maternal figure who embodies the abject mother since the pre-oedipal mother is the first object of abjection. The poet-narrator journeys into Moneta's "globed" mind that "enwombs" the tragedy of the Titans to narrate that story (*Fall* I.245, 276-7). This journey is a venture into the realm of the unrepresentable. Because of this journey, the death-bearing visage of the maternal muse appears. Hence, the poet-narrator confronts the abject in this nocturnal realm and he regresses into the pre-linguistic realm where the abject emerges because of the revolting collapse of boundaries. This twofold nature of Moneta testifies that abjection is about simultaneously attraction and repulsion that stems from the moment when the child's symbiosis with the mother is obliterated. Therefore, the poet-narrator is both fascinated and repelled by the maternal body. The conception of Moneta points to a dialectical oscillation between the impulse for undifferentiated heterogeneity in the semiotic realm, and the desire to draw boundaries in the symbolic realm. In other words, she represents "the symbolic breakdown" on the one hand and "an anchoring of the symbolic dimension" on the other hand (Kristeva, 1989, p. 37). Likewise, the conception of Moneta reflects the dialectical vacillation between semiotic dissolution and symbolic consolidation of boundaries. This fluctuation testifies to the fragility of subjectivity as the subject teeters on the brink of the gaping abyss, which both lures and repulses him. Embodying this abysmal uterus, Moneta represents the "nourishing and murderous, fascinating and abject inside of the maternal body" at once (Kristeva, 1982, p. 54).

The Abject

Kristeva dwells on the distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic. The symbolic denotes the structures of language whilst the semiotic expresses what disrupts and transgresses them. Kristeva asserts there is a perpetual dialectical interplay between the two aspects of signification (1984, pp. 14-22). The semiotic exceeds the denotative efficiency of the communicative aspect of language. It is associated with the infantile pre-Oedipal. It is a realm linked with the maternal, the preverbal, and it lacks structure and precedes syntax (Kristeva, 1984, p. 34). The semiotic corresponds to an ambiguous word, which is reminiscent of the undifferentiated realm of the pre-linguistic. The semiotic is "irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation" since it is "musical, anterior to" syntax (p. 29). By contrast, the symbolic ensures structure and law posit the subject. It is an "inevitable attribute of meaning, sign, and the signified object" for the consciousness of a speaking subject (Kristeva, 1980, p. 134).

The interplay between these aspects causes the abject to haunt the tenuous borders of the subject. Separation from the semiotic realm is necessary for the subject to construct a distinct subjectivity; this is the positive side of the dialectic between the semiotic and the symbolic. On the other hand, the negative side of the dialectic is that the semiotic threatens the symbolic realm.

The abject has a dual function in Kristevan theory. Not only does the abject destabilise the subject, but also it allows the subject to be constituted through detaching itself from others. The infant establishes borders between self and other by the process of abjection. Therefore, Kristeva (1982) contends that the abject "simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject," and she adds that "I abject *myself* within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish *myself*" (pp. 3-5). On the one hand, by means of abjection, the borders of the self and other are constituted. On the other hand, these borders radically break down because of abjection.

The unnameable characterises the abject. The abject is not an object defined by the symbolic and positioned in relation to the subject in the symbolic domain. Kristeva (1982) states that "[w]hen I am beset by abjection, the twisted braid of affects and thoughts I call by such a name does not have, properly speaking, a definable *object*. The abject is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine" (p. 1). Therefore, the

abject refers to what transgresses the symbolic. The abject does not let the subject "be more or less detached and autonomous" (p. 1). Beset by abjection, the subject lacks individuation.

What is abjected is that which is expelled from the subject; therefore, the abject is the part of ourselves that we cast off. The abject is "the jettisoned object" and it is "radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 2). Since the abject lies beyond the realm of the identifiable, it punctures the symbolic. As a result, meaning and structure collapse where the abject looms, as it challenges the symbolic realm. Resisting signification, the abject "beseeches a discharge, a convulsion" (p. 2). Therefore, the abject perpetually violates the tenuous borders of subjectivity.

Abjection obliterates the pre-symbolic symbiosis of mother and infant so that the child could enter the symbolic domain of signification. Therefore, the abjection of the maternal body is essential in the process of the constitution of subjectivity. Kristeva (1982) contends that the abject confronts us "with our earliest attempts to release the hold of the *maternal* entity even before ex-isting outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language" (p. 13). She also adds that abjection is "a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling" (p. 13). The maternal body is symbolically terminated so that the enfant could enter language, yet it never ceases to challenge the fragile borders of the subject.

Moneta: Simultaneously Nourishing and Murderous

The figure of Moneta is viewed as having two aspects in tandem with the dialectics of abjection. First, she represents the poet's mentor who helps him keep the abject at bay. Then, she also embodies the death-bearing maternal body, which reminds one of the "looming" Kristevan maternal Thing that conflates the boundaries upon which the symbolic is built (Kristeva, 1989, p. 15). Therefore, the poet's encounter with Moneta is described as "the very mire in which the poem appears to flounder" (Thomas, 2008, p. 30) as the poet-dreamer becomes mired in the swampy abject. As the poet-narrator's mentor and admonisher, Moneta represents the symbolic authority he holds onto in order to safeguard boundaries. He clings to her to save himself from the asymbolic realm where distinctions are obliterated. The poet-dreamer needs a mentor who saves him from falling into the realm of the speechless infant where borders between self and other are blurred. The poet-persona needs a guide to be orientated towards the symbolic realm of boundaries.

