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JOHN KEATS AND THE "BEWEGING VAN TACHTIG"

City University of New York

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JOHN KEATS AND THE BEWEGING VAN TACHTIG

by

JOSEPH TIMOTHY STEVENS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1984

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1984

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Preface

Any study of literature must eventually take up the problem of influence. Being one of, if not indeed the most, social of human activities, language itself draws the writer into a web of conventions and associations, of intentional as well as unconscious reminders that the work at hand, no matter how original, depends for its intelligibility upon a verbal context of received sounds and signs, imagery and forms, characters and modes. George Steiner has proposed a useful mathematical analogy:

These manifold transformations and reorderings of relation between an initial verbal event and subsequent reappearances of this event in other verbal or non-verbal forms might best be seen as topological Topology is the branch of mathematics which deals with those relations between points and those fundamental properties of a figure which remain invariant when that figure is bent out of shape (when the triangle is bent into conic or spherical form). (After Babel 425)

Differences are to be expected; the individual needs of various authors and their differing interpretations of whichever source encourage a certain degree of autonomy for even the most derivative of texts. Indeed, the sense that a given work is derivative, that it is, to use the disparaging

cliché, "only a copy" of some other work, that uncomfortable and disagreeable perception of insufficiency and of the work in question being somehow secondhand, is a subtle reminder that divergence is the prevailing tendency in even the most intentionally imitative literary efforts.

Obviously, to study one writer's influence on other writers demands a certain sensitivity to what is borrowed and how it is adapted to meet the needs of the new work or works. It is also important to appreciate to whatever degree possible the background of a writer's appeal. Are there any obvious historical, social, or cultural influences that encouraged the attention? If more than one writer is influenced, is there a pattern to the common development of interest? If those writers are contemporaries, do they influence each other?

The influence of John Keats on the late-nineteenth-century Dutch literary movement, the Beweging van Tachtig or Movement of the Eighties, involved all these factors. Because of the difference in language, there was also a distinguished and much-admired translation of Hyperion to take into account. The Tachtig period began with Willem Kloos's 1882 preface to Jacques Perk's Gedichten, skillfully associating Perk, an exceptionally talented poet who had died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-two, with the Keats eulogized by Shelley in Adonais. Herman Gorter's Mei, the masterpiece of Tachtig poetry that was written under the

influence of Keats's Endymion, appeared at the end of the period in 1889. During these years, two other major poems inspired by Keats's Hyperion appeared, Kloos's Okeanos and Albert Verwey's Persephone. From its opening to its close, the course of the Beweging van Tachtig was intimately intertwined with the phenomenon of Dutch interest in John Keats.

The problems of translation are never more acute than when a novice must tackle literary masterpieces. Since I am no poet, I am extremely aware of the disservice that my translations in this dissertation do to the original texts. I have tried to render the texts as straightforwardly as possible, preserving Dutch word order wherever it complemented what I felt to be the effect in question, but not hesitating to substitute conventional English phrasing when there seemed a danger of obscuring the meaning.

One of the most enduring topoi of dissertation introductions must be the polite expressions of gratitude to the professors who supervised the process, and I must admit that reaching the end of this project validates the traditional humilitas formula, "All the virtues of this work are the results of the advice so thoughtfully provided by my readers, and all of its shortcomings are certainly my own." Professor George Ridenour, the supervisor of this dissertation, has offered so much encouragement and such insightful criticisms of my work from its earliest stage that

any expression of gratitude on my part would be completely inadequate. Professor Ridenour is the most rare of teachers, exacting but sympathetic, critical but appreciative. The opportunity to study under him has given me the greatest satisfaction of my academic career.

Professor Wendell Stacy Johnson, my second reader, has also been instrumental in guiding this study to completion. His careful reading and generous encouragement of my work have been invaluable. Professor Fred Nichols, my third reader, has guided my fledgling efforts here in translation with sensitivity and discretion, saving me from numerous embarrassments, yet allowing me to grope about in order to find my own solutions to the problems of conveying the sense of the Dutch.

Without the unceasing support and sympathetic toleration of Jay Todd, this work would surely have never been completed. Finally, I wish to dedicate this study to Leona Henderson, my grandmother, with love and the deepest gratitude for her encouragement.

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Chapter 1

'Hij screef zijn naam in harten niet in water'

During the 1880's in the Netherlands a number of poets associated with the Beweging van Tachtig or the Movement of the Eighties produced poetic allegories inspired by the English poet John Keats's Hyperion and Endymion. The appeal of those poems, of Keats himself, and indeed of English literature to the highly self-conscious nineteenth-century literary revival that the Tachtig movement embodied should be examined with regard to a historical, political, and cultural context, in which contact with Great Britain was identified both with the emergence of the modern Dutch state and with a reactionary political structure, the reform of which provided the impetus for the growth of Dutch Liberalism. The emergence and eventual political triumph of Liberalism was only one indication of the period's general receptivity to attempts at social and cultural renewal, including the establishment of the century's most prestigious intellectual journal De Gids, the emergence of the Dutch modern art movement known as the Hague School, and finally the literary renaissance of the Beweging van Tachtig. These developments provided the background for Tachtig invocation of John Keats

as a biographical model for the period's idealization of the poet and for the resulting interest in Hyperion and Endymion.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The nineteenth century was a particularly innovative time for the Netherlands, a century in which the emergence of the modern state coincided with the struggle to develop a distinctive national literature and art. This is by no means a novel state of affairs; the influence of nationalism on cultural expression is an accepted commonplace of Romantic criticism. However, this particular coincidence of political evolution and cultural self-definition helps to explain the literary atmosphere in which an orientation toward English literature became a motivating element in the Beweging van Tachtig's effort to rejuvenate Dutch culture.

Anglo-Dutch relations were of great significance during the political convulsions which gripped Europe at the close of the eighteenth century and led directly to the establishment of the modern Dutch nation. As a result of British involvement in the Franco-Austrian war the French declared war on Great Britain and her ally the Dutch United Provinces, and by early January 1795 Stadthouder Willem V fled to exile in Britain. The French permitted the establishment of the revolutionary Batavian Republic which remained under direct French control. Eventually in 1806 Napoleon converted the Republic into the Kingdom of Holland

with his brother Louis Napoleon as king. This proved unsatisfactory, Louis Napoleon was forced to abdicate, and the Kingdom was annexed by France. After the Battle of Leipzig in 1813 the French left, and Willem VI--his father Willem V had died in exile in Britain--returned as Sovereign Prince (Kossman 82-102; Vlekke 274-86; Huggett 40-52).

Concerned with securing a Continental buffer against France, the British helped design a union of the Netherlands and Belgium in a United Kingdom and returned the Dutch colonies it had acquired by the Treaty of Amiens in order to provide for the economic health of the new kingdom (Vlekke 290; Huggett 53). By the time that the Sovereign Prince assumed the title King Willem I in 1815 after the Battle of Waterloo, it was apparent that Britain had been decisive in the establishment of the new Dutch state. The expedient generosity of the British during the post-Napoleonic period must have compensated somewhat for any lingering memories of Anglo-Dutch conflicts during the seventeenth century and the two resulting wars.¹ Combine this evidence of more recent support with the fact that a member of the House of Orange had once sat on the English throne (William III)--using, by the way, his good fortune in England to solidify the position of the House of Orange within the ruling hierarchy of the United Provinces (Prall 166-180)--and a very strong rationale emerged for retention of interest in England at the beginning of the new kingdom.

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any explanation of English influence on nineteenth century Dutch culture cannot be based alone upon gratitude to Britain for aiding the formation of the United Kingdom. By 1840 Belgium had seceded, and British hopes for a substantial middle kingdom that would function as a buffer against potential continental aggression were permanently frustrated. Indeed, the Netherlands moved toward neutrality and away from its formerly close ties with Britain (Vlekke 296-98). It would also be a mistake to believe that there was any substantial gratitude towards Britain resulting from the establishment of the House of Orange as the nation's royal family. Willem I ruled as an autocrat until his embittered abdication in 1840 under popular pressure due to his plans to marry a Catholic and to growing political dissatisfaction with the system of purely royal government (Kossman 180). By the time his son Willem II supported a constitutional revision converting the Netherlands into a parliamentary monarchy in 1848, the last reminder of British involvement in Dutch affairs seemed to disappear as the country settled into neutrality.

However, the constitutional revision was an integral aspect of the growth of Dutch political liberalism, and the period's most influential literary periodical De Gids emerged as an early supporter. E. J. Potgieter (1808-75), who began his public career as a Romantic liberal (Kossman 189),

founded De Gids in 1837. The magazine began overt defense of liberalism after 1839, the same year that J. R. Thorbecke, professor of late modern history at the University of Leiden, future leader of the liberals, prime minister, and author of the 1848 constitutional revision, published his Comment upon the Constitution 'Bijdrage tot de herziening der grondwet.'

A quick summary of Thorbecke's political ideals, drawn from the second edition of his Comment (1841 and 1843 in two volumes; rpt. 1948) and his 1844 lecture "Contemporary Citizenship" (Historische Schetsen 84ff.) offered a composite view of orthodox liberal values: true constitutional government, ministerial responsibility and gradual introduction of universal suffrage. The constitution of 1848 embodied most of these goals though the extension of full suffrage was not achieved until the beginning of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, this governmental revision may justly be called the great liberal achievement, for it has remained the basis of the contemporary Dutch state (Kossman 190-95).

The triumph of liberal values in the mid-1800's evidenced a political appetite for innovation and change. Ironically, as the liberals swept away institutional reminders of Britain's involvement in the foundation of the modern Dutch state, another important liberal spokesman was instrumental in the growth of Dutch interest in English literature during the mid-century. De Gids under Potgieter represented the intellectual response to liberalism.² To

what extent literary criticism in De Gids formulized the magazine's ideological commitment is not at issue here. The point is that there Potgieter articulated his views on English Romanticism. In 1863 Conrad Busken Huet joined the editorial board of De Gids at Potgieter's invitation. After Huet left the magazine in 1865 (accompanied by Potgieter in solidarity) after a political scandal involving a book review offensive to the Queen and an article in the same issue in which he criticized liberalism as a disappointment, the very close friendship (Knuvelde 3:441-43, 475-81) between the two writers continued. Both played substantial roles in directing attention toward English Romanticism and provided the earliest indication of Dutch interest in John Keats. When the Beweging van Tachtig found expression in its own journal De Nieuwe Gids, the title itself reminded the reader of the publishing tradition within which the new generation of writers was positioning itself.

THE CULTURAL CLIMATE

As the country adapted to the loss of Belgium, the new constitution of 1848, and the realization that the Netherlands was destined to be a small country with few continental pretensions, a profound cultural renewal began. De Gids was one of its earliest manifestations. In fiction there was the publication in 1860 of Max Havelaar, one of the great nineteenth-century European novels, by Eduard Douwes

Dekker, better known under the pseudonym Multatuli. However, the art movement known as the Hague School offered perhaps the most suggestive indications of the direction of Dutch culture during the period, since the painters involved enjoyed both international recognition and financial success. This movement, linked through tradition to a genre orientation that was predicated upon that of the Golden Age and masters like Rembrandt, Vermeer, or Albert Cuyp,³ was a reminder of past greatness at the same time that it demonstrated contemporary ability to continue the traditions. This may seem a somewhat reactionary and even culturally introverted response, but the Hague School, along with the parallel movement in Amsterdam, represented the modern art of late-nineteenth century Holland. Its acceptance by the avant garde of the 1880's and its practitioners' strong personal ties with various members of the Beweging van Tachtig confirmed a certain degree of aesthetic affinity between the two groups.

The names of even the major artists of the Hague School are not exactly familiar: Paul Gabriël, Jan Hendrik Weissenbruch, Johannes Bosboom, Jacob, Willem, and Matthijs Maris, Anton Mauve, Jozef Israëls, Hendrik Mesdag, and Willem Roelofs. Yet these artists were widely collected in England, Scotland, Canada, and the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Sillevis in Leeuw 96). The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York acquired a number of Hague School watercolors in 1895 (96). The Frick Collection

contained a large number of paintings until returning most of them to the art dealers, M. Knoedler & Co.; it retains still Anton Mauve's A Dutch Road. In Britain works by the Hague School artists entered a number of important collections "formed by well-to-do barristers, solicitors, accountants and, above all, big industrialists who had made their fortunes in the steel industry or in railway and steamship companies" (Dumas in Leeuw 125), but they remained largely undercollected within the Netherlands. The major collectors, generally speaking, were Scottish by birth and their tastes included works by the Barbizon School as well. The most notable were James Staats Forbes, Alexander Young, Sir John Charles Frederic Sigismund Day, John Forbes White, and John Reid (125-27). Such foreign attention helped consolidate the reputation of the Hague School at home. The Dutch art establishment preferred romantic history paintings done in accordance with the tenets of the French Academy, while British collectors approved of the new art and saw its links with the change in French art of which the Barbizon School was an early sign. The British seemed quite obviously more appreciative of new art than their Dutch counterparts; the foreign viewpoint appeared to offer redress to the striving Dutch artist of the mid-nineteenth century.

The period's conceptualization of the artist's nature suggested that artists and writers could find ample grounds for mutual identification. As early as 1781 the roles of artist and poet were conflated by the painter Cornelis Ploos

van Amstel at the Tekenacademie in Amsterdam in an address entitled "The Nature and Practice of the Poetry of the Art of Painting."⁴ The "poetry" consisted of reverence for and study of the techniques involved in prior masterpieces. In 1856 T. van Westrheene considered the present state of Dutch painting in the art journal Kunstkronijk:

An open eye for the beauty and harmony of nature, a lively sense for the poetic and sublime of which its [nature's] outward appearance is merely a reflection, faithfulness, sensitivity, and truth in the depiction of that outward appearance--these are the things in which it [contemporary Dutch art] excels, in which it still invariably turns out to be pervaded with the spirit and principles of our forefathers.

Een open oog voor de schoonheid en de harmonie der natuur, een levendige zin voor het poëtische en verhevene, waarvan hare uiterlijke verschijning de afspiegeling is, trouw, gemoedelijkheid en waarheid in het teruggeven dier uiterlijke verschijning--ziedaar, waarin zij uitmunt, waarin zij nog altijd blijkt doordrongen te zijn van den geest en de beginselen van het voorgeslacht. (16; cited by Leeuw 51)

The artist was someone exceptionally sensitive to the "poetry" which might be glimpsed in and depicted through nature.

The art critic Jan van Santen Kolff addressed explicitly the notions of poetry and the artist in an 1875 article in De Banier which applied the term "Hague School" for the first time (158 ff.). He equated truth with reality and art with poetry, theorizing that the practice of the Hague School united the two. Just as explicitly, when the artist Anton Mauve died in 1888, he was eulogized as "the greatest poet of gentle melancholy. . . . His constant study of nature had

given him such a mastery of the difficult technique of brush and palette that he wrote the poem that rippled through his heart and mind on the canvas with a swift, feverish nervousity and a precise characterization, even down to the smallest details, no differently than he would have set a thought on paper with a pen in his hand."⁵

Hugh Honour has identified the romantic basis of this sort of claim for an artist: "The true artist, it was felt, is never a poet or painter or musician only but a combination: true art is never pure--music is latent in poetry, poetry in painting and each is felt and experienced in the other" (119). In the course of the nineteenth century, as Honour went on to remark, this led to the Wagnerian conception of a Gesamtkunstwerk; however, the point to be stressed here is that it was possible for the painters of the Hague School to function as models for emulation by writers within the parameters of orthodox romantic aesthetic theory.

The salutary effect of the Hague School's success on the notion that the great traditions of seventeenth-century Dutch art were a still valid source of inspiration has already been noted. The opening of the Mauritshuis collection in The Hague in 1828 provided the young Hague artists with some of the finest examples of indigenous seventeenth-century painting. The completion of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1885 exposed yet more people to the treasures of the Gouden Eeuw or Golden Age when the Republic was one of the

wealthiest and most powerful states in Europe. The realities of the 1880's presented a far different prospect. The loss of Belgium had reduced the Netherlands to a precariously small size and made more or less official neutrality the only hope for survival between the conflicting pressures of the great powers. Art, which had long been one of the acknowledged highpoints of seventeenth-century achievement, might well revive and, indeed, be recognized and appreciated throughout Europe and America. But the prospects for literature--during the Golden Age poets like P. C. Hooft and Constantijn Huygens and the playwright Vondel had been renowned as among the finest in Europe--were by no means encouraging. The literatures of Britain, France, and Germany dominated intellectual life because on the most fundamental level they could appeal to vastly greater numbers of readers. Dutch had become a minor European language.

However, the influence of linguistic isolation need not be overly emphasized. Hans Christian Anderson wrote in Danish without much adverse impact upon his broader dissemination. The successes of Ibsen and Strindberg argued against the inevitable obscurity of writers in proportionally less-spoken European languages. A more important factor is the writer's ability to address issues of universal concern and intelligibility, what Herbert Henkels has described in a discussion of Piet Mondriaan's Hague School roots as "the field of tension" between "the national school and international comprehensibility" (Leeuw 153).⁶ The Hague

School achieved distinction by combining national traditions with international developments stemming from the work of the Barbizon School and continuing through Impressionism and Symbolism. Consequently, it is quite tenable to say that the Tachtig movement could well have been culturally predisposed to respond positively to English literature and particularly to English Romanticism, attention to which was perhaps an inevitable result of the Shelley vogue that developed in Europe during the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁷

It is altogether fair to suggest that England was never far from the minds of the Dutch literary community. The most "imitations" of Shakespeare in the seventeenth century occurred in Holland (Downs 289). There were the well-known ties between John Milton and Vondel; indeed, the balance of nineteenth-century Dutch criticism considered Vondel to have been an influence on Milton (294-95). Today, Constantijn Huygen's translations of John Donne into Dutch are thought, in fact, to have contributed to the emergence in seventeenth-century Holland of a distinctly English form of metaphysical poetry.⁸ Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, The Spectator, and Richardson's Pamela affected profoundly the development of eighteenth-century Dutch prose (Russell, Romance 21-31).⁹ As elsewhere in Europe, Scott's novels and Byron's poetry were extremely popular models for early nineteenth-century Dutch writers (Russell, Romance 33-49 and Dutch Poetry 90-114).¹⁰ These borrowings were all roughly contemporary with the dates of the original English

compositions, and despite the linguistic barrier they were explicable in terms of a more or less mutual Zeitgeist quite in keeping with geographical, social and historical proximity.

INTEREST IN JOHN KEATS

The Beweging van Tachtig's interest in and use of English Romanticism occurred almost half a century after the deaths of Keats and Shelley. The Shelley vogue at the end of the century was certainly an important provocative factor, but Dutch interest in Keats was even more interesting in view of the difficulties his poetry--so quintessentially English, so allusively complex--presented to non-English readers. Indeed, his role in Netherlandic literature appears unique among European literatures of the period. E. J. Potgieter provided the first published references to Keats in an 1858 article in De Gids, "Een blik naar Crabbe" or "A look at Crabbe" (486-514). This was a review occasioned by K. Sybrandi's translation of Crabbe's The Parish Register. After some introductory remarks on the nature of translation, Potgieter suggested that British literature had made a great impact in the Netherlands while Germany's "great" and France's "new" literatures had not, observing,

how inimitably rich Great Britain had become around 1830 in all sorts of masterpieces with regard to invention and feeling; already a first collection provides the best proof of a variety of poets as seldom befalls a single period of literary flowering.

hoe weêrgaloos rijk Groot-Britannië omstreeks achttien honderd dertig aan allerlei meesterstukken op het gebied der vinding en op dat des gevoels was geworden, al volstaat de eerste bloemlezing de beste ten bewijze eener verscheidenheid van dichters, als zelden eenig tijdperk van letterkundigen bloei ten deel viel. (489)

Examples of British literary preeminence provided the substance of the article. These include the domestic novels of Richardson and Fielding as well as the works of Smollet, Hogarth, Goldsmith, Sterne, Thomson, Young, and those of Macpherson and Chatterton, who were identified as the creators of Ossian and Rowley.¹¹

Keats and Barry Cornwall (the pseudonym of Bryan Waller Procter, the Romantic writer and biographer) were anachronisms, imitators of earlier poets in an age of originality. Potgieter lingered over the subject of Keats:

And yet we pass our hand over our eyes, once more glancing up at the poet of St. Agnes Eve; poor Keats! dead so young of consumption in a distant land, in the hour of death the prey of the heartless criticism of the time. Defenceless, you lay stretched out on your bed as the savagery was perpetrated; alas! if only the horror were to take place in any other moment than that in which consciousness ought to grant your soul to a higher judge than one of earth; you rise up--an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The now clever little fellow had sulked himself into another masterpiece. There is not the tiniest particle of truth in asserting that anyone of talent ever died from being written about; a writer can do that only to himself. This is attested by the literary period into which we have just transported ourselves: the pain of criticism is but a prick, not a dagger, for anyone with a spark of genius.

En toch strijken wij de hand over de oogen, nog eenmaal opblikkend naar den dichter van St. Agnes-nacht; arme Keats! zoo jong in den verren vreemde aan de tering gestorven, in de ure des doods

de prooi der gewetenlooze kritiek van dien tijd. Weêrloos laagst gij op uw leger uitgestrekt, toen de wreedheid werd gepleegd; in welken anderen oogenblik de gruwel geschied ware dan, helaas! in dien, waarin de gedachte aan een hooger en regter dan eenigen aardschen uw gemoed vervullen moest, op waart gij gestaan, oog om oog, en tand om tand; en de vaardig geworden veder had zich gewroken in een meesterstuk te meer. Er is geen zweem van waarheid in het beweren, dat ooit iemand van talent dood geschreven werd; doodschrijven doet men slechts zich zelve;--zoo eenig letterkundig tijdperk, dat, waarin wij ons hier verplaatst zien, getuigt het: de hekelpen is maar een prikkel, is geen ponjaard, voor wien een vonkje vernufts ten deel viel. (506-7)

It was not a very propitious first mention. Only one poem was even alluded to, but the parodic dismissal of the poet-as-martyr viewpoint was to the point. Though his remarks were not particularly revealing of the extent of his familiarity with Keats, Potgieter did manage to puncture the sentimentality surrounding his death: Keats died of tuberculosis, not criticism. However, the relative length of what was after all only a brief aside indicated the ease with which the pathos could be exploited. Perhaps Potgieter's approach should also be considered a rebuff of any attempt to "Byronize" Keats. In any case he insists on considering the poet in strictly traditional poetic, rather than tragic or pathetic terms.

The remainder of the essay was interesting really only for the remarks concerning Wordsworth, whom Potgieter saw as a towering figure in the period. Scott and Southey were cited as sound contemporary judges of Wordsworth's greater talent; they had characterized him as "the greatest genius of the new poetry" ('grootste genie der nieuwere poëzij' 509).

His poetry was demanding, perhaps even too severe ever to achieve widespread popularity. A number of speculations closed the essay. From the pantheon of English poetry with its abundance of talent and genius, the translator of the work at hand, Sybrandi, had chosen Crabbe. Why Crabbe, Potgieter mused, and not one of the great poets? At best, Sybrandi's translation might be provocative of further interest in English literature, and Potgieter ended hoping that it would spur someone to work on less peripheral English writers (513-14).

Five years later in 1863, Potgieter commented briefly on Keats in a review of Schoonste Lieder van Robert Burns, translated into Dutch by Frans de Cort (rpt. Studiën 387-403). He found the volume itself a disappointment, very inadequately reproducing the genius of the original and reproved the translator:

There is your motto, as well as that of Keats, as well as that of every true poet! Only the truly beautiful lives and gratifies and edifies in eternity; would you take it ill of us, that we drew your attention to where you fell short of the requirements, where your study didn't go deep enough in order to succeed.

Ziedaar uwe spreuk, zoowel als die van Keats, zoowel als die van elken waren dichter! Slechts het waarachtig schoone leeft en streelt en sticht in eeuwigheid; wat zoudt gij het ons dan euvel duiden, dat wij er u opmerkzaam op maakten, waar ge beneden zijne eischen bleef, waar uwe studie niet diep genoeg ging om te slagen. (403)

There was a direct quotation from Endymion, a "motto" for "true" poets. "True" beauty was eternal, with rewarding

intellectually effects. Keats appeared to have made a substantially more profound impact by this time. In "Een Blik naar Crabbe" he could be dismissed as an "anachronism" and derivative. Now Potgieter presented him as a model of proper respect for beauty, with the very strong implication that he is one of the "true" poets. Though no specific linkage was made, the emphasis on truth, beauty, and eternity was implicitly compatible with major Keatsian themes. Any contemporary reader who knew the context from which the quotation was drawn would have noticed the similarity between the two writer's attitudes, and Potgieter's remarks reflected sensitivity to the substance of that context. Sympathy for Keats was now evident; we may assume that he too had entered the pantheon of great English poets.

It is rather difficult to detect very much about the extent of Potgieter's familiarity with Keats from either of his published comments. There are indications of at least limited awareness of biography, text, and thematic concerns. If Potgieter's own recollections may be trusted, he knew about Keats from 1830-31. In a biography of the liberal historian and early De Gids collaborator R. C. Bakhuizen, he recalled attending a meeting of the English Society in Amsterdam during the winter of 1830-31 at which a part of "St. Agnes Eave [sic]" was recited in English (Leven 212). That almost thirty years passed before Potgieter mentioned Keats in his own criticism is rather interesting. It coincided more or less with the beginning of his

collaboration with Conrad Busken Huet on De Gids, and Huet provided, consecutively speaking, the next treatment of Keats in Dutch criticism.

Conrad Busken Huet began public life as a Protestant minister, one of the sceptical "modernists" dedicated to reconciling theology to the advances in science and biblical scholarship.¹² In 1862 he resigned his ministry in order to pursue a literary career, and in 1863 he became a member of the editorial board of De Gids. Though Potgieter hoped that Huet would rejuvenate the magazine, controversy over two articles in the January 1865 issue provoked the editorial board to demand Huet's resignation. Potgieter left as well in protest of the board's decision.¹³ Huet's political and religious ideas became increasingly sceptical and unorthodox, and he moved to Indonesia in 1868 to become editor of Java-blad, an important liberal newspaper there, later founding his own paper Algemeen Dagblad van Nederlandsch Indië in 1873. He returned to the Netherlands after Potgieter's death in 1876, but decided to settle in Paris.

