

SATAN AND EVIL

A Study of Milton's Satans  
in Relation to the Problem of Evil  
in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regain'd

A Thesis

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## INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I will attempt, in terms of Milton's presentation of Satan, to contrast the role of evil in Paradise Lost with the role of evil in Paradise Regain'd. Evil, as presented by Milton, may be defined as a rebellion against the hierarchy of God's creation. This hierarchy consists of an ordered system of life stretching from the mineral realm to God, and is governed by a divine decree to the effect that whatever is closer to God in the great chain of being must govern, by natural right, whatever is more distant from God. A failure to obey one's natural superior in this hierarchical conception constitutes rebellion against the Omnipotent. As a result of rebellion the divine harmony of the universe is replaced by a state of chaos. The order of rule is upset. Internally man is governed by passion rather than reason, and externally society and history are governed by tyranny, war and lust.

Although evil, measured in terms of its impact, upsets temporarily God's perfect government of the world, it does not thereby defeat His divine purpose. Since God is, by definition, Omnipotent, nothing can resist His will. In His foreknowledge exist all the events of eternity. The activity of every atom in the universe is the result of His decree. Evil, therefore, acts and governs with His permission.

That permission is, in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regain'd, the expression of divine justice. Since evil is self-originated, a result of the misuse of free will, it is, therefore, blamable. Blame involves guilt, guilt involves punishment, and punishment is the measure of justice. Thus God declares:

Man disobeying,  
Disloyal breaks his fealtie, and sinns  
Against the high Supremacie of Heav'n,  
Affecting God-head, and so losing all,

To expiate his Treason, hath naught left,  
But to destruction sacred and devote,  
He and his whole posteritie must die,  
Die he or justice must...<sup>1</sup>

Satanic thralldom becomes the justice of God. To punish man God permits evil to rule the world. Evil, therefore, is the servant of justice.

God's goodness, however, is expressed not alone in His justice.

Mercy in the end prevails:

Man therefore shall find grace,  
The other none: in mercy and justice both,  
Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glorie excell  
But mercy first and last shall brightest shine...

Since justice, however, is the pre-requisite of mercy, evil is, in the final analysis, the means to greater good. That greater good is the fulfillment of the divine plan in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Whoever embraces evil must, of necessity, embrace an illusion. Since evil is a revolt against God and yet serves God in the fulfillment of His plan, it follows that to act on the basis of revolt is to act on the basis of an illusion. This fact will be of fundamental importance to an understanding of Milton's presentation of Satan.

In Paradise Lost, Milton is primarily concerned with the justice of God. Evil, therefore, as the servant of justice, performs a dynamic and leading role in the epic. As the instrument of justice it uproots the whole order of the universe and plunges humanity into a living Hell.

In Paradise Regain'd, Milton is concerned with the mercy of God as manifest in the Son. The dynamic function of evil, as the instrument of justice, is replaced by an ineffective evil used as a background against which to present the perfections of the Son.

Viewing evil as defined above in its relation to God, and presenting it as a potent force in Paradise Lost, and as an impotent force in

Paradise Regain'd, Milton has created two Satans to conform to the role of evil in each poem. In the following chapters an analysis will be made of Milton's presentation of Satan as it reflects the function of evil in the two works.

Since the role of evil in Paradise Lost is of central importance and carries, as the instrument of justice, the dynamic movement of the epic, Milton's initial task is to create a figure equal to the superhuman function which it is to perform. Satan, in Paradise Lost, is God's arsenal of ammunition. He is the embodiment of the explosive force of evil which is, at the same time, the explosive force of divine wrath that reverses the whole order of the universe and renders man passion-ridden and society tyranny-ridden until the end of the world.

The change in the role of evil in Paradise Regain'd necessitates a change in the presentation of Satan. The aggressive superman of the first book of Paradise Lost is replaced by a Satan whose ammunition is spent and whose force is exhausted. In the first chapter an analysis will be made of the contrasting presentations of Satan in terms of the specific problems with which Milton is faced in relation to his concept of evil, the means by which he presents him in terms of literary influence, and the way in which he brings him to life in relation to the situation with which he is faced.

Having created a powerful figure in the person of Satan, Milton must identify that power with God by placing it at the service of the divine plan, for this is the function of evil. At the same time, he must demonstrate the deteriorating influence of evil upon the individual who embraces it, for this is the effect of evil. Because of this function and this effect the Satanic illusion glorifies God, on the one hand, and renders Satan morally depraved on the other.

In Paradise Regain'd, Milton is no longer concerned with identifying a dynamic evil with God's plan because justice has been fulfilled. Evil, as a dynamic force, has served its function. Milton therefore accentuates the moral depravity of Satan in order to place mercy in its proper focus as that which shines brightest in the ways of God to men. In the second chapter the way in which Milton subordinates evil to the will of God by making it glorify Him, on the one hand, and by exposing the moral depravity of Satan, on the other, will be analyzed in terms of Milton's presentation of the Omnipotent.

The first two chapters will complete the analysis of Milton's technique of translating into artistic terms the role of evil in the two poems. The third chapter will show evil in action by analyzing Satan in relation to the two temptations. Bearing in mind the role of evil in each poem, I will attempt to measure the consequences of Satan's victory over Adam and Eve and the consequences of Satan's defeat before the Son of God as it sums up Milton's whole concept of, and attitude to evil. In the final chapter this concept and this attitude will be related to the larger social and political background from which both concept and attitude emerge.

NOTES.

1. P.L. Bk. III, 11.203-210.
2. P.L. Bk. III, 11.131-134.

## CHAPTER I

### THE INITIAL PRESENTATION OF SATAN IN PARADISE LOST AND PARADISE REGAIN'D

Milton, in Paradise Lost, presents evil in the service of divine justice.<sup>1</sup> Within the epic, evil causes the overthrow of the earthly Paradise, and plunges disobedient man into an earthly Hell which endures until the second coming of Christ. This overwhelming upheaval within the divinely ordered universe bathed in heavenly Light does not, for Milton, who writes as the spokesman of God,<sup>2</sup> represent a real attack upon the supremacy of the Omnipotent. God, in His foreknowledge, anticipates the fall of man and proclaims in the loss of Eden, not His defeat, but His justice. Thus He declares to His assembled angels:

Assembl'd Angels, and ye Powers return'd  
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismay'd,  
Nor troubl'd at these tidings from the Earth,  
Which your sincerest care could not prevent,  
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,  
When first this Tempter cross'd the Gulf from Hell.  
I told ye then that he should prevail and speed  
On his bad Errand, Man should be seduc't  
And flatter'd out of all, believing lies  
Against his Maker; no Decree of mine  
Concurring to necessitate his Fall,  
Or touch with lightest moment of impulse  
His free Will, to her own inclining left  
In even scale. But fall'n now he is, and now  
What rests, but that the mortal Sentence pass  
On his transgression ...<sup>3</sup>

In Paradise Lost evil serves the pre-ordained scheme of God as the instrument of divine justice. To punish man for his transgression, God subjects him to the rule of evil as embodied in Satan and the fallen angels. When the Omnipotent Judge observes Satan and his crew approaching the world, He declares:

... I to them have quitted all,  
At random yielded up to their misrule;



And know not that I call'd and drew them thither  
 My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth  
 Which mans polluting Sin with taint hath shed  
 On what was pure ...<sup>4</sup>

Evil is God's hell-hound serving Him in the fulfillment of Justice.

In Paradise Regain'd, Milton, having presented the role of evil in relation to divine justice, turns to the role of evil in relation to mercy as it is manifest in the Son of God.<sup>5</sup> The Son, while not restoring in His incarnation the earthly Paradise, symbolizes for the virtuous man an inner Paradise which is protected by "light from above"<sup>6</sup> against the onslaught of evil. This Paradise within is an exclusive advance showing of the new world that is destined to appear with the second coming of Christ.<sup>7</sup> The impact of evil, therefore, in the temptation of the Son of God is negligible. Its dynamic function, as the instrument of justice, is replaced by a non-dynamic function in which it is used as a background that enhances the perfections of the Son.

The initial problem that Milton faces in the presentation of Satan is the creation of two contrasting figures to fit these two contrasting roles. In Paradise Lost, he must create a giant figure that is equal to the superhuman task which it performs in the epic. This involves, however, certain difficulties of which Milton is fully aware, and which, as a highly conscious artist, he undertakes to solve.

Satan, as the embodiment of evil, must act on the assumption that by his actions he is perverting the will of God, for evil is, by definition, a rebellion against God. In reality, (i.e. from God's point of view), however, Satan acts as a puppet of God, fulfilling His justice as a part of the divine plan. Satan, therefore, acts under an illusion. And it is upon this illusion that Milton is able to create the appearance of struggle between Satan and God out of which emerges the dynamic figure that supplies the whole basis for the epic form

(which is built around the struggle of a primitive superman with his environment) and carries the movement of the epic toward its climax. By acting as if he were perverting the will of God, Satan creates the illusion of Titanic strength which validates, in the dramatic sense, his victory in the Garden of Eden, and gives expression, in the final analysis, to the wrath of God.

Milton's problem is to pit the illusion against the reality without, at the same time, destroying the necessary dramatic vitality of that illusion. While the reality must remain dominant, since Milton is writing to justify God and not to justify Satan, the illusion must remain operative. If the veneer of struggle is destroyed, the epic, as an art form, collapses.

In his initial presentation of Satan in Paradise Lost, Milton is primarily concerned with demonstrating the apparent power of the Satanic illusion. In Paradise Regain'd Milton is not concerned with Satanic force. Since justice has been fulfilled, Satan has completed his positive function in carrying forward the divine plan. In relation to mercy, he must fade into the background while the Son comes to the centre of the stage to perform His role in that same plan. It is to illumine the grace of God by showing the triumph of mercy over justice for which Satan is resurrected from the rejected world of humanity upon which judgment has already been passed. In the context of mercy the dynamic of evil is destroyed.

The analysis of Milton's initial presentation of Satan in the two poems will be based upon the method employed by Milton to contrast the two creations. This analysis will limit itself, (with one or two exceptions) to a study of the Satan of the first book of Paradise Lost and the Satan of the first one hundred and thirty lines of Paradise

Regain'd (i.e. from the beginning of Paradise Regain'd until Satan goes off for the first time to tempt the Son of God).

In order to create the illusion necessary to the role that Satan plays in Paradise Lost Milton models him after the epic hero of Homer and places him in an environment that serves as the basis of physical and psychological struggle which call forth the heroic attributes, and make him, in relation to the fallen angels, a great warrior-leader worthy to be a god. In Paradise Regain'd, Milton models Satan, not upon the epic hero of Homer, but upon the Satan of the Book of Job and the Satan of the Gospel of Saint Luke. In addition he removes the whole environment that provides a stimulant to heroic deeds. Satan, as a result, is stripped of heroic attributes. Glory and honor no longer surround him.

The epic hero of Homer is the complete individualist. His personal destiny, as distinct from any social destiny, is of supreme importance to him.<sup>8</sup> In fulfilling this personal destiny, which is the manifestation of his ego-drive, he surpasses all others in strength and courage and overcomes all the obstacles that are implanted against him (usually by the gods) along his path to fame and honor. In pursuing his destiny he is completely ruthless and will destroy anyone or anything that stands in his way. This superman faces no moral issues because his destiny is measured in secular and temporary terms and is concerned with problems that involve either physical prowess or mental cunning. When and if he is successful in overcoming every difficulty, honor, glory and fame are bestowed upon him and he is ranked among the gods.<sup>9</sup>

Making use of this heroic model, Milton must show it to be the garment of the "infernial serpent", without at the same time destroying the dramatic and poetic values of the Homeric concept, for it is these

values that provide the poetic justification of the Satanic conquest and perpetuate the life of the epic. Milton's task is to subject the Greek heroic myth to the Hebrew-Christian one by placing it in apparent opposition to that myth when, in reality, it is at its service. To create the necessary dynamic, the Greek epic hero, while playing the role of an animated puppet of the Hebrew-Christian God, must appear to rebel against him.

Milton's precaution to preserve the real and proper relationship between the Greek and Hebrew-Christian world is evident throughout the first book.<sup>10</sup> In the opening invocation he draws a careful distinction between the Greek and Hebrew world by deliberately by-passing the "Aonian Mount" and continuing beyond that "middle flight"<sup>11</sup> to Mount Sinai for his inspiration in the composition of the epic. In the actual text the will of God is stamped upon the activity of Satan. When, for example, Satan raises his body from the burning lake, Milton points out:

... nor ever thence  
 Had ris'n or heav'd his head, but that the will  
 And high permission of all-ruling Heaven  
 Left him at large to his own dark designs,  
 That with reiterated crimes he might  
 Heap on himself damnation, while he sought  
 Evil to others, and enrag'd might see  
 How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth  
 Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shewn  
 On Man by him seduc't, but on himself  
 Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance pour'd.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to exposing the Satanic illusion by showing its relation to God's plan of salvation, Milton also exposes its inherent evil by making use of a patristic theological speculation to the effect that Satan and his fallen angels become, in incarnation, the gods and idols of the heathen world.<sup>13</sup> Thus when Milton describes the great march and muster-roll in Hell he expands it to include the great march and muster-roll of the pagan world:

Nor had they yet among the Sons of Eve  
 Got then new Names, till wandring ore the Earth,  
 Through Gods high sufferance for the tryal of man,  
 By falsities and lyes the greatest part  
 Of Mankind they corrupted to forsake  
 God their Creator, and th'invisible  
 Glory of him, that made them, to transform  
 Oft to the Image of a Brute, adorn'd  
 With gay Religions full of Pomp and Gold,  
 And Devils to adore for Deities:  
 They were then known to men by various Names  
 And various Idols through the Heathen World.<sup>14</sup>

At the centre of the heroic world is a Hebrew God of justice. The Homeric universe is the Christian Hell, the place of divine punishment. To set in motion the dynamic of the epic, however, Satan must act in a Christian Hell ordained by a Hebrew-Christian God as if he were an Homeric hero on an Homeric battlefield.

In Paradise Regain'd Milton has been little influenced by the technique or conception of classical epic. That technique and conception are concerned with an external struggle of a heroic figure with his environment in a world of public events and public glory. It is to that world that the justice of God applies; it is not to that world that God's mercy applies. The world of Paradise Regain'd is a world of private events and private glory - deeds "in secret done"<sup>15</sup> and "above heroic".<sup>16</sup>

For this world Milton finds his literary sources, not in Homer, but in the Book of Job and the Gospel according to Saint Luke.

In its structure the poem is beyond doubt deeply influenced by the Book of Job, which, as we have seen, Milton regarded as the model for the "brief epic"... The adoption of a certain amount of the technique of classical epic, e.g., the invocation, was inevitable, but on the whole there is very little of such influence as compared with Paradise Lost. The use of adornment from ancient poetry and myth and the echoing from classical passages are also rare.<sup>17</sup>

In the Book of Job, as in Paradise Regain'd, Satan is presented wandering about the world, doing odd jobs for the Almighty by testing, with His permission, God's servants.<sup>18</sup> To test Job he places upon him

every kind of affliction. In the end, however, Job prevails and Satan is defeated. The influence of the Gospel of Saint Luke is pointed out by Hanford:

The poem follows step by step the incidents of the temptation as given in the Gospel of Luke (the order in Matthew is different).<sup>19</sup>

It will be noted that in both of these literary sources Satan's role is of secondary importance and is used as a background against which the perfections of the central figure become manifest.

The contrast between the Greek heroic influence and the Hebrew Christian influence has led Tillyard to conclude that Paradise Regain'd is not an epic:

It is not an epic, it does not try to be an epic, and it must not be judged by any kind of epic standard. There is practically no action, the characters (Satan excluded) do not live, and there is the smallest relation to normal life. All this does not mean that Milton wrote a bad poem; it merely shows one of the things he was not trying to do. The bulk of the poem consists of speeches, suggesting an analogy with drama; but the speeches are void of dramatic interest. The issue of what little action takes place is a foregone conclusion. Any chance Milton has of creating a dramatic situation he deliberately passes over.<sup>20</sup>

The removal of the Homeric literary influence cuts Satan off from the dramatic and poetic context of heroic action. His power is rigidly and ruthlessly subordinated to the inner power of the Son.

To create the heroic illusion in Paradise Lost Milton places Satan in a Hell that suggests the heroic world. Waldock's impression of Milton's Hell is illuminating:

But the chief un-hell-like characteristic of Milton's Hell is simply the atmosphere of busy planning, of life nearly as lively as ever, of energies unquenched... And the plain truth about the giant personalities who absorb all our interest here - who take up their lives pretty well at the point where they left them, who persist in their natures, who preserve their energies and wills, who plan for the future, who mean at the very least to make themselves

comfortable, who feel no remorse - is that they have never in any true sense been in 'hell' at all.<sup>21</sup>

This illusion is evoked by removing God from the actual scene of action (Hell is as far removed from God "as from the centre thrice to the utmost Pole")<sup>22</sup> so that Satan is free to fashion a god out of his own perverted mind and then justify his revolt by attacking a figment of his imagination.<sup>23</sup> The god presented by Satan in the first two books of Paradise Lost is the "grand Foe",<sup>24</sup> the "Angry Victor in his rage"<sup>25</sup> whose supremacy is dependent upon "old repute, consent or custome"<sup>26</sup> and brute strength. With this god to supply the appearance of struggle between Satan and the "Monarch in Heav'n",<sup>27</sup> the heroic illusion springs to life. The struggle in Hell appears to be the struggle of primitive forces in conflict with Satan as the heroic rebel.