The poet-dreamer drinks the potion in the arbour, falls asleep and awakens in a dream. Within his dream, he sees "an old sanctuary" (Fall I.43-62). He goes into the temple where he sees Moneta for the first time. His first sight of Moneta shows her as a grave figure invested with propriety that betokens the wisdom and respectability of a mentor. The poet is overcautious, fearing to overstep the mark in a holy place; he is "sober paced," repressing "haste," which adds to the awe-inspiring encounter with a powerful figure (Fall I.93-6). As the guide who is to help the poet maintain his boundaries of the self, Moneta appears as one who sets a boundary between holy and unholy, proper and improper. These distinctions are vital since she functions as the power that enables the poet to keep the abject at bay.

Moneta's immediate association with a holy flame, too, is important. The significance of the flame is elaborated upon in the following lines:

> When in mid-May the sickening East wind
> Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain
> Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,
> And fills the air with so much pleasant health
> That even the dying man forgets his shroud;
> Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,
> Sending forth Maian incense, spread around
> Forgetfulness of everything but bliss. (Fall I.97-104)

As the poet's guide who helps to repress the abject, Moneta is associated with the purifying power of fire in these lines. The lofty fire drives away the sense of filthiness related with the repulsive abject. The

sickening wind representing the revolting abject gives way to the cleansing warm rain that revivifies the incense of the flowers and repels the abject; that which sickens turns to pleasant health, and death turns to life. The holy fire repels decomposition, and thus cultivates vitality. Moneta helps the poet to distance himself from the sickening situation in which the defeated Titans are locked. Moneta functions as the mediator between the poet and the Titans, and through her, the poet avoids being engulfed in their deathly melancholy. She thus enables him to express their plight by means of his words and to liberate himself from the death-bearing silence of the Titans, which extinguishes poetic utterance.

Following this relatively soft image of Moneta, she next emerges as an admonishing figure. Being unseen by him, she addresses the poet-narrator:

> If thou canst not ascend,
> These steps, die on that marble where thou art.
> Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
> Will parch for lack of nutriment - thy bones
> Will wither in few years, and vanish so. (Fall I.107-111)

Moneta emerges as an intimidating goddess, even a "sphinx-like figure" (Ryan, 1990, p. 273). The "unexpected fury of Moneta's violent condemnation" (Sperry, 1994, p. 328) is intended to groom the poet. She evokes the sphinx who represents a place of meeting and splitting at once, as borders and crossroads suggest. The figure of the sphinx is a "hybrid guardian of the threshold" and her name means both "to throttle" and "to bind'" (Margaroni, 2004, p. 52), which is pertinent to Moneta's bivalent nature.

Menaced by Moneta, the poet-narrator feels "the tyranny / Of that fierce threat" (Fall I.119-120). The hard task of ascending the immortal steps requires the poet-persona to abandon the semiotic luxurious arbour characterised by the profusion of sensual delights. He must rise up the ladder of the poetical development to "feel the giant agony of the world" (I.157). This task forces the poet-narrator to discriminate between the fanatic savage and the creative poet. The former luxuriates in the "state of indolence where impressions are received and associations made" while the creative poet actively shapes his impressions and gives them "a form which is apprehensible to others, rescuing them from oblivion" (Garrett, 1987, p. 41). The poet-narrator begs this "High Prophetess" to "purge off" his "mind's film" (Fall I.145-6). Moneta is now seen as a powerful figure who purifies the poet and frees him from the abject collapse of boundaries. The goddess warns the poet who aspires to mount up the steps of the temple that noone can soar so high:

> "But those to whom the miseries of the world
> Are misery, and will not let them rest.
> All else who find a haven in the world,
> Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,
> If by a chance into this fane they come,
> Rot on the pavement where thou rotted'st half" (I.148-53)

The now-menacing goddess tells the poet to open himself up to the sorrows of the world and to gain insight into the tragic nature of existence. She urges him to leave behind the garden of earthly delights. She warns him against the abject condition of corruption. He will fall into this rotting pit if he fails to discriminate between the rotting dreamer and the poet. The former is enchained in dumb amazement in the asymbolic realm of undifferentiated heterogeneity, while the latter feels the agony of the world and expresses it in a symbolic form intelligible in the world of the linguistic sign. On the one hand, she is a benign guide who tells him what it takes to be a mature poet; on the other, she reprimands him for his rotting half. She castigates him for being a weak dreamer seeking wonders: "Thou art a dreaming thing, / A fever of thyself" (Fall I.168-9). His being a fever of himself suggests that he lives in a solipsistic world where self and other are not differentiated, and this is poisonous and death-dealing. As a mentor guiding the poet to struggle against the revolting collapse of boundaries, Moneta makes distinctions. She reminds him that pain and joy

are distinct; she castigates the pure dreamer who "muddies human experience by not discriminating joy and pain" (White, 2010, p. 195). Hence, the poet-narrator sees Moneta as the representative of the symbolic who gives the poet a stable identity with defined contours that will locate him in the symbolic realm of structures. Therefore, the poet-narrator asks Moneta to define him:

> If it please,
> Majestic shadow, tell me: sure not all
> Those melodies sung into the world's ear
> Are useless: sure a poet is a sage,
> A humanist, physician to all men.
> That I am none I feel, as vultures feel
> They are no birds when eagles are abroad.
> What am I then? (Fall I.186-193)