A lecture series on John Keats's life, works, and the state of contemporary Dutch poetry brought Huet back to the Netherlands in November 1878. He lectured in the Hague, Haarlem, Amsterdam, Leiden, and Dordrecht, writing his wife that he was quite pleased with the public's reaction (Colmjon 132-33; Dekker 88). The popular magazine Nederland reprinted the lecture in the March and April issues of 1879, and Huet reprinted them again in 1880 as part of his multi-volume

Litterarische Fantasien en Kritieken. Entitled "Three Conditions of Artistic Enjoyment" 'Drie Voorwaarden van Kunstgenot' (Litterarische Fantasien 10:125-78), the lecture began with an indirect citation of Keats: "An English poet from the first years of this century has said of the imagination, that it reminds him of Adam's dream which upon awakening appeared reality" ('Een engelsch dichter uit de eerste jaaren dezer eeuw heeft van de verbeelding gezegd, dat zij doet denken aan Adam's droom die bij het ontwaken werkelijkheid bleek" 125). The "beauty-ideal" within the imagination directed attention to virtue and truth. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" from Endymion and "Shed no tear: / The flower will bloom another year" from the so-called "Fairy Song" provided the controlling themes of Huet's discussion. He distinguished between individual expressions of beauty and the concept itself. There was a tendency for all things to be obliterated by "the ravages of the centuries" ('de verwoesting der eeuwen' 126), a destructive process to which books were especially prone. However, the eternity of beauty was in no way compromised, because it reemerged persistently, its specific manifestations embodying yet remaining independent of the concept itself. Rather than discussing the abstraction, Huet chose literature, one of the sources of beauty, as an illustration of his opening generalities.

It was a rather clever introduction. The initial citations from Keats summarized the theoretical

presuppositions of the lecture to follow. Beauty was a worthy goal for art; its eternal character was ideal but might be discerned in practice by recourse to pertinent contemporary expressions. Huet's subsequent procedure relied upon putting into the foreground the literary-historical context in his discussion of contemporary Dutch literature. There were three sections, the first concerning Keats, the second the poet Nicholas Beets, the third discussing the relative lack of European interest in Dutch literature. Keats provided the standard to which first Beets, then Dutch literature in general, might be compared. Huet began by describing a visit to Rome and the Protestant Cemetery when he returned to Europe from Indonesia. The ancient ruins of the city, the somber cemetery, and the poet's grave--left unweeded until 1875--were reminders of the neglect Keats's poetry had suffered in England for almost fifty years; they complemented the pathos of the grave's inscription: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." However, the landscape belied this mood. It reminded Huet of the Elysian Fields. The cemetery was itself "poetic," and the entire notion of death was altogether mitigated by the surrounding presence of the "beautiful Campagna." A look at Keats's poetry produced a similar impression: "The hurt itself is absorbed in his hymn of praise" ('De smart zelve is mede opgenomen in zijn lofzang' 128). That "hymn" was of course inevitably addressed to beauty. Perhaps Huet was also recalling Keats's remark concerning Shakespeare's ability to

make "the disagreeable vanish in the presence of beauty"
(Letters 1:192).

Huet mentioned recent signs of renewed English interest in Keats, "enough in order for his fellow countrymen, in the present-day response in English poetry, to place him very high, yet too little to keep his name on every lip abroad as well" ('genoeg om hem door zijne landgenooten, bij de tegenwoordige reaktie in de engelsche poezië, zeer hoog te doen plaatsen, doch te weinig om ook in het buitenland zijn naam op aller lippen te houden' 127). The result was a popular conception of Keats as another of the Romantic exiles, grouped with Byron and Shelley. Closer attention indicated that any resemblances were superficial. Whereas Byron and Shelley were voluntarily estranged from England, Keats sought refuge from the northern winter. Byron and Shelley wrote their most beautiful works in Italy, Keats nothing. Analysis of their respective works clinched the case for Keats's difference:

All of the poems are rooted in the feeling that they stood with their contemporaries at the entrance of a new century, a new social order. Yet while Byron is the poet par excellence of the human mind and its dissatisfaction, while Shelley appears as apostle of a new world religion, we see everywhere in Keats the aesthetic in the foreground. His new heaven is in the first place a beautiful heaven. His new earth, a beautiful earth. "Beauty endures the longest" is the prevailing tone of his poetry.

Aller dichten wortelde in het gevoel: dat zij met hunne tijdgenooten aan den ingang eener nieuwe eeuw, eener nieuwe maatschappelijke orde stonden. Doch terwijl Byron bij uitnemenheid de dichter is van het menschelijk gemoed en zijne onvoldaanheid; terwijl Shelley als apostel eener nieuwe wereldgodsdienst

optreedt,--zien wij bij Keats overal het esthetische op den voorgrond staan. Zijn nieuwe hemel is in de eerste plaats een schoonere hemel. Zijn nieuwe aarde, eene schoonere aarde. "Schoonheid duurt het langst" is de grondtoon zijner poezie. (128-29)

Huet found that tone in the sonnet "Bright star!," offering it as a characteristic example of "restrained outpouring of passion" ('bedwongen uitstorting van hartstogt' 129).

So far the remarks were impressionistic. Though he mentioned a literary history of the nineteenth century with chapters on the English Romantics (Georg Morris Cohen Brandes' Die Hauptströmungen der Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts) and the recent edition of Keats's letters to Fanny Brawne, Huet sounded very much like Potgieter in "Een Blik naar Crabbe" and "Schoonste Lieder van Robert Burns." His decidedly "arty" description of the Protestant Cemetery revealed a similar sensitivity to biographical pathos, and he rejected it like Potgieter. Quoting "A thing of beauty" and identifying beauty as the central concern of Keats's poetry restated Potgieter's injunction to the translator of Burns. It was almost surprising when Huet proceeded to discuss a number of specific poems and to point out thematic similarities to several poems by other poets. He began by remarking that Keats "loves the sublime" ('bemint het verhevene') of which nature is a reflection (129). Endymion, Otto the Great, Lamia, and Isabella were described briefly, but accurately. Hyperion, however, received extended treatment. Though a fragment, the poem was Keats's greatest work. Its themes are the displacement of one dynasty by

another and the subsequent (conjectured) rebellion against oppression, which Huet interpreted in literary-historical terms:

I point out that these feelings ascribed to the Titans correspond entirely with those, which in the newer poetry (where it substitutes an ancient for a Christian view of life) people are more often represented harboring towards Providence.

Ik doe opmerken dat deze aan de titans toegeschreven gevoelens geheel overeenstemmen met die, welke in de nieuwere dichtkunst (waar zij de antieke levensbeschouwing voor de christelijke in de plaats doet treden) de menschen meermalen voorgesteld zijn, jegens de Voorzienigheid te koesteren. (130)

Huet pointed out similar themes in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister and Prometheus, Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, and Byron's Cain (130-31).

Returning to Hyperion, Huet tackled the allegorical identities of the Titans ("the unformed state of nature" ('den ongevormden natuurstaat') and the new Olympian gods ("civilization, the rise of the realm of beauty and art" 'de beschaving, de opkomst van het rijk der schoonheid en der kunst' 132). A prose summary of the poem with restrained commentary followed (132-35) and ended with a prose translation of Clymene's speech to Saturn before the other Titans (134-35). For Huet this is the poem's high point. Saturn and the Titans represented English poetry before Byron and Shelley, Clymene Keats's own "enchanted and abashed" ('betooverd en beschaamd') muse, who announced the dawning of a new, higher form of poetry:

That notion is confirmed, when what has occurred in the last fifty years of English poetry is taken into account. But Keats himself cannot have meant that Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth were members of a fallen royal house. He only felt very deeply that in the French revolution all sorts of ideas of the eighteenth century had perished irrevocably.

Die opvatting is geregtvaardigd, wanneer men in aanmerking neemt wat er in de laatste vijftig jaren van de engelsche dichtkunst geworden is. Maar Keats zelf kan niet gemeend hebben dat Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, leden waren van een gevallen koningshuis. Hij heeft alleen zeer diep gevoeld dat in de fransche omwenteling allerlei denkbeelden der 18de eeuw onherroepelijk te gronde waren gegaan. (135)

Hyperion was a poem about poetry and literary history for Huet, a poem dedicated to "a new doctrine of beauty" ('eene nieuwe schoonheidsleer' 135). Nevertheless, he distinguished between the poetry and Keats's actual life, using the poet's letters to Fanny Brawne to demonstrate the distance between the ideal and the real.

When he turned to contemporary Dutch poetry in the second section of the lecture, Huet reiterated that there was a gulf between a poet's life and works. This disjunction became an integral part of his evaluation of the poetry of Nicholas Beets (1814-1903), poet and author of Camera Obscura under the pseudonym Hildebrand, whom he saw as a most unpromising figure biographically, but praiseworthy as a writer. Once again, Keats was the standard according to which Huet judged poetry, the representative of "a poetry in which permanent and sublime beauty is first fully appreciated, when it is contemplated entirely in itself" ('eene poëzie wier blijvende en verheven schoonheid eerst ten

volle gewaardeerd wordt, waneer men haar geheel en al op zich zelf beschouwt' 145). Huet's conception was universal, and he suggested quite frankly in the third section of his lecture that an international standard should be applied in evaluating literature. He valued Beets because his poetry transcended its national origin. Dutch literature seemed trapped in the "huiskamer" (165), a word that can be translated as "living room" or "parlor" but that summons up a host of claustrophobic, provincial connotations here. How, Huet argued, can Dutch writers complain about lack of international attention if they continue to write works that cannot appeal to anyone who "is not born in Haarlem or wishes to be buried in Utrecht" ('niet te Haarlem geboren werd of te Utrecht begraven wenscht te worden')? A nineteenth-century Dutch reader cannot find any "adequate food for his spirit" ('voldoend voedsel voor zijn geest') in contemporary Dutch literature, and foreign literature provides precisely that which is missing at home. It isn't, Huet continued, simply a problem of undue attention being given to foreign literature: "The beautiful is something that intrudes so powerfully [upon consciousness], that even the most unpatriotic person would yield to it if he encountered it inside his frontiers in sufficient quantity" ('Het schoone is eene zaak die zich zoo krachtig opdringt, dat zelfs de meest onvaderlandlievende mensch er voor zwichten zou, zoo hij het binnen zijne landpalen in genoegzame hoeveelheid aantrof' 165).

The lecture concluded on a positive note. Compare the

chaos in the Netherlands at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries to the present, Huet urged. It is hardly surprising that the national literature became anemic during a period of political disruption and foreign domination. Less promising circumstances are difficult to imagine for creative output, yet a writer like Beets, a man concerned with universal issues appropriate to great literature, developed during that time. There is certainly hope for the future! The lecture had begun with a thematic orientation predicated upon values that were consciously derived from the works of John Keats. The questions of universal artistic principles and of aesthetic internationalism had been raised. Dutch literature was diagnosed as suffering from the malaise of chauvinistic provincialism, explainable in historical and social terms, but nonetheless lamentable. Keats, we are safe to surmise, was Huet's choice model for future Dutch writers.

KEATS AND THE BEWEGING VAN TACHTIG

Busken Huet's lecture tour began in November 1878; the text appeared five months later in the March and April 1879 issues of Nederland. That very same year Warner Willem van Lennep published privately his translation of Hyperion. It was dedicated to the "Dinsdag vriendenkring," a literary discussion group which met every second Tuesday in the home of the writer J. A. Alberdingk Thijm and which attracted a

number of the young writers who would belong to the Beweging van Tachtig. At this time the promising young poet Jacques Perk received a copy of Van Lennep's translation which he lent to his friend Willem Kloos, who very much later would lend it to Albert Verwey (Colmjon 148). Subsequently, Kloos in his epic fragment Okeanos (in blank verse like Hyperion) and Verwey in Persephone (especially in the section describing the descent into Hades) used Hyperion extensively in fashioning their own poems. A little later Herman Gorter's Mei, the outstanding sustained poem of the period, was inspired by Keats's Endymion (Dekker 198-214).

It would appear that a new generation of writers had fulfilled Busken Huet's hopes. In the second issue of De Nieuwe Gids (December 1885), the original publishing organ of the Beweging van Tachtig, Willem Kloos characterized Huet in his unsigned column "Literaire Kroniek" as "the period itself. For nearly a quarter century he has summoned each new literary phenomenon of his country before his judgement seat and passed sentence without exception of person" ('dat tijdvak zelf. Bijna een vierde eeuw lang heeft hij elk nieuw literair verschijnsel van zijn land voor zijn rechterstoel gedaagd en vonnis gesproken zonder onderscheid des persoons' 316). After his death in May 1886 De Nieuwe Gids reprinted an anonymous eulogy (originally in De Amsterdamer) and the fragment "De Romantiek in Nederland" upon which Huet had been working shortly before he died and in which he insisted that no "Dutch author has written in the last fifty years a Dutch

book, prose or verse, which is regarded by Europe as a welcome addition" ('hollandsch auteur heeft in de laatste vijftig jaren een hollandsch boek geschreven, proza of verzen, hetwelk door Europa als eene aanwinst beschouwd is' June 1886, 167). But Lodewijk van Deyssel--the pseudonym adopted by Karel Alberdingk Thijm, J. A. Alberdingk Thijm's son and another Tachtiger--summed up perhaps best the attitude of the new writers when he evaluated Huet as "really no artist and no great critic, but the only intelligent man of letters in an entire company of stupid people" ('wel geen kunstenaar en geen groot kritikus, maar de eenige verstandige letterkundige in een heel gezelschap domme lieden' "Nieuw Holland" 16).

Potgieter and Huet introduced the Dutch reading public to John Keats in the 1860's and 1870's. The Shelley vogue of the 1870's and 1880's sustained interest in English Romanticism in general.¹⁴ However, a curious biographical coincidence linked Keats with Jacques Perk, a transitional figure at the beginning of the Tachtig movement, but of considerable importance to the history of the movement and of the sonnet in Dutch literature. Perk's early death at twenty-two from tuberculosis and his struggle for recognition provided Willem Kloos with the raw materials for fashioning a poet-martyr for the new literary movement. Kloos published a eulogy to Perk in 1881 in De Nederlandsche Spectator, "In Memoriam Jacques Perk" (rpt. Perk 17-25) and wrote the preface to the 1882 posthumous edition of Perk's poems.

That preface marked the unofficial beginning of the Tachtig movement, and if you can imagine a conflation of Shelley's Adonais, his Defence of Poetry, and Wordsworth's 1800 Preface to Lyrical Ballads, then Kloos's preface can be read as a very clever bit of "instant" literary-historicizing, a very conscious positioning of what would become the Beweging van Tachtig within a highly respectable Romantic context, complete with a programmatic declaration of principles and a poet-victim of unsympathetic criticism.

As in Adonais, the poet dealt with in Kloos's preface was idealized and to a certain extent abstracted; that is, Perk--like Keats--remained unmentioned in propria persona. In Shelley's poem the elegiac format was characteristically quasi-classical. Kloos's essay began with a meditation on early death conceptualized through invocation of an amorphously classical--its source was merely "the ancients"--belief that such death was an indication of divine affection. Shelley urged his reader, "Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears / Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!" (2-3), as well as the "sad Hour" who, further, should teach Time (the other Hours)

. . . thine own sorrow . . .
 . . . till the Future dares
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity! (6-9)

Kloos was unconcerned with enacting grief, however, proposing instead that while humanity honored poets who died young

poetic fame was inherently transitory:

The world always has tears to spare for the fate of death; and poetic fame, even of the greatest souls, follows so closely the undulation of the ocean in its rising and falling, to the degree that heads and hearts inclined and turned, that every spectator, to whom the gift of wonder was not entirely denied, must wonder to himself, what is the purpose of this whirling and changing of opinion and shouldn't literary criticism be considered a subject like religion or metaphysics, about which it is prudent to remain silent when in the company of experts

Nog altijd heeft de wereld tranen over voor het stervenslot; en zoozeer volgt de dichtertelijke roem, zelfs der grootste geesten, de golving der zee, in zijn rijzing en daling, naarmate de hoofden en harten zich neigden en wendden, dat ieder toeschouwer, wien de gave der verwondering niet geheel werd ontzegd, zichzelf moet afvragen, waartoe die warreling en wisseling van begrippen dient, en of niet de literaire kritiek behoort gezet te worden bij de onderwerpen als godsdienst en metaphysika, waarover men onder verstandige lieden liefst het stilzwijgen bewaart. (52)

The concern--perhaps it is more appropriate to say anxiety here--that posterity lacked sufficient memory was addressed in Adonais as well:

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? (181-85)

This led Shelley to a mournful observation of nature's cyclical process. Kloos was concerned explicitly with literary history, and his explanation of the rise and fall of a poet's reputation was also recurrent; "the undulation of the ocean" ('de golving der zee') was an apt metaphor drawn from a repetitive natural phenomenon. Shelley resolved his

fears by asserting Adonais' translation into the unity of Nature (370) and eternity,

The splendours of the firmament of time
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot
 The brightness it may veil. (388-92)

Kloos simply assumed the eternity of poetic fame, focusing instead on the distortions and perversions to which "prying posterity" ('snufflend nageslacht' 52) subjected it, on its "eclipse," to borrow Shelley's expression.

The bulk of the preface dealt with criticism and the nature of poetry.¹⁵ There were provocative references to Bacon, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Leigh Hunt; some were unacknowledged. Kloos quoted Leigh Hunt's "Poetry is imaginative passion" as the best definition of poetry (54). He analyzed Wordsworth's desire to break the confines of traditional poetic diction at the end of the eighteenth century. Kloos also thought that the promise of Shelley's Defence of Poetry had been fulfilled by "what is followed and applied by the best in the wonderful flowering of English literature from Keats and Leigh Hunt to Tennyson, Swinburne, and Rossetti" ('wat in den wondervollen bloei der Engelsche literatuur van Keats en Leigh Hunt, to Tennyson, Swinburne en Rossetti toe, door de besten is gevolgd en toegepast' 55). "Form and content in poetry are one" ('Vorm en inhoud bij poëzie zijn één' 56). Poetry is a "gift of the few for a few" ('gave van weinigen voor weinigen' 56). Finally,

"poetry is no soft-eyed maid . . . but a woman, proud and powerful, whose scorching breath doesn't leaves us alone, who ties us to her glance" ('poëzie is geen zacht-oogige maagd . . . doch eene vrouw, fier en geweldig, wier zengende adem niet van ons laat, die ons bindt aan haar blik' 59). Kloos concluded with an image of a true poet "alone with his soul under the blue infinity" ('eenzaam met zijn ziel onder de blauwe oneindigheid' 60) that resembled, at some distance, the poet at the end of Adonais:

Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.
 (489-95)

There was no specific evidence of Keatsian influence on Perk's poetry. Properly speaking, his death in 1881 excluded him from the Beweging van Tachtig except insofar as he can be said to present an early manifestation of that movement. More to the point was the response that his death occasioned in Kloos's preface with its fusion of English Romantic sources. It was a sophisticated response, couched in very suggestive and evocative terms. An image of the "true" poet was carefully composed, drawn from English examples and articulated with specific references to British literary criticism. Kloos did not need to make an overt comparison between the subject of his preface, the "true" poet, and John Keats. Any reader familiar with the sources upon which Kloos

drew and with the most minimal element of Keats biography (his tragic early death) could make the connection with very little effort. To any new literary movement concerned with self-definition and the question of the poet's position vis-à-vis tradition or literary history, Keats could be appealing indeed. Van Lennep's 1879 translation of Hyperion insured that, at least to those familiar with it, the new writers were aware of Keats's allegorical example. How those writers used Hyperion--and later Endymion--is a fascinating instance of poetic emulation, a complex process involving at the most fundamental level translation, that most traditional mode of both literary tribute and creative inspiration.

Notes

¹See Geyl, Orange and Stuart and Wilson, Profit and Power for further details on Anglo-Dutch rivalry during the seventeenth century.

²De Gids remains one of the leading Dutch journals. For further information about the extent to which Potgieter consciously directed De Gids into overt support for contemporary political liberal ideology, see E. Verkade, "Thorbecke, Potgieter en De Gids."

³The catalogue to the "Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Pointing" exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum (open 18 March 1984) is perhaps the first major study on this subject published in English.

⁴See Redenvoeringen gedaan in de Teken-Academie te Amsterdam, Amsterdam 1785, 249-50; cited in English translation in Leeuw 52 and 74.

⁵Vittore Grubicy de Dragon in the Italian newspaper La Riforma, 15 February 1888; quoted in English translation, that used in this essay, by Sillevius in Leeuw 97. This Italian obituary was reprinted in translation in Dutch newspapers of the time. Grubicy lived in the Hague a number of years and became a friend of a number of the Hague School figures including Mauve who helped Grubicy develop into an artist.

⁶In the twentieth century the Dutch art movement De Stijl, with Mondriaan and Theo van Doesburg as leading theoreticians and practitioners, embraced an "international" aesthetic. The effects on Dutch culture, architecture, and design were, indeed remain, profound. See the catalog to the definitive retrospective show on the movement: Mildred Friedman, ed., De Stijl: 1917-1931 (New York: Abbeville Press, 1982).

⁷See Liptzin, Shelley in Germany and Peyre, Shelley et La France for details of the German and French manifestations of interest. It should also be noted that the London Shelley Society was founded in 1886 and can be seen as another factor in the campaign to awaken interest in Shelley.

⁸Frank Warnke discusses the metaphysical issue in European Metaphysical Poetry 1-86. See also Rosalie Colie's 'Some Thankfulness to Constantine', a fine study of an earlier period of Dutch-English literary contact.

⁹See W. H. Staverman's Robinson Crusoe in Nederland for an interesting extended discussion (in Dutch).

¹⁰Vissink's Scott and His Influence on Dutch Literature and Schults's Het Byronianisme in Nederland are the comprehensive studies.

¹¹Like most admirers on the Continent, the Dutch were largely unconcerned with the deception of Macpherson; indeed, the Romantic poet Willem Bilderdijk was a very successful translator of Ossian. See Russell, Poetry 67-76.

¹²See his wife's article (written under the pseudonym C. Hasselar) for an early discussion of his theological ideas (409-61). Busken Huet's definitive theological work from the period of his ministry is Brieven over den Bijbel (1858). See also Knувelder 3:473-75 and Kossman 294-309.

¹³The articles are a book review of "Een avond aan het hof" (115-31) and "De Tweede Kamer en de Statsbegrooting voor 1865" (42-63). The Queen was personally offended by and issued a protest against the review in which she was fictively depicted, and the other article was considered an attack on liberalism, of which De Gids was a traditional partisan. For the personal ties between Potgieter and Busken Huet and further details of the controversy see De Volledige Briefwissling Potgieter-Busken Huet, J. Berg's "Brieven van Mevr. Anne Busken Huet aan Mejuffrouw Sophie Potgieter," and J. Saks's Busken Huet en Potgieter.

¹⁴Colmjon and Dekker are definitive sources.

¹⁵This is only a suggestive summary with no attempt at comment; see subsequent chapters for further analysis and description. J. C. Brandt Corstius' Het poëtisch programma van Tachtig concentrates upon Kloos's preface, with close attention to both its contemporary literary context and its references to Shelley, Wordsworth, and Leigh Hunt. Brandt Corstius is especially helpful in spotting the areas of reference and borrowing in the essay unacknowledged by Kloos, as well as the specific citations of these English Romantics. He does not discuss Shelley's Adonais. Rather oddly, considering the careful documentation of English influences and the thoughtful establishment of parallels between Tachtiger and English Romantic poetics, this critic attempts to associate the Tachtigers primarily with French Symbolism. His argument here seems based upon mere chronological coincidence instead of specific textual reference, thematic similarities, or even common technical approaches.

Chapter 2

'Diep in de sombre droefheid van een dal'

Warner Willem van Lennep published his translation of John Keats's Hyperion in 1879. He dedicated the privately printed volume to an informal intellectual circle that met at the home of J. A. Alberdingk Thijm:

There is a friendly house at 161 Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal near the Paleisstraat, where the generous host gathers friends of very diverse views every two weeks on Tuesday evenings to read together the works of our great Dutch poets.

Er is een vriendlijk huis op den Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal bij de Paleisstraat, 161, waar de gulle gastheer, om de veertien dagen, Dinsdags avonds, vrienden van zeer uiteenlopende meeningen en opvattingen vereenigt, om de werken van onze groote Hollandsche dichters samen te lezen. (1)

Thijm (1820-1889) was a noted writer, publisher, and the most important cultural leader in the Catholic emancipation movement in the Netherlands. His best known book, Portretten van Joost van den Vondel, examined the life and times of the famous playwright, reflecting Thijm's profound interest in medieval and seventeenth-century Dutch cultural history. His publishing ventures included two periodicals, the popularly oriented Volks-almanak voor Nederlanders, established in 1852, and the more intellectual Dietsche Warande, established

in 1855. In 1876 Thijm was appointed to the chair of Aesthetics and Art History at the Amsterdam Academie van Beeldende Kunsten, where he became identified as an implacable critic of impressionism and the Hague School painters (Leeuw 104). This is rather ironic, because his intellectual circle served as one of the initial "cultural centers" ('culturele centra') for the early Tachtig movement (Colmjon 152-54) and, consequently, an important formative influence on the literary avant garde of the 1880's.¹

The status of Thijm's poetry-reading group meant that Van Lennep's translation, though in limited circulation because of its non-commercial publication, enjoyed the attention and acceptance of one of Amsterdam's intellectual elites. Van Lennep himself was a member of a distinguished literary family. His half-brother Jacob van Lennep (1802-1868) had been a famous Romantic novelist, the most popular of his day, and had popularized the Walter Scott-inspired historical novel in Dutch literature (Meijer 200-2). Warner Willem van Lennep was thirty-one years younger than Jacob (Kloos, "Een 'Nieuwe-Gidser'" 461) and a civil servant. He served as secretary to the School Commission from 1881 to 1895 and as a wethouder or alderman in the Department of Education in Amsterdam. Verwey remembered him as "that nearsighted, old gentleman who sat dozing so agreeably after dinnertime in the Public Reading Room" ('die zacht-ziende oude heer, die na etenstijd op het Leesmuseum zoo genoegelijk te dutten zat' Inleiding 32).

Kloos recalled him, in similarly affectionate terms, as an "imperturbably elegant" ('onverstoortbaar-elegant') gentleman "with placid, fine features" ('met onbewogene fijne gelaatstreken,' "Een 'Nieuwe-Gidser'" 463). There are few other biographical details. The Hyperion translation was reviewed enthusiastically in the Nederlandsche Spectator on 26 March 1880, and Van Lennep published, again privately, another Keats translation, Lamia, in 1900.