Milton describes Hell through the eyes of Satan:

... round he throws his baleful eyes  
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay  
Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:  
At once as far as Angels kenn he views  
The dismal Situation waste and wilde,  
A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round  
As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible  
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
That comes to all; but torture without end  
Still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed  
With ever burning Sulphur unconsum'd.<sup>28</sup>

The whole basis of epic struggle is presented in this passage. Satan stares out across the "Dungeon horrible" that promises unending torment. The mixture of pride, hate, affliction and dismay is the warrior attitude of the conquered leader refusing to submit and prepared to fight back against the iron will of the Conqueror. That iron will is symbolized by Hell. In the struggle to overcome Hell, Satan is like the Greek epic hero fighting the god who places obstacles in the path

of his personal destiny.

Thus by modelling Satan upon the Homeric hero and placing him in an environment that creates the illusion of the heroic world, Milton sets the stage for what appears to be a highly significant struggle between Satan and God. The reader, drawn into Hell by the sheer dramatic force of Milton's description and observing the events of Hell through the eyes of Satan, is caught up into the apparent struggle that carries the movement of the epic, supplies the poetic justification of Satan's victory, and demonstrates, in the final analysis, the glory of God as expressed in His justice.

In Paradise Regain'd Hell, as the abode of Satan, is replaced by "his place"<sup>29</sup> which is somewhere in "mid-air"<sup>30</sup> buried "within thick clouds."<sup>31</sup> In this insubstantial location Satan is something of an anomaly. Cut off from Hell he is like a fish out of water. In Hell Milton creates a sense of person in relation to place that supplies a vital contact between the two so that there is a spontaneous and dramatic illusion of heroic strength.

The sense of place, of actual physical location, in Paradise Regain'd belongs not to Satan's world but to the world of the Son. The locale of Paradise Regain'd is the wilderness in which the Son of God meditates for forty days and nights. This wilderness, cut off from the larger and fallen world of humanity, is the physical counterpart of the Son's inner world which, like the wilderness, is cut off from the public world that surrounds it. When measured in relation to this world, the Satanic one seems unreal. The heroic world of Hell has lost its substantiality in Paradise Regain'd. Tillyard points this out:

The dim wilderness stands for the loneliness of the individual mind, cut off from the experiences of every day and from the support of its fellows in its struggle



for self-mastery, while the dream-like and artificial brilliance of the spectacles that tempt the mind express at once the glamour of worldly success and its essential insubstantiality.<sup>32</sup>

This contrast between the two environments determines, to a large extent, the contrast in the presentation of Satan in each poem. In Paradise Lost, the dynamic interplay of Satan and Hell creates the heroic illusion that is destroyed when Hell is replaced by "mid-air".

In Hell, Satan is first presented chained to his environment:

So stretcht out huge in length the Arch fiend lay  
Chain'd to the burning lake...<sup>33</sup>

About him are strewn the fallen angels who lie like their broken chariot wheels across the flood:

... their floating Carcases  
And broken Chariot wheels, so thick bestrown  
Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood,  
Under amazement of their hideous change.<sup>34</sup>

Now the measure of Satan's apparent physical conquest of Hell lies in the contrast between the first picture of Satan "prone on the Flood"<sup>35</sup> like that "Sea beast Leviathan"<sup>36</sup> and the picture of him sitting high upon his throne in Pandaemonium in the opening lines of Book II:

High upon a Throne of Royal State, which far  
Outshon the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,  
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand  
Shows on her Kings barbaric Pearl and Gold,  
Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd  
To that bad eminence; and from despair  
Thus high uplifted beyond hope...<sup>39</sup>

The movement of Satan from the burning lake to his throne in Pandaemonium is the physical aspect of Satan's illusory struggle and conquest in Hell. This physical activity sets up a momentum that continues throughout the epic and fulfills its purpose in Satan's rule of the world after the fall of man.

The dynamic images that recount Satan's emergence from the burning

lake to which he was chained, and his flight through the dusky air until he finds dry land upon which to stand give the illusion of the courageous, determined and powerful epic hero in action. The heroic attributes spring to life before the challenge of Hell:

Forthwith upright he rears from off the Pool  
 His mighty stature; on each hand the flames  
 Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and rowld  
 In billows, leave in th'midst a horrid Vale.  
 Then with expanded wings he steers his flight  
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air  
 That felt unusual weight, till on dry land  
 He lights, if it were land that ever burn'd  
 With solid, as the Lake with liquid fire.<sup>38</sup>

Close behind him follows Beelzebub and together they rejoice in their new freedom:

Both glorying to have scap't the Stygian flood  
 As Gods, and by thir own recover'd strength  
 Not by the suffrance of supernal Power.<sup>39</sup>

The apparent majesty of Satan rising like a Phoenix from the ruins is the prelude to the resurrection of the whole "groveling and prostrate"<sup>40</sup> crew. Standing like the great warrior-leader of Homeric legend upon the shore, Satan calls to his men with a voice of thunder that stirs the whole of Hell:

He call'd so loud, that all the hollow Deep  
 Of Hell resounded...

...  
 Awake, arise, or be forever fall'n.<sup>41</sup>

In obedience the fallen angels arise:

They heard, and were abasht, and up they sprung  
 Upon the wing, as when men want to watch  
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,  
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.<sup>42</sup>

With the resurrection of his men there takes place within Hell a recreation of its elements. Out of "Chaos and old Night"<sup>43</sup> comes forth Pandaemonium. From a hill

... whose griesly top  
 Belch'd Fire and roaring smoak<sup>44</sup>

the fallen angels dig out "ribs of Gold",<sup>45</sup> and the "massie ore"<sup>46</sup> when purified by means of liquid fire hidden beneath the earth is poured into classic moulds.

Finally

... out of the earth a Fabrick huge  
 Rose like an Exhalation, with the sound  
 Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet,  
 Built like a Temple, where Pilasters round  
 Were set, and Doric pillars over laid  
 With Gold Architrave, nor did they want  
 Cornice or Freeze, with bossy Sculpture grav'n,  
 The Roof was fretted Gold.<sup>47</sup>

Thus out of the dismal situation "waste and wilde" filled with "sights of woe", has come forth a place that

... Not Babilon  
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence,  
 Equal'd in all thir glories, to inshrine  
 Belus or Serapis thir Gods, or seat  
 Thir Kings when Egypt with Assyria strove  
 In Wealth and Luxurie.<sup>48</sup>

In the midst of that "utter darkness"<sup>49</sup> appears

... from the arched roof  
 Pendant by subtle magic many a row  
 Of Starry Lamps and blazing Cressets fed  
 With Naphtha and Asphaltus (yielding) light  
 As from a Sky...<sup>50</sup>

The illusion of the heroic Satan conquering his environment is complete.<sup>51</sup> In Hell the barbarians have built their own barbaric heaven and Satan is their god.<sup>52</sup> The physical conquest, measured in terms of the Greek epic hero, is immense. But the Greek conception of the epic hero is, in Paradise Lost, the facade that hides the inner depravity. Milton warns the reader against being seduced by what Satan and his follows have done:

... Let none admire  
 That riches grow in Hell; that soyle may best  
 Deserve the pretious bane. And here let those  
 Who boast in mortal things, and wondring tell  
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian Kings,

Learn how thir greatest Monuments of Fame,  
 And strength and Art are easily outdone  
 By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour  
 What in an age they with incessant toyle  
 And hands innumerable scarce perform.<sup>53</sup>

The physical struggle in the first book of Paradise Lost is totally absent in Paradise Regain'd. There is no environment to supply the necessary challenge. Satan simply "flies to his place."<sup>54</sup> The god subduing chaos to his will is replaced by a dimensionless ghost<sup>55</sup> flitting through the air.

The sense of physical conquest in the first book of Paradise Lost is repeated on the psychological plane. In both the heroic illusion is manifest. That psychological conquest is demonstrated in the public orations of Satan to his followers. These orations are the emotional counterpart of Pandaemonium. They represent, on the psychological level, another kind of conquest over the environment.

Again, however, Milton is careful to point out the illusion that underlies the apparent psychological conquest. This he does by suggesting the inner state of Satan tormented by the thought of "lost happiness" and "lasting pain". It is this inner state that Milton is later (Book IV) to bring into focus to show the moral depravity of Satan.<sup>56</sup>

To suggest this inner state, Milton has Satan recall, for an instant, the "happy Realms of Light". The memory of Light sets the tone of the opening lines of Satan's first speech to Beelzebub:

If thou beest he; But O how fall'n! how chang'd  
 From him, who in the happy Realms of Light  
 Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst outshine  
 Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league  
 United thoughts and counsels, equal hope,  
 And hazard in the Glorious Enterprize,  
 Joynd with me once, now misery hath joynd  
 In equal ruin...<sup>57</sup>

For a moment the reader catches a glimpse of the real Satan who is the depraved victim of his own self-engendered evil. Misery and ruin have subdued for a moment the supreme ego of the Titan.

At the sight of the "Pit" that surrounds him, however, the tone of Satan's speech undergoes a perceptible change. The epic hero emerges from the dark corners of introspection and takes, at once, his defiant stand toward his Divine Opponent. It is this stand that characterizes the Satan of the opening book and conforms to the impression that Milton wishes to create in accordance with the role that Satan performs. Looking about him, Satan declares:

... into what Pit thou seest  
 From what highth fall'n, so much the stronger provd  
 He with his Thunder: and till then who knew  
 The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those  
 Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage  
 Can else inflict do I repent or change,  
 Though chang'd in outward lustre:<sup>58</sup>

Carefully avoiding all the moral implications of his revolt, Satan presents the struggle in physical and secular terms. In this way the physical and psychological levels are correlated into a unified impression of primitive epic heroism. The illusion of the speech is confirmed by the illusion of the action.

In terms of the heroic standards Satan's pride, "unconquerable will", "steadfast hate", and "courage never to submit or yield" are his chief glories. With these attributes, so strenuously preserved, he appears to remain victorious in defeat.

What though the field be lost?  
 All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,  
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,  
 And courage never to submit or yield:  
 And what is else not to be overcome?  
 That glory never shall his wrath or might  
 Extort from me...<sup>59</sup>

In accordance with the epic standards the glory that the Enemy demands

of Satan belongs to himself and is rendered unto himself. Like the epic superman, with whom he is deliberately identified, Satan is loyal only to the fulfillment of his own ego. But this superman is, in Christian terms, the embodiment of evil. His self-glory is the sin of pride which is the internal cause of rebellion against God and the efficient cause of the reversal of the whole hierarchical universe. The apparent grandeur of Satan's self-glory arises from the fact that it must appear powerful enough and persuasive enough to justify the consequences that follow from it, not only for Satan but for the whole world. Self-glory, as manifest in Satan and carried through Eve to humanity at large, destroys the universe.

In the midst of defeat Satan appears to preserve an attitude to God that renders him victorious over Him. And this attitude unites with the physical struggle to create the grand illusion that in prison he is free:

... Hail horrors, hail  
 Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell  
 Receive thy new Possessor: One who brings  
 A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time.  
 The mind is its own place, and in itself  
 Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.  
 What matter where, if I be still the same,  
 And what I should be, all but less than hee  
 Whom Thunder hath made greater. Here at least  
 We shall be free; th'Almighty hath not built  
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:  
 Here we may reign secure, and in my choyce  
 To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:  
 Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n.<sup>60</sup>

This psychological rationalization of defeat demanded by his pride that will not permit him to recognize his natural superior, Satan is able to project into the fallen angels. Speaking to his followers, he declares:

For who can yet beleieve, though after loss,  
 That all these puissant Legions, whose exile  
 Hath emptied Heav'n, shall faile to re-ascend  
 Self-rais'd, and repossess thir native seat.  
 For me, be witness all the Host of Heav'n,

If counsels different, or danger shun'd  
 By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns  
 Monarch in Heav'n, till then as one secure  
 Sat on his Throne, upheld by old repute,  
 Consent or custome, and his Regal State  
 Put forth at full, but still his strength conceal'd,  
 Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall,  
 Henceforth his might we know, and know our own  
 So as not either to provoke, or dread  
 New warr, provok't; our better part remains  
 To work in close design, by fraud or guile  
 What force effected not: that he no less  
 At length from us may find, who overcomes  
 By force, hath overcome but half his foe.<sup>61</sup>

Caught up in the illusion, they respond spontaneously:

... and to confirm his words, out-flew  
 Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs  
 Of mighty Cherubin...<sup>62</sup>

Within Hell the heroic illusion is complete. Not only does Satan subdue chaos with the erection of Pandaemonium, but also his apparent rule in Hell represents a partial fulfillment of his destiny. To this is added the glory and renown that his followers bestow upon him, and which make of him a god. It is upon the basis of this initial presentation that Milton sets the stage for the fall of man and the punishment that follows.

The psychological illusion that Satan creates in his oration to his followers in the first Book of Paradise Lost is impossible for Satan in Paradise Regain'd. Confronted with the baptism of the Son, with which the epic opens, Satan cannot evade this reality by creating a private world of his own. Nor does he evade it:

... long the decrees of Heav'n  
 Delay, for longest time to him is short;  
 And now too soon for us the circling hours  
 This dreaded time have compast, wherein we  
 Must bide the stroak of that long threatn'd wound,  
 At least if so we can...<sup>63</sup>

The heroic defiance is replaced by a sense of doom. In sheer desperation he recalls his victory in Paradise Lost:

I, when no other durst, sole undertook  
 The dismal expedition to find out  
 And ruine Adam, and the exploit perform'd  
 Successfully; a calmer voyage now  
 Will waft me; and the way found prosperous once  
 Induces best to hope of like success.<sup>64</sup>

Satan, however, is like an old man trying to relive his youth. Like Antony in his fall he turns for support to the memory of a victory in the past. But that victory, like Antony's victory, belongs to another context of events. It no longer applies. It is a forced and artificial stimulus, an illusion within an illusion.

Thus in Paradise Regain'd Milton, by taking Satan out of the dramatic setting of Hell and placing him in a void, has removed the flint that supplies the spark to heroic deeds. Cast up from the imaginative ocean of Paradise Lost on to the dry shore of Paradise Regain'd, Satan comes ignobly to the end of his journey. It is the Son of God who must carry man the rest of the way.

These two initial presentations portray two contrasting figures which are the artistic embodiment of evil in relation to divine justice, on the one hand, and divine mercy on the other. Two distinct dramatic situations, two distinct literary traditions and two distinct artistic settings create two distinct impressions of Satan.



## NOTES (CHAPTER I)

1. "Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit  
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast  
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe  
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat  
Sing Heav'nly Muse...

...  
That to the highth of this great Argument  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And Justify the wayes of God to men."  
(P.L. Bk.I, ll I-26.)

2. It is evident in the invocations to the "Heav'nly Muse" that Milton is calling upon the same source of inspiration that inspired the Hebrew prophets:

Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top  
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed  
In the beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth  
Rose out of chaos...

... I thence  
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song.  
(P.L. Bk.I, ll 6-14)

Commenting upon this identification with the Hebrew prophets, Grierson states:

If ever an English poet (setting aside Blake for the moment) deemed himself a prophet, something even more because more expressly inspired than such a philosophical poet as he judged Spenser to be, it was Milton.

(Grierson, p.26.)

It is, then, by virtue of his role as a prophet that Milton writes as the spokesman of God.

3. P.L. Bk.X, ll 33-49.  
4. P.L. Bk.X, ll 627-632.

5. "I who e're while the happy Garden Sung,  
By one mans disobedience lost, now sing  
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,  
By one mans firm obedience fully tri'd  
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd  
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't,  
And Eden rais'd in the wast Wilderness."

(P.R. Bk.I, ll I-7.)

6. "... he who receives  
Light from above, from the fountain of Light,  
No other doctrine needs, though granted true."  
(P.R. Bk. IV, ll 288-290)

7. The inner Paradise presented in the Son of God will be analysed in the third chapter in relation to Milton's presentation of God.
8. The individualism of the Greek epic hero finds its counterpart in Milton's rebellion against the Monarchy, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Presbyterians and the Independents. The distinction, of course, lies in the moral basis of Milton's rebellion. Nevertheless, it is possible to catch the echo of Milton's revolutionary prose in the orations of Satan to his followers. It is equally possible to catch the echo of the disappointed Republican clinging tenaciously to an ideal of human perfectability even when it means rejecting humanity. That echo lies in the wrath of Caesar. This statement will be developed in the last chapter.
9. "The heroic world holds nothing so important as the prowess and fame of the individual hero. The single man, Achilles or Beowulf or Roland, surpasses all others in strength and courage. His chief, almost his only aim is to win honour and renown through his achievements and to be remembered for them after his death. He is ruthless to any who frustrate or override him. In his more than human strength he seems to be cut off from the intercourse of common men and consorts with a few companions only less noble than himself. He lacks allegiance, except in a modified sense, to suzerain or cause. What matters is prowess. Even morality hardly concerns him; for he lives in a world where what counts is not morality but honour. Historically, this ideal seems to have grown in societies which have burst through the stiff forms of primitive life. It is the reflection of men's desire to be in the last degree themselves, to satisfy their ambitions in lives of abundant adventure, and to be bound to no obligation except to do their utmost in valour and endurance."
- (Bowra, C.M., From Virgil to Milton, p.9.)
10. Bowra points out that Milton fashions Satan on the heroic standards because he rejected them and "wished to show that they were wicked:"
- It is clear that Milton quite deliberately fashioned Satan on heroic models, because he rejected them and wished to show that they were wicked. He had his own ideal of heroism, which he displays in other ways, and Satan prepares us for it by showing that pride, on which the old ideal is based, is not only inadequate but wrong. No doubt when he wrote the first books of Paradise Lost Milton's renewed powers enabled him to display this type of hero in all its splendour; no doubt, too, he had enough of it in himself to portray Satan at least with understanding. But in the main scheme Satan provides a contrast to something quite different and infinitely more admirable.
- (ibid., p.229.)
11. "That with no middle flight intends to soar  
Above the Aonian mount... "
- (P.L. Bk. I, ll 14-5.)