Feeling worthless, but seeking to prove himself, in the presence of an admonishing goddess, the poet-narrator asks her to delineate the boundaries of his identity. Moneta, in response to his question, vigorously discriminates between poets and dreamers:

> The poet and the dreamer are distinct,
> Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.
> The one pours out a balm upon the world,
> The other vexes it. (Fall I.199-202)

Moneta represents the symbolic realm, which maintains distinctions. She warns the poet-narrator against the dreamer who is immersed in utter abundance of sensuous intensity, against the influx of too much affect, which causes linguistic signifiers to remain as impulsive sounds not shaped into intelligible utterances. The semiotic influx of drives vexes the symbolically constructed world. The poet heals the muddled dreamer. The poet is to embalm the abject corpse whereas the dreamer gnaws away at it.

The poet-persona clings to the majestic Moneta to avoid relapsing into the abyss of "the sable charm" and "dumb enchantment" (Fall I.10-11). As the mother of the muses who inspire poets, Moneta stands for "the fine spell of words" (I.9) which saves the poet from the realm of the unsignifiable. Moneta, however, also represents the suffocating abject maternal body. She tells him that his flesh will "parch for lack of nutriment" and his bones will "wither in few years" (I.109-11). Moneta's threat tyrannises the poet-persona as her intimidating presence recalls death. The death-dealing abject looms over the poet, hovering on the periphery of his words:

> So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
> Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed.
> Prodigious seem'd the toil, the leaves were yet
> Burning when suddenly a palsied chill
> Struck from the paved level up my limbs,
> And was ascending quick to put a cold grasp
> Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat:
> I shriek'd; and the sharp anguish of my shriek
> Stung my own ears I strove hard to escape
> The numbness; strove to gain the lowest step.
> Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold
> Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart;
> And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.
> One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd
> The lowest stair; and as it touch'd, life seem'd

To pour in at the toes. (I.119-34)

Death claims the aspiring poet. Moneta has a Medusa-like effect upon the poet, for the chill petrifies his limbs. The abject suffocates the poet and chokes the poetic voice. Kristeva (1982) argues that a "clumsy breaking away" from the maternal body runs the risk of "falling back under the sway of a power as secure as it is stifling" (p. 13). The poet-narrator fails to sperate from the maternal body, to assert his autonomy, and thus, falls under the sway of the stifling pre-symbolic maternal body. Moneta's power is not only that of providing security as a mentor, but it is also stifling as that of an imperious admonisher. The poet shrieks as he fights against the abject, which engulfs him. He shrieks because the abject "beseeches a discharge, a convulsion, a crying out" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 2). The poet-persona strives to escape the feeling of numbness. He shrieks and is revivified; "one minute before death," life seems to "pour in at the toes" (Fall I.132-4). Revitalised, the poet mounts up the steps (I.134).

To compose poetry without being immersed in the asymbolic realm of indistinct profusion, the poet needs an overbearing Moneta who helps the poet to be embedded in the realm of the symbolic. The poet-narrator falls under the sway of the monitoring goddess who will choke his "utterance sacrilegious" (Fall I.140). Under the eyes of his mentor, the poet-persona feels the sensation of dying and coming back to life. Moneta assures him the strength that took him up the first step of the temple to save himself was his own, and remains his saving ability: "Thou has felt / What 'tis to die and live again before / Thy fated hour. That thou hadst power to do so / Is thy own safety" (I.141-4). In contrast to this reassurance, she reminds him that his other half is rotten before he mounts the steps of the temple (I.153). When Moneta goes on to admonish him for being a weak dreamer, the poet castigates himself and attempts to sever himself from all rotting dreamers:

Then shouted I
Spite of myself, and with a Pythia's spleen,
Apollo! faded! O far flown Apollo!
Where is thy misty pestilence to creep
Into the dwellings, through the door crannies
Of all mock lyrists, large self worshippers,
And careless Hectorers in proud bad verse.
Though I breathe death with them it will be life
To see them sprawl before me into graves. (I.202-10)

He represents dreamers as worshipping themselves as they lie buried in their solipsistic worlds; he wants them to be killed by a pestilence. Thus, these dreamers are associated with the death-bearing abject, the death-infecting disease. The poet strives to dissociate himself from these rotting dreamers.

Moneta now begins to recount to him the tragedy of the Titans. As she starts, she changes into a desperately mourning figure: "by her voice I knew she shed / Long treasured tears" in the "temple, sad and lone" (Fall I.220-21). She describes herself as the "priestess of this desolation" (I.227); "sad Moneta" cries and says to the poet that her power of memory is a curse to her (I.240-44). The goddess who has been so far called "Holy Power" (I.136) and "High Prophetess" (I.145) turns into a grieving figure. Up to this point in the poem, she has been marked by shadows. When she is first introduced, she is hidden by "soft smoke" and the poet only hears her voice (I. 105-6); she is called "the veiled shadow" when she speaks for the second time (I.141). She is also named "Majestic shadow" (I.187, I.22) and called a "tall shade" veiled in "drooping linens" (I.194, I.216). That Moneta is heard, but not seen clearly, and that she is surrounded by shadows makes her more majestic and awe-inspiring, and makes her loftiness more impressive by rendering it tantalisingly ambiguous. However, as she begins recounting the tale of the Titans, this harsh image is mitigated, making her appear less severe. As the poet listens to the account of the miserable Moneta, he thinks her voice sounds like a maternal figure: "As near as an immortal's sphered words / Could to a mother's soften, were these last" (I.249-50). The poet-dreamer "approaches the goddess as a child does its mother," as a result of which Mellor (2001) regards the poet-dreamer's relationship with Moneta as "that of

goddess-mother-muse to human-son-poet" (p. 227). Moneta here changes to a maternal figure from an admonishing goddess, which evinces her enigmatic character.