VERWEY AND KLOOS ON THE TRANSLATION

According to Albert Verwey in Inleiding tot de nieuwe Nederlandsche dichtkunst (1880-1900), first published in 1905, and to Willem Kloos in "Een 'Nieuwe-Gidser,' die tevens lid was van het vorige geslacht," an article published in 1927, Van Lennep's Hyperion had a profound influence on the Beweging van Tachtig. For Verwey it represented the beginning of the period and of "the joy over beauty" ('de vreugde over de schoonheid' 33) which pervaded the cultural community. Kloos thought Van Lennep "the only person of that old time who, entirely on his own behalf, might have rejoiced in the realization that he had completely pure literary taste" ('den eenigen mensch van dien ouden tijd, die, geheel uit zichzelf, zich mocht verheugen in het besef, dat hij een volkomen zuiveren letterkundigen smaak had' 463). Verwey recalled the translator of Hyperion as part of an overall aesthetic-historical context for the early stage of the

Tachtig movement, as a factor contributing to the movement's "atmosphere of beauty-deification" ('sfeer van schoonheid-vergoddelijking' 45). Kloos considered him a literary precursor:

W. W. van Lennep was, as it were, a Nieuwe Gidser avant la lettre: that is his literary-historical significance, and in addition to the purity and uncommonness of his reproductive achievements, he will remain of essential importance as such, that is, as unconscious forerunner of a whole period in our national letters, through all the following centuries of our literature.

W. W. van Lennep was als het ware te noemen een Nieuwe Gidser avant la lettre: dāt is zijn literair-historische beteekenis en behalve door de zuiverheid en ongemeenheid zijner reproductieve praestaties, zal hij als zoodanig, dus als onbewuste voorlooper eener heele periode onzer nationale letteren van wezenlijk belang blijven door al de volgende eeuwen onzer literatuur. (468)

Despite the differences in approach, Kloos's and Verwey's accounts indicate that Van Lennep's translation was perceived by both writers as an integral part of their early poetic backgrounds.

Though it might not be apparent at first glance, Kloos's approach is only pseudo-historical; literary history is invoked to lend credence to what is, in actuality, a highly idiosyncratic reminiscence.² As the title Inleiding tot de nieuwe Nederlandsche dichtkunst (1880-1900) or Introduction to the new Dutch poetic art suggests, Verwey attempted a more dispassionate, less explicitly personal account. For instance, he explained "de vreugde over de schoonheid," the characteristic aesthetic enthusiasm of which Van Lennep's

Hyperion was an expression, through a brief analysis of that attitude in Jacques Perk's poetry. Perk had attended several meetings of Thijm's Tuesday gatherings, and his "Mathilde" cycle of sonnets was composed in 1879, the same year that the Hyperion translation appeared.

The sonnet "Δελνὴ Θεός" in Perk's "Mathilde" series is the consummate articulation of what Verwey called "de vreugde over de schoonheid." The first tercet provides a sufficient example:

Beauty, oh thee, hallowed be thy name,
Thy will be done; thy kingdom come;
The earth shall worship no other god before thee!

Schoonheid, o gij, wier naam geheiligd zij,
Uw wil geschiede; kóme uw heerschappij;
Naast u aanbidde de aard geen andren god!

In his remarks upon Perk's use of the sonnet form, Verwey extended the concept of beauty articulated in this sonnet to modern Dutch poetry as a whole. From Verwey's perspective, the

striving, not to reason out a life felt as a unity, but to make [it] visible in its successive moments, is the most immediate poetry of which a conscious generation is capable. What it produces is not the song, but the lyric of reflections.

For whoever understands this, it becomes comprehensible that the poetry of our time is not simply poetry, but at the same time the glorification of poetry. The poetry that we feel becomes the object of our glorification as well as the subject of our reflection. Beauty uttered is likewise beauty exalted.

streven, een als eenheid gevoeld leven niet te beredeneeren, maar zichtbaar te maken in zijn opeenvolgende momenten, is de meest onmiddellijke poëzie waartoe een bewust geslacht in staat is. Wat

het voortbrengt is niet het lied, maar de lyriek van de nadenkenden.

Voor wie dit verstaat wordt het begrijpelijk dat de poëzie van onzen tijd niet enkel is, poëzie, maar tegelijk verheerlijking van poëzie. De poëzie die wij voelen, wordt tegelijk als onderwerp van ons nadenken, voorwerp van onze verheerlijking. De schoonheid, geuit, wordt tevens de schoonheid vergoddelijkt. (35)

Perk's "exaltation" of beauty is then traced back to Van Lennep's Hyperion and, through Van Lennep, to English Romanticism. After concluding his discussion of Perk with the poem "Iris," Verwey noted that "by means of Iris I have also recognized Perk's nearness to those English poets that Van Lennep admired" ('heb ik door Iris ook Perk teruggevonden in de nabijheid van die engelsche dichters, die Van Lennep bewonderde' 45).³ Those poets were Shelley and Keats, who like Perk were "idolizers of Beauty, all three such as the gods, out of love, take to themselves prematurely" ('vergoddelijkers van de Schoonheid, alle drie zulken geweest als de goden vroeg te zich nemen omdat ze zoo liefhebben' 45). The latter part of this comment is, of course, an explicit echo of the opening of Willem Kloos's preface to Perk's Gedichten, "Whom the gods love, they take young to themselves" ('Wien de goden liefhebben, nemen zij jong tot zich' Perk 52). Perk's death had occasioned Kloos's pronouncement, the first major Tachtig statement on poetics, and Verwey's echo of it, twenty-three years later, indicates how powerful the imaginative hold of the preface was and what an evocative symbol of the period it had become.

Kloos, too, invoked Perk's memory in his tribute to Van Lennep's Hyperion. He wrote "Een 'Nieuwe-Gidser'" after the reissue of Van Lennep's translation by the Wereldbibliotheek in the late 1920's, thus even later than Verwey's Inleiding. In it Kloos described Perk lending him a copy of the Dutch Hyperion (464-66), but the anecdote is rather macabre, the retrospection focused upon the implicit pathos of receiving an "immortal" poem from a soon-to-die young poet. It is also possible to construe the anecdote as a not so subtle attempt at reinforcing a biographical parallel between Perk and Keats. In any case, Kloos was willing to propose a basically mystical similarity that bound Perk's poetry with Van Lennep's Hyperion:

The Innermost Depth of the whole World-being that is the moving Force of all Nascence lives in the Dutch Hyperion as well as in Jacques Perk's Mathilde.

De Binnenste Diepte van het algeheele Wereld-zijn, die de bewegende Kracht is van het Wordende, leeft zoowel in den hollandschen Hyperion als in de Mathilde van Jacques Perk. (468)

This sort of esoteric approach proposes a pseudo-historical, spiritual ancestry between poetic works, and it contrasts considerably with Verwey's careful linkage of Van Lennep with Tachtig poetry through analysis of specific texts. However, there is a certain similarity of purpose in the two works, for both writers were concerned with reconstructing for their readers the atmosphere surrounding the appearance of Van Lennep's Hyperion. Though Verwey's evocation of the aesthetic and intellectual texture of literary life in the

1870's and 1880's may be predicated on a more text-based approach than is Kloos's, considered viscerally, it is an attempt also to describe the almost ineffable quality recollected from the period:

The atmosphere into which I would like to introduce you has opened to you. An atmosphere of beauty-deification in which Shelley and Keats were admired and the recently dead Perk was loved The same three-part admiration for the English, the Classics, and the Dutch which inspired us youths appears also in the annotations to the translation of *Hyperion*. Without our knowing the interpreter, we read the sympathetic labor, and that helped to hold us firmly in the atmosphere that was so gratifying to us.

De sfeer waartoe ik u wou inleiden is u opengegaan. Een sfeer van schoonheid-vergoddelijking waarin Shelley en Keats bewonderd werden, en de pas gestorven Perk werd liefgehad Diezelfde driedelige bewondering voor Engelschen, Klassieken en Hollanders, die ons jongeren bezielde, blijkt ook uit de aantekeningen op de vertaling van *Hyperion*. Zonder dat wij den vertolker kenden, lazen wij den sympathischen arbeid en die hielp mee om ons een tijdlang vast te houden in de sfeer die ons weldadig was. (Verwey, Inleiding 45-46)

VAN LENNEP'S TRANSLATION

Van Lennep's translation of *Hyperion* covers sixty-four pages, of which thirty-eight comprise the actual text of the poem and the remaining twenty-six include a preface and specific notes. If you take into account the fact that the poem is double-spaced, the introductory and appended material are proportionally twice as long as the translation. This is by no means unexpected in a literary translation, though it is well to remember that Van Lennep's work was not intended

to be an academic or scholarly text. Its dedication to the poetry-loving Thijm circle, most of whom could read English easily according to Van Lennep (61), was the obvious motivation behind the careful annotations. Nevertheless, we should also keep in mind Verwey's emphasis on the value of the notes, not only in terms of their usefulness in recalling the translation's original appeal, but also as reflections of various Tachtig poetic affinities (Inleiding 45-46).⁴

In his succinct preface to the translation, Van Lennep expressed concern with preserving what he perceived to be the poem's original intent, the impression, in his words, that Keats "wants to produce in his readers" ('bij zijne lezers wil voortbrengen' 4), but he was also aware that there was an important distinction between he might bring to a reading of the poem and what might have been Keats's own goals. Describing the mythological subject matter of Hyperion, he referred to Hesiod's Theogony as a primary source of material on Saturn, the Titans, and their displacement by Zeus, yet Van Lennep was careful to warn against granting too much attention to the poem's classical background since Keats was a "not wholly classically-educated young medical man" ('niet geheel klassiek gevormde jonge geneesheer') and since, in any case, the result was "a completely independent treatment of the given material" ('eene volkomene zelfstandige behandeling der gegevene stof' 4). That kind of comment was indicative of Van Lennep's overall effort to deal with Hyperion as much as possible on its own terms.

The annotations themselves are straightforward attempts to provide relevant information. They serve, roughly speaking, four purposes. Some defend purposeful deviations from the English text, perhaps the most obvious and usually the most controversial decisions in translation. Other notes cover metrical considerations, interpretation of the poem's allegory, and various translation difficulties. Given their original function of making the text more accessible, these notes provide a convenient structure for my discussion of Van Lennep's work on Keats's poem.

A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

The very first note concerns name changes in the translation. Van Lennep replaced the names Kronos and Zeus with those of Saturn and Jove because he felt that the equivalents "agree much better in accent as well as the number of syllables with the English" ('komen zoowel in accent als in het tal van lettergrepen veel beter met het Engelsch overeen' 45). Having decided to use Kronos, he also substituted Ops for Rhea, a move probably suggested by Hesiod's identification of Rhea in the Theogony as Kronos' sister-wife. He justified these decisions further by citing Keats's practice of mixing "Greek and Latin names throughout, without allowing himself to be led by anything other than the rhythmic value of the syllables" ('Grieksche en Latijnsche namen dooréén, zonder zich door iets anders dan de

rhythmische waarde der lettergrepen te laten leiden' 45). Furthermore, Van Lennep found the inclusion in the council in Book II of both Titans and Giants, despite the fact that the Giants were of a much later generation, to be indicative of a Keatsian independence from source material, an attitude which he lauded wholeheartedly and wished to emulate. The independence which Van Lennep asserted was, in practice, quite modest. There are indeed 945 lines in the translation that reproduce 884 lines in the original, but this has more to do with the problem of attempting to reproduce to whatever degree possible something resembling the full panoply of the original poem's associations without undue expansion of the text, than it does with a lack of concern with introducing extraneous material into the poem.

What is important at this point is the way in which Van Lennep's stylistic observation leads to a "comparative" illustration of his point. That is, when he sought to explain more precisely what he meant, Van Lennep introduced a late-classical Latin text in order to illustrate poetic conflation. This is not exactly an expected move; in literary translation, depending upon the extent of a reader's awareness or interest, the original text represents a standard against which, it is usually presumed, the translation may be judged. You might say that, according to this point of view, the translation exists in a kind of perpetual apposition to the initial statement in the original text. In fact, just such a presumption is the most obvious

pretext underlying the quotation of relevant portions of the English text for the purpose of explicit comparison with the Dutch versions, as in the notes to lines 73 ff. (50), 220 ff. (51-52), 240-41 (52), and 276 ff. (52-53) in Book 1, lines 116-20 (62), 158 ff. (62-63), and 330 ff. (63) in Book 2, and lines 62 ff. (64) in Book 3.

What I have called Van Lennep's "comparative" method, however, calls attention not to self-evident verbal differences inherent in translated texts, but to more general areas of interest, such as technique and style or characterization and theme, which transcend the specific text at hand. Van Lennep's compared the late-Roman poet Claudian with Keats:

In the following lovely sound-mimicing verses:

"Intonuit, respondit Athos, Haemusque
remugit,
"Ingeminat raucum Rhodope concussa fragorem,"

it is not Jupiter, but Mars, who hurls his thunder bolts against the Constantinople of Arcadius and combines in the imagination of Claudianus, notwithstanding his strong devotion to his national Gods, the representation of the War God Mars with that of the Germanic War and Thunder God Thor. Thus, one will hear in Keats's "Hyperion," throughout its Renaissance-Classicism, many tones which recall the new feeling for nature of our nineteenth century and which were entirely foreign to the poetic paganism of the renaissance.

In de volgende prachtige klank-nabootsende vaerzen . . . is het niet Jupiter, maar Mars, die tegen het Constantinopel van Arcadius zijn donders zwaait en vloeide in de verbeelding van Claudianus, niettegenstaande zijne sterke gehechtheid aan zijne nationale Goden, de voorstelling van den Krijgsgod Mars met die van den Germaanschen Krijgs- en Dondergod Thor te zamen. Zoo zal men in Keats' "Hyperion," door zijn Renaissance-Classicisme heen,

vele tonen hooren, die aan het nieuwe natuurgevoel van onze negentiende eeuw herinneren en aan het poëtisch heidendom van de renaissance nog geheel vreemd waren. (45-46)

This is a considerably more sophisticated strategy, appealing to thematically or technically similar texts, than the simple juxtaposition of original and translated portions of the text at hand. It permitted Van Lennep a much broader field of reference for the substantiation of his conclusions about Hyperion, and he repeated that kind of approach throughout his notes. This says something about the literary tastes of the circle within which Van Lennep circulated his translation and which, it is reasonable to assume, he kept in mind when he composed his notes. It would have been pointless, the height of pendency, or both to have cited writers like Shelley (50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57), Wordsworth (54, 56), Madame de Staël (55), Byron (56), Spenser and Milton (both on 54), unless he could depend upon at least a modicum of familiarity with those writers among the readers for whom his work was initially intended. The general familiarity of the Dutch literary community with English literature, which I discussed in Chapter 1, suggests that was indeed the case.

A METRICAL MODEL

That Van Lennep could rely on such cosmopolitan literary tastes as he addressed the difficulties in Keats's poem and his own translation practices is one of the most peculiar,

but in the end revealing, features of the translation. One of the truisms current in commentary on translation is that only those people who do not need a translation in the first place can judge its quality.⁵ Van Lennep acknowledged that "most recipients" ('de meeste ontvangers') of his Hyperion could "read English easily" ('Engelsch gemakkelijk lezen' 61), yet he felt that his translation would serve a purpose. In part, he hoped simply to increase familiarity with what he had called in his preface "a beautiful and little-known, to us, fragment from that beloved, prematurely dead young Englishman" ('een schoon en bij ons weinig bekend fragment van dien beminnelijken, te vroeg gestorven jongen Engelschman' 1).

More importantly, it seems, Van Lennep considered the translation an opportunity to demonstrate the use of unrhymed, iambic pentameter verse, which he acknowledged had been "very seldom used in Dutch" ('in 't Nederlandsch zeer zelden gebruikt' 5), and he offered his translation of Hyperion as an inspiration to "all young poets . . . who want to make unrhymed iambic pentameter into a vehicle of their own sublime thought" ('alle jonge dichters . . . die den rijmeloozen jambischen vijfvoet tot voertuig willen maken van eigen verheven gedachten' 46). In both the preface and the note on name changes in the translation, Van Lennep had characterized Keats as an innovator--at the same time, of course, that he was justifying his own, further, innovations. Indeed, one of those "jonge dichters," Albert Verwey, would

assert later that Warner Willem van Lennep's discussion of meter in his preface and annotations to Hyperion had had a profound effect on Tachtig poetry. Those "remarks of the Hyperion-translator pierced deeply and found in us a multifarious answer" ('opmerkingen van den Hyperion-vertolker drongen diep door and vonden in onszelf een veelvoudig antwoord,' Inleiding 52), and this impact, Verwey implied quite clearly, was second only to that of Perk's Gedichten (48).

What then in Van Lennep's remarks had made such an impression? In his preface he contrasted English iambic pentameter with the German "tragic" form. He thought that the distinguishing characteristics of the English form were the "repeated inversion of the ictus, indeed also the frequent use of trochees in the middle of the verse" ('het herhaaldelijk omkeeren van den aanslag, ja ook het dikwerf gebruiken van trocheen in het midden van het vaers') by which "the meter increases in variety" ('het metrum aan verscheidenheid wint' 6). Even more significantly, according to Van Lennep, English iambic pentameter was almost completely free of feminine line-endings, which contributed to a greater feeling of "stateliness" ('statigheid' 6) than was possible in either the German or Dutch forms due to the different structures of the languages. Van Lennep noted as well that the English form had been recognized as "the true heroic meter" ('de echte heroïsche maat' 6) since Milton's Paradise Lost.

The notes to the text of the poem are substantial and specific on metrical matters. Indeed, Verwey, who became a professor of Literature at the University of Leiden, admired them sufficiently to quote a substantial section from the note to lines 1-21 of Book 1 in his account of their importance to Tachtig poetry in his Inleiding (48-52; in Van Lennep 46-49). Many other metrical comments are scattered throughout the poem, but this note is perhaps the most interesting because it contains a sensitive analysis of Keats's use of alliteration in the poem as a whole and a detailed treatment of the various metrical effects in the poem's opening twenty-one lines

"Not only by the choice of his images, but also by the similarity of sound and expression of feeling and above all by rare gifts of versification" ('Niet alleen door de keus van zijne beelden, maar ook door de overeenkomst van klank en gevoelsuiting en vooral door zeldzame gaven van versificatie' 46), according to Van Lennep, Keats had demonstrated an impressive command of poetic effects, and he understood alliteration "more than anyone" ('meer dan iemand' 47), and Van Lennep analyzed the alliterative effects in the poem's first line, illustrating what he perceived as the coordination of sound and feeling. In "Deep in the shady sadness of a vale," he noticed that "the ascending heaviness of the English d serves to make the word sadness stand out with previously unheard emphasis" ('dient de klimmende zwaarte der Engelsche d om het woord sadness met vroeger

ongehoorden nadruk te doen uitkomen'), and found it to be a "graceful" ('bevallige') example Keat's ability to evoke "bright sparks in the happy, shadowy tints in the sombre" ('lichtvonken in 't vroolijke, schaduwtinten in 't sombere' 47). Also, the line's vowel sounds enhanced the effect, receding like "a fading footstep, as sound changes with distance, in order to die away finally in a short e" ('een zich verwijderenden stap en wijzigen zich, zooals het geluid zich met den afstand wijzigt, om eindelijk in eene korte e weg te sterven' 47).

Van Lennep's aural sensitivity extended to an appreciation of the placement of accent or stress, the diversity of which he admired especially in Hyperion:

For a change the principle weight is found on the last, then the penultimate arsis, then on the very variable caesura or on the arsis which precedes it; or, very frequently, with change of the verse's ictus, on the first syllable, indeed sometimes even in the fall of the last foot.--Yet the rhythm is never disturbed.

Nu eens vindt men het hoofdgewicht op de laatste, dan op de zeer veranderlijke snede of op de heffing die er aan voorafgaat; of zeer dikwijls, met verandering van den aanslag van het vaers, op de eerste lettergreep, ja soms zelfs in den val van den laatsten voet.--Toch wordt de rhythmus nimmer verstoord. (48)

A reprint of the first twenty-one lines of Hyperion, with a little additional commentary and various orthographic emphases, follows to demonstrate Van Lennep's observations (48-49). Of course, it is not unreasonable to hope that a translator of a good poem will have a finely attuned ear for

metrical effects in the original, and Van Lennep was clearly interested in overtly demonstrating that he, at least, was aware of the challenge. That sort of attitude must have been another factor contributing to the esteem in which the translation was held by the Tachtig poets. They might well have concurred with Flanor, the reviewer of Van Lennep's work in De Nederlandsche Spectator, that one of the chief benefits of a really good poetic translation was its enriching effect on native "metrical construction and poetic language" ('versbouw en dichtaal' 106).⁶

INTERPRETING THE ALLEGORY

Nowhere in the commentary to the translation is what I have called Van Lennep's "comparativism" more apparent than in his remarks on the allegory in Hyperion. In the opening note to Book 2, he asserted that "everyone who has read the 'Lamia' and the 'Endymion' of the poet" ('ieder die de "Lamia" and the "Endymion" van den dichter gelezen heeft' 56) could perceive that Hyperion was another allegorical effort. However, he rejected the contention that the poem concerned the replacement of one poetic generation by another:

The intention of "Hyperion" does not seem to me to be to set the poetry of the preceding period against the newer poetry, which had found already in Wordsworth, Byron, and the young Shelley such diverse and beautiful expressions. No more would I want to see, as Mr. Huet assumes for a moment in his informative lecture, the eighteenth century in the Titans and the nineteenth century in the new rulers of Olympus.

De bedoeling van den "Hyperion" schijnt mij niet te zijn de poëzie van de voorafgaande periode tegenover die nieuwere poëzie te stellen, die reeds in Wordsworth, Byron en den jongen Shelley zoo verscheidene en zoo schoone uitingen had gevonden. Evenmin zou ik, gelijk de heer Huet, in zijne leerzame verhandeling, een oogenblik aanneemt, in de Titanen de 18de eeuw en in de nieuwe beheerschers van den Olympus de 19de willen zien. (56)

As you may remember, in "Drie Voorwaarden van Kunstgenot" Busken Huet had construed Saturn and the Titans to represent English poetry before Byron and Shelley, but

Keats himself cannot have meant that Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth were members of a fallen royal house. He only felt very deeply that all sorts of ideas of the eighteenth century had perished irrevocably in the French revolution.

Keats zelf kan niet gemeend hebben dat Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, leden waren van een gevallen koningshuis. Hij heeft alleen zeer diep gevoeld dat in de fransche omwenteling allerlei denkbeelden der 18de eeuw onherroepelijk te gronde waren gegaan. (135)

On the contrary, Van Lennep objected, nothing in Hyperion, "considered from the standpoint of 1820, can have resembled the period before the revolution" ('beschouwd van het standpunt van 1820, overeenkomst kan gehad hebben met de periode vóór de revolutie' 57).

For his part, Huet had thought Hyperion a straightforward, relatively unambiguous allegory of the birth, so to speak, of Romanticism. Though it could also be placed within the context of other Romantic narratives that dealt with rebellion against oppression, it was basically an "idea" poem with a historical orientation, describing a

period of change in literature.⁷ Van Lennep, however, interpreted Hyperion as an allegorical representation of an internal struggle for poetic self-definition which revealed an evolution in Keats's attitudes toward nature and the poetic imagination, whereas Busken Huet had viewed the poem as a sort of allegorical literary history (see "Drie Voorwaarden," Litterarische Fantasien 10:132-35).

Considering that Van Lennep had already proposed, in one of the first annotations, his translation as a model for young poets, this subsequent commentary might have had considerable appeal to those writers, who, it is reasonable to assume, would have been especially receptive to another young poet's account of the struggle to develop an individual, poetic "voice."

Van Lennep's interpretation is carefully argued and quite subtle. He contrasted Shelley's Saturn in Prometheus Unbound, which he considered an obvious allegorical depiction of the revolutionary struggle against eighteenth-century tyranny, with Keats's treatment of Saturn in Hyperion. Shelley had written:

Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has wither'd them
And semivital worms; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire and the majesty of love."
(Van Lennep's text)

But Keats had not indicated that his Saturn in Hyperion had hindered "the development of human thought" ('de ontwikkeling van het menselijk denken' 57). Indeed, Keats had described "men under his [Saturn's] rule who know how to explain with 'labouring thought' the signs of the Heavens and to depict them on colossal monuments" ('mensen onder zijne regeering, die met "labouring thought" de teekens van den Hemel weten te verklaren en op kolossale gedenkteekenen af te beelden' 57). Van Lennep suggested that Keats described the forgetting by later generations of those records,

Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart, their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled. (1:281-283)

Since the Titans' wisdom was "very imperfect" ('zeer gebrekkige') and represented the "old religion of nature" ('ouden natuurgodsdienst' 57), pantheism, Van Lennep saw Keats's Titans as reconstructions of primeval anthropomorphic, poetic conceptualizations of "the Divine in Nature" ('het Allevan der Natuur' 57). They were also important elements within Keats's allegorical self-examination of his own Romantic pantheism.

Van Lennep did not mean that Keats's pantheism was a modern expression of ancient nature worship, but that it was a thoroughly Romantic identification of nature as the true source of poetic inspiration. According to his reading of the allegory, Keats's self-examination is an integral part of the poem's description of the poet's personal aesthetic

development. In Van Lennep's words, "Keats begins rather in the period of 'Hyperion' to stand above his earlier poetic art" ('Keats begint echter in het tijdperk van den "Hyperion" boven zijne vroegere dichtkunst te staan'), at which time "he becomes open to higher ideals or, from a poetic pantheistic standpoint, revelation of the Divine" ('hij wordt ontvankelijk voor hogere idealen of, op dichterlijk pantheïstisch standpunt, openbaringen van het Goddelijke' 58). Earlier in his poetic career, Keats had found "the creation outside man . . . virtually the only source of poetic art" ('de schepping buiten den mensch . . . bijna de eenige bron van dichtkunst' 58). By the time of Hyperion, Keats understood that nature alone "does not preach true worldly wisdom" ('de ware levenswijsheid niet predikt' 58) and that any truth imparted by nature might be more sombre than joyous, more disabling than invigorating:

In the broad murmur of the waves a deep wisdom does indeed lie; it proclaims, like trees in their changing shapes to our poet Hooft, that "life opens on a death and that time always sails before wind and flood without ever pitching anchor." Through the beauty of her stateliness, the sea teaches to a Keats above all:

"that first in beauty should be first in power"

but she does not go further than this declaration. Her last word is a sad fatalism leading to inaction, on which true poetry cannot live.