12. P.L. Bk.I, ll 210-220.
13. "... the poet makes use of a patristic conception much in vogue during the Seventeenth Century - one that regarded Satan's angels as the gods and idols later worshipped by the heathen world."  
(McColley, G., Paradise Lost, p.104.)
14. P.L. Bk.I, ll 365-375.
15. P.R. Bk.I, l 15.
16. P.R. Bk.I, l 15.
17. Hanford, p.224.
18. "Now there was a day when the Sons of God came to present themselves to the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.

Then Satan answered unto the Lord and said: Doth Job fear God for ought?

Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou has blest the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord."

(Job, I: 6-12.)

19. Hanford, p.243.
20. Tillyard, pp.316-7
21. Waldock, pp.94-5
22. P.L. Bk. I, l 73
23. There is an interesting parallel in technique between the opening scene of Othello and the opening book of Paradise Lost. In both works the instrument of evil (i.e. Iago and Satan) is given the initial advantage over goodness as presented in the characters of Othello and God. By presenting goodness in a distorted light the stage is set for tragedy. Note, for example, the terms in which Othello is first introduced to the reader: "a Barbary horse, an old black ram, lascivious Moor." Compare these suggestive phrases to those that describe God in the first book of Paradise Lost: "angry Victor in his rage, our Enemy, Tyranny of Heav'n."
24. P.L. Bk. I, l 123.
25. P.L. Bk. I, l 95.
26. P.L. Bk. I, ll 639-40.
27. P.L. Bk. I, l 638.
28. P.L. Bk. I, ll 56-69.

29. P.R. Bk. I, l 39.
30. P.R. Bk. I, l 39.
31. P.R. Bk. I, l 41.
32. Tillyard, p.319.
33. P.L. Bk. I, ll 209-10.
34. P.L. Bk. I, ll 310-313.
35. P.L. Bk. I, l 195.
36. P.L. Bk. I, ll 200-201.
37. P.L. Bk. II, ll 1-7.
38. P.L. Bk. I, ll 221-9.
39. P.L. Bk. I, ll 239-241.
40. P.L. Bk. I, l 280.
41. P.L. Bk. I, ll 315-6-330.
42. P.L. Bk. I, ll 331-4.
43. P.L. Bk. I, l 543.
44. P.L. Bk. I, ll 670-1.
45. P.L. Bk. I, l 690.
46. P.L. Bk. I, l 703.
47. P.L. Bk. I, ll 710-717.
48. P.L. Bk. I, ll 717-22.
49. P.L. Bk. I, l 72.
50. P.L. Bk. I, ll 726-30.
51. Waldock argues that the portrait of Satan in the first two books is complete:

The extreme simplification of the method of Book I and II leaves us with a memorable, indeed, an overpowering image: but the image is self complete, finished. To expect it to develop is like expecting a statue of Michelangelo to develop.

(Waldock, p 82.)

52. Throughout the physical struggle of Satan in Hell there are overtones of the Renaissance enthusiasm for the conquest of nature. Milton, at one point, shared this enthusiasm. That enthusiasm finds expression in such works as Bacon's Novum Organum which was published while Milton was at St. Paul's. Tillyard thinks that it is altogether possible that Milton read it (see Tillyard's Milton, p. 11), and that it formed the basis of his criticism of the curriculum at Cambridge. In that criticism he emphasized the study of the natural sciences in order to carry forward the conquest of nature:

How much better would it be, Academicians, and how much more worthy of your reputation, to walk as it were with the eyes on the universe of earth... and then investigate and study the nature of all living things, and from these again to direct the mind downward to the secret virtues of stones and plants! Nor hesitate, my hearers, even to soar into the heavens... not let there be hidden from you what either Jupiter or nature means when a dreadful and vast comet menaces the heaven with conflagration ... nay follow the wandring sun as his companions, and call time itself to a reckoning, and demand an account of its eternal march.

(Prolusiones Oratoriae III, Hanford p.16-7).

53. P.L. Bk. I, ll 690-9.

- 54. P.R. Bk. I, l 39.
- 55. Satan in Paradise Regain'd, although materializing to tempt the Son of God, is an invisible force that dwells in the air and speaks through oracles. Milton has identified him with pagan magic.
- 56. Waldoock, in his analysis of Satan, argues that the Satan of Book IV is an entirely different Satan from the one presented in the first two books. His conclusion is based upon the overpowering impression left by these two books. That portrait, however, is only half the man, the public hero. The other half, the inner man, tormented by "lost happiness" and "lasting pain" supplies the necessary correction to the public orator. When this inner nature is brought into focus it does not create a new Satan. The inner and the outer Satan are in line with Milton's view of evil, and supply, relative to that view, a unified impression. This whole problem will be dealt with in the second chapter.
- 57. P.L. Bk. I, ll 84-91.
- 58. P.L. Bk. I, ll 91-8.
- 59. P.L. Bk. I, ll 105-11.
- 60. P.L. Bk. I, ll 250-63.
- 61. P.L. Bk. I, ll 631-50.

In Satan's call to resurrection it is possible to catch the echo of Milton's resurrection call to the English people. Compare, for example, the above quoted passage to a passage from Areopagitica:

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invisible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance ...  
(S.M. p.750)

This will be enlarged upon in the final chapter.

- 62. P.L. Bk I, ll 663-665.
- 63. P.R. Bk I, ll 55-60.
- 64. P.R. Bk. I, ll 100-5.

## CHAPTER II

SATAN IN RELATION TO GOD IN PARADISE LOST AND  
PARADISE REGAIN'D

In the first chapter it was noted that Milton, in order to set in motion the dynamic force of evil that is destined to reach its climax in the temptation of Eve and overcome the universe in the denouement, has created the powerful illusion of a heroic Satan patterned on the model of Homeric epic. To make this illusion sufficiently credible he removes God from the scene of action and presents him in the derisive speech of Satan and suggests his anger in the topography of Hell. It would appear, as a result, that Satan has made a just revolt against a Tyrant. Because that Tyrant is upheld by a supremacy of arms, custom and old repute, it would further appear that Satan, as a counterforce to the Monarch of Heaven, has a fighting chance of success. Waldock, analysing Satan in terms of Milton's handling of a narrative problem, points this out:

The impression, carefully built up in Book I and confirmed in Book II, is that the rebellion (in the eyes, of course, of the rebels) was a thoroughly rational undertaking, with a fair fighting chance of success ... he must do his best as a narrative poet (it was elementary technique) to make us forget the fact, must try by every craft of narrative at his command to instil into us the temporary illusion that Omnipotence can be shaken - until such time, at least, as he has the poem properly moving and Satan firmly established in our imaginations as a worthy Antagonist of Heaven. The rebellion, we know well, was 'a foolish effort': we know it is we stop to think. But if the net effect of Milton's writing in Book I has been to make us feel mere foolishness he might just as well have laid aside his work there and then.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, however, Milton has laid the foundation for the real and proper focus to which Satan, as the embodiment of evil in a Hebrew-Christian universe, must conform. In giving the devil his due,

Milton has not altogether ignored God. By identifying Satan with the gods and idols of a pagan world<sup>2</sup>, by stating that his every movement is dependent upon the permission of God and serves His Omnipotent Will<sup>3</sup>, and by exposing for an instant the inner agony that follows upon divine rejection<sup>4</sup>, Milton shows the reader the reality of Satan as that reality embodies the nature of evil.

This unheroic Satan is the focus that Milton is after. Waldo suggests that it stems from Milton's nervousness:

But it is evident that portraiture so sympathetic drawing such strength from Milton's own life and nature, could be very dangerous for Milton's scheme. Of course it was dangerous; and nothing is more interesting, technically, in the opening books than to note the nervousness that creeps on Milton as he becomes aware of what is threatening. It is an instructive and in some ways an amusing study. If one observes what is happening one sees that there is hardly a great speech of Satan's that Milton is not at pains to correct, to damp down and neutralize. He will put some glorious thing into Satan's mouth, then, anxious about the effect of it, will pull us gently by the sleeve, saying (for this is what it amounts to): 'Do not be carried away by this fellow: he sounds splendid, but take my word for it...' We have in fact, once again, the two levels: the level of demonstration or exhibition, and the level of allegation or commentary; and again there is disagreement. What is conveyed on the one level is for the large part of the time not in accord with what is conveyed on the other. Milton's allegations clash with his demonstrations.<sup>5</sup>

What Waldo fails to recognize is the nature of Milton's theme and the role that evil plays in that theme<sup>6</sup>. Evil, as the instrument of God's wrath, glorifies God in direct proportion to its apparent power. The more heroic Satan appears the greater is the God that makes use of him to fulfill his justice. Satan's apparent sublimity springs not from Milton's sympathy for or identification with him, but rather, from his sympathy for and identification with God. Grierson points this out:

Some critics have found a reflection of Milton in his Satan. He is much more closely to be identified with his own picture of the Deity, just and stern.<sup>7</sup>

It is the God of wrath that dominates Paradise Lost. In that domination lies the apparent grandeur of Satan.

When Milton "puts something glorious into Satan's mouth", he is not anxious or nervous about it; his imagination is not out of control. In the scheme of the poem, concerned with God's justification of evil, the demonstration or exhibition is a demonstration of God's wrath, a flexing of divine muscles in preparation for the final overthrow<sup>8</sup>. The allegations simply tell the reader this, simply points out that Satan by God's "high permission"<sup>9</sup> is going to be let loose in the universe to tempt man, to rule man, and then, with the fulfillment of justice, to be cast back into Hell, having paved the way for greater good. There is, in this right and proper focus, no clash of allegation with demonstration.

When Milton turns to a presentation of God these allegations are demonstrated, the portrait of Satan is completed, and the artistic statement of evil fulfilled. This presentation of God Milton handles in terms of two contrasting symbols: the symbol of power in terms of which God is a Caesar ruling the universe by decree and military strength, and the symbol of Light in terms of which God is an inaccessible Being showering His divine rays upon the universe. By means of the first symbol Milton is able to keep the illusion of Book I sufficiently alive to supply the necessary dynamic of evil in relation to justice. By means of the second, he is able to show the inner depravity of Satan by revealing the nature of God's unquestionable omnipotence. Through a careful manipulation of his two symbols, Milton is able to present all aspects of evil in Satan, without, at the same time, undermining its powerful impact. Satan in his apparent "eternal warr"<sup>10</sup> with Caesar serves justice. Because that Caesar is also Light, however, Satan falls into greater depths of depravity. He is trapped by a constant juxtaposition of Caesar and Light.



In Paradise Regain'd the world of evil (which is manifest justice) has been replaced by a private world of grace (which is manifest mercy): Milton achieves the near-collapse of the Satanic dynamic by removing Caesar and replacing him with Light. Satan, as a result, is totally depraved.

The God of Light Milton presents in a series of lyrical passages throughout Paradise Lost. In Heaven the angels address their hymns of praise to Him:

"Thee Father, first they sung Omnipotent,  
 Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,  
 Eternal King; thee Author of all Being,  
 Fountain of Light, thy self invisible  
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st  
 Thron'd inaccessible, but when thou shad'st  
 The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud  
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant Shrine,  
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear  
 Yet dazle Heav'n, that brightest Seraphin  
 Approach not, but with wings veil thir eyes."<sup>11</sup>

His radiance is manifest in the Son:

Hail holy light, offspring of Heav'n first-born,  
 Or of th'Eternal coeternal beam  
 May I expres thee unblam'd? Since God is Light,  
 And never but in unapproach'd light  
 Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,  
 Bright effluence of bright essence increate.<sup>12</sup>

Adam and Eve express that Light in "thir looks Divine":

Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,  
 Godlike erect, with native Honour clad  
 In Naked Majestie seem'd Lords of all,  
 And worthie seem'd, for in thir looks Divine  
 The Image of thir glorious Maker shon.<sup>13</sup>

Paradise is bathed in it:

O Earth, how like to Heav'n, if not preferr'd  
 More justly, Seat worthier of Gods, as built  
 With second thoughts reforming what was old!  
 For what God after better worse would build?  
 Terrestrial Heav'n, danc't round by other Heav'ns  
 That shine, yet bear thir bright officious Lamps,  
 Light above Light, for thee alone, as seems,  
 In thee concentrating all thir precious beams  
 Of sacred influence.<sup>14</sup>

Light is the symbol of perfection, a universal harmony in which all things are endowed with the grace of God in proportion to their divinely endowed capacities. The light-drenched universe is ordered upon a hierarchy of values that begin in the mineral realm and move upward toward God. Raphael explains the divine structure to Adam:

O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom  
 All things proceed, and up to him return,  
 If not deprav'd from good, created all  
 Such to perfection, one first matter all,  
 Indu'd with various forms, various degrees  
 Of substance, and in thing that live of life;  
 But more refin'd, more spirituous, and pure,  
 As neerer to him plac't or nearer tending  
 Each in thir several active Sphears assignd,  
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds  
 Proportioned to each kind.<sup>15</sup>

From this hierarchical conception of the universe, which stems from Aristotle, and which was integrated into Christian theology by St. Thomas Aquinas<sup>16</sup>, there emerged a conception of order whereby those creatures that are more distant from God in the great chain of being must obey those creatures that are closer to God. C.S. Lewis points this out:

According to this conception degrees of value are objectively present in the universe. Everything except God has a natural superior; everything except un-informed matter has some natural inferior. The goodness, happiness and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferior.<sup>17</sup>

The aristocratic principle that merit must rule was central to Milton's thought. Wolfe states:

To his analysis of the government of Heaven and Hell, of the home, and of man himself, Milton applied the leadership principle that he had so persistently championed during the tumultuous pamphleteering years. The government of heaven, as described by Milton, accords ideally with the pattern of his commonwealth principles. Not, as Satan claims, 'upheld by old repute consent or custome,' but sustained by his perfection of character, God rules over all the aristocracy of Heaven.<sup>18</sup>

This principle, Mr. Lewis believes, is the "indwelling life of the whole poem"<sup>19</sup>. Commenting on the Paradise episode, he observes:

Almost everything one knows of Milton prepares us for such an enchanting and makes it certain that Hierarchy will appeal to his imagination as well as to his conscience, will perhaps reach his conscience chiefly through his imagination... Everything that he greatly cares about demands order, proportion, measure, and control. In poetry he considers decorum the great masterpiece. In politics he is that which of all things least resembles a democrat - an aristocratic republican who thinks "nothing more agreeable to the order of nature or more for the interest of mankind, than that the less should yield to the greater, not in numbers, but in wisdom and virtue." (Defensio Secunda, Trans. Bohn. Prose Wks., Vol. I, p.265)".<sup>20</sup>

Against a background of Divine Light Satan's sin becomes self-evident. In rebelling against the exaltation of the Son of God, Satan has rebelled against his natural superior. In the epic the consequences of this event are worked out in the inner depravity of Satan, on the one hand, and the Satanic rule of the world, on the other. Milton makes use of Light to expose the inner depravity.

Confronted by the Light of God in the garden of Eden, the hidden depths of agony that Hell could not release (because it supplied a different kind of challenge) come to the surface and spill out in agonized soliloquies:

O thou that with surpassing Glory crowned,  
 Look'st from thy sole Dominion like the God  
 Of this new World; at whose sight all the Starrs  
 Hide thir diminsht heads; to thee I call,  
 But with no friendly voice, and add thy name  
 O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams  
 That bring to my remembrance from what state  
 I fell, how glorious once above thy Speare;  
 Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down  
 Warring in Heav'n against Heav'ns matchless King:<sup>21</sup>

In the presence of Celestial Light, the heroic illusion of the first book is brought under control. Satan, in Paradise, has been confronted by reality. He cannot fashion, in the face of the absolute perfection of Paradise, a God to fit the darkness of his own perverted mind. The agony attendant upon revolt and drawn out by the all-encompassing Light of

Paradise finds its way into the speech:

Me miserable! which way shall I flie  
 Infinite wrauth, and infinite despaire?  
 Which way I flie is Hell; myself am Hell;  
 And in the lowest deep a lower deep  
 Still threatning to devour me opens wide,  
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.<sup>22</sup>

Waldock, in his analysis of this speech, states that Milton has created a new Satan:

The Satan of the address to the Sun is not a development from the old, he is not a changed Satan, he is a new Satan.<sup>23</sup>

Yet it is this Satan that is first met in the opening book when, filled with a sense of "lost happiness"<sup>24</sup> and "lasting pain"<sup>25</sup> he recalls those "happy Realms of light"<sup>26</sup>. Milton has not created a new Satan; he has simply opened up the private world of evil which stands out in apparent contrast to its public force. In the mind of God, which is the mind of the poem<sup>27</sup>, the private agony and the heroic illusion are one and the same thing since both belong to evil when placed at the service of justice.

The idea of two Satans is also expressed by Gilbert. Dividing Paradise Lost into two parts (the epic and the garden tragedy), he feels that Milton has created a heroic Satan for the epic proper, and an unheroic Satan for the garden tragedy:

So far as this Satan, standing for the universal power of evil, is not to be reconciled with the villain of the garden tragedy, a critic cannot arrive at a unified characterization of the Adversary. Milton brought two conceptions - never wholly diverse - into such agreement as his purpose required but no further.<sup>28</sup>

Again it must be argued, however, that it is possible to "arrive at a unified characterization of the Adversary". The way is to recognize what Milton was attempting to embody in the Satan of Paradise Lost,

and to relate that to the actual presentation. While Milton must create the heroic impression in order to present the force of evil, he must also show that force depraved and helpless to achieve its own ends. By means of relating Satan to the Light of God, he exposes the heroic illusion and brings out the depravity at the centre of his personality. This depravity supplies no contradiction to his aggressive force. Evil, in Paradise Lost, is both depraved and powerful.