Moneta is associated with a mother's soft words, but only temporarily. She is a forbidding goddess who frightens the poet-persona. In addition, he likens her "sphered words" to those of a mother while her robes, which invest her with symbolic authority, still intimidate the poet (Fall I.251-54). Moneta is recurrently presented as veiled in the poet's descriptions. For instance, she is shown as a "tall shade veiled in drooping white" whose speech and breath moved "the thin linen folds that drooping hung / About a golden censer from the hand / Pendant" (I.194, 196-98). The poet repeats almost word-for-word the same description of Moneta within the space of eighteen lines. This repetition of Moneta's description is striking, especially when one thinks the poet is resolved to discipline his style. The shadow that has an "accent feminine so courteous" (I.215) is different from the image of Moneta as an admonishing judge. This enigmatic figure shrouded in mystery is suggestive of the hazy image of the mother seen from the infant's fledgling point of view, of the nebulous image of the maternal body felt very faintly by the infant. The tall shade veiled in drooping linens, her voice, her breath stirring the linen folds, and the censer pending from her hand evoke not only the perspective of the child who looks upward towards the mother (vertically) but also the intimacy between the mother and the infant (horizontally). This image of Moneta as maternal voice and breath is much more intimate than that of Moneta as an admonitory figure.

A death-bearing image of Moneta follows these representations of Moneta as an intimidating goddess and a hazy maternal body when the poet saw her face paled

> By an immortal sickness which kills not;
> It works a constant change, which happy death
> Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
> To no death was that visage. (Fall I.258-61)

The abject emerges through Moneta's face, which is "drained of blood as if in death" (Roe, 2007, p. 192). The sickness that does not kill points to the abject condition of living in death. Death infects life; the boundary between death and life is blurred. Hence, the distinction that Moneta makes between life and death is obliterated. The poet says to himself he must not think now because Moneta's face progressing deathwards to no death is beyond the communicable; this visage is the unsignifiable that resists symbolic signification. With the veils parted, the poet-persona gestates towards a primary fusion with the maternal body. This union with the mother leads to "a living death" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 4), a union that is characterised as an immortal sickness that does not kill. Death (as the death of the symbolic subject of the linguistic sign) is the most important marker of the dissolution of the symbolic contract. The poet-persona is journeying back into the unnameable realm of the maternal body, which is "a trespass on ancestral space" (Parker, 1990, p. 116). There he trespasses on the realm of the ancestors by moving into the land of the primordial mother, transgressing into the pre-linguistic realm where there is no gap between the maternal body and the infant. The union with the mother is both delightful because comforting, and threatening because smothering. Moneta's eyes hold him back

> with a benignant light
> Soft mitigated by divinest lids
> Half closed, and visionless entire they seem'd
> Of all external things; they saw me not,
> But in blank splendour, beam'd like the mild moon,
> Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not,
> What eyes are upward cast. (Fall I.265-71)

The eyes of the mother are captivating. A benignant light shines from Moneta's blankly splendid eyes, made beautiful also by their superb lids, which mitigate the otherwise overpowering intensity of the kind beams of her look, and renders their splendour comforting rather than terrifying. The face of an abject death-bearing

mother is conflated with the benign effluence of kindness. This twofold nature of Moneta dovetails with what Kristeva (1984) called "the threshold of language" (p. 45), for the poem presents itself as existing in a limbo between poetic utterance that signifies in the symbolic domain and the potential termination of poetic utterance by dreamers and fanatics.

Simultaneously fearing and cherishing the mother, the poet-persona transgresses into the realm of the unnameable through delving into Moneta's mind, where

> I ach'd to see what things the hollow brain
> Behind enwombed: what high tragedy
> In the dark secret chambers of her skull
> Was acting, that could give so dread a stress
> To her cold lips, and fill with such a light
> Her planetary eyes. (Fall I.276-81)

The poet voyages into the semiotic realm of the womb that resists signification. To behold "the scenes / Still swooning vivid through" her brain (I.244-5), the poet plunges into it to see things there. The poet thus ventures into the dark secret chambers of Moneta's skull to recount the tragedy of the Titans. The poet turns towards the void of Moneta's "hollow brain" and embarks on "a lone night-journey without landmarks" (Garrett, 1987, p. 43). Through the medium of Moneta, the poet journeys into "the hollow dark" (Fall I.455), which is the abyss that resists signification. He is in fact embarking on a nocturnal journey into what Keats in Endymion called "the old womb of night" (IV.372) through Moneta's brain where the unnameable is enwombed. This nocturnal realm is where the symbolic vanishes and where the imponderable affect of the pre-symbolic is carried out. He journeys into this trans-linguistic realm without linguistic signifiers, without anchoring points, and this is terrifying for a poet who dreads being choked. The verb "enwomb" renders Moneta's brain as a "maternal vessel" and it highlights "an adhesive maternal wrapping" (Kristeva, 1987, pp. 38, 34-5). The poet fears being contained by this pre-symbolic vessel. The verb "enwomb" evokes "entomb" as its lexical shadow (Stewart, 2001, p. 147). In the Keatsian echo chamber, the former evokes its ghostly shadow. This association suggests that being engrossed in Moneta's brain is like being buried in a grave. In the realm of this uterine night, consciousness has not "transformed into signifiers those fluid demarcations of yet unstable territories where an 'I' that is taking shape is ceaselessly straying" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 11). This nocturnal uterus threatens to obliterate the poet.