In het breed gemurmel der baren ligt nog wel een diepe wijsheid; het verkondigt, zooals de boomen in hun veranderlijke gedaante aan onzen dichter Hooft, dat "het leven op een sterven uitkomt en dat de tijd altijd voor wind en voor stroom zeilt, zonder ooit anker te werpen." Door de schoonheid van haar statigheid leert de zee aan een Keats bovendien . . .

maar verder dan tot deze verklaringen brengt ze het niet. Haar laatste woord is een droevig, tot werkeloosheid leidend fatalisme, waarvan de ware poëzie niet leven kan. (58-59)

Clymene, whom Van Lennep identified as the "voice of nature in its softly melancholic tones" ('stem der natuur in hare zacht-melankolieke tonen' 60), was the "too frail" ('te zwak' 59) Muse of a poetry that "is actually nothing more than the blowing of the seawind in a shell" ('is eigenlijk niet meer dan het blazen van den zeewind in eene schelp' 60).

Following Van Lennep's interpretation a bit further, the Apollo of Book 3 represented "a higher inspiration" ('een hogere inspiratie' 60). Van Lennep viewed his apotheosis as an acknowledgement by Keats that poetic inspiration could be internal, emanating from the poet's human intellect:

The contemplation of nature . . . is the beginning of poetry and of Mythology; only contemplation and, above all, penetration of man gives true consecration to poetry and the concept of Divinity.

Natuuraanschouwing . . . is het begin van de poëzie en van de Godenleer; beschouwing en vooral doorgronding van den mensch alleen geeft aan poëzie en Goden-opvatting de ware wijding. (60)⁸

Accordingly, Apollo becomes a god only after "he has gained immense knowledge of what goes on in the conscious, thinking nature" ('hij onmetelijke kennis heeft gekregen van hetgeen omgaat in de bewuste denkende natuur" 60). A play on the word "nature," here reflecting its sense as "personality" after having been used repeatedly in its other senses as either "the external world" or "the processes of the physical

universe," parallels quite nicely Apollo's revelation, the connotative "expansion" of the word suggesting Apollo's new, higher state of consciousness.

One of the virtues of Van Lennep's approach to the allegory in Hyperion was that it also provided a solution to the puzzle involving Keats's decision not to complete the poem. Though he conceded that a negative review of Endymion by the Quarterly Magazine could possibly have contributed to a "temporary suspension" ('tijdelijke staking' 61) of work on Hyperion, Van Lennep insisted that the reasons for the poem's abandonment had more to do with its theme than with extraneous biographical considerations. He pointed out that Keats had written in a famous letter that he had "given up Hyperion, there were too many Miltonic inversions in it" and also that "Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or rather, artist's humour." Since it seemed obvious that syntactic inversions would have been simple to eliminate, Van Lennep focused on the remark concerning an "artist's humour. It was obvious that Keats was describing himself, "that Keats felt himself not yet ready for his chosen task" ('dat Keats zich nog niet voor zijne gekozene taak rijp voelde' 61):

Keats's merit is to have perceived that moment. I mean, however, that in the first two books he has managed to evoke for us, as much as our poetic disposition is able to bear this, the beautiful side of the old nature religion, with as well that spark of faith on his part in the comparative truth of that religion, which appears to have to be present in the poet if he chooses such a subject.

De verdienste van Keats is dat oogenblik gemerkt te hebben. Ik meen echter dat in de twee eerste zangen,

zooveel als onze poëtische stemming dit dragen kan, hij geslaagd is ons de schoone zijde van de oude natuurgodsdiensten voor den geest te brengen, ook met dat sprankje geloof, van zijn kant, aan de betrekkelijke waarheid van die godsdiensten, dat bij den dichter aanwezig schijnt te moeten zien, indien hij eene dergelijke stof kiest. (60-61)

By proposing "the development of a . . . not yet completed internal struggle between two poetic directions" ('de ontwikkeling van een . . . nog niet voltooiden inwendigen strijd tusschen twee dichterlijke richtingen' 60) as the proper interpretation of the poem's allegory, Van Lennep was able to rely on textual analysis to explain why Hyperion, despite its many felicities, remained a fragment. He hailed the poem as "one of the most original products of English poetry" ('een van de origineelste voortbrengselen van de Engelsche poëzie' 5), but, at the same time, he suspected that the reasons for the poem's suspension, including doubts concerning his own poetic maturity, had developed out of its original motivation, the desire to depict allegorically a step, not yet fully resolved, in personal, aesthetic development.⁹

A LITERARY TRANSLATION

Samuel Johnson remarked once in The Idler that the ideal translator is someone "who can give a representation at once faithful and pleasing, who can convey the same thoughts with the same graces, and who when he translates changes nothing but the language" (217). He saw translation in terms of

straightforward substitution; it was all a question of finding the right word and exercising the proper taste. Writing about Van Lennep's translation of Hyperion, Willem Kloos was perhaps even more exacting, but still in basic agreement with Johnson:

I have respected him [Van Lennep] my whole life . . . because he was able to feel very precisely and spontaneously that, as for all who have known the ancient classics and integrated them into their own art, the pure artistic expression is the most indispensable element for all literary Art, and, thus, that the Translator of a fundamentally first-rank poem, like Keats's Hyperion, will also have to hold himself strictly to the minute delicacies of the beauties of the words, such as those which arose in the original poet, making his creation into what it truly is: an immortal poem.

Ik heb hem mijn heele leven beschouwd . . . omdat hij haarfijn-precies en spontaan had weten te voelen, dat de vlekkeloos-artistieke uitdrukkingwijze, zooals, vóór allen, de klassieke antieken die gekend hebben en in hun Kunst tot daad gemaakt, het onmisbaarste element is voor alle letterkundige Kunst, en dat dus óók de Vertaler van een wezenlijk eersterangsch gedicht, als Keats' Hyperion, zich in zijn weergave ervan, strikt zal hebben te houden, ook aan de kleinste fijnheden van de schoonheden des woords, zooals deze, in den oorspronkelijken dichter zelf naar boven gekomen, zijn schepping hebben weten te maken, tot wat zij waarlijk is: een onsterfelijk poem. ("Een Nieuwe-Gidser" 463)

In both of these cases there is an insistence on re-creation and a close correspondence between the spirit of the original and that of the translation. As his approving reference in the same Idler article to Dryden's practice indicated (217), Dr. Johnson did not believe that a satisfactory result could be achieved through simple literalness in translation; some changes seemed inevitable. As Kloos's references to

spontaneity and "pure artistic expression" indicated, whatever the way, how a really fine literary translation was achieved seemed to be itself an art.

Kloos's esteem, as well as Albert Verwey's, for Van Lennep's Hyperion, has never resulted in much subsequent critical interest in the translation itself. The usual response has been a perfunctory acknowledgement of its appearance, with no attempt to account for the importance attached to it by Tachtig writers like Kloos and Verwey. The translation is treated as a curiosity of the late pre-Tachtig period, as an indication of general interest in English Romanticism. For instance, though offering by far the most extensive treatment (90-100), Dekker's discussion of Van Lennep's Hyperion as an independent work is basically cursory and impressionistic. Even more brief (148), Colmjon's discussion is notable chiefly for its gently critical characterization of the work as somewhat old-fashioned, though its provocative value is conceded. In Meijer and Knuvelder there are only brief acknowledgements of the translation's appearance in 1879.¹⁰

How to engage the issue usefully is, of course, the problem. Protracted comparison of the translation with the original is more problematic than useful, for maintaining the necessary distance in order to discuss the translation without resorting to value judgements concerning its relationship vis-à-vis the original imposes a constant tension between the personal taste of the critic and the

basically ineffable linguistic motivations that governed the translator's choices in the first place. Were it only a question of ascertaining "correctness," qualitative judgements might suffice. However, as Kenneth Rexroth has pointed out, competent literary translation is "an act of sympathy" in which the "ideal translator, as we all know well, is not engaged in matching the words of a text with the words of his own language. He is hardly even a proxy, but rather an all out advocate. His job is one of the most extreme examples of special pleading" (in Arrowsmith 22).

Van Lennep's competence in translation is not in question. The audience for which he expressly wrote could "read English easily" ('Engelsch gemakkelijk lezen' 61), as one of his notes to the text acknowledged, hence the number of notes in which translation problems are discussed. In the note to lines 40-41 in Book 1, the concern was simple mistranslation (49-50); later in the same book at lines 355-56, the question of Dutch poetic precedent for the translation of "an evident God" (55) was raised. Van Lennep was only too aware that specific aspects of his performance contained points on which men of good will and equal linguistic competence might well disagree.

Van Lennep was also aware that some problems in translation were insurmountable simply because Dutch and English were different languages. This phenomenon bears directly on the relevance of focusing exclusively on a translator's apparent command of a given language. To borrow

Werner Winter's formulation, "it is not entirely a matter of competence of the craftsman that decides the outcome . . . the great commanding structures of the languages of the original and the replica set the limit of what can be done" (in Arrowsmith 81-82). Van Lennep was trying to come to terms with this sort of inherent limitation on the translator when he explained his version of lines 64-72 in Book 2:

Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,
 Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,
 Shadow'd Enceladus, once tame and mild,
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads
 Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
 He meditated, plotted, even now
 Was hurling mountains in that second war,
 Not long delay'd, that scared the younger Gods
 To hide themselves in form of beast and bird. (61)¹¹

Since Van Lennep felt that he could not preserve the word "ox" and, at the same time, achieve the "majesty" of Keat's lines, he decided to render the passage freely (lines 73-85 in his translation). He expanded the "grazing ox" simile in Keats to

Once good-natured, as a square-built steer,
 That undisturbed in high pastures treads
 And the farm child knows and lets quietly his head
 Be patted by the soft little hand.

Eens goedig, als een breedgebouwde stier,
 Die ongemoeid in hooge weiden treedt
 En 't kind der hoeve kent en stil zijn kop
 Laat streelen van het zachte handje. (76-79)

The alliteration of "beast" and "bird" was impossible in Dutch, so he described instead the revenge imagined by the enraged Enceladus:

Full of tiger-passion and lion-sense,
 He plotted his revenge, the new battle
 of Pelion on Ossa,--of Olympus
 Surrounded, emperiled, stormed, nearly lost,
 That day, when away from the rock his fist
 Scattered--the retinue of Zeus--on swallow-wing.

Vol tijgerdrift en hoogen leeuwenzin,
 Beraamde hij zijn wraak, dien nieuwen strijd
 Van Pelion op Ossa,--van Olymp
 Omzet, benard, bestormd, bijkans verheerd,
 Dien dag, toen vóór de rotsen uit zijn vuist
 Op zwaluwwiek--de stoet van Zeus--verstooft.--
 (80-85)

The metamorphosis of the other Titans has disappeared; it is replaced by a fuller description of Enceladus' psychological state. Van Lennep lost the Miltonic echo of Keats's "hurling mountains," but his sonorous inversions and progressively more paratactic lines allowed him to preserve the Keatsian sound of the passage even while he replaced the original imagery.

Resorting to a more free style of translation can be most effective if done with tact and with insight into the sense of the original text. Robert M. Adams has likened its effect to a stimulating discussion:

Translation, by making us question our texts, not where habit invites, but where linguistic and literary problems make them difficult to render, gives us a chance to find virgin or at least relatively uncrowded waters. It is like a literary conversation with a fresh reader, whose point of view is just odd enough to deepen a running dialogue now and then toward the possibility of fresh vision.
 (181)

On the other hand, the result is necessarily alteration of the original. This would be true of even the most literal

translation, but evidence of that change is nowhere so obvious as in poetry. As George Steiner has observed, a "poem is language in the most intense mode of expressive integrity, language under such close pressure of singular need, of particularized energy, that no other poem even if it differs only in one phrase, perhaps one word, can do the same job" (Poem 21). When subjected to the transformation of translation, the original poem's meaning may become profoundly dislocated. That is because, to adopt James Holmes's linguistic explanation, the "root problem of all translation is the fact that the semantic field of a word, the entire complex network of meanings it signifies, never matches exactly the semantic field of any one word in any other language" ("Poem and Metapoem" 101).

This admittedly theoretical concern with the limits of the possible in translation can help to explain why a translator like Van Lennep, who was self-confident enough to propose his Hyperion as a model for younger poets, was also willing to exploit a kind of modesty topos in a note explaining the reasons behind his rendering of Hyperion's premature attempt to initiate the dawn in Book I. Quite uncharacteristically, Van Lennep opened the note with an apology for what he called "my shortcomings in this passage" ('mijne tekortkomingen in dezen passus' 52). The passage in question includes lines 283-89:

Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach,

And now from forth the gloom their plumes immense
 Rose one by one till all outspreaded were,
 But still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command. (53)

Van Lennep translated them,

On two wings floated
 The wonderous fireball, silvery wings,
 Ever aloft at the arrival of the God.
 And, shining, in the soft a-dawning East,
 Immense, one by one, arose plume by plume,
 And wider waxed the nimbus; but still held
 The sphere its all-blinding light enshrouded,
 And stayed at the high behest of Hyperion.

Op twee wieken dreef
 De wondre vuurbol, vleuglen zilverhel,
 Immer omhoog bij de aankomst van den God.
 En, blinkend, in het zacht òpscheemrend Oost,
 Onmeetlijk, één voor één, rees pluim bij pluim,
 En wijder wies de nimbus; maar nog hield
 De spheer haar alverblindend licht omhuld,
 En toefde op 't hoog bevel van Hyperion. (296-303)

Generally speaking, Van Lennep literalized much of the imagery, especially in the first three lines. There are, however, a number of lovely effects in the passage. "The soft a-dawning east" ('het zacht òpscheemrend Oost' 299) is a clever substitute for describing the emergence of the "plumes" from "forth the gloom" (286). Though my translation of "òpscheemrend" as "a-dawning" stresses the initiatory aspect of the word by a forced construction with a prefixed "a," Van Lennep's word carries also senses of movement and direction in Dutch, as in the upward movement of a celestial body away from the horizon line. The introduction of a "nimbus" is another striking choice, describing as it does a pre-dawn situation in which the source of light must appear,

yet without disclosing its full luminance.

Van Lennep lamented the changes he had imposed on Keats's lines, feeling that they disrupted an exceptional section of the poem, Hyperion's untimely attempt to raise the dawn. In order to reinforce his point, he described very specifically the sound effects of the original, concentrating here on lines 286-87:

Now in both the poet and you, the image of the first white dawn has been aroused. It discharges itself in its fullness within two peerless lines, in a dazzling weave of alliterating poetry, in which f's and w's present to view as much as is possible only with sound, the wind-speed and lightness, assonating vowels and above all full oo-sounds, the beauty, m's and n's, through melodious vibration, the harmony, heavy, elastic syllables, the high majesty of the great phenomenon.

Nu is bij den dichter en bij U ook het beeld van den eersten witten dageraad geheel opgewekt. Het stort zich dan in zijn volheid uit over twee weergalooze regels, in een schitterend weefsel van allitereerende poezie, warin f's en w's, de windsnelheid en lichtheid, assoneerende vocalen en vooral volle oe-klanken, de schoonheid, m's en n's, door welluidende trilling, de harmonie, zware veerkrachtige syllaben, de hooge majesteit van het grootsche verschijnsel te aanschouwen geven, zooveel als dit met klanken slechts mogelijk is. (53)

Transferring the sound effects possible in the poetry of one language into that of another language is tremendously difficult. Though often phonetically possible, to do so involves considerable sacrifices in ease of reading, as well as increasing the difficulty of achieving overall equivalence of meaning between the original and the translation.¹² Van Lennep's willingness to call attention to what is, after all, one of the most intractable problems in the translation of

poetry indicated a commendable degree of commitment to the integrity of the Keatsian text. Not at all hesitant to parade what he perceived to be the merits of his work, Van Lennep was also sensitive to its inherent status as a copy, a fine one perhaps, but a replica nonetheless.

That was an honorable admission of the restrictions inherent in translation and a recognition of what O. F. Babler has called the "peculiar" position of anyone engaging in the activity:

The translator is a peculiar type of writer whose mental labour consists of seeking words which another writer has already found, formulating ideas which another has already formulated, promoting knowledge which another scholar has already promoted, and shaping verse which another poet has already shaped. He has to reconstruct with as little loss as possible the original literary work of art, its sense and its sound, its form and its style, in a new idiom, in order to carry over into a new language something already existing in the original language, the conditio sine qua non being faithfulness. (in Holmes, Nature 194)

Warner Willem van Lennep fulfilled commendably his responsibilities as a translator in his work on Keats's Hyperion. He strove to recreate the beauties of the original with an eye on enriching his native poetic tradition, yet at the same time he would never let his readers lose sight of the original. He defended his choices and decisions in the translation, but he was also willing to admit that certain costs were involved. He brought Keats to the immediate attention of a new literary generation and, through his modern translation, freed the English poet from the confines

of literary history. In translation Keats's Hyperion was once again a new poem, but this time it was an expression of contemporary Dutch, not English, literature.

Notes

¹Thijm's son Karel, better known under his pseudonym Lodewijk van Deyssel, was one of the most iconoclastic Tachtig writers. In addition, De Nieuwe Gids became one of the Hague School's most fervent supporters. See the articles by Staphorst, Verberchem, W. J. v. Westervoort, Stemming, Eeden, and Verwey, "Haagsche Teekenmaatschappij." The Stemming article is a particularly interesting, polemical attack on the elder Thijm.

²Kloos was characteristically idiosyncratic when reminiscing. Both Colmjon and Dekker treat his lapses in accuracy as purposeful revisionism. I prefer to view them as lapses in objectivity rather than veracity, as judgements which implied the superiority of his own, personal view of literary history to those of others.

³Perk's "Iris" is deeply indebted to Shelley's "The Cloud." See Stutterheim's discussion of Perk's specific debts to Shelley's; Meeuwesse and Westenbroek provide more recent reactions.

⁴Consider also his remark in the Inleiding: "Even now I can still not read that annotation [the first on Book 1], without being back at home again in the atmosphere in which the poetry of the Amsterdam youths tarried so long" ('Nu nog kan ik die aantekening niet lezen of ik ben weer thuis in de sfeer waar de poëzie van de amsterdamse jongeren een tijdlang vertoefd heeft' 32).

⁵Lefevere 7; Bovie in Arrowsmith 39. Though Adams doesn't raise the issue in these terms, his contention that knowledge of a given text's translations can enrich the understanding of the original proceeds from a similar assumption (179-81).

⁶Flanor was the pseudonym used by Carel Vosmaer (1826-88) when he wrote in the Spectator. The significance of this review is heightened by the fact that a pre-Tachtig literary group, which included Kloos, Verwey, Van Deyssel, and a large number of other Tachtig writers, adopted the name "Flanor" in tribute to Vosmaer's openness to new literature. See Colmjon 158-60, Dekker 76-79. and Luger (Nieuwenhuys' introduction) 2-4 on Vosmaer and the Flanor group. Vosmaer also corresponded with Perk, Kloos, and Verwey. See his extensive correspondence with Kloos for an interesting glimpse at the young Kloos's literary views.

⁷The works cited by Huet were Goethe's Wilhelm Meister and Prometheus, Chateaubriand's Atala, Byron's Cain, and Shelley's Prometheus Unbound.

⁸The use of "van" in the expression "beschouwing en vooral doorgronding van den mensch" is ambiguous out of context. The rest of Van Lennep's remarks in the section make it clear that the proper translation of "van" is "of" and not "by." Thus, true poetry is predicated on the "contemplation and, above all, penetration of man" by the poet, according to Van Lennep.

⁹Helen Vendler has remarked recently in The Odes of John Keats on the labored structure of the first two books of Hyperion (204-05). Here, she pursues also the notion that the reasons for the poem's abandonment may be traced within Hyperion itself: "Keats's lyric desire to ensconce all feeling into one suffering subject defeats his epic desire to tell a tale, and he decides to begin the massive recasting which he will entitle The Fall of Hyperion: both titles show his interest to lie more in the tragic decline and suffering witness of the Titans than in the hopeful unveiling of Apollo" (205). Also, see Dickstein on Keats's characterizations of the Titans. He suggests that Keats explored to exhaustion the themes in which he was interested and, consequently, that the poem's abandonment was predictable (185-88).

¹⁰Meijer added that the translation influenced Kloos's Okeanos and Verwey's Persephone (238-39).

¹¹All subsequent quotations from Keats in this chapter are taken from the text of Van Lennep's notes. Van Lennep's emphasis of various words, presumably done for ease of reference, has been omitted.

¹²See Catford 56-61 on the difficulties of "phonological" translation.

Chapter 3

'Over Navolging en Overeenkomst'

A society shows most persuasively its appreciation of a foreign writer by incorporating elements of his work into its own literature. Translations are useful introductions to a writer's work, but their effect is limited by the sense in which they may be said to represent the writer's actual text in absentia, his official canon so to speak. As such, translations are inert, their influence more potential than real. Until native writers begin to draw on the foreign-language texts, in either their original or translated forms, as models or as inspirations for their own works, until the native literature begins to show signs of exposure and response to the foreign import, it is not possible to discern to any significant degree the actual impact of cross-cultural literary contact.

With the appearance of Willem Kloos's Okeanos and Albert Verwey's Persephone in the early 1880's, there was hard evidence that John Keats's Hyperion had exerted a discernable influence on Dutch poetry. Even the superficial resemblances to Keats's work were striking. Kloos's and Verwey's poems were epic fragments. Each was written in blank verse, and

both contained three divisions or songs. In Okeanos even the title character recalled Keats's poem. As E. R. Curtius has pointed out in European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, literature can be shaped to a considerable extent by precedent:

There is here an inexhaustible wealth of possible interrelations. Furthermore, there is the garden of literary forms--be they the genres . . . or metrical and stanzaic forms, be they set formulas or narrative motifs or linguistic devices. It is a boundless realm. Finally, there is the wealth of figures which literature has formed and which can forever pass into new bodies: Achilles, Oedipus, Semiramis, Faust, Don Juan. (15)

However, recognition of the relevant precedent is only the first step. It is more important to study how the precedent was applied. The extent to which it was adapted or revised shows the pressure of reconciling a prior structure with the needs of the moment, and the resulting literary structure can range in character from a derivative composite of old and new to a highly original, creative rearticulation. In any case, to ponder the relationship between Keats's Hyperion, Kloos's Okeanos, and Verwey's Persephone is to appreciate how complex the resulting relationship can become.

TRANSLATION AND CREATION

When Warner Willem van Lennep published Hyperion in 1879, he included a note urging young writers to heed his example. Carel Vosmaer's enthusiastic review of Van Lennep's

work noted approvingly: "Whenever we get such outstanding translations . . . it is for the good of our metrics and poetic language" ('Wanneer wij zulke uitstekende vertalingen . . . krijgen . . . komt dit ook aan onzen versbouw en dichttaal ten goede' 106). In other words, good translation was conceived as a means of expanding the realm of possibility in Dutch literature. Albert Verwey's Inleiding tot de nieuwe Nederlandsche dichtkunst and Willem Kloos's "Een 'Nieuwe-Gidser,' die tevens lid was van het vorige geslacht" were, among other things, confirmations that the appearance of Van Lennep's translation had provoked such a response.

The dynamics of translation in themselves, at least as they were conceived during the period, encouraged what could be called a creative leap from the example of the foreign text to an original literary expression. E. J. Potgieter's discussion of translation in "Een Blik naar Crabbe" summarized the attitude:

Translating verse gives evidence of the nature and scope of our taste, of the one-sidedness or variety of our appreciation and admiration, not merely through the choice of the model;--it poses us a double test: it brings to light our greater or lesser command of the language in the harnessing of all its forms, as well as the coarser or finer receptivity of our spirit in the reproduction of every thought; is a demonstration still required, then, that without a trace of genius, without more than a trace of conscience, stalemate occurs?

Verzen vertalen geeft niet enkel door de keuze van het voorbeeld blijk van den aard en den omvang van onzen smaak, van het eenzijdige of veelzijdige onzer waardering en bewondering;--het stelt ons bovendien op dubbelen toets, daar het zoowel onze meerdere of

mindere heerschappij over de taal in het dienstbaar maken van al hare vormen, als de grovere of fijnere ontvankelijkheid van onzen geest in het weêrgeven van iedere gedachte aan het licht brengt;--behoeft het dan nog betoog, dat men er zonder een zweem van genie, zonder meer dan een zweem van geweten schaakmat afkomt? (486)

Translation, according to Potgieter, required both taste and skill. Of course, fluency in the pertinent languages was to be expected in a translator, but aesthetic sensitivity and sophistication were Potgieter's real concerns. "Taste" ('smaak'), "receptivity" ('ontvankelijkheid'), "genius" ('genie'), "conscience" ('geweten'), all of these considerations engaged the subjective extreme, so to speak, of the translation act. The nature of the translator's literary and philosophical affinities might be discerned in the very choice of the text in question, and the extent to which the original's full sense was grasped by the translator and conveyed to the reader seemed to Potgieter to depend upon an intensity of insight into and empathy with the original text that bordered upon genius.

The application of genius to an explanation of what constituted successful translation suggested a certain degree of individuality and creative autonomy that was, indeed probably had to be, at odds with that peculiar self-effacement involved in the literary re-enactment of translation, so long as concerns with linguistic accuracy and fidelity to the prior structure restrained the translator's imaginative freedom. Balancing conscience against genius was an acknowledgement of what might be called an appropriating

tendency in translation; that is, Potgieter was aware that the genius necessary to convey adequately the character of a distinguished original might well assert itself at the expense of absolute fidelity to the text at hand. He chose an analogy from art to illustrate the proper reconciliation of individual genius with the need for duplicative accuracy:

A poem in a foreign language, a painting in the gallery of a connoisseur, these are two sources of pleasure for only a privileged few, two sources of pleasure denied the public at large. . . . Artistic creations, enclosed within the narrow boundaries of the territory of a language or within the still more narrowly confining walls of a hall, an institution, a museum, thus to be made the common property of the whole world, that is your task, translators, whether with the pen or with the engraving tool, but that glorious gift would have granted you lower praise had you not adopted the rigorous study which engenders, had not the holy fire, which we name conscience, burned in you, on account of the respect with which it looks at the works of the masters; that we call genius--on account of the respect which your labor may require of us in its turn?--artists, as you have to be in order to copy and to bring forth art.