By rebelling against Light, Satan has rebelled against the nature of reality, the sine qua non of life itself.<sup>29</sup> He has placed himself in an impossible situation that is closer to farce than to tragedy.<sup>30</sup> It is saved from degenerating into farce only by the presence of Caesar and the whole theme of punishment that lifts Satan to the level of a superman inflicting universal misery throughout the course of history from its inception in the fall of Adam until its conclusion in the destruction of the world. Lewis recognizes this:

Milton has chosen to treat the Satanic predicament in the epic form and has therefore subordinated the absurdity of Satan to the misery which he suffers and inflicts.<sup>31</sup>

In Caesar, God is stripped of the Light that invests, with awful splendour, His omnipotent power. As a result, the willing submission to God that is as natural to the angelic hosts as reflection to a mirror appears to be a forced submission to a decree that is backed by a threat of eternal damnation. Light sheds its transcendent beams and reveals a hard core of naked power:

Hear my Decree, which unrevok't shall stand.  
This day I have begot whom I declare  
My onely Son, and on this holy Hill  
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold  
At my right hand; your Head I him appoint;  
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow  
All knees in Heav'n, and shall confess him Lord:

Under his great Vice-gerent Reign abide  
 United as one individual Soule  
 For ever happie: him who disobeyes  
 Mee disobeyes, breaks union, and that day  
 Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls  
 Into utter darkness; deep ingulft, his place  
 Ordaind without redemption, without end.<sup>32</sup>

Commenting on this speech, Grierson points out:

What we gather is seemingly that the will of God,  
 however arbitrary it may appear, is to be obeyed.  
 That is reasonable. Heaven is a totalitarian  
 state.<sup>33</sup>

There is, when God's omnipotent power is divorced from its poetic sanction in Milton's description of His Light, the appearance of mere arbitrary power and rule for its own sake. And with this appearance the Satanic illusion is perpetuated. The apparent heroic struggle between Satan and Caesar, first manifest in Hell, dovetails with the Homeric battle in Heaven.

Satan, in the barbaric Heaven, filled with "mystical dance"<sup>34</sup>, "harmonie Divine"<sup>35</sup> to which "Gods own ear listens delighted"<sup>36</sup>, and tables set with "fruits of delicious vine" and "rubied Nectar"<sup>37</sup>, calls the angels who fly under his banner to his place in the north

Rais'd on a mount, with Pyramids and Towrs  
 From Diamond Quarries hew'n, and Rocks of Gold.<sup>38</sup>

There, as in Pandaemonium, he consults with his followers:

Will ye submit your necks, and chuse to bend  
 The supple knee? ye will not, if I trust  
 To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves  
 Natives and Sons of Heav'n possest before  
 By none, and if not equal all, yet free  
 Equally free; for Orders and Degrees  
 Jarr not with liberty, but well consist.  
 Who can in reason then or right assume  
 Monarchie over such as live by right  
 His equals ....<sup>39</sup>

In the meantime, on the other side of Heaven, God consults with his Son:

Neerly it now concernes us to be sure  
 Of our Omnipotence, and with what arms  
 We mean to hold what anciently we claim  
 Of Deitie or Empire ...<sup>40</sup>

It would appear that Satan supplies a real threat to God's supremacy in Heaven, that it is possible for Satan to usurp power and hold divided Empire with Him:

... such a foe  
 Is rising, who intends to erect his Throne  
 Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North;  
 Not so content, hath in his thought to trie  
 In battel, what our power is, or our right.  
 Let us advise, and to this hazard draw  
 With speed what force is left, and all employ  
 In our Defense, lest unawares we lose  
 This our high place, Our Sanctuarie, our Hill.<sup>41</sup>

Finally the forces of God, led by Michael, and the forces of Satan collide. The conflict of good and evil, which the collision of these two forces represent, is blurred, however, by the apparent likeness of both sides. His gods, including the Omnipotent and His Son, do not appear to be much better, except in terms of military power, than their opponents. Grierson states that

If Milton had been Homer (and there is in him more of Homer than of either Virgil or Dante, so little is he a philosophical poet) his gods would have been somewhat better characters than their Titanic opponents, certainly more strong and beautiful:

'til the eternal law  
 That first in beauty should be first in might,  
 as Keats in the spirit of the Greeks, declares.<sup>42</sup>

In so far as Heaven is created in the image of Olympus, and turns into a Homeric battlefield to cast out evil, Satan remains, in illusion, the epic hero. The spectacle of "Heav'n running from Heav'n"<sup>43</sup> is the spectacle of primitive and Titanic forces in conflict:

... now storming furie rose,  
 And clamor such as heard in Heav'n till now  
 Was never, Arms on Armour clashing bray'd  
 Horrible distord, and the madding wheelles

Of brazen Chariots rag'd; dire was the noise  
 Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss  
 Of fiery Darts in flaming volies flew,  
 And flying vaulted either Host with fire  
 So under fiery cope together rush't  
 Both battels maine, with ruinous assault  
 And inextinguishable rage;<sup>44</sup>

The apotheosis of sheer might is evidenced when the Son, at the express command of God, hurls down upon Satan and his followers ten thousand thunderbolts:

Full soon  
 Among them he arriv'd; in his right hand  
 Grasping ten thousand Thunders, which he sent  
 Before him, such as in thir Soules infix'd  
 Plagues; they astonisht all resistance lost,  
 All courage; down thir idle weapons drop'd;  
 O're Shields and Helmes, and helmed heads he rode  
 Of Thrones and mighty Seraphin prostrate,  
 That wish'd the Mountains now might be again  
 Thrown on them as a shelter from his ire.<sup>45</sup>

This portrait of the Son, putting on the terrors of God, "too severe to be beheld and full of wrauth"<sup>46</sup> is the dynamo of the Omnipotent divorced from His Light which Milton uses, in another context, to describe the Son as the "Bright effluence of bright essence increate."<sup>47</sup>

Heaven is drained of the Christian spirit of love.<sup>48</sup> Light undergoes a metamorphoses and becomes a Caesar.

In Paradise Lost God is Caesar. The order of the universe is no longer a mathematical harmony drenched in Light, but a mighty Tyranny. Heaven is now a glittering barbaric court of warriors, of feudal princes and barons. The dominating symbol of Milton's new Heaven is not Light but power. God is the utter and absolute despot ruling by decree, crushing revolt and dissension by military force.<sup>49</sup>

When God becomes, in appearance, a despot, and heaven, a glittering barbaric court, Satan appears heroic because of the kind of government he tries to overthrow. So long as this heroic display remains operative Milton is able to keep the dynamic force of evil in movement. By



means of two contrasting symbols, which stand for two aspects of a single God, he is able to perpetuate the heroic illusion of Book I, and, at the same time, to reveal the inner depravity that lies buried beneath the 'sound and fury' of Satan's apparently heroic revolt.

The epic form is the heroic armour of the Satanic illusion. It finds its justification in the apparent struggle between Satan and God. In this apparent struggle God appears, like the Greek Appollo,<sup>50</sup> to stand for the principle of order and harmony, the pure perfection of which prevents him, without the sudden infliction of a disruptive force from without, from performing a new creative act. Since God creates all things in a state of perfection and decrees that each should reflect back, like a mirror, the perfection with which it has been endowed, it follows that the universe, as called into being by the word of God, consists of an eternal giving forth and reflecting back of Light. This is precisely the situation that exists in the garden of Eden. The universe exists from the moment of its creation in a state of perfect being that admits of no struggle.<sup>51</sup> Harmony and order dominate and control.

Into this Light infused universe there suddenly comes, in appearance at least, the Dionysian force which is the principle of vitality. Satan, it would seem, embodies this force. By challenging God he upsets a state of harmony and creates a state of war that is necessary and inevitable to the unfoldment of reality. Thus, when Satan disturbs the harmony of Heaven by rebelling against the Son of God, he provides the means by which God is able to create man. God points this out:

But least his heart exalt him in his harme  
 Already done, to have dispeopl'd Heav'n  
 My damage fondly deem'd, I can repaire

That detriment, if such it be to lose  
 Self-lost, and in a moment will create  
 Another world, out of one man a Race  
 Of men innumerable, there to dwell  
 Not here...<sup>52</sup>

And when Satan upsets the harmony of Paradise, God responds by sending His Son through whom the New Jerusalem will eventually be established.

When Adam is told of the ultimate consequences of his fall, he replies:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!  
 That all this good of evil shall produce,  
 And evil turn to good; more wonderful  
 Than that which by creation first brought forth  
 Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,  
 Whether I should repent me now of sin  
 By mee done and occasion'd, or rejoyce  
 Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,  
 To God more glory, more good will to Men  
 From God, and over wrauth grace shall abound.<sup>53</sup>

By making Satan appear necessary to God, His counter-divinity through whom the evolution of life is made possible, Milton has recreated the whole mythological framework that lies at the basis of Greek heroic art. He has given voice to the inevitable conflict between the principle of order and the principle of vitality that go to the making up of reality. He has made Satan the God-like Dionysian hero whose revolt provokes both admiration and pity. As Niebuhr points out,

Zeus remains God, but one is prompted to both admiration and pity for those who defy him.<sup>54</sup>

This mythological framework Toynbee describes in terms of the principle of challenge and response. He finds it worked out in the Promethean Trilogy of Aeschylus, Goethe's Faust, and the Book of Job. It would appear to be worked out in Paradise Lost. Here is Toynbee's account of the myth:

In both the theme is a conflict between the superhuman powers: a conflict between Zeus and Prometheus in this case (i.e. the Promethean Trilogy) and a conflict between God and Satan or Mephistopholes in the other.

In both myths again, the field of this superhuman conflict is a human being or human society which is also the stake for which the superhuman combatants are contending. The role of Faust or Job is played in the Aeschylean myth by Hellenic society which expands in the poets transcendent imagination into mankind at large. And lastly, in both myths, the relative importance of the human and superhuman actors, as it appears in the mythological fantasy, has to be reversed when we come to their psychological interpretation. From this introverted angle of vision, the field of human conflict or prize of victory takes substance as the sole figure on the stage while the superhuman combatants resolve themselves into conflicting impulses in this actor's soul.

To this extent the two myths are analogous. The difference between them lies in the relation of the two superhuman combatants - or two conflicting impulses - with one another. In the myth of Faust or Job, it is God, the receiver of the challenge, who wins the victory through finding an opportunity, in the challenge presented by Satan or Mephistopholes, for performing a new creative act from which God would otherwise have been inhibited by his own perfection. In this myth, the challenger - Mephistopholes or Satan - is permitted by God to persecute a human victim in order that the persecutor may suffer discomfiture and defeat. On the other hand, in the Aeschylean myth, the receiver of the challenge who in this myth is Zeus, is the loser of the battle.<sup>55</sup>

It is this myth that underlies the epic form of Paradise Lost. Here again are two superhuman powers. Again the field of this superhuman conflict is a human being (Adam) who is the representative of the human race. Because Milton is working in terms of the epic which shares none of the limitations of tragedy (unity of time, place and action, etc.), he is able to introduce both human and divine elements and thus represent the struggle from several angles of vision rather than limit it to the psychological interpretation.

The myth continues along the lines of Faust and Job (although the earthly victory of Satan over man relates it to the Aeschylean victory of Prometheus). God appears to find in Satan's rebellion the opportunity to perform a new creative act from which he would otherwise be prevented by virtue of his own perfection. He allows Satan to

persecute man in order that he may suffer eventual defeat.

The sense of the necessity of Satan to the creativity of God, and the sense of heroic struggle between order and vitality for the control of man, are the basis of the heroic nature of Satan. Milton corrects this heroic impression, however, by subjecting the Greek world to a Hebrew-Christian God.

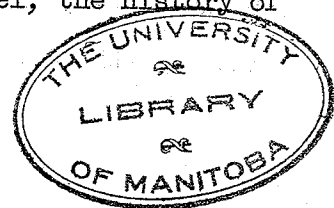
Milton's God is a God of Light, Omniscient and Omnipotent. By virtue of His foreknowledge, the whole illusion of struggle is subjected to an all-controlling power. It is impossible for Satan to challenge God since Satan is at all times under the control of Him. His every movement is a part of a pre-conceived plan involving justice and mercy. Milton points this out throughout the poem. In the third book, God, prior to the temptation, foretells the fall of man, the eternal damnation of Satan, and the final redemption of humanity:

Onely begotten Son, seest thou what rage  
 Transports our adversarie, whom no bounds  
 Prescrib'd, no barrs of Hell, nor all the chains  
 Heapt on him there, nor yet the main Abyss  
 Wide interrupt can hold; so bent he seems  
 On desperat revenge, that shall redound  
 Upon his own rebellious head. And now  
 Through all restraint broke loose he wings his way  
 Not farr off Heav'n, in the Precincts of light,  
 Directly toward the new created World,  
 And Man there plac't, with purpose to assay  
 If him by force he can destroy, or worse,  
 By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert;  
 For man will hark'n to his glozing lyes,  
 And easily transgress the sole Command,  
 Sole pledge of his obedience:

...

The first sort by thir own temptation fell,  
 Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls deceiv'd  
 By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace,  
 The other none: in Mercy and Justice both,  
 Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glorie excel,  
 But Mercy first and last shall brightest shine.<sup>56</sup>

And with the actual fall God foretells, through Michael, the history of the world under the rule of Satan:



... So shall the world go on  
 To good malignant, to bad men benign,  
 Under her own weight groaning, till the Day  
 Appear of respiration to the just,  
 And vengeance to the wicked ...<sup>57</sup>

Milton makes use of the epic for the specific purpose of rejecting it as the garb of evil. He is careful to separate his theme from the heroic tradition that he uses to present it:

Not less but more Heroic than the wrauth  
 Of stern Achilles on his Foe pursu'd  
 Thrice Fugative about Troy Wal...

...  
 Not sedulous by Nature to indite  
 Warrs, hitherto the onely Argument  
 Heroic deem'd, chief maistrie to dissect  
 With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights  
 In Battels feign'd; the better fortitude  
 Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom  
 Unsung...

...  
 Mee of these  
 Nor skilld nor studious, higher argument  
 Remaines...<sup>58</sup>

He pushes the Greek heroic tradition out the front door and ushers it in again through the back to supply the necessary heroic illusion for the dynamic role of Satan. In the appearance, at least, no real distinction can be drawn between the wrath of Caesar upon Satan and man and the wrath of "stern Achilles on his Foe", or between the war in Heaven and the "tedious havoc of fabl'd Knights in Battels feign'd". While Milton discounts war "hitherto the onely argument heroic deem'd", war, it would appear, is of the essence of the epic ("to wage by force or guile eternal Warr irreconcilable to our grand Foe").<sup>59</sup> The apparent paradox lies in the fact that the Satanic world, which is the world of war and struggle, must be both dynamic and rejected. For this reason the soliloquies in Paradise supply no contradiction to the heroic illusion in Heaven and Hell.

The heroic illusion and the inner depravity represent the public

and the private personality of Satan. The aggressive forward drive of Satan is counteracted by the inward check. He is caught between the horizontal drive of Caesar and the vertical shaft of Light. As a result, evil, as manifest in Satan, slowly but deliberately cancels itself out. One may observe the process of a substantial and muscular evil, enclosed within a Titan, disintegrating before the Light of God. Lewis describes the process:

This progressive disintegration, of which he himself is vividly aware, is carefully marked in the poem. He begins by fighting for "liberty", however misconceived; but almost at once sinks to fighting for "Honour, Dominion, glorie, and renowne" (vi,422). Defeated in this, he sinks to that great design which makes the main subject of the poem - the design of ruining two creatures who had never done him any harm, no longer in the serious hope of victory, but only to annoy the Enemy whom he cannot directly attack. (The coward in Beaumont and Fletcher's play, not daring to fight a duel, decided to go home and beat his servants.) This brings him as a spy into the universe, and soon not even as a political spy, but a mere peeping Tom leering and writhing in prurience as he overlooks the privacy of two lovers, and there described, almost for the first time in the poem, not as the fallen Archangel or Hell's dread Emperor, but simply as "the Devil" (iv,502) - the salacious grotesque, half bogey and half buffoon, of popular tradition. From a hero to general, from general to politician, from politician to secret service agent, and thence to a thing that peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows, and thence to a toad, and finally to a snake - such is the progress of Satan.<sup>60</sup>

Finally the ultimate depravity of Satan is demonstrated when, bringing back to Hell news of victory, he is transformed against his will into a serpent:

So having said, a while he stood, expecting  
 Thir universal shout and high applause  
 To fill his eare, when contrary he hears  
 On all sides, from innumerable tongues  
 A dismal universal hiss, the sound  
 Of public scorn; he wondered but not long  
 Had leasure, wondring at himself now more;  
 His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,  
 His Armes clung to his Ribs, his Leggs entwining  
 Each other, till supplanted down he fell

A monstrous Serpent on his Belly prone,  
Reluctant, but in vaine, a greater power  
Now rul'd him, punisht in the shape he sin'd,  
According to his doom:61

Waldock, in his comment upon this passage, suggests that Milton has here made use of the comic cartoon technique:

The technique of this famous scene is the technique of the comic cartoon. This is not just a way of being rude to Milton. It is most interesting to observe that the technique of it is exactly that of the comic cartoon. The method of the cartoon is to allow the villain of the piece to reach a pitch of high confidence and vainglory, and then to dash him down, the essence of cartoon technique being to bring your adversary to grief by unfair means - in short, by some form of practical joke. This, of course, is precisely how Satan is treated here. What happens to him parallels in the exactest manner what used to happen in religious plays to the Devil and Herod, what happens in war posters to our enemies, and what happens in film comedies to the Big Bad Wolf.62

Throughout his analysis of Satan, Waldock argues that Milton is essentially undramatic in his presentation of evil. Satan does not degenerate; he is degraded.