This voyage into the night is marked by pain and fear. The poet intensely wishes to look into Moneta's brain, aches to see what things are stored in her brain. Meanwhile, Moneta's deathly face with its benign gaze is further complicated by the fact that her thoughts are sad and produce a dreadful stress on Moneta's cold lips. All the same, the poet, twinging with his need to enter her mind, aspires to conquer this night of melancholy as if he were an avaricious prospector expecting to find "sullen entrails rich with ore" there (Fall I.271-4). This tendency to envision himself as the fearless conqueror is related to his anxiety about being submerged in the globed mind of the primordial mother and hence his attempt to inflate his feeble ego.

Moneta embodies both light and its loss for the poet. She is "the mirage of the primal Thing" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 41). This venture into the nocturnal realm of the mother evokes the metaphor of the black sun: "a light without representation: the [maternal] Thing is an imagined sun, bright and black at the same time" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 13). The description of the odyssey into the brain of Moneta is characterised by a conglomeration of both light and darkness. The poet-persona strains his eyes, and Moneta's death-bearing visage is contrasted with her eyes' "benignant light" (Fall I.260-70), which resonate with the maternal Thing as an imagined sun, both black and bright at once. Her "visionless" eyes that beam "like the mild moon" in "blank splendour" are suggestive of a light without representation (I.267-9). Moneta's "planetary eyes" filled with light mark the poet's journey into the womb of the night, "the dark secret chambers of her skull" (I.278). Thus, his union with the mother is both enlightening and smothering because of Moneta's bivalent nature. Moneta, as a mentor, enlightens the poet, while the pre-symbolic darkness in her maternal realm threatens to extinguish his light.

The poet needs to murder the maternal Thing symbolically. Kristeva (1989) argues that killing the death-bearing mother is "the first step on the way to becoming autonomous" (p. 27). She adds that matricide is the "condition of our individuation" (p. 27-8). The matricidal drive is hindered in the case of the poet-dreamer who is captivated by the muse that stands for the Maternal Thing. Moneta's death-dealing image suggests that "the maternal object" has been "introjected" and the melancholic self is put to death; this is what follows, Kristeva asserts, instead of matricide when the drive to kill the mother is inhibited (p. 28). The poet-dreamer makes "of Her an image of Death" when he identifies with her (p. 28). Making the archaic mother into an image of death is to give her a representation; thus, "the feminine as image of death" is, Kristeva maintains, "a screen for my fear of castration" (p. 28). Being immersed in the archaic Thing is, therefore, an "oceanic death" (p. 73).

Embracing the maternal is oceanic as well as deathly. Moneta's "cold lips" are revitalised by the poet's "devout lips" (Fall I.280, I.292). The poet and Moneta stand side by side "like a child by its mother" (Williams, 2010, p. 115). They are like "a stunt bramble and a solemn pine" (Fall I.292-3), an image reminiscent of the (de)penda(e)nt infant looking up to the shadow of the maternal body as the overpowering shade. By means of this union, the poet journeys into the realm of the barely representable, the rapacious depth that threatens to dissolve the linguistic sign. There, he hears Moneta's voice and grows within him a power "of enormous ken / To see as a god sees" (I.301-304). Delving into Moneta's brain that enwombs the Titans's tragedy, the poet manages to recount the story of the fallen Titans stuck in the vale. The poet journeys through the veiled Moneta curtained in mysteries into the land of the vanquished Saturn veiled in the "shrouded" vale (I.311). On the one hand, the poet mourns for "the archaic Thing" through Moneta. On the other, telling the tragedy of the Titans, he accepts "a set of signs" which allow him to signify in the symbolic realm as a result of being severed from the primordial Thing (Kristeva, 1989, p. 41). The poet-narrator is, in one aspect, similar to the infant who learns language "when that intrepid wanderer leaves the crib to meet the mother in the realm of representations" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 41). In another aspect, differing from the intrepid wanderer, the poet-narrator is fearful lest he could submerge in the maternal Thing. The fear of being incorporated by the Thing is accompanied by the poet-dreamer's urge to incorporate her speech that is the tale of the Titans recounted by Moneta. Their encounter is marked by loss of identity and the forging of identity through language at once. Kristeva (1987) states that once "the object that I incorporate is the speech of the other – precisely a nonobject, a pattern, a model - I bind myself to him in a primary fusion" (1987, p. 26). Kristeva's account of introjection and language also sheds light on the poet-dreamer's relationship with Moneta. The poet-narrator incorporates Moneta's speech, introjects her language to recount the tragedy of the Titans like an infant incorporating the mother's speech. He nourishes himself with words; thus, he becomes what he incorporates; he becomes his own muse. In one aspect, he leaves the crib to meet the mother represented in the domain of signs; in another aspect, he merges with the archaic mother and becomes the mother, the muse of his own self.