Een dichtstuk in eene vreemde taal, eene schilderij in het kabinet van een liefhebber, het zijn twee bronnen van genot voor slechts enkele bevoorregten; twee bronnen van genot, het groote publiek ontzegd. . . . Kunstscheppingen, besloten binnen de enge grenzen van het gebied eener taal, of binnen de nog enger wanden van eene zaal, een gesticht, een museum, dus voor heel de wereld gemeen goed te doen worden, het is u gegeven, vertolker, hetzij met de pen, hetzij met de stift! maar die heerlijke gave, zou ze u verleend zijn tot minderen prijs dan dat gij u de strenge studie getroostet, die ontwikkelt; dan dat ook u het heilige vuur blaakte, 't welk wij geweten noemen, om den eerbied, waarmeê het naar de gewrochten des meesters opziet; dat wij genie heeten, om den eerbied, die uw arbeid ons op zijne beurt vergen mag? kunstenaars als ge zijn moet om kunst af te zien en voort te brengen. (487)

It was an appealing analogy. The etched reproduction was the

basic mode of disseminating art to a mass public in the mid-nineteenth century and could be printed, as could the translation, for the largest possible audience. In addition, increasing exposure to high culture had a vaguely democratic, thoroughly Thorbeckian Liberal ring to it. In any case, the very high level of graphic skill required in order to successfully represent a masterpiece of painting compared quite felicitously with the finesse of a good translator. Scrupulous respect for the original had to be observed by the translating artist, either engraver or translator proper, who had to attempt to suggest as completely as possible the effects of the original work, hence the need for a particularly self-effacing attitude in the transmitting artist.

Nevertheless, an etched reproduction was far removed from the original, bearing only the most approximate resemblance to the painting on which it was based. Details of brushwork and textures of paint and canvas could at best, if indeed at all, only be suggested. Color would be entirely missing; the resulting rendition could never reproduce the actual sensory experience of gazing directly at the original painting.

Potgieter was hardly suggesting that an etched reproduction was a totally satisfactory substitution. Actually, his comments emphasized the differences between the two media rather than propose their equivalence. The genius praised in talented graphic artists had to do with their

ability to transcend the inherent distinctions between etching and painting, to describe the original accurately and with insight while, at the same time, conveying an independent artistic integrity. Thus, an actual copy was impossible in either etching or translation, allowing imaginative room, so to speak, for "translating" artists to make their own aesthetic mark on the resulting work.

Potgieter's remarks on translation in "Een Blik naar Crabbe" preceded a lengthy discussion of the accomplishments in English literature:

Were there talk of a competition of peoples from our continent, which of these in the last hundred years contributed the most to the development of beautiful literature, England would be permitted to assert strong claims.

Als er sprake was van een wedstrijd der volken van ons werelddeel, welk van deze in de laatst verlopen honderd jaren het meest tot de ontwikkeling der schoone letteren bijdroeg, Engeland zou hooge aanspraken mogen doen gelden.
(498)

However, Potgieter's praise led to a bitter observation:

The Dutch language is an outcast, Dutch poetry forgotten or scorned. . . . We build a People's Palace, after the example of England, for the wonders of our Industry, that must yet be born;--for the creations of the ancestral paint-brush, honored by cultured Europe, we still have a ready appetite, not for the sake the memories attached thereto, merely on account of the profits from these as products of culture.

Hollands taal is eene verschoveling, Hollands dichtkunst vergeten of veracht. . . . Wij bouwen een Volkspaleis, op het voorbeeld van Engeland, voor de wonderen onzer Nijverheid, die nog moeten worden geboren;--voor de scheppingen van het voorvaderlijk penseel, door het beschaafd Europa

gehuldigd, niet om den wille van de herinneringen
er aan verknocht, louter om de verdiensten van deze
als voortbrengselen der kunst, hebben wij lust noch
licht over. (505)

The scathing irony in Potgieter's comparison of England, prosperous not only in literature, but also in industry and empire, with the Netherlands could hardly have been lost on a Dutch reader. The one-time rival had become a source of envy. Despite the cosmopolitan tone of his admiration for English literary accomplishment and the thoughtful internationalist aesthetic which underlined his appraisal of the value of translation at the beginning of his essay, Potgieter was intent upon indicting Dutch cultural achievement in the nineteenth century. The resulting impression left by the essay was that an implicit, yet unmistakable, call for emulation had been issued and that translation could serve that end through the power of example.

KLOOS AND VERWEY

The histories of Okeanos and Persephone are bound together inextricably, in addition to their common Keatsian features, as a result of the close relationship between Kloos and Verwey during much of the period in which each was composing his respective poem. Verwey met Kloos on 13 December 1881. Still a student at the Hogere Burgerschool on the Keisersgracht in Amsterdam, Verwey was only sixteen.

Kloos was a twenty-two-year-old university student. Kloos recalled their initial meeting in a 1934 Nieuwe Gids article:

Young Verwey, who, very different from me, was vivaciously talkative, felt happy naturally that he should be permitted to visit an older poet--six years seems so much at that age--who was a critic as well, and he paid me a visit. And before long, at my request, he began to read to me an endless number of verses, of which I, to tell the truth, could not make much sense.

De jonge Verwey, die, heel anders als ik, levendig-druk was en vlot praatte, voelde zich natuurlijk blij, dat hij een ouderen dichter--zes jaar lijkt heel veel op dien leeftijd--die tevens kritiseerde, zou mogen bezoeken, en ging zijn visite bij mij afsteken. En hij begon mij toen weldra, op mijn verzoek, een eindeloozen hoop verzen voor te lezen, aan welke ik, om de waarheid te zeggen, niet heel veel touw vastknoopen kon. ("Okéanos en Perséphoné" 440)

Verwey had been given an introduction to Kloos, who was a former student at the Hogere Burgerschool, by one of his teachers, Dr. Willem Doorenbos. Not only Verwey, but also Kloos, Jacques Perk, and Frank van der Goes had been students of Doorenbos. Doorenbos had been Kloos's tutor in Greek and Latin in preparation for his entrance examination in classics at the University of Amsterdam. He had also been considered as a possible chief editor of Perk's Gedichten before Carel Vosmaer agreed to oversee the work. The respect in which Doorenbos was held by his former students was perhaps best indicated in 1885 by the acceptance of one of his historical articles for inclusion in the first issue of De Nieuwe Gids.¹

Of course, the poetic immaturity to which Kloos referred in his recollection of the younger poet was hardly surprising

in a sixteen-year-old, but in any case Verwey made a strong impression on Kloos.² Shortly after their first meeting, Kloos directed Verwey's attention to the myth of Persephone and lent him a copy of Van Lennep's Hyperion as an example of how to handle classical subject matter (Uyldert 115-16). The acquaintanceship developed into a genuine friendship, and beginning in September 1882 Verwey started to study classical literature, with the encouragement and support of Kloos and Willem Paap, in order to prepare himself for writing Persephone. He finished work on the poem most probably between February and March 1883 (Verburg 16), for he carried a completed manuscript of the poem along with him on a trip to America that began in June 1883 (Uyldert, De jeugd 115).

When he was introduced to Verwey in 1881, Kloos was working with Carel Vosmaer on the posthumous edition of the collected poems of Jacques Perk. Perk and Kloos had met in either 1879 or 1880 (Michaël in Kloos, Willem 14; Knuvelde 4:104; Prick in Kloos, Ik ben 9). They were contemporaries, and their ensuing friendship was intense, influencing the literary development of both young poets. According to Kloos, Perk introduced him to Van Lennep's translation of Hyperion in 1880 and lent him a copy ("Een 'Nieuwe Gids" 464-66). Perk's father gave Kloos that copy after Perk's death (462). Despite its intimacy, however, their relationship was short-lived. Perk broke off the friendship in April 1881 for reasons that remain unclear.³ Nevertheless, Kloos obscured the estrangement after Perk's

death on 1 November 1881 and succeeded in securing the permission of Perk's father to participate in editing the first edition of Perk's poetry. That volume appeared in December 1882, accompanied by Kloos's soon famous "Inleiding" or "Preface," with its echoes of Adonais and its subtle, implied association of Perk with Keats (see 28-33 of this study), just as Verwey was beginning his preliminary studies for Persephone under Kloos's guidance (Stuiveling in Perk 5-14).

About this time Kloos began to work on Okeanos.⁴ A more precise dating is very difficult, if not impossible, for a number of reasons. In Kloos's letters to Vosmaer, in which Kloos wrote in considerable detail over his current work and plans, Okeanos is first mentioned in a letter dated 24 December 1883 among comments on the appearance of Marcellus Emant's Godenschermering or Twilight of the Gods:

And it was interesting to me above all, because I am knocking about a similar subject from Greek mythology (Okeanos). I have already a few fragments of it, and the design is finished. I hope to continue it after my examination.

En vooral voor mij was het interessant, omdat ik met een dergelijk onderwerp uit de Grieksche mythologie (Okeanos) rondloop. Ik heb er reeds eenige fragmenten van en het plan is klaar. Ik hoop het na mijn examen voort te zetten. (in Vosmaer 200)

His next letter to Vosmaer, dated 8 January 1884, contained fragments of the poem (lines 75-93 of De Nieuwe Gids text) and a summary:

Fragment from the struggle with the Titans in the first book. The Uranians on Othrys, opposite the Olympians on Olympus. First attack of the Titans. Fright of Aphrodite and amusement that the others have over it. Zeus has ridden out in order to hurl the lightning

Fragment uit den Titanenstrijd in het 1e boek. De oeranionen op den Othrys, daartegenover de Olympiers op den Olympos. Eerste aanval der Titanen. Schrik van Aphrodite en plezier dat de anderen daarover hebben. Zeus is vooruitgereden, om den bliksem te slingeren (205)

There was also a letter to Kloos, dated 15 February 1890, from Lodewijk van Deyssel, in which Van Deyssel recalled receiving an early version of the opening lines of the poem while he was living on the Plantage-Badlaan in Amsterdam, a period which lasted from March 1883 until April 1884 (Verburg 9).

Kloos suspended work on Okeanos while he prepared for his candidaatsexamen in classics at the University, passing the examination on 9 July 1884. Afterwards, he went to Brussels and completed the remaining portions of the text apparently between September and December (Verburg 9). Then Kloos returned to Amsterdam and became involved in setting up De Nieuwe Gids.⁵ Though the first issue, October 1885, contained sections of Verwey's Persephone, nothing from Kloos's poem appeared until the third issue in February 1886, when most of what eventually became the second book of Okeanos appeared under the title "Ganymedes op aarde" or "Ganymedes on earth" (479-82). The date January 1885 was appended to the poem. Okeanos appeared in its present form in the August 1893 issue (357-71), with the exception of a

few lines that were withheld until 1895. In preparation for publication, Kloos had taken all the various versions and fragments that he had written earlier and compiled them into a longer poem; its final structure was, obviously, one of Kloos's last considerations.⁶

Verwey's dedication of his first volume of poetry, Persephone en andere gedichten, to Willem Kloos in 1885 was an indication of how important the friendship between the two poets had become. After Verwey and Kloos met in 1881 and until their relationship was ruptured in 1888, the personal lives and the poetic development of the two were intertwined. Both became members of the pre-Tachtig literary group Flanor in the early 1880's. Later, they were co-founders of De Nieuwe Gids, and in 1886 they were co-authors of a notorious pamphlet, De Onbevoegdheid der Hollandsche Literaire Kritik or The Incompetence of Dutch Literary Criticism, which attacked contemporary critical taste and practice.⁷

In 1885 their friendship became a subject in their poetry. Verwey published a sonnet series, Van de liefde die vriendschap heet or Of the love that is called friendship, which reflected on his feelings toward Kloos and to which Kloos responded in a number of his own sonnets, including "Ik ben een God in 't diepst van mijn gedachten" or "I am a God in the depths of my thoughts."⁸ Despite their intimacy, a complete break between the two occurred in 1888 over Verwey's engagement and eventual marriage to Kitty van Vloten. Kloos, who was already suffering physically from heavy drinking,

considered Verwey's decision a betrayal. Frans Erens, a co-worker on De Nieuwe Gids, described Kloos's response:

Thus, the companionship with Kloos was being changed, and he felt himself slighted. It was a very common case, but Kloos could not bear it. He stood alone now. He missed the young man, whom he had instructed previously and with whom he poured forth his soul, who understood him. If Verwey had not found Kloos, his formation would have been perhaps otherwise.

Zoo werd de omgang met Kloos veranderd en deze voelde zich achteruitgezet. Het was een heel gewoon geval, maar Kloos kon het niet verdragen. Hij stond nu alleen. Hij miste den jongeling, dien hij vroeger had onderwezen en bij wien hij zijn ziel uitstortte, die hem begreep. Indien Verwey Kloos niet had gevonden, zou zijn vorming misschien anders zijn geworden. (189-90)

According to Erens, Kloos viewed the developments as "tragisch" (190).

In an evocative introduction to the most recent anthology of Kloos's poems, Harry Prick has described the effects of the estrangement between Verwey and Kloos and suggested "that in the fall of 1888 something in Kloos had snapped, broken, changed forever, and that thereafter much of his being . . . had become almost unrecognizably different" ('dat er in de herfst van 1888 voor altoos iets in Kloos geknakt, gebroken, veranderd was, en dat nadien veel van zijn wezen . . . haast onherkenbaar anders geworden was' in Kloos, Ik ben 18). That fall Kloos retreated to London to stay with the painter Willem Witsen and wrote a sonnet series, Het boek van Kind en God. Een Passie-spiel. or The book of Child and God. A Passion play., in which he replied to the perceived

abandonment. The poems, among Kloos's best, appeared in the October 1888 issue of De Nieuwe Gids (66-75).⁹ During the next nine years, Kloos, already a heavy drinker, became alcoholic. Progressively more depressed, he attempted suicide. His physical and mental health declined precipitously, and on 9 November 1896 Kloos entered a mental hospital in Utrecht as a result of a nervous breakdown.¹⁰

THE CONTROVERSY OVER INFLUENCE

In 1897 Kloos published a critique in De Nieuwe Gids of Verwey's most recent volume of poems, Aarde or Earth. There Kloos cited Persephone as representative of Verwey's work at its finest and made a number of deprecating remarks concerning Verwey's subsequent poetic development. However, his comments concerning Verwey's inspiration for Persephone were the prime source of interest, for they initiated a protracted disagreement between the two men. According to Kloos, he had shown Verwey Okeanos a short time after their first meeting; that would have been, most probably, late December 1881 or January 1882. He advised Verwey,

You must, rather, fix your entire being on a definite subject, just take one, which one does not matter, enter into it, try to hear and to see with it in your imagination, and then write down precisely what you see and hear and feel. Look, I have also done that on occasion: here you have, for example, Okeanos, just read that and try whether you too can write something like that one day. Do you know what? Do you know the tale of Persephone?

Je moest liever je heele zijn eens vestigen op een bepaald onderwerp, neem er maar een, 't komt er niet op aan wat, denk je daarin, tracht er bij te hooren en te zien in je fantasie, en schrijf dan precies op wat je ziet en hoort en voelt. Kijk, ik heb ook wel eens zoo gedaan: hier heb je b.v. Okeanos, lees dat eens en probeer of je ook niet eens zoo wat schrijven kan. Weet je wat? Ken je de geschiedenis van Persephone? (265)

Kloos added that Verwey returned a few days later and read some new verses supposedly written in accordance with his advice. Pleased by some of the work, Kloos recalled telling Verwey:

Thus must you render all of it, so distinct for your imagination, lovely for your ear, simple and understandable for your comprehension. Thus Keats worked, thus Milton, and I myself have to try to do it that way as well. Now you can also, I believe, bring yourself to it.

Zóó moet je maken dat de heele boel wordt, zoo duidelijk voor je verbeelding, mooi voor je gehoor, eenvoudig en begrijpelijk voor je begrip. Zoo heeft Keats gewerkt, zoo Milton, en ik zelf heb het ook wel eens pogen te doen. Jij nu kunt er, geloof ik, ook wel toe komen. (266)

Kloos was presumably referring to the earliest stage of Persephone, which would become Verwey's most Keatsian work. To compare the young poet's work, or at least his technique, with that of Keats and Milton was extremely flattering. Furthermore, Kloos, who was himself beginning to work on his own Keats-inspired poem Okeanos around this time, hastened to include himself among the poets that he was citing as suitable models for Verwey. In Kloos's opinion the poetry resulting from the acceptance of his advice, including other early poems as well as Persephone, was of enduring beauty and

value, but Verwey's most recent work in Aarde proved that Verwey had forgotten that guidance and had returned to his original attitude toward poetry, what Kloos derisively recalled as "an endless rhapsody on rhyme and meter" ('een eindeloze rhapsodie op rijm en maat' 265).

Verwey's immediate response to Kloos's version of the events leading to the composition of Persephone was tactful. In a letter to Frank van der Goes dated 25 January 1897, Verwey commented:

Have you noticed that Kloos has actually suffered worst of all in his memory? Persephone after Okeanos--the published data show that Okeanos has been written nearly 2 years after Persephone. Is this now not too innocent to respond to?

Heb je wel opgemerkt dat Kloos toch eigenlijk het allerergst in zijn geheugen geleden heeft? Persephone na Okeanos--de gedrukte data wijzen uit, dat Okeanos bijna 2 jaar na Persephone geschreven is. Is dit niet te onschuldig om te beantwoorden? (cited in Uyldert, Dichterlijke 280)

Kloos had, indeed, assigned the date January 1885 to "Ganymedes op aarde" when he published it in De Nieuwe Gids, and he had said nothing about Verwey dating Persephone "spring 1883" in Persephone en andere gedichten, a volume dedicated explicitly to Kloos. Of course, the problem was that everything revolved around Kloos's anecdote; there were no actual witnesses besides himself and Verwey. On the one hand, Verwey conceded that Kloos had directed his attention to the Greek myth and had lent him materials for background reading (Uyldert, De jeugd 116). On the other hand, from the existing manuscript evidence it is clear that Okeanos did not

exist in its final form until shortly before its publication in 1894 (Verburg 13-14). However, when Verwey identified the winter of 1884-85, in his Inleiding tot de nieuwe Nederlandsche dichtkunst, as the period during which Kloos wrote Okeanos (48), he was definitely inaccurate; fragments of the poem's opening book can be dated with assurance as having been in existence by late 1883 (Vosmaer 200, 205).

Kloos added to this confusion through a number of articles over the years in which he continued to insist that Verwey had used Okeanos as a model for Persephone. The dates he assigned Okeanos were always a bit vague. In the March 1908 issue of De Nieuwe Gids, Kloos mentioned 1882-84 as the correct period (330-31); in a March 1934 article the date 1882 was implied (313). The final time he broached the subject was in an essay entitled "Okéanos en Perséphoné" which appeared in De Nieuwe Gids in 1934. The general outline of the original anecdote remained the same, but the number of details included was considerably greater, most of them at the expense of Verwey, whom Kloos took pains to represent as especially unknowledgeable at that time about literature and "inwardly ambitious" ('innerlijk-ambitieuze' 447) to advance his own career. The date claimed here for Okeanos was 1881 (439).

It would seem most probable that the then very young Verwey simply forgot having seen what could only have been, especially if the earlier dates Kloos assigned are taken at all seriously, a fragment. Sixteen years passed before Kloos

raised the issue, and, consequently, disagreements concerning the details are understandable. What really mattered was that both poets were engaged in similar poetic efforts at roughly the same time in their respective careers, despite the extent to which the circumstances of publication obscured the poems' essential contemporaneity.

The struggle of an emerging literary generation, the need to articulate the nature of the creative process, and an interest in the poetry of John Keats, these were the common concerns of Kloos and Verwey around the time of the appearances of Persephone and Okeanos. Nine months after the first appearance of Persephone and three months after that of the "Ganymedes op Aarde" episode from Okeanos, Kloos and Verwey published De Onbevoegdheid der Hollandsche Literaire Kritiek in May 1886. In it they repeated a criticism of Dutch literature already familiar from Potgieter and Buskin Huet:

You know that the entire body of our literature is small compared to those of other peoples. You know that the nineteenth century has not had here its Goethe, nor its Hugo, nor its Shelley. You also know that Dutch art is held in contempt by the foreigner.

Gij weet, dat de gansche massa onzer letteren weinig is bij die van andere volken. Gij weet, dat de negentiende eeuw hier noch haar Göthe, noch haar Hugo, noch haar Shelley heeft gehad. Ook weet gij, dat de Hollandsche kunst geminacht is bij den vreemdeling. (41)

However, the young poets were still hopeful for a land in which the very notion of art itself seemed strange, for the

new writers were seizing the moment:

Their striving is likewise not theirs, but that of the time that has brought them forth. . . .

Therefore, art is no game to them, but a passion; no trade, but a service; no part of life, but life itself. Therefore, they are demanding much of each other and much of others. Therefore, they believe that the time of cultivation is past, of softening the soil and covering the seed and staking up cuttings that are young. They do not want the great to pass by in order to look longer at the weak.

Ook is hun streven niet het hunne, maar dat van den tijd, die hen heeft voortgebracht. . . .

Daarom is de kunst hun geen spel, maar een hartstocht; geen vak, maar een bediening; geen deel van het leven, maar het leven-zelf. Daarom eischen zij veel van elkander en veel van anderen. Daarom gelooven zij, dat de tijd van kweeken voorbij is, van zachtmaken van den grond en dekken van het zaad en stutten van de stekjes, die jong zijn. Zij willen het groote niet langs gaan om langer naar het zwakke te zien. (43)

De Onbevoegdheid der Hollandsche Literaire Kritiek was a joint statement of poetic principles, and its explicitly cooperative nature, coinciding so nearly with the composition of those two poems, is perhaps the most suggestive indication of how closely interrelated the poetic visions of Kloos and Verwey were at this time.

THE URGE TO IMITATE

The study of examples is one of the most fundamental learning techniques. Edward B. Koster, a secondary Tachtig poet, applied the principle to the development of a poet in Over Navolging en Overeenkomst in de Literatuur or Concerning

Imitation and Resemblance in Literature, a provocative booklet published in 1904. Like Potgieter in "Een Blik naar Crabbe," Koster found an art analogy useful:

It is a progress similar to painting. The more practice in and study of nature a painter has had, the less dependent on it he becomes. He will be able to separate eclectically that which he needs at a given moment from the rich memory treasure of natural beauty, without needing to turn again directly to nature; and likewise will the poet or prose writer draw what he needs from the full treasure of his own thought, acquired and developed by the study, first, of great writers and, then, of life and nature, without slavish devotion to others.

't Is een dergelijk verloop als met het schilderen. Hoe meer oefening in en studie van de natuur een schilder heeft gehad, des te minder afhankelijk wordt hij van haar. Hij zal uit den rijken herinneringsschat van natuurschoon eclectisch datgene kunnen afzonderen, wat hij op een gegeven oogenblik nodig heeft, zonder zich weer direct tot de natuur te behoeven te wenden; en zoo zal de dichter of prozaïst uit den vollen schat van eigen gedachten, verkregen en ontwikkeld door de studie eerste van groote schrijvers en dan van het leven en de natuur, putten wat hij nodig heeft, zonder slaafsche overgave aan anderen. (2)

According to Koster, the study of literary precedent was part of a writer's maturation, an apprenticeship of sorts.

However, no writer outgrew completely its effects on his or her work. Though desire for originality in any self-professedly "new" poem constrained somewhat the extent to which the example of a text or texts was conspicuously followed, the pervasive nature of literary influence could not be escaped altogether.

Koster conceived the overall process of literary influence in terms of imitation. Once accused of imitating

Kloos and Verwey by Verwey himself, Koster was only too aware that there was a negative side to imitation:¹¹

Imitation of others can occur consciously or unconsciously. The one writer can imitate the other either out of impotence, if he has absolutely nothing to say, or because at a certain moment he cannot express a thought better than his predecessor and does not take the trouble to seek for it himself, thus, out of a sort of indolence, or in order to tie his own observations to the words of his fellow artist.

Navolging van anderen kan geschieden bewust of onbewust. De eene schrijver dan den anderen bewust navolgen of uit impotentie, als hijzelf heelemaal niets te zeggen heeft, of omdat hij op een zeker oogenblik een gedachte niet beter kan uitdrukken dan zijn voorganger en de moeite niet neemt er zelf naar te zoeken, uit een soort van vadsigheid dus, of om aan de woorden van zijn mede-artiest zijn eigen beschouwingen vast te knopen. (1)

Nevertheless, Koster contended that, in its most idealized form, imitation was a largely unconscious process in which "a writer is so wrapped up in the sound- or idea-sphere of another that he allows himself to be led will-lessly" ('een schrijver z66 opgaat in de klanken of ideeesfeer van een ander, dat hij zich willoos laat leiden' 2) along lines similar to those admired in the work of another writer. This sort of imitation manifested itself less explicitly; it was more properly termed resemblance.

Imitation and reminiscence are not so much elements of a procedural dichotomy as they are indications of differences in motivation. To draw on literary tradition at all involves of necessity a degree of imitation, a recognition and utilization of precedence. As George Steiner observed in

After Babel, "No statement starts completely anew, no meaning comes from a void Western art is more often than not about preceding art; literature about literature" (461).¹² Imitation and reminiscence lend resonance to literature, and recognizing their effect in a given work provides valuable interpretive clues for coming to grips with that work as an independent creation, be it extremely original or utterly derivative.

OKEANOS

In Okeanos Willem Kloos, like Keats in Hyperion, followed the tradition found also in the theogonies of Hesiod and Apollodorus, in which the Titans, an older race of gods, were displaced by younger deities led by Zeus. Furthermore, Kloos adopted a variant of the Titan myth, like that used by Aeschylus in Prometheus Bound, in which Okeanos was spared the fall of his fellow Titans. That version had an obvious appeal, enhancing a distance between that figure and the rest of the Titans that had already been present in Hyperion when Oceanus appealed for acceptance and appreciation of the new order. In something of the same sense, the Tachtigers distinguished Potgieter or Busken Huet, who had been open to and had encouraged a new literature, from other, less receptive members of the previous literary generation.

Furthermore, Verburg and Prick have pointed out that Kloos's own feelings over the advent of the Tachtig movement

coincided with Oceanus' speech in Hyperion in which the disposed sea god counseled acceptance of the new order (21):

So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
 A power more strong in beauty, born of us
 And fated to excell us, as we pass
 In glory that old darkness; nor are we
 Thereby more conquered than by us the rule
 Of shapeless chaos. (2.212-17)

If in Hyperion Oceanus' wisdom was stressed (2.162-243), then here Okeanos' beauty was the point, for it presaged that of the new dynasty, the Olympians:

Okeanos, the wonderous Okeanos,
 He, the first-born of dark Earth
 And bright Heaven, older than the Night,
 But young as the Light, and as the Twilight
 beautiful,--
 With blond locks like the Dawn,
 When the first sunlight without sun
 Hems the first little yellow cloud in gold,

 The last Titan lay on Othrys' slope,
 And looked in reverie at the high sun
 And Hyperion, sitting enthroned in the blaze.