A character in a piece of imaginative literature degenerates when we are in a position to check his progress by what we know of him: when we are made to feel that this or that change, once we are shown it, does follow, although we ourselves could not, perhaps, have foretold it. But what we have in the alleged "degeneration" of Satan, is really, on a large scale and in a disguised form, what we have had in the running fire of belittling commentary already noted. It is a pretended exhibition of changes occurring; actually it is of the nature of an assertion that certain changes occur. The changes do not generate themselves from within: they are imposed from without. Satan, in short, does not degenerate: he is degraded.63

Once again Waldock is divorcing Satan from the thing that he embodies. Of course the degeneration of Satan consists of a large scale demonstration of the "belittling commentary" of the first book. This demonstration of that commentary does not, however, constitute an imposition from without.

It belongs to the nature of evil, to the inner nature of evil as Milton defines it and demonstrates it in Satan.

Although Satan is aware of the increasing depravity of his person,<sup>64</sup> he never pierces through his illusion to the reality of his evil. He remains until the end a deluded victim of his own revolt. When, for example, he confesses his guilt and admits his misery, he is still able to say

Evil be thou my Good; by thee at least  
Divided Empire with Heav'ns King I hold  
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign.<sup>65</sup>

In this speech Satan declares his ultimate goal in his revolt against God. What he fails to realize, of course, is that, paradoxically enough, his good and God's good coalesce. Evil is manifest justice which glorifies the goodness of God. In that one telling phrase - "evil be thou my good" - is summed up the essence of the heroic illusion and the inner depravity of Satan.

It will be noted that the heroic illusion of Paradise Lost is necessitated by the role that evil performs in the epic. Because evil, as embodied in Satan, is, in reality, the ammunition of God by which he punishes a disobedient humanity, it is necessary that Satan should be presented as a superhuman dynamic force. As the servant of justice he must embody divine wrath.

Once Satan had performed his dynamic function (i.e. once judgment had been passed upon man) the heroic illusion is dropped. The Satan who brings news of victory to the fallen angels is dramatically bankrupt. As Waldo suggests, he is degraded to the level of the Big Bad Wolf.

In Paradise Regain'd, Milton is no longer concerned with God in relation to his Justice. Judgment has been passed and sentence



inflicted upon the world. Caesar has given vent to his wrath. Satan, who when last seen was being "punisht in the shape he sin'd," is now totally depraved. Without the force of Caesar to drive him, he is trapped by the full flood of Divine Light as it shines inward in the Son of God.

The absence of Caesar in Paradise Regain'd is demonstrated by Milton's presentation of the Son of God. In Paradise Lost, the Son acts under the orders of Caesar in the performance of justice. He takes on the terror of Caesar and hurls Satan and his followers from the battlefield of Heaven into the abyss of Hell. Note, for example, the Son's reply to Caesar when commanded by Him to ascend God's chariot:

Scepter and Power, thy giving, I assume,  
 And gladlier shall resign, when in the end  
 Thou shalt be All in All and I in thee  
 For ever, and in me all whom thou lov'st:  
 But whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on  
 Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,  
 Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,  
 Arm'd with thy might, rid Heav'n of these rebell d,  
 To thir prepar'd ill Mansion driven down  
 To chains of Darkness, and th'undying Worm,  
 That from thy just obedience could revolt.<sup>65</sup>

There follows the portrait of the Son as the warrior-leader in a glorious cause involving "sacred and devote"<sup>66</sup> destruction:

... and into terrour chang'd  
 His countenance too severe to be beheld  
 And full of wrauth bent on his enemies.<sup>67</sup>

This portrait of the Son stands out in direct contrast to the portrait in Paradise Regain'd. While still hating (although now in a detached manner)<sup>68</sup> the enemies of God, he rejects all show of physical violence, and condemns the victories of the battle field:

They err who count it glorious to subdue  
 By conquest far and wide, to ever-run  
 Large Countries, and in field great Battels win.<sup>69</sup>

The false glory of war he would replace with true glory which may be attained without war or violence. Thus he concludes:

But if there be in glory aught of good,  
It may by means far different be attain'd  
Without ambition, war or violence;  
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,  
By patience, temperance; I mention still  
Him whom thy wrongs with Sainly patience born  
Made famous in a Land and times obscure;  
Who names not now with honour patient Job?<sup>70</sup>

Milton has replaced the warrior leader of Paradise Lost with a figure who stands, not for a life of heroic deeds that bring with them public glory, but for a life of inner certitude and perfect virtue.<sup>71</sup> He admits that heroic deeds had once tempted him:

... yet this not all  
To which my Spirit aspir'd. Victorious deeds  
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while  
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,  
Then to subdue and quell o're all the earth  
Brute violence and proud Tyrannick power,  
Til truth were freed, and equity restor'd.<sup>72</sup>

He decides, however, that Israel is not worth saving:

What wise and valiant man would seek to free  
These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,  
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?<sup>73</sup>

This change in the Son demonstrates a change from Caesar to Light in the presentation of God. Milton has turned from the public world of Caesar (and even the public world of Light as manifest in the garden of Eden) to a private world of inner Light. Satan is therefore cut off from the whole environment of Paradise Lost. He cannot struggle against Caesar because Caesar is absent, and he cannot create the illusion of power in his rule of the world because that world has been rejected.

Evil is totally subordinated to Light as manifest in the Son. In Paradise Lost this subordination was counteracted by the domination of Caesar.<sup>74</sup> The theme of Paradise Lost is a Hebrew one, and to present it Milton uses a Hebrew God.<sup>75</sup> The theme of redemption, on the other hand, is a Christian one, and to present it Milton makes use of a more Christian

God.<sup>76</sup>

Satan cannot tempt the Son with the world that he possesses. That world is depraved beyond redemption. It simply lies, like a stagnant fen, awaiting the final upheaval. All that really matters, all that can help man, is Light:

... He who receives  
Light from above, from the fountain of Light,  
No other doctrine needs though granted true.<sup>77</sup>

In a series of pageants that suggest the artificiality of the Satanic world<sup>78</sup> (in Paradise Lost it was the world of Light manifest in Paradise that seemed artificial) the heroic world passes into an oblivion and Satan along with it. It is a thoroughly contemptible world filled with delusion and idolatry:

For God hath justly giv'n the Nations up  
To their Delusions; justly, since they fell  
Idolatrous.<sup>79</sup>

It is beggar's trash contaminated by a fatal moral disease that not even the Son, the Redeemer of men, will stoop to save.

Thus, before the full rays of Divine Light manifest in the Son of God, Satan's depravity reaches its final stage with hardly an echo of the dynamic force that carried him, with apparent Herculean strength, through Paradise Lost. That Herculean illusion of strength was dependent upon the continuing presence of Caesar as a God of vengeance and wrath. When cut off from Caesar, and exposed to Light, the whole basis of Satan's power is removed. Depravity destroys his might.

## NOTES (CHAPTER II)

1. Waldoock, p.66
2. P.L. Bk. I, ll 364-375
3. P.L. Bk. I, ll 212-220
4. P.L. Bk. I, ll 84-91
5. Waldoock, pp 77-78
6. Waldoock believes the theme of Paradise Lost "cut clean against the grain of his nature" and put Milton "in a false position". Believing in the validity of "independent and strenuous thought" and feeling that the essence of life is struggle, Milton was forced at the same time, to "deplore the coming of thought into the world (for that is what it really amounts to) and represent man's best state as that original featureless blessedness."

In a sense Milton's central theme denied him the full expression of his deepest interests. It was likely, then, that as his really deep interest could not find outlet in his poem in the right way they might find outlet in the wrong way. And to a certain extent they do; they find vents and safety-valves often in inopportune places. Adam cannot give Milton such scope to express what he really feels about life: but Satan is there, Satan gives him scope. And the result is that the balance is somewhat disturbed; pressures are set up that are at times disquieting, that seem to threaten more than once, indeed, the equilibrium of the poem.

(p.24)

This conflict of theme and nature does not really exist in Paradise Lost. Milton can express in Satan the depths of his own heroic nature because he is dealing with an ascendant evil overcoming the universe and embodying, in its power, the full wrath of God.

It must be remembered, however, that Paradise Lost was written at the psychological point in which Satan and Milton parted company. The public world of heroic struggle backed by independent and strenuous thought (the world of Satan) Milton rejects with the failure of the Commonwealth. One catches the echo of that world and that struggle in Satan's speech and action. But it is a world that Milton is casting off. Paradise Lost is composed as an heroic epitaph to a lost ideal. In Satan, he eases himself out of the world.

7. Grierson, p.80.
8. Milton is consciously aware in the description of Satan in Hell that the "prison ordain'd" is going to stretch its bars across the globe. Throughout the epic he is careful to repeat again and again the universal significance of Satanic activity.
9. ... but that the will  
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven  
Left him at large to his own dark designs  
(P.L. Bk. I, ll 211-213)
10. To wage by force or guile eternal Warr

Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,  
(P.L. Bk. I, ll 121-2)

11. P.L. Bk. III, ll 372-381
  12. P.L. Bk. III, ll 1-6
  13. P.L. Bk. IV, ll 288-292
  14. P.L. Bk. IX, ll 99-107
  15. P.L. Bk. V, ll 469-479
16. "This thought is not peculiar to Milton. It belongs to the ancient orthodox tradition of European ethics from Aristotle to Johnson himself, and a failure to understand it entails a false criticism not only of Paradise Lost but of nearly all literature before the revolutionary period."

(Lewis, p.72)

(For a discussion of the hierarchical conception in Aristotle which is carried forward into the Christian tradition by St. Thomas Aquinas, and into the Elizabethan compromise, especially in the thought of Richard Hooker, see Northrup, F.S.C. "The Meeting of East and West Chaps IV and VI)

17. Lewis, p 72
18. Wolfe, Don M., p 241
19. Lewis, p 78
20. Lewis, p 78. (By "enchancing" Lewis refers to Milton's enchantment by the Hierarchical Principle.
21. P.L. Bk. IV, ll 32-41
22. P.L. Bk. IV, ll 73-78
23. Waldo, p 82
24. P.L. Bk. I, l 55
25. P.L. Bk. I, l 55
26. P.L. Bk. I, l 85
27. Milton, it must be remembered, writes as a prophet of God, asserting God's Providence and justifying His ways.
28. Sirluck, Ernest, On the Composition of Paradise Lost (Book Review). Modern Philology, May 1948, p 274.
29. Satan, himself, admits that he has rebelled against that which created him:

When he created what I was  
In that bright eminence...

(P.L. Bk. IV, ll 43-44)

30. The comic undertones of Satan's revolt are pointed out by Lewis:

But it is a mistake to demand that Satan, any more than Sir Willoughby, should be able to rant and posture through the whole universe without, sooner or later, awaking the comic spirit. The whole nature of reality would have to be altered in order to give him such immunity, and it is not alterable. At that precise point where Satan or Sir Willoughby meets something real, laughter must arise, just as steam must when water meets fire. And no one was less likely than Milton to be ignorant of this necessity. We know from his prose works that he believed everything detestable to be, in the long run, also ridiculous; and mere Christianity commits every

Christian to believing that "The Devil (in the long run) is an ass."

(Lewis, p.93)

And Milton does laugh; at least, he puts laughter into the mouth of God, which is substantially the same thing:

... thou thy foes  
Justly hast in derision, and secure  
Laugh'st at thir vain designes and tumults vain,  
(P.L. Bk. V, p.735-37)

31. Lewis, p. 93.
  32. P.L. Bk. V, ll 602-615.
  33. Grierson, p.117.
  34. P.L. Bk. V, l 620.
  35. Bk. V, l 625.
  36. P.L. Bk. V, ll 626-7.
  37. P.L. Bk. V, l 633.
  38. P.L. Bk. V, ll 758-9.
  39. P.L. Bk. V, ll 787-97.
  40. P.L. Bk. V, ll 72-4.
  41. P.L. Bk. V, ll 724-732.
  42. Grierson, p.109.
  43. P.L. Bk. VI, l 868.
  44. P.L. Bk. VI, ll 208-19.
  45. P.L. Bk. VI, ll 834-843.
  46. P.L. Bk. VI, ll 826-7.
  47. P.L. Bk. III, l 6.
48. Hamilton argues that Satan is a tragic hero who is justified in his rebellion against God:
- Sin is terrible because it is a revolt against love, not because it is a revolt against sheer power... The New Testament idea of God has been grafted clumsily on to the jealous Jehovah who is more successfully endowed with the thunder and restlessness of Jove..
- (Hamilton G.R. Hero or Fool - A Study in Milton's Satan, p.35)
49. Ross, M.M. Milton's Royalism, pp 75-6.
  50. The Greek spirit provides the illusion of Paradise Lost. In the Olympian universe Zeus represents the principle of order and measure while Dionysius represents the principle of vitality. Between order and vitality war is inevitable because the order must be upset to bring about a change which is essential to life. To be creative, therefore, is to be destructive. Niebuhr, in his analysis of the Greek spirit, points this out:

Thus life is at war with itself according to Greek tragedy. There is no solution, only a tragic solution for the conflict between the vitalities of life and the principle of measure. Zeus remains God, but one is prompted to both admiration and pity for

those who defy him.

(Niebuhr, R. The Nature and Destiny of Man  
p.11)

51. "The actual Paradise in Book IV consciously expresses Milton's yearning for a better state of things than this world provides: all the idealism of his youth is concentrated in that amazing description. Conscious and unconscious are at one in it. But when Milton introduces people into the picture, to present his age of innocence, he can be no more successful than any other human being in an attempt to imagine a state of existence at variance with the primal requirements of the human mind... Milton cannot really believe in such a way of life. Reduced to the ridiculous task of working in a garden which produces of its own accord more than they will ever need, Adam and Eve are in the hopeless position of Old Age Pensioners enjoying perpetual youth... On the contrary, we feel that Milton, stranded in his own Paradise, would very soon have eaten the apple on his own responsibility and immediately justified the act in a polemical pamphlet."

(Tillyard, p.282)

52. P.L. Bk. VII, ll 150-7.  
 53. P.L. Bk. XII, ll 469-478.  
 54. Niebuhr, R. Op. Cit. p.11.  
 55. Toynbee, A. A Study of History, Vol. III, pp.112-113.  
 56. P.L. Bk. III, ll 80-135.  
 57. P.L. Bk. XII, ll 537-541.  
 58. P.L. Bk. IX, ll 13-45.  
 59. P.L. Bk. I, ll 121-2.  
 60. Lewis, p.97.  
 61. P.L. Bk. X, ll 504-517.  
 62. Waldock, p.91-2.  
 63. Ibid, p.83.
64. Note Satan's awareness of his own depravity in the following passages:

O foul descent! that I who erst contended  
 With Gods to sit the highest, am now constraind  
 Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,  
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,  
 That to the hight of Deitie aspir'd;  
 But what will not Ambition and Revenge  
 Descend to? who aspires must down as low  
 As high he sould, obnoxious first or last,  
 To basest things. Revenge, at first thought sweet,  
 Bitter ere long back on itself recoiles;

(P.L. IX, ll 164-173)

Then let me not let pass  
 Occasion which now smiles, behold alone  
 The Woman, opportune to all attempts,  
 Her husband, for I view far round; not right,  
 Whose higher intellectuall more I shun,  
 And strength, of courage hautie, and of limb

Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould,  
 For not formidable, exempt from wound,  
 I not; so much hath Hell debas'd, and paive  
 Infeeb'l'd me, to what I was in Heav'n.

(P.L. IX, ll 479-489)

65. P.L. Bk. VI, ll 730-74.

It is possible to observe, within this speech of the Son, the metamorphoses of Light into Caesar, as the Son puts off mildness and takes on terror, the image of God in all things.

66. P.L. Bk. III, l 208.

67. P.L. Bk. VI, ll 824-6.

68. And what the people but a hard confus'd  
 A miscellaneous rabble, who extol  
 Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise

...

And what delight to be by such extoll'd,  
 To live upon thir tongues and be thir talk,  
 Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise?

(P.R. Bk. III, ll 49-57)

69. P.R. Bk. III, ll 71-74.

70. P.R. Bk. III, ll 89-96.

71. "Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules  
 Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King;  
 Which every wise and vertuous man attains;"

(P.R. Bk. II, ll 466-469)

72. P.R. Bk. I, ll 215-210.

73. P.R. Bk. IV, ll 143-5.

74. "We remember less Christ the promised redeemer than Christ who goes forth in all the panoply of Ezekiel's vision to overthrow the rebellious Angels. Perhaps had Milton read the greater prophets aright, and not like most Protestants of his day been more interested in the apocalyptic forecasts of "the two handed engine at the door", he might have found a better conception or produced a more Christian impression."

(Grierson, p.105)

75. "The God of Paradise Lost is the God of Moses".

76. Salvation on the basis of "right reason", rather than on the basis of the crucifixion of the Son places Paradise Regain'd closer to the humanist tradition than to orthodox Christianity. Milton's God is never completely Christian.

77. P.R. Bk. IV, ll 288-290.

78. That artificiality becomes almost grotesque when Satan appears in the desert wilderness and stands before the Son  
 Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,  
 As one in City or Court, or Palace bred.

(P.R. II, ll 299-300).

79. P.R. Bk. I, ll 442-444.



### CHAPTER III

#### SATAN AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF EVIL IN PARADISE LOST AND PARADISE REGAIN'D

Adam is the symbol of humanity<sup>1</sup>. In his fall the race of men fall. The "second Adam"<sup>2</sup> is the symbol of the elect. In his victory over Satan the few are victorious. The temptation of Eve that brings with it the fall of Adam is of universal consequence. Within it are both the beginning and the end of the world. History, emerging from the fall, revolves on the axis of Satan, propelled by the wrath of Caesar. The victory of the Son over Satan is a victory over the world.<sup>3</sup> It involves the creation of a Paradise of the mind cut off from the space-time activity of men and governed directly by Light from above. It is an inward Eden replacing the lost outward Eden.<sup>4</sup>

In Paradise Lost Satan's conquest of Paradise is the conquest of the universe. It brings with it the reversal of reality as manifest in the hierarchical universe bathed in Light, and replaces that "Terrestrial Heav'n"<sup>5</sup> with a terrestrial Hell. With this Satanic victory justice is fulfilled. Caesar and Satan work, each from their own angle of vision, one real, the other illusory, toward a common goal. The victory of Satan is the expression of justice. The double vision of the poem converges upon a single point in the fall of man.