The poet's imagination is housed in Moneta's brain. With the poet passing through Moneta, she becomes the medium (Parker, 1990, p. 117). The poet goes into the womb of night through Moneta's brain. The infantile stunt bramble identifies with the solemn maternal pine to continue his odyssey, and he has to that extent merged with his mentor. Through the protective medium of Moneta, the poet enters the realm of the bankrupt symbolic father without being engrossed by the death-dealing despondence of the overthrown Titans. Moneta guides him, he hears her voice, and she shows him a dethroned Saturn who has lost his realms. He realises that "what first I thought an image huge" is an "[u]nsceptred" Saturn with "his realmless eyes" (Fall I.324), for Saturn is no longer "the image pedestal'd so high" (I.298-99). Upon seeing Saturn as unsceptred, the poet is invigorated; a power grows within him, which enables him to see as a god sees. He sees as a god sees thanks to Moneta's divine perspective. Now his inward eye (seeing things through Moneta) sees through things as agilely as his outward eye. The merging of Moneta as the inward eye and the poet as the outward eye helps him gain an insight beyond his limited perspective. Thus, the union with the mother immortalises the poet who mounts up the immortals steps of Moneta's shrine. Henceforth, the theme regarding the tragedy of the Titans is vast before his enlarged vision. Endowed with a god-like perspective, he now knows he no longer belongs with vultures that are "no birds when eagles are abroad" (Fall I.192), for they chiefly feed on carrion, the abject decaying flesh of the dead animals. Thanks to

Moneta, the poet-narrator is reborn as an eagle, a bird known for its keen sight and powerful soaring flight. The legacy of the mortality of the maternal body is now replaced by Moneta's promise of immortality: "My power, which to me is still a curse, / Shall be to thee a wonder" (I.243-44).

Merging with the maternal Thing not only gives life, but also causes symbolic death. Reuniting with the primordial mother is "as lethal as it is jubilatory" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 19). The poet-persona's reunion with Moneta is also lethal since she is "the archetype of death" (Garrett, 1987, p. 43). He progresses deathwards, moving "backwards to the 'sable charm' – to the potential loss, or stifling, of voice - a return to infancy (in-fans) or speechlessness" (Parker, 1990, p. 117). This fear of regressing to a state of dumb enchantment pervades the poem, as its numerous references to suffocation and choking suggest. The poet-dreamer carves out a territory for himself within Moneta's mind; therefore, he is beset by abjection as he lacks "being particular" (Kristeva, 1987, p. 7). The "voracity of the dual symbiosis" (p. 55) disables the poet-dreamer from being autonomous. Therefore, the poet is threatened by a dissolution of identity. The poet assumes Moneta's identity and encloses himself in her brain, which challenges the tenuous borders of his selfhood. The merging with Moneta is marked by the fear of permeability that results from the dissolution of the boundaries between subject and object. The poet dreads speechlessness as the bower of imagination, embodied by Moneta, becomes a suffocating enclosure. He is worried his utterance will be choked (Fall I.140), for, in Moneta's presence, he has "no words to answer, for my tongue, / Useless, could find about its roofed home / No syllable of a fit majesty" (I.228-30). Moneta's globed brain overwhelms the roofed home of the poet's tongue, so he remains tongue-tied. Her globed brain is contrasted with the roofed home of his tongue in terms of magnitude. In addition, obliterating semantics with acoustics, these two words ("globed" and "roofed") also evoke volubility and roundness besides being phonetic cognates of each other. Keats as a poet of "seductive verbal melds" (Stewart, 2001, p. 141) allows the poetic language to generate meaning through lexical chords. The globed brain of Moneta brings to mind unbounded knowledge beyond a mortal's ken while the roofed home of the tongue refers to the symbolic aspect of signification that works in a limited space delineated by fixed boundaries. The former suggests untamed imagination rendered through the semiotic component, whereas the latter recalls the symbolic aspect of language established by linguistic laws.

The reunion with the maternal Thing is potentially lethal since it threatens to dehumanise the poet. This can happen in two ways. Firstly, the merging with the death-dealing Circe-like maternal Thing causes her captives to lose their human forms. Secondly, merging with Moneta collapses the boundary between self and other, mortal and immortal, and this leads the poet to be dehumanised, in other words, to be immortalised and to see as a god sees. The poet strives to accomplish the latter by rejecting the former. Despite his resolution to transcend the dehumanising carnality and to idealise the disembodied ascension to the temple of sublime poets through the desexualised medium of Moneta, the abject still resurfaces in "the hollow dark" (Fall I.455). As he recounts the Titans's tragedy through the brain of Moneta, the tenuous borders of his identity are threatened by the emergence of "the sable trees, / Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms" (I.446-47). When these serpentine forms (that straggle, grow untidily, spread irregularly) intimidate him and threaten the linearity of the narrative as he recounts the story of the Titans, his "pleasant union of sense" is broken (I.438-45). This unsettles the poet. He is crushed underneath the weight of the gloomy vision of the Titans:

> But my own weak mortality, I bore
> The load of this eternal quietude,
> The unchanging gloom, and the three fixed shapes
> Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon. (Fall I.389-92)

The poet-narrator, overburdened with the despair of the Titans' story, curses himself (I.398-99). His brain cannot handle the influx from Moneta's divine brain. His weak mortality disturbs the poet because he aspires to be immortal. The legacy of the maternal body, which is death, disrupts the poet's ascension. He becomes more haggard and ghostly as pestilence creeps into the dwelling of the poet-narrator.