Okeanos, de wondre Okeanos,
 Hij, de eerst-geborene van donkere Aard
 En heldren Hemel, ouder dan de Nacht,
 Maar jong als 't Licht, en als de Scheemring schoon,
 Met blonde lokken als de Dageraad,
 Wanneer het eerste zonlicht zonder zon
 Het eerste geele wolkje gouden zoomt,

De laatste Titan lag aan Othrys' helling,
 En zag in mijm'ring naar de hooge zon
 En Hyperion, troonende in den gloed. (1-12) ¹³

Consequently, it is hardly puzzling that the descriptive imagery in this passage suggested the opening of the third book of Hyperion and Apollo, rather than Keats's description of Oceanus or that of any other Titan. The twilight imagery

used to describe Okeanos recalled Keats's Apollo wandering "in the morning twilight" (33) in Hyperion, Book 3.

Okeanos's blond locks and the comparison with the dawn enhanced the description's Apollonian character.

The final lines of the opening passage, possibly recalling Keats's "Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire" (1.166), shifted attention to the subject proper of the poem's first book, the fall

Of the dark Uranians . . .
Thundered apart by the hand of Zeus.

Der donkere Oeranionen . . .
Uit-één-gebliksemd door de hand van Zeus. (14-15)

A description of the Titan council followed:

The Gods sat on their thrones, the one
As far from the other, in a half-circle,
As here on earth, in the last light of the sun,
Seen on all sides, the rearing tops
Of the Alps rise near and far,
Each a host in his own realm
And vicinity, supreme and alone.

De Goden zaten op hun tronen, de één
Zoo ver van de'ander, in een halven kring,
Als hier op aarde, in 't laatste licht der zon,
Alom-gezien, de steigerende toppen
Der Alpen zich verheffen heinde en veer,
Een ieder heerscher in zijn eigen rijk
En omtrek, oppermachtig en alleen. (16-22)

The half-circle of thrones and the severe, silent self-possession of the Titans was reminiscent of Keats's Titans in Book 2, scattered,

like a dismal cirque
Of Druid stones upon a forlorn moor,

Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair (33-40).

Kloos's mountain simile might also owe something to the
lines,

Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborned with iron. (2.33-35)

Kloos devoted the remainder of the first book to the revolt of the Titans against Zeus. Generally speaking, Kloos's narrative agreed with Conrad Busken Huet's projection of how Keats would have completed Hyperion in "Drie Voorwaarden van Kunstgenot." That lecture was first given in November 1878 and later reprinted in 1879 and 1880, making it roughly contemporary with the publication of Van Lennep's translation (see 18-19 in Chapter 1). Busken Huet had speculated that Keats would have gone on to describe the "revolt against Zeus, who dethroned the Titans" ('opstand tegen Zeus, die de titans onttroonde' 130), a development which he predicted from and found consistent with the orthodox Romantic theme of rebellion against oppression (130-32). Kloos's earliest statement of his plan for the first book of Okeanos, in the 8 January 1884 letter to Vosmaer, described just such a counterattack by the Titans on the Olympians (Vosmaer 205).

In Hyperion Enceladus reminded the Titans of their defeat at the hands of Zeus:

Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all

That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
 Not world on world upon these shoulders piled
 Could agonize me more than baby words
 In midst of this dethronement horrible.
 Speak! Roar! Shout! Yell, ye sleepy Titans all
 Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
 Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm. (2.311-18)

Kloos's account of the Titan struggle against Zeus contained a number of parallels. In Okeanos a Zeus "of young majesty" ('Van jonge majesteit' 38) looked on the sullen Titans and wondered

--whether he had to raise
 Aglow the hand against that frantic night,
 Whirling it away in the shock.

--of hij de hand
 In gloed moest heffen naar dien dollen nacht,
 Heen-dwarlende in den schok. (39-41)

As Zeus contemplated whether or not to destroy them, the Titans howled in rage:

They all stood, covering Othrys' ridge,
 but suddenly above them all
 Lifted up, rolling, the dull bellow
 From a thousand breasts, that to dimmer distances
 The stars shrank back in the hollow universe.

Zij stonden allen, dekkende Othrys' rug,
 maar plotsling boven allen
 Hief wentelend het dof geloei zich op
 Uit duizend boezems, dat naar flauwer verten
 De starren deinsden in het hol heelal. (60-69)

Finally, Kloos's Titans counterattacked with a tremendous "hail of rocks" ('rotsen-regen' 75) that piled around Olympus and threatened the new gods. The Olympians laughter at Aphrodite's fear of the Titans concluded the first book of

the poem, and in the second section Kloos shifted the narrative to Olympus and the story of Ganymedes. The Titans were not mentioned again in the poem.

The most direct correspondences between Okeanos and Hyperion occurred in the first book, which was also the oldest portion of the poem. With the exception of lines 16-34, its text appears to have been compiled exclusively from material contained in the earliest extant manuscript fragments. Chronologically speaking, those were written closer to the probable time of Kloos's initial exposure to Van Lennep's Hyperion; Kloos received Perk's copy of the translation sometime after Perk's death in November 1881 (Kloos, "Een 'Nieuwe-Gidser'" 462). Since the composition of the second two books of Okeanos can be dated with certainty in the fall of 1884 and the winter of 1885 (see 83-84 of this study), it is obvious that the longer Kloos worked on the poem, the more independent his handling of the subject matter became.

With the introduction of Ganymedes, there was a shift in the poem's allegory. In the first book the Olympians were relatively straightforward allegorical representations of the new Tachtig writers, crowned with beauty and battling the old literary generation with the thunderbolts of polemical literary criticism (Verburg 21). Kloos had described the ideal, new poet in his preface to Perk's Gedichten:

Others may bow and pray in fear and hope, as if they could recognize the odor of paradise through the planks of the grave and confine the path of their movements among the cottages of Christian virtues toward the prospect of eternal

blessedness--more blessed the poet who tolerates pressure neither above nor around him, who sees the things of this world go past him with an admiring glance and, playing on everything the shine of his own beauty, allows no sigh of desire as they give way--they think death as wonderful and sweet as life--but who is at the same time divinity and lover to himself, wherever he rages and rejoices, both weeps and muses, alone with his soul under the blue infinity.

Anderen mogen buigen en bidden in bangheid en hoop, alsof zij door de planken der groeve den geur van het paradijs konden erkennen, en den landweg hunner bewegingen beperken tusschen de optrekjes der christen-deugden naar het verschiet der eeuweige zaligheid--zaliger de dichter, die geen drukking boven, noch om zich duldt, die de dingen dezer wereld langs zich voorbij ziet gaan met bewonderenden blik, en over allen den schijn zijner eigene schoonheid doende spelen, geen zucht van begeerte laat, als zij wijken--zoo wonderbaar en zoet als het leven dunkt hem de dood--maar die zichzelf godheid en geliefde tevens is, waar hij stormt en juicht, en weent en mijmert, eenzaam met zijn ziel onder de blauwe oneindigheid. (in Perk 60)

Kloos's conception of this new poet had something in common with Oceanus' pronouncement on the inevitability of the Titans' fall:

For 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might;
Yea, by that law, another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now. (2.228-31)

In any case, the new poet was detached from the ordinary world, wholly wrapped up in the beauty of his imagination.

The myth of Ganymedes had long been associated with the transcendental experience, as well as coronation and confirmation of deity (Graves 115-18; Roscher I.1:1595-1603). Plucked from the mortal realm, the everyday world, by the

chief of the new Olympian dynasty, Ganymedes represented the individual poet, and the narrative in the final book gave clues to the turmoil of the creative process. Zeus's first sight of Ganymedes had provoked a very Keatsian response, the relation of pain to the perception of beauty:

Woe is me, the dances of that earthly lad
 Are bitter. It is for me as if that rash foot
 With every fall treads on my heart . . .
 Woe, do men then have a god's soul
 And can gods be only miserable?

Wee mij, de dansen van dien aardtschen knaap
 Zijn bitter. 't Is mij of de rassche voet
 Met iedren val mij op het harte trapt . . .
 Wee, hebben menschen dan een goden-ziel
 En kunnen goden slechts rampzalig zijn? (211-15)

In the third section of Okeanos, Ganymedes became the focus of Hera's jealousy. Though Zeus praised and loved him, resting "his right hand on that tender head" ('zijn rechter op dat teere hoofd' 247), Hera knocked the golden cup from the boy's hand and muttered:

Oh, may your head, your tender, curly head
 Once fall so loud on this hard metal
 Before my feet as that golden vessel!

O, mocht uw hoofd, uw teeder, lokkig hoofd
 Zoo luid eens vallen op dit hard metaal
 Voor mijne voeten als dat gouden vat! (267-69)

Immediately, Hera was filled with "a dark joy" ('een donkre vreugd' 271), seeing the spilled wine as a joint libation. From Ganymedes it was dedicated to Zeus for "fulfillment of his dearest wish" ('vervulling van zijn diersten wensch' 280). For Hera it was a libation to Moira or Fate:

She is immovable and She hears my prayer,
 Because She writes nowhere in Her Eternal Law
 The foolish wishes of this vain lad.

Zij is onwrikbaar en Zij hoort mijn woord,
 Want Zij schrijft nimmer in Haar Eeuwge Wet
 De dwaze wenschen van dees ijdlen knaap. (287-89)

She looked "triumphantly" ('zegevierend' 291) across at Zeus,
 but he was oblivious to her, lost in contemplation of "the
 ordaining of the earthly state" ('t ordnen van der aarde
 staat' 292).

The contradictory reception of Ganymedes on Olympus
 recalled Kloos's description of poetry in the "Inleiding":

Poetry is no soft-eyed maid . . . but a woman,
 proud and powerful, whose scorching breath does not
 leave us alone, who ties us to her glance, but so
 that we will be free from cares of the world, who
 plunges heart and head into stupor, but also gives
 the pressure and the strength to draw them up again
 to purer clarity than previously, who is the
 deepest joy in the deepest anguish, yet at the same
 time the deepest anguish in the bliss of the pain,
 and presses the thorns into our forehead until it
 bleeds, so that out of it blossoms the sole crown
 of immortality. No affection is she, but a
 passion, no encouragement but an intoxication, not
 a tear over life's seriousness and a laugh over its
 pleasantness, but a glow and a desire, a vision and
 an elevation, a will and a deed, outside of which
 no true salvation for man is to be found and which
 alone makes life worth living.

De poëzie is geen zachtogige maagd . . . doch eene
 vrouw, fier en geweldig, wier zengende adem niet
 van ons laat, die ons bindt aan haar blik, maar
 opdat wij vrij zouden zijn van de wereldzorg, die
 hart en hoofd in bedwelming stort, maar ook den
 drang en de dracht schenkt, zich weder op te
 richten tot reiner klaarheid dan te voren, die de
 hoogste vreugd in de diepste smart, doch tevens de
 diepste smart in den wellust van de pijn verkeert,
 en tot bloedens toe ons de doornen in het voorhoofd
 drukt, opdat er de eenige kroon der onsterfelijk-
 heid uit ontbloeië. Geen genegenheid is zij, maar
 een hartstocht, geen bemoediging maar een

dronkenschap, niet een traan om 's levens ernst en een lach om zijn behaaglijkheid, maar een gloed en een verlangen, een gezicht en een verheffing, een wil en een daad, waarbuiten geen waarachtig heil voor den mensch to vinden is, en die alleen het leven levenswaard maakt. (Perk 59-60)

To be a poet was terrifying as well as exhilarating, isolating as well as inspiring. Kloos envisaged the situation in taut emotional terms; the poet was wracked by conflicting, even contradictory, feelings and impulses in response to the intensity of involvement in his poetic vision. The poet was caught, to borrow Ganymedes' characterization of his situation on Olympus, in a "frightening dream" ('bange droom' 297), from which, though there was a natural inclination to long for the more gentle pleasures of ordinary existence, there could be no escape. Like Apollo in the closing lines of Hyperion, Kloos's true poet had to suffer from the very intensity of the experience which deified him.¹⁴

PERSEPHONE

Both Verwey and Kloos would have been aware of Warner Willem van Lennep's reading of Hyperion as an allegorical treatment by Keats of his own poetic maturation (see 53-60 of this essay). In one of the notes to his translation, Van Lennep had interpreted Keats's Apollo as the "higher inspiration" ('hoogere inspiratie' 60) to which Keats was aspiring:

Apollo himself becomes God of poetry only from that moment that he has received immense knowledge of what goes on in the conscious thinking nature.--Contemplation of nature, so the preceding [source of poetic inspiration] should be summarized, is the beginning of poetry and of Mythology; contemplation and, above all, fathoming of man alone gives the true consecration to poetry and to the conception of God.--Because only then do poetry and her conception of the highest things have a world-commanding power; only then does she come to action and stand, also as force, above the cattle-like Enceladuses (John Bulls), who at least in this surpass the much finer organized Clymenes, in that they feel as human beings.

Apollo zelf wordt alleen van dat oogenblik af God der dichtkunst, dat hij onmetelijke kennis heeft gekregen van hetgeen omgaat in de bewuste denkende natuur.--Natuuranschouwing, zoo zou men het voorgaande kunnen samenvatten, is het begin van de poëzie en van de Godenleer; beschouwing en vooral doorgronding van den mensch alleen geeft aan poëzie en Goden-opvatting de ware wijding.--Want dan alleen heeft de poëzie en hare opvatting van de hoogste dingen eene waereld-beheerschende macht; dan alleen komt zij tot de daad en staat zij, ook als kracht, boven de runderachtige Encéladus'sen (John Bull's), die de veel fijner georganiseerde Clymené's hierin ten minste overtreffen, dat ze als menschen gevoelen. (60)

Perhaps Apollo's ecstatic realization that "Knowledge enormous makes a God of me" (3.113) reminded Van Lennep of Keats's explicit projection in Sleep and Poetry of the course that he envisaged for his own poetic development, of the desire to deal with "the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts" (124-25). In any case, the meditation of Kloos's Zeus on human mortality was a coordinate expression of the importance of sympathy with the human condition:

Oh, to-be-mourned-for wonderously happy race,
With death round about it, in it, under it,
That still the day, which rises in the East,
Greets: 'Hail, oh holy day!'

And as he, paler from his long journey,
Sinks into the West, softly says: 'Thou roameth
beautifully.'

O, om-te-weenen wonder-blij geslacht,
Met dood rond-om zich, in zich, onder zich,
Die toch den dag, die opkomt in het Oost,
Toe-roepen: 'Wees gegroet, o heil'ge dag!'
En als hij, bleeker van zijn langen tocht,
In 't West verzinkt, zacht zeggen: 'Gij waart
schoon.' (224-29)

Kloos's Zeus wondered at mankind's reconciliation of the inevitability of death with mortal happiness and then whisked away the mortal Ganymedes to serve as cupbearer to the immortal gods.

In Albert Verwey's Persephone, the mythical subject matter of the narrative made treatment of such concerns with human mortality predictable, if not indeed inevitable. On a certain level Verwey's poem was, as Maurits Uyldert has pointed out, "a dirge over the transitoriness of beauty, and at the same time a glorification of its immortality, because that transitoriness is only a deceptive appearance" ('een treurzang over de vergankelijkheid der schoonheid, en tegelijk een verheerlijking van haar onsterfelijkheid, want die vergankelijkheid is slechts bedriegelijken schijn' De jeugd 138). Yet, Uyldert's reading, though of value, was too limited. The poem's association of Persephone with the poet made it clear that Verwey was dealing principally with the development of a poet's consciousness, with the process of internal self-examination that led to poetic maturity (Kazemier 174-77; Wolf 112-114).

The section of Keats's Hyperion that exerted the most

influence on Verwey's handling of his subject was Book 3. In the closing lines of Hyperion, Keats applied similes involving death and resurrection to a description of Apollo's deification:

Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
Or liker still to one who should take leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
Die into life. (3.126-30)

Properly construed, Persephone's journey to the Underworld and, though not included in the uncompleted poem, her eventual return to the world of the living provided a narrative equivalent to Apollo's "death into life."

Verwey's introduction of Persephone, called Kora while in Enna, at the beginning of the first book, "Het Ennadal," was modeled closely on Keats's introduction of Apollo. The scenes in both poems were set in early morning, "morning twilight" (3.33) in Keats and "silver dawn" ('zilv'ren dageraad' 13) in Verwey. Just as Apollo left "his mother fair / And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower" (31-32), Persephone arose

And left Demeter in her high dwelling,
The lovely shade, of living wood,
With green halls, cool and broadly arched.

En liet Demeter in haar hooge woning,
De schaduwlieflijke, van levend hout,
Met groene zalen, koel en wijdgewelfd. (4-6)¹⁵

Only "a few stars / Were lingering in the heavens" (36-37) as Apollo listened to "the murmurous noise of waves, / Though

scarcely heard in many a green recess" (40-41). Similarly, Persephone "saw the last stars in the sky" ('zag de laatste sterren in de lucht' 12) and sat,

where the running water with a soft fall
Sounded in the twilight of the wood.

waar 't vlietwater met een zachten val
Geruisch maakte in de schemering van 't woud.
(14-15)

The impression of similarity between the two scenes is particularly enhanced by an striking verbal reminiscence in Persephone of Keats's "while the thrush / Began calm-throated" (3.37-38).¹⁶ Verwey described the birds which greeted Persephone:

Rising, ever singing, higher, higher,
With happy sound from clear, calm throat.

Opstijgende, immer zingend, hooger, hooger,
Met blij geluid uit klare, kalme keel. (25-26)

These initial links to Keats's Apollo were too detailed and sustained to be of only descriptive importance.

There are no striking verbal resemblances between Persephone's encounter with Aidoneus or Hades in the second book, "De Roof van Persephone," and Hyperion, but Persephone's psychological response at the moment of her encounter with the the god of the Underworld matched in some ways Apollo's reaction to Mnemosyne. Puzzled by Mnemosyne's sudden appearance, Apollo suspected that he had seen her before in a dream. When Aïdoneus, "somber great" ('somber groot' 67) stood before her on the meadow in Enna, Persephone

stared in wonder:

And, like a tidal wave, forced itself into her soul
 The memory of all her somber dreams.
 And pale, bowing forward in the night,
 She lisped: «Aïdoneus!»

En als een vloedgolf drong zich in haar ziel
 De erinnering aan al haar somb're droomen.
 En bleek, voorovernijgende in den nacht,
 Lispte zij: «Aïdoneus!» (69-72)

This corresponded with Apollo's identification by name of the "awful Goddess" (3.46) who had appeared before him: "Mnemosyne! / Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how" (3.82-83). In both cases the encounters led to profound recognitions. Aïdoneus approached Persephone:

And on her lips lay his name and along
 Her arm the chilly flower with the odor of death,
 And in her eye the dawning laugh,
 With which Day greets his pale brother Night
 Silently at the entrance of the universe.

En op haar lippen lag zijn naam en langs
 Haar arm de kille bloem met doodengeur,
 En in haar oog de schemerende lach,
 Waarmee de Dag zijn bleeken broeder Nacht
 Zwijgende groet aan de' ingang van 't heelal.
 (85-89)

Apollo, of course, read the "wondrous lesson" in Mnemosyne's "silent face" (3.112) that resulted in his deification.

In conjunction with the identification of Persephone with the poetic consciousness, the journey into the Underworld can be considered as an allegorical representation of the internal struggle accompanying poetic self-definition (Kazemier 177). In his introduction to the notes covering the second book of Hyperion, Van Lennep had interpreted the

allegorical significance of the Titan council as part of Keats's declaration "of a, in him, not yet completed inner struggle between two poetic directions" ('van een, in hem, nog niet voltooiden inwendigen strijd tusschen twee dichterlijke richtingen' 60), the Titans and Apollo representing the respective inclinations of the poet. Interestingly, Verwey's description of the Underworld followed very closely Keats's description of the cave to which the Titans retreated (see also Koster 52):

. . . for the solid roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seemed
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns.

Apparently, not only did Verwey preserve the individual images from Hyperion, but he also retained their original sequence:

And ever there grew a tangled roar,
Whence waterfall threw itself on waterfall
Invisible between crags;
And monstrous mountains bowed toward each other
The stumped forehead, like two giant steers,
That, dazed, stand ready for new struggle

En immer groeide er een verward gedruisch,
Vanwaar zich waterval op waterval
Onzichtbaar tusschen rotsen nederwierp;
En berggevaarten nijgden naar elkaar
Het stompe voorhoofd, als twee reuzenstieren,
Die duiz'lend, vaardig staan tot nieuwen kamp.
(3-9)

In Hyperion the Titan's debate over acceptance of the new order occurred in such a setting. According to Van Lennep's

interpretation of that debate, Keats was presenting allegorically his rejection of poetry based purely upon "the contemplation of nature" ('natuuraanschouwing'), upon "the creation outside man" ('de schepping buiten den mensch'), which he had considered earlier "almost the only source of poetry" ('bijna de eenige bron van dichtkunst' 58).

In "De Onderwereld" section of Verwey's poem, when Aïdoneus entered the Underworld with Persephone, the goddess Styx rebuked him:

Hail, Aïdoneus! overwise God!
 The somber one, who wants to share his gray throne
 And chair with a queen, great as he!
 The wise one, who abducted from the field a child,
 That plucked little flowers for garland weaving
 --Kora!

Heil, Aïdoneus! overwijze God!
 De sombre, die zijn grauwen troon en stoel
 Met een vorstin wil deelen, groot als hij!
 De wijze, die van 't veld een kind zich schaakt,
 Dat bloempjens plukt tot kransenwinden--Kora!
 (73-77)

Kora, Persephone, had been surrounded by the beauties of nature in the living world. In the Underworld there was only stony ground,

Where stems grew with colorless leaves
 And faded blossoms, never ripened to fruit.

Waar stengels groeiden met ontkleurde bladen
 En vale bloesems, nooit tot vrucht gerijpt. (8-9)

The absence of Enna's lush vegetation, so carefully emphasized by Verwey earlier in the poem, was one of the most striking differences in the landscape, if it could be called

that, of the Underworld.

Nevertheless, the dark, phantom-filled Underworld did not intimidate Persephone. Hearing Styx's taunt,

Then she rose on the car, next and tall,
Taller than Aïdoneus, there he stood!
And next to him she took with the left hand
The reins, while the dark steeds rushed.

Toen ze oprees op den wagen, naast en hoog,
Hooger dan Aïdoneus, daar hij stond!
En naast hem nam zij met de linkerhand
De teugels, wíjl de donk're rossen jaagden.
(80-83)

In Hyperion Apollo looked into the face of Mnemosyne, one of the Titans, and became a god. Confronted by Styx, Persephone seized the reins of Hades's chariot, more than commensurate in size to the god who had chosen her as his consort.

Whether Verwey's Underworld is construed strictly in terms of death and human mortality or in more general terms as an inner struggle of the poetic consciousness, Persephone has become somehow greater as a result of her journey into the Underworld. Riding alongside Persephone, Hades called out to Styx that his will was supreme in the Underworld, and the poems ended with Styx bowing in terror as she listened to Hades's threat to displace her. That demand for reconciliation to the inevitable, of course, had also been Oceanus' advice to the Titans.

* * * * *

Persephone, Verwey's first great poem, marked the beginning of a career. After sections of it were published in the first issue of De Nieuwe Gids in 1885, a reviewer in

De Amsterdammer hailed it as by far "the most important thing in the magazine" ('het belangrijkste in het tijdschrift' rpt. in Luger 35). For Kloos the publication of Okeanos marked an end of sorts to his career. Of course, he had composed most of the text of his poem about the same that Verwey was working on Persephone, but Kloos did not assemble the various fragments into Okeanos until 1893 when he published it in De Nieuwe Gids. By that time, Kloos was hardly writing any poetry at all, De Nieuwe Gids was on the verge of collapse, and Kloos's health, both physical and mental, was increasingly bad. In Persephone and Okeanos, Verwey and Kloos presented their visions of what it meant to be a poet. Ironically, each man ended up fulfilling the allegorical promise of his respective poem. Verwey's Persephone had seized the reins of Hades' chariot, equal to the challenge. Kloos, like Ganymedes caught between Hera and Zeus, had become a helpless onlooker.

Notes

¹Of the five founding editors of De Nieuwe Gids--Kloos, Verwey, Van der Goes, Willem Paap, and Frederik van Eeden, three had been Doorenbos' students. Kloos's relationship with Doorenbos, who had been an early admirer of Kloos's poetry and had helped him to find publication outlets for his work, was perhaps the most significant. See Apeldoorn's definitive biography of Doorenbos for further details.

²Verwey was not exactly a complete novice; he had been translating Shelley since he was thirteen. See Baxter.

³There has been speculation that the rupture occurred because of pressures arising from Kloos's now-presumed homosexuality. Jaap Meijer's Jacques Perk en Kloos 1881 is the most tactful treatment of the breakdown of the friendship. Meijer is also quite helpful on the larger question of mutual poetic influence; see also his The onlie begetter.

⁴This complex problem is described briefly, but definitively in Verburg's and Prick's helpful introduction to Okeanos-fragmenten (5-14). Most relevant sources and authorities are cited there, and a number of pertinent quotations from related period sources are included.

⁵See Frans Erens' Vervlogen Jaren 173-76 for an anecdotal account of the founding of De Nieuwe Gids. Erens joined the magazine's staff shortly after it was set up. He knew virtually all of the Tachtigers personally, and his book is an invaluable source for information on the period from a dependable contemporary observer.

⁶Photographs of the fragments with transcriptions are included in Verburg and Prick.

⁷The facsimile edition of Onbevoegdheid includes a brief, but useful essay by Bernt Luger on the uproar which followed (54-61).

⁸The exact nature of the Kloos-Verwey relationship remains a matter of controversy. The most recent evidence indicates that, as had also been the case with Perk, the relationship was strongly homoerotic, though the extent to which that was, or for that matter could have been, expressed is debatable. See Nijland-Verwey for further details.

⁹See Eeten 68-96 and Kraft for further discussion of the role of Het Boek in the Kloos-Verwey rupture.

¹⁰Before this, Kloos had already alienated most of his friends and collaborators. By the May 1894 issue of De Nieuwe Gids, Kloos was the only original member of the editorial board still associated with the magazine, which ceased very soon thereafter to be a significant literary force in the Netherlands.

¹¹Apparently, Verwey had accused Koster at one point of imitating Kloos and himself; see Koster's refutation of Verwey's charge in a note on page 60. Kloos discussed Koster in Veertien jaar 2:188-90 and in Nieuwere literatuur 3:13-14. Koster's most important volume of poetry Liefde's Dageraad or Love's Dawn appeared in 1890.