With the fall of Adam God commands his angels to destroy the harmony of man and nature:

... the Sun  
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,  
As might affect the earth with cold and heat  
Scarce tollerable, and from the North to call  
Decripit Winter, from the South to bring  
Solstitial summers heat.<sup>6</sup>

Sin and Death, the offspring of Satan, build a bridge between Hell and

earth:

Now had they brought the work of wondrous Art  
 Pontifical, a ridge of pendent Rock  
 Over the vext Abyss, following the track  
 Of Satan, to the self-same place where hee  
 First lighted from his Wing, and safe landed  
 From out of Chaos to the outside bare  
 Of this round world; with Pinns of Adamant  
 And Chains that made all fast, too fast they made  
 And durable...<sup>7</sup>

Satan then returns to Hell to give his followers the keys to the earthly Kingdom, and to lead them personally across the "ridge of pendent Rock".

I call ye and declare ye now, returnd  
 Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth  
 Triumphant out of this infernal Pit  
 Abominable, accurst, the house of woe,  
 And Dungeon of our Tyrant: Now possess  
 As Lords, a spacious World, to our native Heaven  
 Little inferiour...<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, in the garden the Son passes judgment upon Adam:

Curs'd is the ground for thy sake, thou in sorrow  
 Shall eate thereof all the days of thy life;  
 Thorns also and Thistles it shall bring thee forth  
 Unbid, and thou shall eate th'Herb of th'Field,  
 In the sweat of thy Face shalt thou eate Bread,  
 Till thou return unto the ground, for thou  
 Out of the dust wast taken, know thy Birth  
 For dust thou art, and shalt to dust returne.<sup>9</sup>

With the stage set for evil to overrun the universe, Satan and his followers, led by the hand of Divine Justice, rush earthward:

See with what Heat these Dogs of Hell advance  
 To waste and havoc yonder World, which I  
 So fair and good created...

...  
 I to them have quitted all  
 At random yielded up to their misrule;  
 And know not that I call'd them thither  
 My Hell-hounds...<sup>10</sup>

Finally Michael takes Adam up to a high hill to show him the Hell-hounds in action. In a vision of the world until the second coming Adam observes his punishment.<sup>11</sup>

This vision of the world is an extension of the Hell episode of Book I and II. It simply carried forward the activity undertaken in Hell to its logical conclusion, and supplies a unified impression of dynamic evil bringing, as God's hangman, "death into the world, and all our Woe"<sup>12</sup>.

The world, like Hell, is a prison ruled by the tyrant:

... yet know withall  
 Since thy original lapse, true Libertie  
 Is lost, which alwayes with right Reason dwells  
 Twinn'd, and from her hath no individual being:  
 Reason in man obscur'd, or not obeyd,  
 Immediately inordinate desires  
 And upstart Passions catch the government  
 From Reason, and to servitude reduce  
 Man, till then free. Therefore since he permits  
 Within himself unworthie Powers to reign  
 Over free Reason, God in judgment just  
 Subjects him from without to violent Lords;  
 Who oft as undeservedly enthrall  
 His outward freedom: Tyrannie must be,  
 Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse.  
 Yet sometimes Nations will decline so low  
 From vertue, which is reason, that no wrong,  
 But Justice, and some fatal curse annext  
 Deprives them of thir outward libertie,  
 Thir inward lost.<sup>13</sup>

Milton's emphasis upon the role of justice in the divine plan obscures the role of mercy.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the epic Milton is anxious to show that man will receive mercy, while Satan will be eternally damned:

The first sort by thir own suggestion fell,  
 Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls deceiv'd  
 By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace,  
 The other none: in Mercy and Justice both  
 Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glorie excel,  
 But Mercy first and last shall brightest shine.<sup>15</sup>

In the vision of the world, however, those who find grace are few in number. Milton is never able to bring his mercy into focus. Always it is the unique individual, the single soul dwelling apart in a world of evil that lives by grace:

But hee the seventh from thee, whom thou beheldst  
 The only righteous in a World perverse,

And therefore hated, therefore so beset  
With Foes for daring single to be just,<sup>16</sup>

One Man except, the onely Son of Light  
In a dark Age, against example good,  
Against allurements, custom, and a World  
Offended:...<sup>17</sup>

The very fact that Milton is dealing with the history of the world makes it impossible for him to bring divine grace into focus. Evil, in Paradise Lost, overruns the universe. The Kingdoms of the earth are placed in the stranglehold of Satan's grasp. There can be, because of Satan's control of the world, no redemptive process within history. Mercy, therefore, necessitates a complete rejection of the world. Before dealing with grace, as distinct from justice, Milton must unravel the whole predestined course of history that ends ignominiously in the utter destruction of the world. By the time that Milton has rejected the world, however, he has rejected the larger part of humanity along with it. The destiny promised to Adam becomes the destiny of the few. Humanity at large shares, in the end, the destiny of Satan. When Satan is hurled back into Hell he is "cramm'd and gorg'd"<sup>18</sup> upon a steady diet of fallen humanity.

Upon the world of Paradise Lost judgment has been passed. The curse that guides its destiny leads it toward final annihilation:

... so shall the World goe on,  
To good malignant, to bad men benigne,  
Under her own waight groaning, till the day  
Appeer of respiration to the just,  
And vengeance to the wicked, at return  
Of him so lately promis'd to thy aid,  
The Womans seed, obscurely then foretold,  
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord,  
Last in the Clouds from Heav'n to be reveal'd  
In glory of the Father, to dissolve  
Satan with his perverted World, the raise  
From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,  
New Heav'ns, new Earth, Ages of endless date  
Founded in righteousness and peace and love,  
To bring forth fruits Joy and eternal Bliss.<sup>19</sup>

God's divine economy, presented in terms of justice and mercy, becomes, in

the actual working out, a ruthless weeding out of the major portion of humanity in preparation for the Kingdom of God upon a new Earth. The sons of Adam are divided into the damned, of whom Satan is the prototype, and the elect, of whom the Son is the prototype.<sup>20</sup> The repentant Adams dwindle into nothingness.

It is in Paradise Regain'd that Milton brings this revised conception of mercy into focus. The God of Light, who had showered his blessing throughout Eden without discrimination, now sheds his beams only upon a select clientele. The new Jerusalem will be highly exclusive:

This is true glory and renown, when God  
Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks  
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven  
To all his Angels, who with true applause  
Recount his praises; thus he did to Job,

.....

Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth less known;  
Where glory is but false glory, attributed  
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.<sup>21</sup>

The Son makes it quite clear that the world belongs to Satan:

The Kingdoms of the world to thee were giv'n,  
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp't,  
Other donation none thou canst produce:  
If given, by whom but by the King of Kings,  
God over all supreme ...<sup>22</sup>

The temptation that confronts the Son of God is the temptation to perform heroic deeds<sup>23</sup>, the temptation to identify himself with the ways of the world. Milton pits perfect man against the imperfect world and demonstrates thereby the grace of God existing as an inner Paradise within the individual. All the Kingdoms of the world are spread out before the Son as they were spread before Adam, and the Son rejects them all. In that rejection lies the conquest of evil.

The Son of God is not of this world. He is not the good Shepherd who, finding the hundredth sheep without the fold, sets out in search of him to

bring him back. He is no longer the Saviour. The tribes of Israel, polluted by evil, he leaves to Satan:

As for those captive Tribes, themselves were they  
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off  
From God to worship Calves...

...

Should I of these the liberty regard,  
Who freed, as to their antient Patrimony,  
Unhumbl'd, inrepentant, unreform'd,

...

no let them  
Thir enemies, who serve Idols with God.<sup>24</sup>

The Roman Empire is left to its own damnation:

For him I was not sent, nor yet to free  
That victor once, now vile and base,  
Deservedly made vassal...<sup>25</sup>

Even the wisdom of the Greeks is rejected:

But these are false, or little else but dreams,  
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, having offered him the whole world, Satan realizes that the Son of God belongs to another order of reality:

Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts  
Kingdom nor Empire pleases thee, nor aught  
By me propos'd, in life contemplative,  
Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,  
What dost thou in this world? the wilderness  
For thee is fittest place, I found thee there,  
And thither will return thee.<sup>27</sup>

The Son's world is within himself, illumined by Light from above:

Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules  
Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King;  
Which every wise and vertuous man attains.<sup>28</sup>

The redemption of man lies in the denial of the world. The universe of grace is beyond history. To be caught up in the affairs of the "herd confus'd"<sup>29</sup> is to be caught up in the fatal current of public events that leads to damnation. The path of history is the path of Satan:

Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost  
Of my reception into grace; what worse?

For where no hope is left is left no fear;  
 If there be worse, the expectation more  
 Of worse torments me then the feeling can.  
 I would be at the worst; worst is my Port,  
 My harbour and my ultimate repose,  
 The end I would attain, my final good.<sup>30</sup>

It is the consequences of the fall of Adam that justifies the heroic illusion under which Milton presents Satan. The Satanic conquest of man overrides, in the end, the mercy of God when that mercy is measured in numerical terms. The sheer force of Caesar's wrath almost annihilates his Light. In Book III God promises "light after light" to guide fallen humanity to final salvation:

The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd  
 Thir sinful state, and to appease betimes  
 Th'incens'd Deitie, while offerd grace  
 Invites; for I will cleer thir senses dark,  
 What may suffice, and soft'n stonie hearts  
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.  
 To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,  
 Though but endevord with sincere intent,  
 Mine eare shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.  
 And I will place within them as a guide  
 My Umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,  
 Light after light well us'd they shall attain,  
 And to the end persisting safe arrive.<sup>31</sup>

By Book XI, however, that light is the custody of the elect alone:

Some I have chosen of peculiar grace  
 Elect above the rest; so is my will:<sup>32</sup>

These elect have no social impact whatsoever. All the prophets of Israel and the Son of God together cannot reverse the fatal course of history.<sup>33</sup> The dictatorship of Satan continues without interruption or interference, throughout the history of the world. Every civilization becomes the incarnation of Hell stamped by the curse of God and ruled by Satan. The illusion of Book I becomes the illusion of the world:

For in those dayes Might onely shall be admir'd,  
 And Valour and Heroic Vertu call'd;  
 To overcome in Battel, and subdue  
 Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite

Man-slaughter, shall beheld the highest pitch  
 Of human Glorie, and for Glorie done  
 Of triumph to be styl'd great Conquerours,  
 Patrons of Mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods,  
 Thus Fame shall be achiev'd, renown on Earth,  
 And what most merits fame in silence hid.<sup>34</sup>

The apparent grandeur, the heroic courage, the Titanic strength, the majesty and the might of the Satan of Book I bears fruit - finds its dramatic demonstration - not alone in the activity of Hell, but also in the actual conquest of the universe that places into his hands all the Kingdoms of the world from the beginning of time until the end of time. It is the consequences of evil that Milton has in mind when he models his Satan upon the epic hero of Homer. Behind Book I lies the realization that the world is Hell and that Satan is the mighty Sultan.<sup>35</sup> All the shock of that shattering discovery springs to life in the dramatic power and poetic vitality of Satan in Hell. And that shock carries the epic, centred upon the Caesar-Satan dynamic, until the vengeance of God has worked itself out, until evil has enmeshed all the citizens of Satan's perverted world, and the way has been cleared for the New Jerusalem.

The epic closes upon a note of resignation. As Adam and Eve walk hand in hand out of the garden there is a sense of their purgation, a sense of their having recognized and confessed all the guilt of the world for which they alone are responsible, a sense of quiet resignation to punishment within which exists the possibility of final redemption.

Stoll comments upon this ending:

The stern Puritan might have been expected to dictate an ending full of anger and fierce denunciation of the sin which has brought Death into the world and all our woe, or to give place only to the wailing of the sinners themselves. But he does neither. He presents to us,



instead a simple picture of the man and woman leaving home and going out into the world, in tears but not despairing. This is meant, it would seem, to be a picture - a symbol - of the life they were entering upon, the life their children were to lead; and is it not a remarkable thing that the blind old Puritan amid his quarreling daughters and the renegades of the Restoration, on evil days though fallen and evil tongues, could, after singing of the wrath of God, the rage of devils, and the fatal folly of men, now change his note, stay his hand, and give that life its due?<sup>36</sup>

Stoll answers his own question by showing that the fall brings Adam and Eve closer together - "How can I live without thee?" - that they repent together their sin, that God accepts their repentance, and that before them lies the New Jerusalem. All of this, argues Stoll, belongs to the humanizing process that follows the fall. Milton deliberately eases the reader out of the supernatural into the natural, out of the epic into the garden tragedy:

His thought unfolds as in a drama rather than as in an epic; and from the moment of the temptation of Eve there is perceptible a gradual humanizing of his tone and adjustment to his point of view. Adam really becomes a man, Eve a woman... They give up epic formality, as has been observed. No longer do they address each other as "Daughter of God and Man",... Their dignity and formality disappear as nature asserts itself within them - as they know what it is to tremble and weep, to reproach or forgive one another, and cling to one another because either has no other in the world.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, Stoll concludes that the pensive mood in which Adam and Eve go out to face life is indicative of Milton's whole attitude to life:

They are not dejected, but neither are they cheerful: their mood is as pensive as the movement of the verse. Mood and meter both breathe the spirit of the words of the Lord - "sorrowing, yet in peace". In short, this is human life as we know it, and as Milton knew it, of a mingled web, good and ill together, dim, sad, but very dear. And to a poet (and reader too) who conceives it so, all the previous developments and adjustments are necessary as in this poem of superhuman life we approach the human, and as what we call human nature takes, in a measure, the place of sin.<sup>38</sup>

It would seem, however, that Milton's view of the world stands out, to some extent, in contradiction to the attitude of Adam and Eve to that

world. It would be difficult, in the face of Milton's damnation of the whole of history, to believe that Milton found life a "mingled web of good and evil together, dim, sad, but very dear." Surely it is the realization that life is not a "mingled web of good and evil together" that lies behind the epic. The good man, the elect, does not mingle with evil. He goes off by himself into an ark or into the wilderness and leaves the world to rot. There is no redemption within history.

Both the conquerors and the conquered, the rulers and the ruled are corrupt and incapable of practising or understanding true liberty. "One Man except" - the Elect of his age - stands outside his time and is plucked for eternity. The rest perish. Note, too, the austere references to the goods of this world. The lost souls, instead of striving for spiritual perfection "practise how to live secure", little reckoning that the abundance of the earth is nothing more than a trap for the intemperate.<sup>39</sup>

Stoll pictures Milton as a kindly old man gently easing in human nature to replace original sin. He forgets that all men are damned by Milton for their human nature.

In Adam, Milton embodies for an instant the delicate balance of mercy and justice. He is careful to show that it is the "destind Man" that judges "Man fall'n:"

Easie it may be seen that I intend  
 Mercy colleague with Justice, sending thee  
 Mans Friend, his Mediator, his design'd  
 Both Ransom and Redeemer voluntarie,  
 And destin'd Man himself to judge man fall'n.<sup>40</sup>

The judgment by the Son of God bears little resemblance, however, to the actual working out of that judgment. Milton's vision of the world is far deadlier than the passed sentence which states that women shall bear children in sorrow and submit to the rule of their husbands, while men shall labour for their food and die.<sup>41</sup> Milton's human being is stillborn. He is destroyed at birth by being caught up into the vortex of evil in a perverted world.

A good deal has been written concerning Milton's intoxication with his own creation of Satan. Some believe that the figure of evil gets out of control and knocks out the props from under the whole Christian construction.<sup>42</sup> Tillyard, for example, finds a gradual change in the tone of the poem from the professed Christian optimism of the first four books to the unadmitted pessimism of the last books:

From the beginning to the end of Paradise Lost Milton adheres to the orthodox idea of guilt and redemption. It is as important to the poem as the Fall itself ... And along with the redemption of man by Christ is a professed optimism. Regenerate man, man with his reason reilluminated by Christ, will rise to a more excellent state than that from which he has fallen. Thus in the end Satan's schemes have turned to good, and Adam, though himself sinning, did an ultimately beneficial act. This professed optimism is constant. We are carefully informed that Satan would never have risen from the lake of fire, had not God intended him to be the instrument of ultimate good. When at the beginning of Book Eleven Christ presents the prayers of Adam and Eve to the Father, he exalts them above anything they were capable of producing in their state of innocence. The new earth revealed to Adam by Michael near the end of the poem will be far happier than the original Eden ...<sup>43</sup>

Against this professed optimism, he places the unadmitted pessimism:

Milton's unadmitted pessimism also affects the unity. It is present in some degree throughout, but far more strongly in the last four or five books. And this difference is much more than a relative frequency of passages in which the pessimism is latent: it amounts to a change of attitude... In the first four books Milton gives energy out: in the last four or five he turns it inward into himself. In the first it is active: in the last books it has been converted into a stoical resistance.<sup>44</sup>

Milton's pessimism is the result of the overpowering figure of Satan in the first books. Having released that kind of heroic energy into the universe it must run its course. Within the epic, however, it is possible to observe a dissociation of Milton from his own poetic creation. At the outset Satan embodies the heroic energy of Milton's mind:

In sum it is Satan who in Paradise Lost best expresses that heroic energy of Milton's mind, best hitherto expressed in Areopagitica, which undoubtedly, though in a very different form, would have been the master emotion of the projected Arthuriad.<sup>45</sup>

But that heroic energy is identified with evil. Milton's description of Satan could almost be interpreted as a confession of guilt. Certainly he condemns heroic deeds, or deeds that pertain to the perpetuation of the conditions that prevail amongst men. By the end of Paradise Lost Milton, having rejected the world, finds, at last, a new world in which to enshrine his ideals. He turns to deeds "above heroic"<sup>46</sup> and "in secret done".<sup>47</sup> And in this denial of the world lies the historical victory of evil, the virtual collapse of grace, and the near annihilation of light. Satan, in this sense, does get out of control, does upset the unity of the poem which had set out to present an orthodox conception of guilt and redemption. Satan is too powerful a figure for the Christian myth. Evil carries most men beyond the hope of redemption and leads Milton to a rigid concept of election by which the chosen few are caught up into heaven on a shaft of vertical light.