The initial image of Moneta as the guardian of distinctions is shattered by the image of the poet merging with his muse. Moneta's power is both a wonder and a curse. For a poet submerged in the maternal Thing, the distinction between self and other is obliterated. Barnard (1987) argues, "Moneta's otherness has a weird familiarity" (p. 132). She is, to the poet, an other that is uncannily familiar; he passes through her. Her uterine brain coalesces the poet and the muse, while the poet-dreamer becomes Moneta and "disappears into the creatures of his imagination" (Ward, 1990, p. 18).

The poet comes across Moneta in a dream within a dream, and she recounts the Titans's tragedy "from the antechamber of this dream" (Fall I.465). This antechamber represents the unconscious or the unrepresentable in the poet's psyche. It is the "source of poetic wisdom [that] seems to lie in deep, possibly dangerous crevices of the mind, a terrain to which only the dreamer can gain access" (Garrett, 1987, p. 41). This terrain resists signification; therefore, the poet hesitates to go beyond the confines of the comprehensible symbolic. The poet digs into the unsignifiable, pauses to give a shape to whatever he has gleaned from Moneta's brain and to render it in an intelligible form. He does not dare go beyond as he fears falling into the maternal abyss where the symbolic is entirely exterminated.

The poet-dreamer and Moneta are the dramatis personae of the Keatsian psyche, which splits into a multiplicity of selves. A polymorphous poet-dreamer retreats into a mental temple. In this solipsistic sanctuary of the poet merging with Moneta, the boundary between the outward eye of the poet and the inward eye of the muse is blurred. This collapse of the boundary points to "self-referential poetic making" (Bennett, 1994, p. 157). Similarly, O'Neill (1995) notes, "nurturing by his muse" requires isolation (p. 162). In this self-enclosed realm, the poet and the muse are the same person. Self-referentiality isolates the poet and obliterates the distintion between inside and outside. Embodying the inward eye, Moneta is "visionless" of the external things; therefore, she represents the introspective half of the poet. Since she is inward-looking, her eyes are blank (Fall I.267-69). Many critics argue the poet and Moneta are mirror images and they are not diffentiated by the boundary between self and other (Barnard, 1987; Homans, 1990; Day, 1996; Perry, 1998; Faflak, 2008; Thomas, 2008). Therefore, the poet-dreamer never sees his spectral self clearly for the shadowy self of the solipsistic poet-dreamer is always shrouded in mystery; the outlines of this allegorical mindscape are frustratingly evanescent. In this dream within the dream, where self and other are conflated, Moneta is too familiar to be an other. Therefore, she is engulfed in shadows, too hazy for the poet to see her clearly, too close for the poet to be able to behold her from a distance. She is like an inborn muse of his inner self. Keats changes the name of the goddess of memory from Moneta to Mnemosyne, from Roman to Greek, respectively. Moneta swings back to the relatively more polysyllabic, internally rhyming, self-resonating Mnemosyne (which repeats and encloses the sound of the syllable –ne within the sound ripples of the echoing syllable) and its gentle wave-like patterns of rising and falling as the poet merges with her. She is called Mnemosyne only twice: "the griev'd voice of Mnemosyne" that is different from the menacing voice of Moneta, and Mnemosyne of "the dusk vale," the darkness of which obliterates the distinction between self and other (Fall I.331, 518). Therefore, one may argue that Moneta represents the mentor who urges the asprining poet-dreamer to adhere to the symbolic law, while Mnemosyne embodies the maternal Thing with whom the poet-dreamer is intermingled in the pre-symbolic realm. In otherwords, Mnemosyne is the semioticised Moneta, which resonates with the bivalent nature of the goddess.

Moneta, as the abject mother, dominates the poet-dreamer, and subjects him to pain and self-castigating rituals. This primary fusion does not lead to an opening or an "emptiness" that is "precisely encompassed in linguistics by the bar separating signifier from signified and by the 'arbitrariness' of the sign, or in psychoanalysis by the 'gaping' of the mirror" (Kristeva, 1987, p. 42). The symbolic is constructed in this emptiness; however, the merging of the poet and the maternal muse cancels the linguistic bar between the signifier ad the signified. Therefore, the emptiness is not, for the poet-dreamer, encompassed in the symbolic sign but enwombed by the maternal muse. Separation from the maternal Thing gives the poet-dreamer an opportunity to become a subject of representation. Nonetheless, the vacuity this separation opens up is "the barely covered abyss where our identities, images, and words run the risk of being engulfed" (p. 42). This gaping abyss sucks in the poet-dreamer. His words are inundated, which is why the poem comes to a standstill.