¹²See also Gombrich's Art and Illusion, especially 74-90 and 291-389, for an elegant discussion of this principle applied to art.

¹³This is the 1893 De Nieuwe Gids text, reprinted with line numbers and edited by Verburg and Prick.

¹⁴Duinkerken has discerned a peculiarly Keatsian quality in Kloos's identification of Ganymedes with the true poet and his association of pain with poetic inspiration (in Asselbergs 84). His unsigned contribution in Asselberg appeared in virtually identical form as "Willem Kloos" in the Katholiek Cultureel Tijdschrift Streven, April 1951, 21-34.

¹⁵The text used is taken from the 1885 Persephone en andere gedichten.

¹⁶Koster cited this passage as a Keatsian echo in Persephone; see 51.

Chapter 4

'Een nieuwe lente en een nieuw geluid'

The appearance of Herman Gorter's Mei in 1889 marked the third major attempt in the Tachtig movement to engage allegorically the nature of the poetic process. In Kloos's Okeanos and Verwey's Persephone, the predominant precursive influence had been Keats's Hyperion, and like it both Dutch poems remained fragments. In Mei Gorter relied once again on Keats, but this time the relevant text was Endymion, Keats's first long, narrative poem. Like Endymion, Mei was written in heroic couplets, and its mythological narrative described a quest in which three major figures, identifiable with various aspects of the poetic vocation, were romantically involved.¹ P. N. van Eyck has pointed out in his preface to the 1940 edition that Mei, like Endymion, was a "poem of youth: a nature-and-love-story" ('jeugd-gedicht: een natuur-en-liefde-verhaal' xlii), and eventually Gorter looked upon Mei with as much disdain as Keats came to have for Endymion.² Nevertheless, Mei, whatever Gorter came to think of it as he matured into a poetic articulator of socialist and, later, communist aesthetic values, remained one of the great achievements in--perhaps it is even prudent to call it

the most fully realized expression of--Tachtig poetry. The influence of John Keats, in any case, remained a salient factor in yet another major Tachtig poet's articulation of what was involved in the creative struggle to produce great poetry.

THE CHOICE OF ENDYMION

Gorter's reliance on Endymion as he developed various features of Mei was encouraged in part by the attention that a number of commentators had given to the poem's opening line, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." Potgieter's 1863 De Gids review of De Cort's translation Schoonste Liederen van Robert Burns introduced the verse from Keats as an explicit motto for "every true poet" ('elken waren dichter' Studiën 403). Gerben Colmjon has pointed out that soon after this the line became familiar throughout the Amsterdam literary community, especially the Alberdingk Thijm circle (132). Indeed, Warner Willem van Lennep, who dedicated his translation of Hyperion to the members of that circle, quoted the first five lines of Endymion in the preface to his work, associating them with the pleasure he derived from attending the Tuesday evening gatherings at Thijm's house (1).

Conrad Busken Huet quoted the "thing of beauty" line near the beginning of his famous lecture on Keats, "Drie Voorwaarden van Kunstgenot," and developed his opening

remarks from it. Combining it with "Shed no tear. O shed no tear: / The flower will bloom another year" (Huet's text) drawn from Keats's late, so-called "Fairy's Song," Busken Huet pointed out the distinction between the Keatsian conception of beauty as an eternal principle and individual expressions of that concept, conspicuously vulnerable to the ravages of time, but the inspiration for new generations of artists who would perpetuate beauty in succeeding expressions:

A subsequent generation will bring forth new virtuosos. The sounds pass by, the impressions remain. "A thing of beauty" not only is, but also gives "a joy for ever."

Een volgend geslacht zal nieuwe virtuozen voortbrengen. De geluiden gaan voorbij, de indrukken blijven. "A thing of beauty" is niet alleen, maar geeft ook "a joy for ever." (126)

Huet's explication of Endymion's opening line went considerably beyond the rather obvious and superficial value placed upon it as an ideal in composition or as a description of aesthetic pleasure. The emphasis on mortality and mutability was astute, complementing major themes in Keats's poem. However, linking "A thing of beauty" to literary regeneration, so to speak, presupposed a provocative aspect of beauty, its inspirational value for the artist.

Later in his lecture, Busken Huet returned to Endymion and briefly discussed the plot:

Keats loves the sublime. The surrounding nature is the reflection of it to him. In his Endymion the loving Queen of Night becomes gradually the

stainless Muse, who appears to the poet occasionally in dream visions, grants him her favor a few times on earth, and finally takes him with her to the heavens.

Keats bemint het verhevene. De omringende natuur is hem daarvan de afspiegeling. In zijn Endymion wordt de liefhebbende Nachtvorstin allengs de vlekkelooze Muze, die den dichter bijwijlen in droomgezigten verschijnt; op aarde hem eene enkele maal hare gunsten schenkt; en ten laatste hem met zich naar den hemel voert. (129)

Huet's allegorical interpretation equated Endymion with the poet and Cynthia / the Indian Maid with the poetic process. It is fair to assume that Huet considered Endymion's, and thus the poet's, quest after beauty to be the fulfillment of the poem's opening line. Huet had commented at the beginning of his lecture on the dynamic implications of beauty that were inherent in the line, stressing the sense in which beauty "gives" joy and linking that with artistic creation. His approach to the narrative made it clear that he appreciated that Endymion could be approached as some sort of comment on poetry itself and the creative toil of the poet.

Though this summary of Endymion was made only in passing, with Hyperion receiving far more attention (130-35), the impact of Huet's remarks must not be lightly dismissed.³ The success of Huet's lecture tour and the subsequent reprinting of "Drie Voorwaarden" in 1879 and 1880 meant that his views had received considerable exposure and that access to the text was relatively easy. During the 1880's there was no comparable formal, public discussion of Keats's poetry in general, and Huet's lecture must have remained something of a

source in Dutch for basic information on Keats. In addition, when Van Lennep's much admired translation of Hyperion appeared, "Drie Voorwaarden" was referred to and discussed in the notes. Van Lennep's comments on Endymion agreed more or less with those of Busken Huet:

For the young Keats the creation outside man had been, up to now, almost the only source of poetry. In "Endymion" it is, in the chaste Moon, the symbol of the sublime, that is not conquered by the youth until after hard struggle In "Endymion" the deep, green sea is the voice of the greatest secrets.

Voor den jongen Keats was de schepping buiten den mensch, tot nu toe, bijna de eenige bron van dichtkunst geweest. In den "Endymion" is zij, in de kuische Maan, het symbool van het verhevene, dat door den jongeling niet dan na harden strijd veroverd wordt In den "Endymion" is de diepe groene zee de stem der grootste geheimenissen. (58)

Later in this same note, Van Lennep interpreted Clymene in Hyperion as the Muse of Keats's early poetry, "the voice of nature in her soft, melancholic tones" ('de stem der natuur in hare zacht-melankolieke tonen' 60), which he was outgrowing by the time that he began to write Hyperion. Van Lennep believed that there was a clear pattern of poetic maturation in Keats away from an early enthusiasm for external nature as the subject of his poetry toward an emphasis on the self.

Van Lennep was focusing upon a very important theme running through Keats's poetry, poetic maturing. That is, Van Lennep discerned in Keats a preoccupation with the poetic vocation that kept emerging as a subject in his poetry.

Endymion was representative of an early stage in Keats's poetic evolution during which he depended upon objects for poetic inspiration. By the time that he wrote Hyperion, Keats was rejecting external inspiration in favor of a more internal focus, a reliance upon imagination rather than nature for appropriate material for poetry.

The importance of landscape in Keats's poetry had been discussed shortly before the appearance of both Van Lennep's translation and Busken Huet's lecture by the eminent Danish literary historian Georg Brandes in the fourth volume of Die Hauptströmungen der Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, an authorized translation into German of his work in Danish.⁴ In fact, Busken Huet mentioned this volume, devoted entirely to English Romanticism with individual chapters on each of the major Romantic writers, in "Drie Voorwaarden" (127) as, presumably, one of his sources on Keats.⁵ Die Hauptströmungen was the widely admired Continental reference work for comparative literary history in much of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Brandes defined English Romanticism as exemplifying Naturalism or a "realism" (7) founded upon an intense love of nature: "The English poets, one and all, are observers, lovers, worshippers of nature" (6). In the chapter devoted to Keats, Brandes referred to the young poet as "the most fragrant flower of English Naturalism" (137) and discussed at length what he called Keats's "all-embracing sensuousness" (141):

Naturally the senses of hearing and sight provided him with a much greater proportion of his imagery than the inferior, less noble senses. He had a musician's love of music and a painter's eye for variations of light and colour. And for all the different kinds of sound and smell and taste and sensations of touch, he possessed a store of words which any of the greatest poets might have envied. In short, he was by nature endowed with qualities which in combination, and in their full development, constituted supreme capacity to perceive and to reproduce all the beauty of nature. (139-40)

Brandes cited from a number of Keats's poems in support of his approach, considering Shelley's tribute in Adonais to be particularly fitting:

We search the history of literature in vain for a parallel to this elegy. It is instant transfiguration after death--a poetic transfiguration of a purely naturalistic and purely human kind. To Shelley, Keats's true apotheosis was what he expresses in the words: "He is made one with Nature." (147)

Brandes' approach to Keats was, admittedly, rather florid. Nevertheless, he did recognize the importance that Keats attached to the imagination: "Keats, as poet, recognises no truth of the kind that means improvement or exclusion; but he has an almost religious faith in imagination as the source of truth" (138). Whatever Keats's affinities for the sensual world and nature, Brandes thought Keats "more of an artist" than the other English Romantics. Nature and art were not at all in conflict. Keats's genius lay in his superlative ability to integrate the two in his poetry.

In comparison with all the attention given to Hyperion during this period, Endymion, except for its opening line,

received little comment. The appeal of the statement "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" was certainly part of the growth of aestheticism during the second half of the nineteenth century, what would eventually be reduced to the tag "l' art pour l' art."⁶ The comments of Busken Huet and Van Lennep indicated that the two prominent Dutch admirers of Keats found a degree of allegory in the poem and associated it with the poetic process. Brandes, who may be considered with some justice as perhaps the Continental authority on comparative Romantic literature during the period for a German-reading public, praised Keats for his sensuously expressive, consummately artistic poetry, not only inspired by nature, but also reflecting an almost pious respect for the creative role of the imagination.

All these considerations suggest something of the general appeal of Endymion for Gorter as he conceived Mei, the narrative of which described the progress of the young, child-like Mei, a personification of the month May, through a specifically Dutch landscape.⁷ Her love and quest for the blind Balder, a seeming conflation of the Germanic god and Apollo that represented the absolute self-absorption of the artist, was described in the second section. Though Mei eventually found Balder, he rejected her, and the final section of the poem described her reunion with the, at that point, dramatized poet-narrator, whose last act in the poem was to preside over Mei's burial.

KLOOS, VERWEY, AND GORTER

When the first section of Gorter's Mei appeared in the February 1889 issue of De Nieuwe Gids, almost no one other than a few of the members of De Nieuwe Gids circle even knew that Gorter was writing poetry (Endt in Stuivering 166-67). As the poet Jacob Groot has observed, Gorter's emergence into Dutch literary life occurred at an opportune moment and indicated a certain deliberateness:

He began to write at a moment that the literary ideals of De Nieuwe Gids were just coming into vogue, but at the same time were still creating a stir; while Kloos and Verwey became "famous" and then also promptly fell out, Gorter was still hardly taking part in literary life. He studied, cycled, played the new English sports tennis and cricket (which he would lead in international competition), and wrote.

Hij begon te schrijven op een moment dat de literaire idealen van De Nieuwe Gids al zo'n beetje in zwang waren geraakt, maar toch ook nog wel stof deden opwaaien; terwijl Kloos en Verwey "beroemd" werden, en dan ook prompt ruzie kregen, nam Gorter nog nauwelijks aan het literaire leven deel. Hij studeerde, fietste, beoefende de nieuwe Engelse sporten tennis en cricket (waarin hij het tot international zou brengen), en schreef. (28-29)

The young Gorter would have been recognized, if at all, as a talented amateur sports figure who had been studying classics at the University of Amsterdam. He was a talented scholar and a prominent member of the University debating organization U.N.I.C.A. Far better educated than Kloos or Verwey, Gorter had attended the gymnasium, with its explicit academic orientation, rather than the Hoogere Burgerschool in

which the other two had received a less rigorous, more generally oriented education. During the period in which he was writing Mei, Gorter completed doctoral study. He had to submit two dissertations. The first, apparently a general discussion of Greek poetry, was rejected in April 1889, a month after Mei was published, presumably because of its controversial approach. Very little about the work is known other than what can be inferred from a Dutch translation of Gorter's Latin preface made by Alphons Diepenbrock (rpt. in Endt 162-67).⁸ In that fragment Gorter's remarks appeared to apply as much to Tachtig as to Greek poetry. Gorter's singling out Homer, Shakespeare, and Zola as the greatest writers (167) gives some idea of the work's approach. With considerable resentment, Gorter submitted another, previously completed study, "De interpretatione Aeschyli metaphorarum," in May and received his doctorate on 2 October 1889.⁹ Shortly thereafter, Gorter was hired to teach classical languages at the gymnasium in Amersfort, a small city near Utrecht.

When Gorter, still a student, was introduced to Albert Verwey and Willem Kloos at a Flanor gathering on 22 June 1886, he met two of the most prominent members of the literary avant-garde.¹⁰ Kloos was the better known of the two young men, having emerged as a poet in 1880 when the magazine Nederland published his dramatic fragment Rhodopis. He had written regularly for another periodical De Amsterdammer since 1881, and his essays "In Memoriam Jacques

Perk" and the "Inleiding" to Perk's poems had established his reputation as a controversial critic. Kloos had also studied classics at the University of Amsterdam and passed his kandidaatsexamen in 1884, the year after Gorter began there. It was not particularly unusual that they did not meet at that time; after all, Kloos was completing his degree and would not have been at the University on a regular basis.

Verwey was a half-year younger than Gorter, and he had gone into business after the H.B.S. instead of attending a university. Nevertheless, Gorter admired him intensely. Verwey's accomplishments were impressive for his age. He was an acknowledged member of the literary elite associated with De Nieuwe Gids. He had collaborated with Kloos, among others, on the poetic hoax Julia. Een verhaal van Sicilië, and again with Kloos on De Onbevoegdheid der Hollandsche Literaire Kritiek (see Luger in Onbevoegdheid 54-61). He was a co-founder of De Nieuwe Gids, and his Persephone had appeared in the new magazine's first issue (October 1885) to the acclaim of at least one reviewer.¹¹ Verwey was only twenty when he published his first collection, Persephone en andere gedichten, at the end of 1885. Sometime during the winter of 1885-86, Gorter gave an lecture about these poems to a group of first-year university students; the text has not survived (Antonissen 46).

The June meeting did not result in immediate close contact between the three writers, but there was a gradual increase in familiarity. Gorter began planning Mei probably

in the summer or fall of 1886 and worked on it in virtual secrecy, reading portions of it to and discussing it with his friend Diepenbrock, through late 1888 (Stuiveling 27). By that point Gorter knew Verwey and Kloos well enough to address them in correspondence with the familiar "Amice" greeting and intimate "jij" form of the second-person pronoun.¹² Soon after finishing his first draft of Mei on 15 November 1888, Gorter read the first section to Verwey and sent Kloos, who had fled to London in 1888 following the breakdown of his friendship with Verwey, a copy. When Kloos returned to Amsterdam in December 1888, Gorter made a point of reading it to him personally.¹³ As word spread about the new poem, Frederik van Eeden, another member of De Nieuwe Gids editorial board, invited Gorter to his home in Bussum during the New Year holiday to read Mei to a small circle of friends (Endt in Stuiveling 172-73).

Arrangements were made for the inclusion of Mei's opening book in the February 1889 De Nieuwe Gids (345-83). In March the entire work was published. Kloos and Van Eeden commented approvingly in the April issue of their magazine. Kloos's remarks were brief, but enthusiastic in his column "Kroniek," calling Mei "a treasury of beauty, inexhaustible as Nature" ('een schatkamer van schoonheid, onuitputtelijk als de Natuur' 157). Van Eeden's discussion was article-length, entitled "Gorter's Verzen" (112-37; rpt. Studies 1:73-104):

Lately, in our land the sound, a new sound, of

someone who spoke has been heard. That is an event in our country, the good, loquacious Netherlands, where as long as fifty, as long as one hundred years without a pause nothing other than chat, and only seldom pleasant chat, was heard.

Voor kort is in ons land het geluid gehoord, een nieuw geluid, van iemand die sprak. Dat is een gebeurtenis in ons land, het goede praatrijk Nederland, waar wel vijftig, wel honderd jaren achtereen niet anders dan praten en nog maar zelden aardig praten gehoord werd. (119)

Van Eeden castigated the bulk of contemporary Dutch literature throughout his article. Objections to Gorter's poem were comparable to the contemporary criticism faced by the great English Romantic poets Blake, Shelley, and Keats (123). Interestingly, Van Eeden defended Mei against charges of obscurity by citing Robert Browning, "perhaps the greatest, but certainly the most obscure of all living poets, who is more difficult to understand than Shakespeare" ('misschien de grootste, maar zeker de duisterste van alle levende poëten, die moeilijker te verstaan is dan Shakespeare' 124).

Even the conservative press expressed approval. Since Potgieter's departure from De Gids in 1865, the magazine's coverage of new literature had grown steadily more reactionary, yet J. N. van Hall, the De Gids editor who reviewed Mei, was impressed and relatively appreciative in spite of reservations over the poem's modernity (185-96).¹⁴ Gorter's reputation as one of the best young poets in the Tachtig movement was confirmed with his first published work.

Alone among the Tachtigers, Lodewijk van Deysse was

rather unimpressed with Mei. In a letter to Kloos dated 7 December 1888, Van Deyssel expressed his reservations after reading the work in manuscript:

I have now also read Mei in its entirety. Be so good and let it be perfectly indifferent to you, but my opinion concerning it is not changed; namely, I find it not great and also not full of emotion. Certainly pretty, but pretty whistling or humming, as the poet himself says in the beginning.

'Mei' heb ik nu ook heelemaal gelezen. Wees zoo goed en laat het u volkomen onverschillig zijn, maar mijne meening daarover is niet veranderd, namelijk ik vind het niet groot en ook niet emotie-vol. Wèl mooi, maar mooi gefluit of geneurie, zoo als de dichter zelf in den aanvang zegt. (rpt. in Endt 198)

However, when Gorter's next volume of poetry, Verzen, appeared in September 1890, Van Deyssel became an avid supporter. This collection contained a number of radically experimental, extremely subjective poems that became known as Gorter's "sensitieve verzen." They were brilliant, detailed sketches of vivid sensory experiences, what Reinder Meijer has described as attempts to render "individual sensations" (244). Trying to explain Gorter's technique in such poems, a number of which were initially published in De Nieuwe Gids, Kloos coined one of his most famous slogans in his October 1890 De Nieuwe Gids "Literaire Kroniek" column, remarking "that art should be the most individual of all expressions of the most individual of all emotions" ('dat kunst de aller-individueelste expressie van de aller-individueelste emotie moet zijn' 144). Van Deyssel sprang to Gorter's defense in the February 1891 issue with a remarkable essay that was

itself an experimental prose piece written in a style similar in some ways to Gorter's "sensitieve verzen" (418-28).¹⁵

Gorter's poetry appeared regularly in De Nieuwe Gids through the August 1893 issue, and there was periodic discussion of making Gorter a co-editor. Kloos, who had considered himself the vital mentor of Perk and Verwey before Gorter, may have thought that this collaboration might prove similar. However, Kloos was becoming increasingly difficult and extreme in his relations with his colleagues on the magazine's staff. Though he wanted to leave his teaching position in Amersfort in order to pursue his literary interests more actively, Gorter was wary of too close involvement with a magazine that might restrict his outside publication opportunities (Stuiveling 34-36). Furthermore, Kloos's alcoholism and increasing emotional distress undermined the extent to which anyone could really participate on De Nieuwe Gids, and strains between the other collaborators on the magazine began to develop. After 1890, Verwey had refused to participate on the editorial board, and P. L. Tak, a socialist journalist, had replaced him. Van Eeden and Van der Goes, the other editors and early socialists as well, had been arguing over politics with Van Deyssel in the pages of De Nieuwe Gids since 1890.¹⁶

Kloos seized control of the magazine beginning with the October 1893 issue and declared himself sole editor. It was a unilateral move, and the other co-editors were outraged as Kloos began publishing poems addressed to them as well as

other former friends and associates that charged them with betrayal and alleged a decline in the literary merit of their work or in the insight of their criticism. The attack on Gorter, "Tegen Herman Gorter," in the October issue was a particularly bitter example:

Oh quasi-genial and wishfully manly,
But at bottom weak and stupidly insolent
Little being, child-weak, but not a child.

O quasi-geniaal en manlijk-willend,
Maar au-fond zwak en idioot brutaal
Wezentje, kind-zwak, maar geen kind. (152)

Gorter had done nothing to provoke the invective, yet he responded in a letter to Diepenbrock as though the criticism contained a truth:

The chastisement is harsh, but for a great measure deserved. I have strayed in my fervent seeking after the true and certain in order to describe that in literature, and I have tampered with the uncertain

As far as Kloos's hatred of me goes, that is unfounded, as you know. To be friendly to everyone, that is in keeping with the general truths that I believe to have found.

De straaft is hard, maar voor een groot deel verdiend. Ik heb gedwaald in mijn vurig zoeken naar het ware en zekere om dat te beschrijven in de litteratuur en ik heb mij vergrepen aan het onzekere

Wat Kloos' haat tegen mij betreft, die is ongegrond, zooals je weet. Tegen iedereen vriendelijk te zijn, dat strookt met de algemeene waarheden die ik geloof gevonden te hebben. (rpt. in Endt 348-49)

In a sense, Gorter was the last Tachtiger, and the break in publication of De Nieuwe Gids after the February 1894 issue can be seen as the unofficial end of the Beweging van Tachtig

as a cohesive movement. Verwey, Van Eeden, and Van der Goes tried to revive the magazine, but tensions between Verwey and Van Eeden made it impossible (Luger 3). De Nieuwe Gids reappeared in May 1894, reorganized, with Kloos in de facto editorial control, but it lost intellectual stature quite rapidly.

Gorter became a committed socialist and, later, a leader in the Dutch communist movement (see Liagre Bohll). In an 1897 article, "Kritiek op de litteraire beweging van 1880 in Holland," which was published in the socialist journal De Nieuwe Tijd, Gorter denounced the Tachtig movement as too bourgeois and individualistic and dismissed his own involvement in it as a youthful excess. The Beweging van Tachtig had been proclaimed dead by one of its foremost talents.¹⁷

PERSEPHONE and "GANYMEDES OP AARDE"

Gorter's choice of Keats's Endymion as a model for Mei had to do in part with the example set by Verwey's Persephone and Kloos's "Ganymedes op aarde." Persephone had been Verwey's very successful debut poem, the longest poetry selection in the inaugural issue of De Nieuwe Gids, and the title poem of Verwey's first collection. Though it is impossible, given the absence of an extant text or even a reminiscence by someone who had attended, to know what Gorter discussed in his Verwey lecture during the winter of 1885-86,

it may be supposed that Verwey's longest and best-known poem to date must have figured rather substantially in Gorter's remarks. Kloos's "Ganymedes op aarde," which contained most of the text that was included later in the second book of Okeanos, appeared in the February 1886 issue, the third, of De Nieuwe Gids, and four months later, in June of that year, the three young men met for the first time.

Gorter's Mei fit perfectly into the pattern established by the two other Keats-inspired poems. In each, a happy child-figure, associated with the poet, was described in a paradisiacal landscape during spring or summer.¹⁸ All three poems contained, to varying degrees, pseudo-classical elements. These were most sustained in Verwey's and Kloos's works, as a consequence of their mythological subject matter. Gorter had considerably more freedom in Mei because his narrative, though exploiting various mythological conventions and characters, was basically original and assertively Dutch in character. For instance, the setting for the poem was explicitly the "garden / of Holland" ('tuin / Van Holland' 7), and Gorter opened Mei with a characteristically Dutch scene:¹⁹

A new spring and a new sound:
 I want this song to sound like the whistle
 That I often heard before a summer night
 In an old town, along the canal--
 In the house it was dark, but the still street
 Collected twilight, in the air gleamed late
 Yet light, there fell a golden bright shine
 Over the facades in my window sash.

Een nieuwe lente en een nieuw geluid:
 Ik wil dat dit lied klinkt als het gefluit,

Dat ik vaak hoorde voor een zomernacht
 In een oud stadje, langs de watergracht--
 In huis was 't donker, maar de stille straat
 Vergaarde schemer, aan de lucht blonk laat
 Nog licht, er viel een gouden blanke schijn
 Over de gevels in mijn raamkozijn. (5)

In Mei, the classical elements, transplanted into the indigenous locale with a fairy-tale deftness, complemented, but did not govern, the narrative. Mei appeared in a boat surrounded by "a young Triton" ('een jonge Triton' 7), mermaids, and nymphs. Aurora was present at her birth (11), and Cynthia, her mother, sailed the sky in "her nightboat" ('haar nachtboot' 12). In fact, Gorter's use of mythology was rather eclectic. The god with whom Mei fell in love, Balder, was Germanic or Norse, and in the second section of the poem, when she visited the home of the gods, Mei went to Valhalla rather than Olympus.

The youth of Mei, Persephone, and Ganymedes accorded conspicuously with Kloos's prophecy at the beginning of his famous "Inleiding": "Whom the gods love, they take young to themselves" ('Wien de goden liefhebben, nemen zij jong tot zich' in Perk 52). What had been a eulogistic maxim, with a probable allusion to Keats as well (see 28-30 of this essay), at the beginning of the Tachtig period became a characteristic attribute of poet-identified figures in the allegories of Kloos, Verwey, and Gorter. In "Ganymedes op aarde," Kloos cropped, so to speak, the narrative in such a way that all references to Ganymedes' translation to Olympus were omitted. Instead, Kloos focused on Ganymedes amid his

herds and described the "festival in the open field" ('Feesttij in het open veld' 39) or frolic of the young boy and his animals. Ganymedes gambolled perpetually among the cattle; Zeus never arrived; and Olympus never replaced the fields.

The Ganymedes of Kloos's poem was explicitly a human child:

He was a child of men, reared
By men, and like men mortal.