In Paradise Lost, the demonstration of the power of the Omnipotent Caesar in the presentation of the heroic Satan draws the whole epic into the orbit of evil. Under the supreme banner of Justice the distinction between Satan, God and the Son of God is blurred. Commenting on the passage in which the Son of God goes forth to war, Ross states:

"The "Prince of Light" is here the warrior-king armed with his Father's might. He is distinguished intellectually but not poetically from Satan by the signposts of virtue, grace, worth."<sup>48</sup>

For Milton the heroic symbols are the clothing of evil. By dressing both Heaven and Hell in like armour, by showing them in actual cooperation (although, of necessity, in apparent opposition), and

finally by bringing the illusion of struggle to a head by damning the world and all men who dare to have anything to do with it, Milton has made the bite of the serpent more contagious, and its sting more fatal, than he had thought it to be at the outset. The theme of revenge goes beyond the Christian scheme of salvation when Milton removes from the world the Divine Physician who alone could apply the remedy. Man, in the end, is left alone to suck on the serpent-bite.

When the reader turns from the final book of Paradise Lost the universe of Light, the Paradise of Adam and Eve, is like the faint memory of some forgotten lyric.<sup>49</sup> The sound and fury of a damned world rings in the ear. Foul distrust, revolt, disobedience, ruin, perdition, Sin, Death, Miserie, vengeance, woe, Anger, just rebuke, judgment - such is the tone of the epic. And underlying every word is the wrath of Caesar manifest in the apparent heroic power of Satan.

In Paradise Regain'd, Milton extricates the Son of God from the whole world of evil. He is carefully disentangled from the heroic environment and placed in a wilderness to perform secret deeds "above heroic". The whole poetic context is reversed. In Paradise Lost the Satanic world set the tone of the epic. The life of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden is remote and cut off from the main current as the elect are cut off from history. In Paradise Regain'd it is the Son's world that sets the tone while it is the Satanic world that is remote. In the world of the elect, which is the world of the Son of God, it is the damned who are cut off.

The rigid distinction between good and evil, the damned and the elect, the punished children of Caesar and the rewarded child of Light, those of heroic deeds and those of deeds "above heroic", divides mankind into two mutually exclusive levels of reality between which

there can be no intercourse. At the level of Satan, which is the level of justice, Satan is all-powerful by divine permission. At the level of the Son of God, which is the level of grace, the Son is all-powerful by divine permission. Justice and mercy are no longer colleagues. Satan, therefore, is as powerful on the one level, as he is weak and depraved on the other. The Satan who rules the world, is, at the same time

... a poor miserable captive thrall,  
... now depos'd  
Ejected, emptyed, gaz'd, unpityed, shun'd,  
A spectacle of ruin or of scorn  
To all the Host of Heaven:<sup>50</sup>

It all depends upon how one looks at Satan. From the point of view of fallen humanity he is one thing; from the point of view of the "Host of Heaven" he is something else. Because fallen humanity is the subject of Paradise Lost, Satan is, in illusion, heroic and powerful. Because the elect are the subject of Paradise Regain'd, Satan is, not in illusion, but in reality, weak and depraved, helpless before the vertical Light shining inward in the Son. That same depravity comes to the surface in Paradise Lost, but like the Light shining out of Heaven, it is clouded over by the wrath of Caesar. It is amidst the thunderbolts of divine rage that Satan shines like the darkness of the sulphurous fires of Hell.<sup>51</sup>

Behind Milton's view of evil is the perfectionist theory of human nature that cannot admit of an active and dynamic co-mingling of good and evil at the centre of human personality. One does not cast out devils in Milton's theology. They either get in and stay, in which case one is damned, or they do not get in, in which case one is saved. To struggle is to be trapped. Thus struggle itself becomes evil. Satan struggles because he is evil, men struggle because they are evil, but the Son of God does not struggle, because he is good. In Paradise

Regain'd, as Tillyard points out,

There is practically no action, the characters (Satan excepted) do not live, and there is the smallest relation to normal life.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, whatever there is of life in Satan is evil. Evil has become life at the level of the "herd confus'd" which is, with rare exception, the level of humanity. Milton's conception of evil takes in the whole world and every human action that stems from it. His attitude to evil is manifest in his rejection of the world and his retirement into himself. This rejection and this retirement is, in a sense, the rejection of the fall. The echo of Paradise Lost lingering faintly in the Satan of Paradise Regain'd is the echo of 'sound and fury, signifying nothing'. The epic is cancelled out.

NOTES (CHAPTER III)

- 1. Throughout the epic Milton identifies Adam with men:  
 And Man there plac't, with purpose to assay,  
 If him by force he can destroy, or worse  
 By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert;  
 For man will hark'n to his glozing lyes.  
 (P.L. Bk. III, ll 90-94)
  
- 2. Milton specifically relates the two Adams. He compares the hill upon which Adam sees the vision of the world to the hill where the "second Adam" is presented, for a different purpose, with the same vision:  
 Not higher that Hill nor wider looking round,  
 Whereon for different cause the Tempter set  
 Our second Adam in the wilderness.  
 (P.L. Bk. XI, ll 381-383)
  
- 3. "His weakness shall o'recome Satanic strength  
 And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh; "  
 (P.R. I, ll 161-162)
  
- 4. "For though that Seat of earthly bliss be fail d,  
 A fairer Paradise is founded now  
 For Adam and his chosen sons... "  
 (P.L. Bk. XI, ll 381-383)
  
- 5. P.L. Bk. IX, l 103.
- 6. P.L. Bk. X, ll 651-656.
- 7. P.L. Bk. X, ll 312-320.
- 8. P.L. Bk. X, ll 462-468.
- 9. P.L. Bk. X, ll 221-228.
- 10. P.L. Bk. X, ll 616-630.
- 11. P.L. Bk. XI, l 371-Bk. XII, l 465.
- 12. P.L. Bk. I, l 3.
- 13. P.L. Bk. XII, ll 82-102.
  
- 14. Grierson argues that Milton's presentation of justice overshadows God's mercy. As a result there is a certain revulsion toward God on the part of the reader:  
 In Paradise Lost the poet and the prophet, or to put it otherwise, the poet as creator and the poet as critic, meet but fail to coalesce, come even into conflict with one another, leave on the reader's mind and imagination conflicting impressions. On the one hand the argument, as developed by Milton speaking in his own person or through the mouth of God (and Milton, as Professor Saurat has said, is the chief protagonist of Satan), aims at one effect, the justification of God's ways to men. The story itself as the poet so vividly and dramatically presents it, leaves us with a very different impression, one not of entire acceptance of the justification. What do we see when we try to isolate the dram from the poet's contention?



A war in heaven, aroused by the apparently arbitrary, almost capricious, exaltation of one among many of the Sons of God; as a consequence Satan's revenge by the seduction of Adam and Eve into a fatal breach of another apparently arbitrary tabu.

(Grierson, p.135)

- 15. P.L. Bk. III, ll 129-134.
- 16. P.L. Bk. XI, ll 700-704.
- 17. P.L. Bk. XI, ll 808-811.
- 18. P.L. Bk. X, l 632.
- 19. P.L. Bk. XII, ll 537-551.

20. Milton, it will be noted, speaks of the "Chosen Sons of Adam" in Paradise Regain'd. See P.R. Bk. IV, l 615.

- 21. P.R. Bk. III ll 60-70.
- 22. P.R. Bk. IV, ll 182-186.

23. The Son has already faced and rejected the temptation to perform heroic deeds. See P.R. Bk. I, ll 215-220.

- 24. P.R. Bk. III, ll 414-433.
- 25. P.R. Bk. IV, ll 131-133.
- 26. P.R. Bk. IV, ll 291-292.
- 27. P.R. Bk. IV, ll 368-374.
- 28. P.R. Bk. II, ll 406-408.
- 29. P.R. Bk. III, l 49.
- 30. P.R. Bk. III, ll 224-231.
- 31. P.L. Bk. III, ll 185-197.
- 32. P.L. Bk. III, ll 183-184.

33. Note, for example, the experience of Noah:  
 ... and to them preach'd  
 Conversion and Repentance, as to Souls  
 In Prison under Judgements imminent:  
 But all in vain: which when he saw, he ceas'd  
 Contending, and remov'd his Tents far off.  
 (P.L. Bk. XI, ll 723-727)

34. P.L. Bk. XI, ll 689-698.

35. In a sense, Milton's vision of the world is the justification of the heroic Satan of the first two books. Grierson, I believe, is wrong in calling it an after-thought:

The least interesting part of the poem is doubtless the visions and narrative of the last books when Micael descends to continue the instruction of Adam which Raphael had begun before the disaster. This was an after-thought, for in the earlier planned drama the consequences of the Fall were to have been presented in a symbolic Masque.

(Grierson, p.120)

36. Stoll, E.E., Poets and Playwrights, p. 203-204.

37. ibid. p. 204-205.  
 38. ibid. p. 207-208
39. Ross, p.90.  
 40. P.L. Bk. X, ll 58-62.  
 (Note also:  
 ... yet I shall temper so  
 Justice and Mercie, as may illustrate most  
 Then fully satisfied, and thee appease.  
 (P.L. Bk. X, ll 77-79)
41. P.L. Bk. X, ll 192-208.
42. According to Hamilton, for example, Satan is the tragic hero of Paradise Lost:  
 But behind the tragic darkness of Satan (pride or self love clamoring for personal independence) powerful and boasting in his own power, we catch the vision, not quite eclipsed, of an ardent Lucifer in a Heaven more truly harmonious, giving glory to love and a world of Light.  
 (Hamilton, G.R., Hero or Fool - A Study in Milton's Satan, p. 41)
43. Tillyard, p. 272-273.  
 44. ibid. p. 291.  
 45. ibid. p. 279.  
 46. P.R. Bk. I, l 15.  
 47. P.R. Bk. I, l 15.  
 48. Ross, p. 117.
49. Commenting on the invocation to Light in Book III, Hanford states:  
 The passage embodies the first of the great personal utterances which recur at intervals throughout Paradise Lost and constitute a lyric thread interweaving itself with the objective narrative.  
 (Hanford, p.179)
50. P.R. Bk. I, ll 411-415.
51. "A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round  
 As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames  
 No light, but rather darknew visible."  
 (P.L. Bk. I, ll 61-63.)
52. Tillyard, p. 316.

## CHAPTER IV

### SATAN IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF MILTON'S THOUGHT

In the foregoing chapters the analysis of Satan in relation to the role of evil in the two poems has been limited, almost exclusively, to a textual study. In this concluding chapter the presentation of Satan will be related to Milton's social and political aspirations, the defeat of which was destined to find expression in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regain'd. Milton's "Celestial patroness" is a disappointed Republican.

Paradise Lost is, in a sense, a secularized gospel of revenge, while Paradise Regain'd is a secularized gospel of election. Both poems, coming at the end of the Catholic Christian culture, and stripped in their extreme Protestantism of the whole sacramental nature of the Christian faith<sup>1</sup> (and therefore of all the traditional Christian symbols), supply new flesh to the Hebrew-Christian skeleton.

Milton comes not merely at the end of the great Christian tradition. In a real sense he ends that tradition. His role in the process of cultural change must be recognized as active. He carries Christian poetry, and in particular the poetic use of the Christian symbol, to a limit beyond which it cannot go and remain Christian. In its ultimate reaches, Milton's art is distinctly Protestant, but Protestant edging on the purely secular. For this reason the abandonment by the poets of the next century of Milton's awesome theological framework was by no means an abandonment of the direction Milton had set for English poetry. Indeed, the heterodox nature of Milton's theology is already sign enough of the rapid disintegration of theology. This process of disintegration merely continues after Milton - and it will not stop with mortalism or Arianism.<sup>2</sup>

The new flesh that Milton gives to the Hebrew-Christian myth is to be found in the background of thought and feeling out of which both poems emerge. It will be seen in the following pages that both thought

and feeling, as they become embodied in social ideals, are identified with evil, and that, as a result, all the heroic energy that Milton puts into "the glorious cause"<sup>3</sup> is put into Satan. All the aesthetic glory, in terms of heroic imagery, by means of which Milton hoped to stir the English people becomes the imagery by means of which he presents Satan. It is in and through Satan that Milton purges himself of his active and dynamic hopes for the Kingdom of God on earth. In Satan's decreasing vitality and his increasing depravity can be seen the slow fading out of Milton's heroic vision. Deprived of his vision of a redeemed society, Milton is deprived of the aesthetic that had clothed that vision in the language of poetry. His Christian world is a bleak wilderness, grey with the twilight shadows of encompassing night. Paradise Regain'd is like a New England chapel stripped of all adornment. The Son of God is a lonely Puritan in the chapel communing, in isolation, with His God:

One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;  
 And his deep thoughts, the better to converse  
 With solitude, till far from track of men,  
 Thought following thought, and step by step led on,  
 He entred now the bordering Desert wild,  
 And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,  
 His holy Meditations thus persu'd.<sup>4</sup>

Underlying all of Milton's thought there is an unsplit nucleus of optimism based upon a concept of human perfectability. He clings to it tenaciously, even to the point of damning the whole of humanity when it fails to live up to his perfectionist ideal. Never, however, is the ideal forsaken. He may and does eliminate from it all the social and historical accessories of life, but always from the ruins there arises, like a Phoenix, the single perfect man sufficient in his isolation to preserve and perpetuate the reality of his ideal.

It is the essential un-Christian character of Milton's ideal that

cuts him off from the whole tradition of Christian symbolism and permeates both his prose and his poetry with a secular quality foreign to the Catholic Christian culture. The secular quality of Milton's thought lies in the concept of individual autonomy. Man, at the level of reason, is perfect and self-sufficient. Like Descartes God,<sup>5</sup> Milton's God becomes the divine guarantee of the validity of human reason. The perfect Being which is God becomes, in actual practise, almost identical with the perfect being which is reason.<sup>6</sup> The reception of "Light from above" is akin to the reception of the Greek "Nous" into the soul by virtue of which the Greek man becomes almost identical with the Greek God.

Niebuhr points this out:

The classical view of man, comprised primarily of Platonic, Aristotlian and Stoic conceptions of human nature, contains, of course, varying emphasis but it may be regarded as one in its common conviction that man is to be understood primarily from the stand-point of the uniqueness of his rational faculties. What is unique in man is nous. Nous may be translated as "spirit" but the primary emphasis lies upon the capacity for thought and reason. In Aristotle the nous is the vehicle of pure intellectual activity and is a universal and immortal principle which enters man from without...The rationalism practically identifies rational man (who is essential man) with the divine; for reason is, as the creative principle, identical with God.<sup>7</sup>

It is the suggestion of a too intimate embrace of man and God, leading to an anthropocentric universe that separates Milton from what may be called the orthodox Christian tradition. Man, by virtue of his reason, approximates Divinity. By his self-sufficiency and his self-initiation, he assumes a Christ-like attitude toward himself. The heretical blending of man with God squeezes out the redemptive role of Christ. The Son of God in Paradise Regain'd, it was noted, ceases to be a Saviour except as he saves Himself.

Milton, in his concept of the autonomous individual ruled by "light

from above" and in need of no other doctrine "though granted true", carries the individualism of the Protestant tradition beyond the confines of the Christian faith into a rational Empyrean. It is tinged by the Green heresy and is more closely related to the Renaissance than to the Reformation. Niebuhr illuminates the distinction between the two individualisms. Speaking of Protestant and Renaissance individualism, he declares:

The real significance of the two movements lie in the fact that one represents the final development of individuality within terms of the Christian religion and the other an even further development of individuality beyond the limits as set in the Christian religion, that is, the development of the "autonomous" individual... The heightened sense of individuality in Protestantism is expressed theologically in the Reformation principle of the "priesthood of all believers". The emphasis lies not so much upon the individual's capacity to know the truth as upon his individual responsibility to God, and upon an assurance of mercy for his sins which no institution can mediate, if individual faith is wanting.<sup>9</sup>

In Milton, as in the Renaissance, it is man's capacity to know truth that lies at the basis of his view of man. Man is the embodiment of truth which becomes manifest through the right use of reason. If his reason fails him, he cuts himself off from mercy. Reason is its own mediator.

While Milton has complete confidence in the virtue of the rational man, he has no confidence that all men will be rational. He is forced, in the final analysis, to place his faith in an abstraction, to take away flesh and bone from reality and to replace blood with Light. For an instant in time he had thought the word was again to become flesh and live among men. But social and political events were to prove otherwise. If the word dwelt among men, it stood like Ruth amid the alien corn.

When Milton returned from Italy after receiving the "melancholy

intelligence" of the "civil commotions in England"<sup>11</sup> he was almost at once caught up in the war between Parliament and Charles. The ideal world that had taken shape at Cambridge, at Horton, and in Italy was about to be tested in the arena of public events. From that ideal world Milton brought a personal conviction of high destiny which, at twenty-three, he had linked with God;<sup>12</sup> a sound classical training;<sup>13</sup> an enthusiasm for the progressive outlook of the Renaissance<sup>14</sup> and a patriotic love of England that he hoped to express in a national epic dealing with the glories of his country.<sup>15</sup> These ambitions, springing from an inward ideal, were immediately projected into the social and political environment of revolutionary England. Milton's high destiny that he had linked with God now embraced the English people. His divinely ordained destiny was to be partially fulfilled in becoming a prophet to the chosen race of Englishmen.<sup>16</sup> His view of himself combined with his patriotic fervour to lift England and things English up to the Millennium. The "loose synthesis of classical, Puritan and Elizabethan elements"<sup>18</sup> was about to step out of the cloister of Horton and the salons of Italy where it had taken shape and meet the world that Milton was later to relegate to an illusion.