The poet-dreamer oscillates between the two facets of Moneta: Moneta as a mentor who urges the poet to adhere to the symbolic law, and Moneta as the embodiment of the pre-symbolic maternal Thing. However, towards the end of the poem, contained by the "nonobjectal Thing," the poet exhausts any possibility of becoming a subject in the symbolic realm (Kristeva, 1989, p. 48). Submerged in the archaic Thing, the poet is shielded from "the pain of pre-oedipal separation" (p. 49). He capitalises on "the narcissistic object" and broods over it "within the enclosure of an exitless personal vault" or "in the vault where sadness has locked up with the mother" (Kristeva, 1989, pp. 60, 63). He meets Moneta in the "domed monument," and thus her globed brain becomes for the poet his personal vault. Moneta's globed brain that enwombs things is domed. This metaphor suggests the poet-dreamer is housed in Moneta's brain, as the Latin etymology of "dome" refers to domus that means "house." Drawing on this etymological association, we can see Moneta as either dominating or domesticating the poet-dreamer, for both verbs derive from the Latin word domus (Merriam-Webster, 2022). A simultaneously dominating and domesticating Moneta would be congruous with her dual nature: a muse admonishing and comforting the poet at once. As a dominating goddess, she is "the archaic Thing of omnipotent ascendancy" that enwombs the poet-dreamer (Kristeva, 1989, p. 64). As a domesticating goddess, she is guiding and taming the indulged dreamer, reminding him of the distinction between the cultivated land and the wilderness. By extension, she points to the difference between the poet as the maker of a symbolic artifice, mastering "the fine spell of words," and the dreamer as the savage whose imagination submerges in "dumb enchantment" (Fall I.11). The words that are associated such as "enwombed," "globed," "roofed" and "domed" are strangely semanticised. Distant semantic fields are connected, thereby producing new verbal associations that destabilise the signifier. The poet-dreamer evacuates (symbolically fixed) meaning from words and shows a delight in their asemantic, asymbolic echolalias. Moneta also compels the poet not to disown the signifier, not to repudiate splitting, not to deny the divide between self and other, and the distinction between poets embedded in the realm of signs and indulged dreamers. She forces him to acknowledge "a chasm in the very subject" between signifiable subjects and symbolisable objects (Kristeva, 1989, p. 51).

Conclusion

The poet-protagonist in The Fall strives to preserve the distinction between genuine poets and pseudo-poets. His confrontation with Moneta lies at the centre of discussion in this paper. Moneta's dual nature is of crucial importance. In one respect, she is a comforting mentor who helps the aspiring poet to maintain the boundary between genuine poets and savage dreamers. In another respect, she emerges as a death-bearing smothering figure with whom the poet-dreamer merges, because of which the boundaries between subject and object are obliterated.

This paper has demonstrated that the discussion of the abject and abjection revolves around the central character Moneta. Her twofold being has been claimed to represent the poet's dialectical oscillation between the desire for undifferentiated heterogeneity and the urge to draw boundaries. Therefore, Moneta simultaneously embodies the abject and that which expels the abject. Her enigmatic characterisation demonstrates that the pseudo-poet's drive towards heterogeneity and the genuine poet's attempt at differentiation are folded into one figure, that is Moneta. Moneta is a mentor who guides the poet-narrator to preserve distinctions between poets and dreamers and to safeguard boundaries against the abject. Therefore, she is associated with the purifying power of fire. As his mentor, she warns the poet-narrator against the abject condition of rotting into which he will fall should he fail to make the division properly between the savage dreamer imprisoned in dumb amazement and the poet who is able to master the linguistic sign. All these features show her as the one who enables the poet to expel the abject. Besides being an intimidating goddess, a muse and an admonishing mentor, she also emerges as a mother. The son-poet's relationship with the maternal muse is both jubilatory and lethal. On the one hand, it is jubilatory because he quests into Moneta's "globed" brain to recount the tragedy of the Titans which is "enwombed" there (Fall I. 244-5, 276-7). On the other hand, it is lethal since he sees the death-bearing visage of the mother that progresses "deathwards" (Fall I. 260-1). He journeys into the uterine realm where the linguistic sign disintegrates, as a result of which, this paper has asserted, the poet-dreamer tumbles into the pre-linguistic

realm where the divide between the mother and the infant is not established. The poet-narrator quests into Moneta's mind to tell the tragedy of the Titans, yet The Fall remains a fragment, as the poet-narrator is submerged in the maternal Thing. He voyages beyond the fissured sign of the symbolic domain into the semiotic terrain of full words of plenitude that does not recognise the divide between self and other. However, "translatability" of the maternal total word into the symbolic split word becomes impossible so long as "the weight of the primal Thing prevails" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 42).

In conclusion, that which he seeks to expel engulfs the poet-dreamer. The conglomeration of the abject and the symbolic authority that expels the abject in one figure stifles the poet. The symbolic is overwhelmed by the semiotic as the poet-dreamer is submerged in the abject maternal Thing. Because of the blurring of boundaries, The Fall fails to differentiate between poets and dreamers despite the firm resolution to keep them apart. Therefore, the poem oscillates between light and darkness, between the fine spell of words and the primordial womb of night. The poet-narrator undergoes the process of becoming a poet who strives to dissociate himself from the realm of the black charm of dumb enchantment and to associate with the symbolic law. As he vacillates between these poles, his poetic capabilities are tested. He is tried to see whether he is the illiterate savage who does not trace his utterances on "vellum or wild Indian leaf" (Fall I.4-6) or the nascent poet who masters language. He is tested to see whether he relapses into the pre-linguistic realm of dumb enchantment or he commands language and is released from the prison house of undifferentiated heterogeneity. As his relationship with Moneta is a solipsistic encounter with his own shadowy self, a self-trial is taking place in his psyche. Therefore, the trial never ends, for he always oscillates between being a poet and a dreamer. Although the poet-dreamer attempts to move beyond the threat of suffocation, he fails. As poetic utterance comes to a standstill, the poem remains incomplete.

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