Hij was een kind der menschen, opgevoed
Bij menschen, en als menschen sterfelijk. (1-2)²⁰

To raise the issue of mortality was certainly appropriate to the Ganymedes myth, but it also introduced a vaguely plaintive tone into the poem, contrasting childhood with death. That observation was made all the more poignant by a description of the boy's suggestively divine beauty:

And if sometimes by chance a cunning faun
Or wild satyr, on that same path
Fallen, cautiously pushed apart the boughs
With the hand and two sparkling eyes peeped
Through the dark green leaves, then he certainly
thought,
Surprised by the sight of that beautiful face,
That glowed like daylight in that dusk,
To see a young God, a son of Zeus,
Hermes or Phoebus himself--and tripped further.--

En als soms bij geval een sluwe faun²¹
Of wilde sater, op datzelfde pad
Geraakt, behoedzaam met de hand de takken
Uiteenschoof en twee vonklende oogen gluurden
Door 't donkergroen geblaêrt, dan dacht die wel,
Verrast door de'aanblik van dat schoon gelaat,
Dat in die schemering als daglicht gloorde,
Een jongen God te zien, een zoon van Zeus,
Hermes of Phoibos-zelf--en tripte verder.--
(20-28)

Within the circumscribed narrative of "Ganymedes op aarde," the boy remained mortal, his beauty all the more intense because it would fade and he would eventually die. Of course, Ganymedes' eventual translation to Olympus, the realm of the immortal, unchanging gods, could be surmised from the poem's title. The story of Ganymedes was really one of fortunate arrested development; that is, Ganymedes would be spared death by presumably eternal childhood.

In Persephone, youth was confronted directly by death, and the result was a clear advance in maturity. The nineteen-line introduction to Verwey's poem, which stands outside the numbering of the poem proper, opened with a simile likening the birth of Persephone to the natural cycle of vegetative regeneration:

Persephone, Zeus's and Demeter's child,
Born as a blossom is born,
That sweetly hanging in the smile of the sun,
Opens--.

Perséphone, Zeus' en Deméters kind,
Geboren als een bloesem wordt geboren,
Die lieflijk hangende in den lach der zon,
Onluikt--. (1-4)

Verwey was taking advantage of the traditional association of Persephone with spring and foreshadowing the effect that her annual return from the Underworld would have on nature. As a personification of the vegetative cycle, the Persephone figure represented the alternation of life and death in nature, organic decay or, to follow Verwey's introductory simile, the inevitable fading of the blossom.

At least in Verwey's version of the myth, Persephone's encounter with Aïdoneus, god of the Underworld, was what might be called a "fortunate fall." Though the breaking off of Persephone, like that of "Ganymedes op aarde," left the resolution of the title-character's fate outside the action described in the poem, Persephone's eventual return to Demeter and Enna, the world of the living, could be predicted. That Verwey conceived Persephone's journey into the Underworld as essentially positive was reflected in her response to Aïdoneus' sudden appearance:

And on her lips lay his name and along
 Her arm the chilly flower with the odor of death,
 And in her eye the dawning laugh,
 With which Day greets his pale brother Night
 Silently at the entrance of the universe.

En op haar lippen lag zijn naam en langs
 Haar arm de kille bloem met doodengeur,
 En in haar oog de schemerende lach,
 Waarmee de Dag zijn bleeken broeder Nacht
 Zwijgende groet aan de' ingang van 't heelal.
 (85-89)

Persephone's response was not terror, but a "dawning laugh" ('schemerende lach' 87) that signaled the beginning of understanding. The quality of this increase in knowledge was conveyed in the metaphor involving day and night, brothers rather than opponents, whose contact in dawn was heralded by a greeting, not a conquest. Death's relationship to life, we may presume, was similar, and when Persephone took the reins of Aïdoneus' chariot in Hades (3.80-83), it was obvious that the effect of her experience was somehow enriching. The child of the poem's first two books had become a woman.

MEI AND ENDYMION

The stories of Ganymedes and Persephone concerned contact with a god that resulted in some sort of gain. As it became clear in Okeanos, Ganymedes was associated with the poet, and his eventual transplantation to Olympus represented a retreat from the mortal, everyday concerns, which were central in "Ganymedes op aarde," into the turmoil of the creative process, at once both exhilaratingly inspiring and frighteningly isolating. In Verwey's Persephone, the descent into the Underworld could also be connected with the inner struggle of the poetic consciousness and with the resulting potential for creative growth. However, in Gorter's Mei, involvement with a god, associated allegorically with the egotism of the creative consciousness, proved essentially ineffectual, and the death of the title character Mei at the end of the poem was a recognition of nature's constraint on transcendent aesthetic aspirations.

Kloos's and Verwey's poems reflected the influence of Keats's Hyperion, which had broken off in the middle of Apollo's deification, sharing its emphasis on the poet's accession to inspiration. Gorter, on the other hand, turned to Keats's Endymion, an allegorical narrative which focused on the poet's reconciliation of earthly concerns with the sublimity of poetic inspiration. Endymion was framed by seasonal transition, opening in springtime and closing with autumn. On its simplest narrative level, Mei concerned the

passing of a month. Mei, the title character, was an explicit personification:

Who was she? One of the twelve sisters,
Who stand on the sun, hand in hand, alone,
Like the game of children in a small ring.

They are the blond months who stand there,
All born when the mother-moon
Was very heavy on a starry winter night.

Wie was ze? Van de twalef zusters één,
Die op de zon staan, hand in hand, alleen,
Als 't spel van kindren in een kleinen kring.

Dat zijn de blonde maanden die daar staan,
Gelijk geboren toen de moedermaan
Heel zwaar was in een starr'gen winternacht. (11)

The following verse paragraph identified her mother, the moon, as Cynthia (12), who was the object of Endymion's affections in Keats's poem.

In Endymion there were three main characters, Endymion himself, Cynthia, and the Indian Maid, a man and two women. The pattern was reversed in Mei where the three main characters, Mei, Balder, and the poet-narrator, were a girl and two men. Endymion fell in love with the goddess Cynthia, Mei with the god Balder. Endymion's quest, which occurred in the middle two books of the narrative, ended inconclusively; upon his re-emergence from the underground, the desired union with Cynthia remained unattained. Mei's search for Balder, related in the second section of the three-part poem, ended with her rejection by him. Upon Endymion's return to a natural landscape, he fell in love with the Indian Maid, presumed to be human but actually the goddess Cynthia in .

disguise. When Mei joined the poet-narrator, actually dramatized only in the final section of the poem, she recognized Balder in his voice:

'You are like him, like him, in your voice.'
 And then she kissed me, but kissed him
 On my mouth, and then on my eyes,
 But her eyes haunted the heights.

'Gij zijt als hij, als hij, in uwe stem.'
 En toen kuste ze mij, maar kuste hém
 Op míjnen mond, en toen op mijne ogen,
 Maar hare ogen waarden in den hoge. (159)

Both Endymion and Mei ended with the worship of a divine being in human form.

According to his introductory song, overheard by Mei at the beginning of the poem's second section, Balder, the bright god of the sun, had awakened in blindness one day. Music alone provided relief: "Draught of music always and never enough" ('Drank van muziek altijd en nooit genoeg' 71). Verwey's explanation of Mei's rejection by Balder has become the classic interpretation. In his Inleiding tot de nieuwe Nederlandsche dichtkunst, Verwey wrote that he considered the poem,

the story of how the transitory Mei-beauty wanted to unite herself, by wedding with the blind god Balder, the world-soul that pours itself out the most immediately in music, but can indeed be depicted by nothing; and how she is rejected.

het verhaal van hoe de vergankelijke Mei-schoonheid zich vereenigen wilde door te huwen met den blinden god Balder, de wereldziel die in de muziek het meest onmiddellijk zich uitstort, maar inderdaad door niets kan worden afgebeeld; en hoe zij wordt afgewezen. (109)

Balder represented something more than simply music as such. According to his final speech, what Balder meant by music was a rather more comprehensive concept, "Zielsleven" or the "Life of the soul" (143), representing nothing external to the soul:

it is not words,
It is not things, it is not sounds, no song
Represents the soul's movements enough.
Everything is image, is image of it, and sooner
Or later falls together into dust, it remains,
Whatever also falls around it and drifts away.

't zijn woorden niet,
't Zijn dingen niet, 't zijn klanken niet, geen
 lied
Verbeelt de zielsbewegingen genoeg.
Alles is beeld, is beeld van haar, en vroeg
Of laat valt het inéén in stof, zíj blijft,
Wat er ook om haar valt en henedrijft. (144)

Interestingly, Gorter apparently developed Balder's conception of music out of Verwey's paeon to the soul in Cor Cordium.

Published in the August 1886 issue of De Nieuwe Gids (469-77), Verwey's poem was something of a meditation on Shelley's chosen epitaph:

Soul of my Soul! Life, that lives in me,
 Many-named Mystery, that I call
My I, my Self, my Being,--.

Ziel van myn Ziel! Leven, dat in my woont,
 Veelnamige Mysterie, die ik noem
Myn Ik, myn Zelf, myn Wezen,-- . (1-3)²²

According to the poem, the soul of the poet was blind to nature, and poetry was what the poet's utterance revealed about his soul (Van Eyck in Gorter, Mei x; see also Knuvelder

4:197-98):

There lives no other God! You are alone.

Because who loves you, loves not the world;
Worlds come and go--you remain:
And with you remains what you propel to us in the
heart,
And all which we, in your honor, say in the
Song.

Daar leeft geen andre God! Gy zyt alleen.

Want wie ú mint, bemint de wereld niet:
Werelden worden en vergaan--gy blyft:
En mét u blyft wat ge ons in 't harte dryt,
En al wat we, ú ter eer, zeggen in 't Lied.
(61-72)

The conclusion of the blind Balder's speech dismissing Mei at the end of the poem's second section was very similar:

Who is thus his soul, is himself a God.
I am my soul, I am the only God.

It is always the same, it knows no ebb
And flow, it is eternal, alone, it is,
It lives through its own conception.

Wie dús zijn ziel is, is zichzelf een God.
Ik ben mijn ziel, ík ben de een'ge God.

Zij is altijd gelijk, zík kent geen ebben
En vloed, zij is eeuwig, alleen, zij ís,
Zij leeft door eigene ontvangenis. (144)

Gorter's Balder reflected strongly the influence of Verwey's belief in the utter self-involvement of the poet's soul as it communicated itself in poetry.

With this in mind, the significance of Mei's death at the end of the poem is more readily apparent. A personification of a month associated with the rebirth of nature, Mei represented the inspiration of nature, inherently

beautiful, but fleetingly transient. Almost as soon as she appeared in the poem, her fate was foreshadowed by the funeral procession of her sister April:

What is it that those dark men bear
 In cowl and habit, hear, hear, they wail
 As over someone dead; that one lies on the bier.
 She is still young and in the blond hair
 That hangs lie the flowers of April.
 Woe, woe, it is her sister.

Wat is het dat die donkre mannen dragen
 In monnikskap en pij, hoor, hoor, ze klagen
 Als om een dode; dié ligt op de baar.
 Zij is nog jong en in het blonde haar
 Dat hangt, liggen de bloemen van April.
 Wee, wee, het is haar zuster. (20)

Observing Mei's grief, the poet remarked that death was to be trusted, not to be feared. It was part of a natural process. Mei's mother was, after all, the moon, a traditional symbol of the transient and mutable. Gorter made the point explicit by appending a meditation on the inexorable life cycle to the passage describing Mei's birth and parentage:

One thing is sad and causes soft lamentation
 Always round about the earth, a haze faint
 And light around that body: it is succession
 Of being and not being and that drives
 Every thing, souls and flowers, to that realm,
 Where it is white and still and dead alike.

Eén ding is droevig en maakt zacht geklaag
 Altijd om d' aarde heen, een nevel vaag
 En luchtig om dat lijf: 't is wisseling
 Van zijn en niet zijn and dat ieder ding,
 Zielen en bloemen, drijven naar dat rijk,
 Waar 't wit en stil is en den dood gelijk. (12)

The immediately preceding verse paragraph described Cynthia sailing happily around the earth in her "nachtboot" and her

adoration by the creatures below.

Long before Mei began her quest for Balder, Gorter had made the very strong suggestion that her death was both inevitable and natural. Consequently, the eventual frustration of her desire for Balder was not the cause of her death, but, rather, a revelation leading to an acquiescence like that of Endymion at the end of Keats's poem. Incidentally, Balder's song, appropriately the most overtly musical portion of the entire poem, was modeled metrically on the Indian Maid's song in Book 4 of Endymion. Of the song's thirty stanzas, the last consecutive nineteen matched the Keatsian pattern of a six-line stanza with a long line following two short lines. This was hardly a fleeting reminiscence of Endymion, and the song concluded with an explicit echo of the last stanza in the Indian Maid's song addressed to Sorrow:

There is not one
No, no, not one
But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid.
Thou art her mother,
And her brother,
Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade.
(4.285-90)

Rejoicing in his "pale, still, solitude" ('bleke, stille, eenzaamheid' 73), Balder ended his song:

There is not one,
No no, not one
Who knows like me its deserts--
It is my cell,
My father's house,
My citadel, my heavenly tabernacle.

Er is niet één,
 Neen neen, niet één
 Die zo als ik haar woestenijen kent--
 Zij is mijn kluis,
 Mijn vaderhuis,
 Mijn stad, mijn hemeltent. (73)

The effect on Mei was as instantaneous as that on Endymion.
 She was immediately in love.

Both songs were pivotal moments in the respective poems.
 Though he could not know it, Endymion had found his goddess
 in human form, and his instinctive preference for her,
 despite the accompanying misgivings and some seemingly adverse
 heavenly signs, resulted in the crucial revelation,

I have clung
 To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen
 Or felt but a great dream! Oh, I have been
 Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
 Against all elements, against the tie
 Of mortals each to each, against the blooms
 Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
 Of heroes gone! Against his proper glory
 Has my own soul conspired. (4.638-44)

Allegorically speaking, embracing the Indian Maid was a
 descent into what Keats had called "the agonies, the strife /
 Of human hearts" (123-25) earlier in "Sleep and Poetry."
 Endymion would soon be denied union with his apparently human
 love, the Indian Maid describing that painful prohibition
 with the exclamation, "Ah, bitter strife! / I may not be thy
 love (4.751-52), an apt summary of the severe psychological
 distress that Endymion would suffer. Contemplating the
 consequences of bidding farewell to his love, Endymion
 predicted his own ensuing death:

Night will strew
 On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,
 And with them shall I die, nor much it grieves
 To die when summer dies on the cold sward.
 Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
 Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,
 Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour roses.
 My kingdom's at its death, and just it is
 That I should die with it. (4.933-41)

Of course, the sudden turn of events at the end of the poem, the "unlooked-for change" (4.992) that resulted from the revelation of the divine in the human, meant that Endymion was spared, yet the juxtaposition of pain with joy, of doom with salvation was extremely important, representing the Keatsian paradigm for poetic development. Hence, in "Sleep and Poetry" the turn to "the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts" was connected with a vision of the creative consciousness, the "car / And steeds with streamy manes" (124-27), and in Hyperion Apollo's deification was likened to the "swift convulse" of a death "into life" (3.129-30). Gortor's poem closed with actual, biological death, realizing the seasonal metaphor of Endymion's self-imagined demise. In a sense, Mei's fate could be interpreted allegorically as the fulfillment of Endymion's prediction:

There never lived a mortal man who bent
 His appetite beyond his natural sphere
 But starved and died. (4.646-48)

After realising that Balder was unattainable, Mei was able to confront her own inevitable end, if not exactly with Endymion's "deathful glee" (4.945), then very much in the spirit of his final, stoical pondering "On things for which

no wording can be found" (4.962). There were no protests or complaints. Mei returned to the Dutch countryside after her ethereal journey and quietly lived out her remaining period. The dramatized poet-narrator took her to what was presumably the village alluded to at the beginning of the poem and watched over her decline:

And it became in her as a wood in winter,
 In terrible winter, when the wind
 Blows vainly there and the stiff trunks and
 branches
 Harden themselves roughly and around the open spots
 Frozen grass, they stand like stone and the moon
 Its beam like ice pours in the arbor.

En 't werd in haar zoals een woud in winter,
 In vreselijken winter, als de wind er
 Vergeefs blaast en de stijve stamme' en takken
 Zich harden ruw en om de open vakken
 Bevroren gras, als steen staan en de maan
 Zijn straal als ijs stort in de bomenpaân. (158)

The happy child of the poem's opening section was dying without lament, and Gorter evoked an extraordinary pathos and sadness by allowing the changes to speak for themselves. Instead of attempting to describe psychological pain or anguish as Keats had in the final book of Endymion, Gorter displaced it onto the sympathetic reader by means of a simple, affecting account of the death of a child:

And tenderly began the head to bend over
 When the fullest hour had been filled, and sinking
 Dreamily down the lashes, very gradually.

En teer begon het hoofd over te neigen
 Toen 't volste uur gevuld was, en te zijgen
 De wimpers droom'rig neer, heel langzaam aan.
 (172)

The fairy-tale nature of the poem's opening had given way to the inevitable consequences of the biological cycle. Contact with Balder, representing the complete self-absorption of aesthetic creativity, played absolutely no role in determining Mei's death. Art was utterly impassive in and of itself, but the simple grief of the poet who buried Mei at the end of the poem implied that the artist himself was not aloof from human feeling, from the ability to experience the pain while creating beauty.

Shortly after Herman Gorter died on 15 September 1927, Albert Verwey wrote a commemorative article for the Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant in which he hailed Gorter's Mei as the greatest of his works:

The fairy tale of Mei and Balder is not only the longest but also the most charming of the poems which were published by the Nieuwe Gidsers between 1880 and 1890. What we produced for the rest in stories and verses was short and fragmentary. It could be recognized, esteemed, admired; but it remained of secondary importance amidst the poems of different sorts that came into being all around, and it penetrated no further than to a small circle of poets and connoisseurs. Gorter's Mei, on the contrary, was the first and only work that a young poet, under the influence of the Nieuwe-gid-movement, had written in the course of three years: a real story with beginning, middle, and end, a poem in three parts that could captivate and hold, carry along and satisfy; and it was the first and only work in verse that, as much as Van Eedens Kleine Johannes, won admirers in a wide circle of readers.

Het sprookje van Mei en Balder is niet alleen het langste maar ook het bekoorlijkste van de dichtten die door de Nieuwegidsdichters, tusschen 1880 en 1890, werden uitgegeven. Wat wij overigens aan verhalen in verzen gaven, was kort en fragmentarisch. Het kon erkend, gewaardeerd, bewonderd worden; maar het bleef bijzaak temidden

van de andersoortige gedichten die er rondom ontstonden, en het drong niet verder door dan tot een kleine kring van dichters en kunstminnenden. Gorters Mei daarentegen was het eerste en eenige werk dat een jong dichter, onder de invloed van de Nieuwe-gid-beweging, in de loop van drie jaren, geschreven had: een werkelijk verhaal met begin, midden en einde, een gedicht in drie zangen dat boeien kon en vasthouden, meesleepen en bevredigen; en het was het eerste en eenige werk in verzen dat evenzeer als van Eedens Kleine Johannes bewonderaars won in een wijde kring van lezers. (Keuze 220)

Indeed, if you were to ask most Dutch readers today whether they could recall a line of Tachtig poetry, by far the most probable positive response would be the opening line of Mei: "Een nieuwe lente en een nieuw geluid."

Keatsian influence on Dutch literature had begun with the popularization of the simple motto, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." Despite its impact, Van Lennep's Hyperion was only privately published and never available to the general public. Though Kloos's Okeanos and Verwey's Persephone were certainly among those two poets' best-known poems, Verwey was absolutely correct to acknowledge that their exposure, though ample within the literary community, remained modest by mass standards. However, Gorter's Mei, among the great works reflecting Keatsian influence during the period, became one of the two indisputably most popular Tachtig works. The majority of readers, as Verwey was quick to point out despite his praise for the poem, were totally unaware of or unconcerned with Mei's literary signification and its obvious debt to literary tradition (221). They embraced it as a movingly original, authentically Dutch work,

the most sincere compliment that could possibly be paid to the results of a foreign writer's impact on the native literature. A new national classic, in the most unaffected sense of the word, was recognized.

Notes

¹During her discussion of the Ode on Indolence, Helen Vendler commented on the relationship of the three characters in Endymion: "The three spirits, almost indistinguishable each from the other, represent the principal dramatis personae of Endymion replicated in outline: the ambitious youth flanked by two maidens, one Love, the other Poesy, must recall to us Endymion placed between the Indian Maid and Cynthia In short, the Fates here are Keats's doubling of his own dilemma of vocation already debated in Endymion, and the poem represents a dialogue of the embryonic, unformed, languorous, dreaming poetic self with its later envisaged incarnation in accomplished form" (24).

²See whole text of Gorter's 23 March 1889 letter to his uncle K. Gorter in Endt 176; see also Gorter's 1897 and 1905 prefaces to the respective editions of his collected verse, De school der Poëzie, rpt. in Verzamelde lyriek 517-522. For Keats's opinion on Endymion, see his revised 1818 preface to the poem and his letters of 27 February 1818 to John Taylor, of 9 April 1818 to John Reynolds, and of 8 October 1818 to John Hessey (Letters 1:238-39, 266-6 , 373-4).

³In a U.N.I.C.A. debate on 12 June 1884, Gorter referred to Busken Huet as "den koning onzer kritici" ('the king of our critics' rpt. in Endt 68-69).

⁴All references to the Brandes text are from the standard English translation Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature, which appeared 1901-05. The first four volumes appeared in German 1872-76, in Danish 1872-75. According to a 1910 Encyclopedia Britannica entry, "the brilliant novelty" of Brandes' criticism in Die Hauptströmungen attracted widespread attention in Europe: "In his critical work, which extends over a wider field than that of any other living writer, Brandes has been aided by a singularly charming style, lucid and reasonable, enthusiastic without extravagance, brilliant and coloured without affectation" (4:427). Brandes died in 1927.

⁵There is a certain resemblance between Brandes' and Busken Huet's treatments of Keats. Brandes opened his chapter on Keats with two long quotations from Hyperion, Oceanus' and Clymene's speeches in Book 2. Immediately following the quotations, Brandes described the rise of the younger generation of English Romantics, including Keats, Shelley, and Byron, and the displacement of the older writers, like Wordsworth, Scott, and Southey. The controlling metaphor in the passage, obviously suggested by Hyperion, was that of a change in gods (131). Busken Huet devoted much of his commentary on Keats's poetry in "Drie

Voorwaarden" to Hyperion and translated Clymene's speech into Dutch, calling it the "highpoint" ('glanspunt' 135) of the poem; this paralleled rather closely Brandes' judgement that Keats had "surpassed himself" in that passage (131).

⁶Brandes remarked that Keats "may almost be said to have been devoted to art for art's sake" (12).

⁷See Verwey, Keuze 220-21 on how seriously Gorter's depiction of the landscape in Mei could be taken. See also Stuiveling 26-27, Colmjon 289, and Groot 101.

⁸Alphons Diepenbrock became one of the best known Dutch composers of the late nineteenth century. He and Gorter met while students at the University of Amsterdam. Diepenbrock was also a widely published critic. His De Nieuwe Gids articles are reprinted in his Verzamelde Geschriften. See Gravensande for reprints of numerous letters and documents in which Diepenbrock figures for evidence of his influence on De Nieuwe Gids; Kloos dedicated Okeanos to Diepenbrock when it appeared in De Nieuwe Gids in 1893. Diepenbrock was an enthusiastic admirer of French Naturalism; he was also an early, influential Dutch admirer of Richard Wagner. Among his most noted compositions were a Te Deum and his theatrical music. He also composed a number of songs with texts from Perk's poetry. Weevers has suggested that Gorter's use of Germanic mythology in Mei stemmed from Diepenbrock's influence (170). Diepenbrock was Gorter's closest friend and confidant throughout the period during which Mei was composed; see Endt in Stuiveling 184-87.

⁹See rpt. of the University promotion register entry in Endt 195. A concise and informative discussion of the dissertation as well as the controversy surrounding the rejected topic can be found in "Herman Gorter en de klassieke oudheid" by M. F. Fresco in Stuiveling 71-161.

¹⁰See Endt 132 for rpt. of the Flanor minutes from that meeting.

¹¹The praise was issued in an unsigned column, "Nieuwe Tijdschriften" or "New Magazines," in the 18 October 1885 De Amsterdammer; see Luger 35 for a photographic reproduction of the column.

¹²See Endt 155-98 for rpt. of various Gorter letters to Kloos and Verwey.

¹³See Hein Boeken's comment on the reading in a letter to Willem Witsen, a fragment of which is reprinted in Endt 160.

¹⁴See also the unsigned review in the 30-31 May 1889 issue of Het Vaderland and the curious review, dated 20 May

1889, in Los en Vast by Jenny Möllner, apparently a Dutch immigrant to America writing from Oak Tawn, Iowa; both are reprinted in Endt 191-92, 185-88.

¹⁵See Endt 273-75 for Gorter's letter of appreciation to Van Deyssel and the reply. For more on Gorter's technical accomplishments in his "sentieve verzen," see Knuvelder 4:172-75 and Antonissen 84-97. Numerous extracts from articles and letters commenting on Gorter's poetic experiments during this period are reprinted in Endt 181-288.

¹⁶The growing conflict in political values was particularly evident in the February 1882 issue of De Nieuwe Gids, which contained Van Deyssel's critique "Socialisme" (365-96) and Van der Goes supportive "Studies in socialisme" (397-452). Stuiveling's De Nieuwe Gids als geestelijk brandpunt, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1981) is perhaps the best comprehensive treatment of politics and De Nieuwe Gids.

¹⁷De Nieuwe Tijd was founded by Frank van der Goes, one of the original co-founders of De Nieuwe Gids. Gorter reworked his "Kritiek" in 1908-09. Both versions are reprinted in Verzamelde Werken, vol. 3. See Antonissen 199-222 on the background to and the results of Gorter's "Kritiek."

¹⁸See Endt in the 1940 edition of Gorter's Mei xiv-xxi on the allegorical identification of the three major characters with the poet.

¹⁹All references to the text of Mei are drawn from Garmt Stuiveling's 1978 edition. There is no line-numbered edition of Mei; all subsequent citations of the text are accompanied by the relevant page number in Stuiveling.

²⁰All citations of the text are drawn from Verburg's and Prick's reprint of the De Nieuwe Gids text in Okeanos-fragmenten 22-24.

²¹The Verburg text has a period at the end of this line, an obvious typographical error that can be confirmed by comparison with the actual De Nieuwe Gids text.

²²The text is that published in the August 1886 De Nieuwe Gids 469-77.

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