The staggering optimism that lay behind Milton's transfer of inward ideals onto the public stage, the conviction that all Englishmen were, like himself, in the focus of his "great task Masters eye" and the naive belief that the heroic epic of national glory was about to be written on the pages of history by the whole race of Englishmen, can only be explained by the perfectionist view of human nature that had, as yet, to face a crucial test. Tillyard points this out:

A man of more capacious mind and a better knowledge of human nature would have known that the premises upon which Milton argued were false, that no revolution

could change men's hearts in the way Milton imagined, and that the exhortations and denunciations which Milton indulged in would be powerless to affect the issue in any large degree. To have kept aloof in the controversy would have required great strength of mind, but Milton had sufficient. It was his judgment, not his strength of mind, that was at fault. A Shakespeare would have had the sense to keep out of the active controversy.<sup>19</sup>

Milton stepped in where angels fear to tread. His vision ignited and he cast the torch to his Englishmen. Unfortunately they failed to catch it.

It is possibly in Areopagitica (1644) that Milton best demonstrates the optimism with which he looked upon the God-chosen race of Englishmen. In it he describes the whole mass of autonomous men rising as a unit to purge themselves of all the restrictions placed upon their God-given liberty:

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about amazed at what she means, and in their enviable gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.<sup>20</sup>

Such is the victory of a "great and war-like nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practise of truth and righteousness."<sup>21</sup>

But the nation did not rise, the purification did not take place. In that early naive vision Milton had seen a nation moving like Guion through the "cave of Mammon" to the "bower of earthly bliss:"

"Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness; which was the reason why



our sage and serious poet Spenser, (whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas,) describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know and yet abstain.<sup>22</sup>

The nation, unfortunately, never got beyond the "cave of Mammon." When Milton's vision is again resurrected, the context is radically different. The movement is no longer upward from evil toward good. It is, rather, the movement of evil upward from Hell to conquer the universe:

Forthwith upright he rears from off the Pool  
His mighty Stature; on each hand the flames  
Drivn backward slope their pointing spires, and rowld  
In billows, leave i' th midst a horrid Vale.  
Then with incumbent wings he steers his flight  
Aloft incumbent on the dusky Air  
That felt unusual weight....<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, however, Milton's vision of England "casting farr off her the rags of her old vices" and being judged the "wisest and most Christian people at that day" when "the eternal and shortly expected King"<sup>24</sup> shall make his appearance, is akin to God in Paradise Regain'd "looking down on the Earth" and marking "with approbation" the "just man". The difference lies, of course, in the fact that Milton has replaced the just nation with the just man. He has moved from an elect nation to an elect individual. The ideal that Milton projected out of himself into the English nation, he draws back, with the Commonwealth failure, into himself. The ideal stripped of its social and political manifestations, is preserved. At the social level Milton gives his heroic vision to Satan, at the individual level, he gives it to the Son. The reason is writ large in Milton's later prose.

In clearing the decks for the New Jerusalem, Milton realized that the perfect nation must consist of perfect individuals and perfect individuals must be free from external law. Any form of "custom from

without" is merely a public manifestation of "blind affection within".

To live by reason is to live without the tyranny of custom:

If men within themselves would be governed by reason, and not generally give up their understanding to a double tyranny of custom from without, and blind affections within, they would discern better what it is to favor and uphold the tyrant of a nation.<sup>25</sup>

The Christian nation is a collection of Christian individuals who are freed from all external law and live by the internal law of reason.

United by reason they achieve a kind of mystic unity in a laissez-faire state.

Christian liberty is that whereby we are loosed as it were by enfranchisement through Christ our deliverer, from the bondage of sin, and consequently from the rule of the law and of man; to the intent that being made sons instead of servants, and perfect men instead of children, we may serve God in love through the guidance of the Spirit of truth.<sup>26</sup>

It is "perfect men instead of children" that Milton envisions when he makes the English people the elect of God. They are a people in which human nature is being perfected for a special purpose and as a result of a special calling. They are, as a result, liberated from "written or external law." Woodhouse notes:

In the regenerate, under the influence of the Spirit, human nature is daily approximating more closely to its original reliance on the inward law alone. To that state the believer is restored by the Christian Gospel, and it is the true state of Christian liberty. Milton insists that Christian liberty means abrogation of the whole written or external law.<sup>27</sup>

Milton, however, was soon to realize that the mass of Englishmen were not perfect. With the execution of Charles public opinion reversed itself and condemned the deed. Milton then realized that the cause of freedom was being undermined, that men were turning their backs upon the Millennium, cutting themselves off from the special grace that God had bestowed upon them. He writes in 1649 (The Tenure of Kings and

Magistrates):

It is true that most men are apt enough to civil wars and commotions as a novelty, and for a flash hot and active; but through sloth of inconstancy and weakness of spirit, either fainting ere their own pretences, though never so just, be half attained, or through an inbred falsehood and wickedness, betray, oftentimes to destruction with themselves, men of noblest temper joined with them for causes whereof they in their rash undertakings were not capable.<sup>28</sup>

Milton is now beginning to talk in the language of the Son of God in

Paradise Regain'd:

And what the people but a herd confus'd,  
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol  
Things vulgar, and well weighed, scarce worth the praise.  
They praise and they admire they know not what;  
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;<sup>29</sup>

He is moving along the fatal course of history as presented in Paradise Lost. Satan is looming larger upon the horizon of events. The split has occurred in the ranks of the "puissant nation". Milton now speaks of those of "inbred falsehood and wickedness" and those of "noblest temper". He is at that stage in which the world is divided into "the elect above the rest",<sup>30</sup> and the rest who

...shall here me call, and oft be warned  
Thir sinful state, and to appease betimes  
The incens'd Deitie, which offerd grace  
Invites;<sup>31</sup>

Mercy and Justice are still colleagues.

The process of weeding out has now begun. Once the split occurs in the nations ranks, Milton's aristocratic view of man asserts itself.<sup>32</sup> He is forced to take a more desperate stand to keep the way open "for the establishment of real liberty" and "the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition".<sup>33</sup> The desperation that creeps into his prose is the desperation of Cromwell who, in the interest of Christian piety, was forced to perpetuate by any means the rule of the

just minority labouring for God. The dictatorship of the elect becomes a necessity:

Nothing is more agreeable to the order of nature or more for the interest of mankind, than that the less should yield to the greater, not in numbers but in wisdom and virtue.<sup>34</sup>

In this yielding of the less to the greater is the justification of Cromwell's tactics:

Certain points are clear. The Presbyterians represented a majority in Parliament but were intolerant and for the Monarchy. Cromwell's Independents were reasonably tolerant of each other and were for the most part against the King but represented only a minority.

Cromwell made up for the latter weakness by making himself "head of one of the finest armies the world had ever seen", composed of followers "of strong earnest Puritanical convictions." On June 3, 1647, this army, "acting under Cromwell's orders, suddenly appeared before Holmby House, and demanded the person of the King. 'Where is your commission', asked Charles... as he stepped forth on the lawn. 'There is my commission', answered Cromwell's captain, pointing to his line of soldiers." Thus Cromwell's army, without any authority under law or from the Parliament, took the King captive. In similar fashion, Cromwell and his army dealt with the Presbyterian majority ... Finally Cromwell treated his own Rump Parliament as he had previously treated the Presbyterian majority and the King.<sup>35</sup>

Milton at this point condones the use of force if the cause is just and the soldiers are of "strong earnest Puritanical convictions". In the Defensio Secunda (1654) Milton praises Cromwell's heroic acts because they are derived from an inner conquest of the self:

When the sword was drawn, he offered his services and was appointed to a troop of horse, whose numbers were soon increased by the pious and the good, who flocked from all quarters to his standard; and in a short time he almost surpassed the greatest generals in the magnitude and rapidity of his achievements. Nor is this surprising; for he was a soldier disciplined to perfection in the knowledge of himself. He had either distinguished or by habit learned to subdue the whole host of vain hopes, fears, and passions, which subdue the soul. He had acquired the government of himself, and over himself acquired the most signal victories; so that on the first day he took to the field against the external enemy he was a veteran in arms, consummately

practised in the toils and exigencies of war.<sup>36</sup>

This portrait of Cromwell is the mixture of Light and Caesar, of internal control and external force. He is both the Son of the "Paradise within"<sup>37</sup> and the warrior-leader that hurls Satan out of Heaven.

It is significant that Tillyard states that the Secundo Defensio is written in the same spirit and temper as the first book of Paradise Lost.<sup>38</sup> This, I believe, is altogether true. Milton's admiration of Cromwell's way of dealing with the reprobate is echoed in Milton's justification of God's justice. It declares the moral basis for Caesars' heroic tactics in the punishment of Satan, while, at the same time, exalting the private world of grace as it exist within the chosen individual. The heroic power and the inner virtue of Cromwell demonstrate the two aspects of God manifesting themselves in the individual. When manifest in Satan they produce the heroic illusion and the inner depravity. The temper of mind that underlies Milton's description of Cromwell in the Secundo Defensio is the temper of mind that underlies the creation of the Satan of the first four books of Paradise Lost. The public and the private world are not, as yet, mutually exclusive of each other. By the end of Paradise Lost, however, the public world is rejected altogether.

The death of Cromwell in 1658 and the Restoration in 1660 cut Milton off entirely from the social and political arena. The sound of English rejoicing over the return of the King was the death knell of Milton's social ideal. There was nothing left but to reject the world.

God and "his Englishmen" have parted company.  
By 1666 Milton had almost ceased to think of himself as an Englishman:

For the virtue you call statesmanship (but which I would rather have you call loyalty to

my country), after captivating me with her fair-sounding name, has so to speak, almost left me without a country... One's country is wherever it is well with one.

It is not so much that Milton came to lose faith in the people of England as it is that he came to realize that they existed. He quickly found them uncontrollable and unteachable. They are dumped from the abstract concept "the nation" (identified by tradition with the Arthurian ideal) into that impatient Puritan receptacle "the unregenerate." And with them went the hope of achieving on earth the Kingdom of Heaven.

In brief, "the Paradise within" is all that can be salvaged from the lost hope of a Paradise without, a Paradise that had been regarded by Milton not merely as an early possibility but as a definite project.<sup>39</sup>

In the final books of Paradise Lost the Paradise within emerges surrounded by the darkness of a fallen world. In Paradise Regain'd that fallen world receives its final ignominious epitaph. It expresses the final decay of a rejected world, the ultimate depravity to which Satan is reduced.

Thus, by relating the two poems to the social and political currents from which Milton, after a heroic and naive identification, slowly and tortuously dissociated himself, it is possible to recognize beneath the Hebrew-Christian frame a secularized gospel of revenge and a secularized gospel of election. And beneath the sound and fury passing into silence lies a view of individual autonomy buttressed by an immaculate soul beyond sin and beyond redemption. Milton, like the God with whom he identified himself, dwells alone "in unapproached light", though perhaps not from eternity.

NOTES (CHAPTER IV)

1. Note Milton's condemnation of the Catholic Church with its ritual:  
 ... for on Earth  
 Who against Faith and conscience can be heard  
 Infallible? yet many will presume:  
 Whence heaveie persecution shall arise  
 On all who in the worship persevere  
 Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, far greater part,  
 Will deem in outward Rites and specious formes  
 Religion satisfied...

There can be little doubt that Milton identifies the Catholic ritual with pagan religious rites. He speaks of Satan and his fallen angels becoming in incarnation the Deities of the pagan world (P.L. Bk. I, ll 365-375). Then, when Satan leaps over the wall into Eden he compares the act to the climbing of hirelings into the church:

So clomb this grand Thief into Gods Fould:  
 So since into the Church lewd Hirelings climbe.  
 (P.L. Bk. IV, ll 192-193)

2. Ross, M.M., "Milton and the Protestant Aesthetic", U. of T. Quarterly, Vol. XVII. No. 4, July, 1948, pp.346-360 - p.346.

3. Defensio Secunda, S.M., p. 1138.

4. P.R. Bk. I, ll 189-195.

5. Descartes finds God among his innate ideas. Because God is a perfect Being and therefore good, He does not deceive Descartes in his conviction of the reality of the external world. He guarantees the absolute certainty of all "clear and distinct" ideas. (For a discussion of Descartes' conception of God see Gilson, E., God and Philosophy, Chapter II, pp. 74-90).

6. "From the whole body of (Milton's) writings it is clear that he conceived the regenerate person as one whose life and thought are marked by order because reason presides over passion and rules them without suppressing them."

(Woodhouse, A.S.P., "Milton, Puritanism and Liberty", U. of T. Quarterly, Vol. IV. No. 4, July, 1935, pp.483-513 - p.497)

When man operates at the level of reason he is freed of all external control. The regenerate man, the Christian man of reason, obeys only the law of his inward nature. He is autonomous:

Milton insists that Christian liberty means the abrogation of the whole written or external law.

(*ibid.*, p.495)

7. Niebuhr, pp. 6-7.

8. Maritain, in his analysis of the Christian humanism of the Renaissance period, states:

This then is the typical man of the Christian humanism of the anthropocentric epoch. He believes in God, and in grace, but he disputes the ground with God, he claims his own share in the primary initiative with regard to salvation and to acts that merit eternal life, while he undertakes by himself and on his own account to look to his earthly life and happiness.

(Maritain, Jacques, True Humanism, pp.11-12)

9. Niebuhr, pp.59-60.
10. ibid. p.9.
11. Defensio Secunda, S.M. p. 1146.

12. Milton writes to his friend Diodati in 1637:

Hear me, my Diodati, and suffer me to speak without blushing, in a more lofty strain. Do you ask me what I am meditating? By the help of Heaven, an immortality of fame.

(From a letter to Charles Diodati, London, Sept. 23, 1637, Hanford, p.22.)

The same desire finds a more sober expression in the sonnet written at twenty-three:

Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be still in strictest measure eev'n,  
To that same lot, however mean, or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heav'n;  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great task Masters eye.

(Sonnet VII)

13. Milton's thorough knowledge of the classical world is self evident in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regain'd.

14. Note the Renaissance spirit that permeates the following passage:

How much better would it be, Academicians, and how much more worthy of your reputation, to walk as it were with the eyes over the universe of earth as it is portrayed in the map... and then to investigate and study the nature of all living things, and from these again to direct the mind downward to the secret virtues of stones and trees... But let not your mind suffer itself to be contained and circumscribed within the same limits of the world, but let it stray even beyond the boundaries of the universe; and let it finally learn (which is yet the highest matter) to know itself, and at the same time those holy minds and intelligences with whom hereafter it is to enter into everlasting companionship.

(Profusiones Oratoriae III, Hanford, p.16-7)

15. "That what the greatest and the choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above, of being a Christian, might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British



islands as my world; whose fortune hath hitherto been, that if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, England hath had her noble achievements made small by the unskilful handling of monks and mechanics."

(Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelaty S.M. p. 524-525)

- 16. "It is as a prophet, then, one burdened with a message which it is laid on him to deliver, that Milton writes in these first contributions to the religious and political warfare of his day; and it is only by considering them as such prophetic outcries that one can do justice to their strange contrasts, passages of angry argument and invective on the one hand and lofty prophetic and apocalyptic flights on the other.  
(Grierson, p.38)
  
- 17. Note the suggestion of special grace being poured down upon the English people:  
Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself; what does he then but reveal himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his Englishmen?  
(Areopagitica, S.M. p.748-9)
  
- 18. Ross, p.45.
- 19. Tillyard, p.III.
- 20. Areopagitica, S.M., p.750.
- 21. Of Reformation, S.M. p. 469.
- 22. Areopagitica, S.M. p.738.
- 23. P.L. Bk. I, ll 221-227.
- 24. Of Reformation, S.M. P.469.
- 25. The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, S.M. p.754.
- 26. De Doctrina Christiana, S.M. p. 1028.
- 27. Woodhouse, A.S.P., "Milton, Puritanism and Liberty", U. of T. Quarterly, Vol. IV, No.4 (July, 1935) p.495
  
- 28. The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, S.M., p.768.
- 29. P.R. Bk. III, ll 49-53.
- 30. P.L. Bk. III, l 184.
- 31. P.L. Bk. III, ll 185-188.
  
- 32. "Wherever the clear-cut Puritan distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate operates strongly, as it does in Milton's thought, one may get an unlimited emphasis on individual liberty, and may even find this liberty demanded for all; but one will not get fundamental democracy, for democracy means the addition of equality to liberty. To ground the claim for liberty on the idea of Christian liberty is to assume a distinction between Christians and other men and to build into your conception of liberty itself the idea of basic inequality, the inequality between the regenerate and the unregenerate. In so doing Milton illustrates in an extreme

degree what may be called the "aristocratic" element in the Puritan position."

(Woodhouse, op.cit. p.496-7.)

33. Defensio Secunda, S.M. p. 1144.  
 34. ibid. p. 1139.  
 35. Northrop, F.S.C. The Meeting of East and West, p. 182.  
 36. Defensio Secunda, S.M. p. 1150
37. "It has been suggested that Milton took from Cromwell some of the traits in his Satan, I confess it seems to me that there is a closer kinship between the Cromwell he here celebrates and the Christ of his own Paradise Regained, the picture of a man who has conquered the meaner passions and gained a complete mastery over himself."  
 (Grierson, p.73)
38. "If, as I conjecture, the serious beginnings of Paradise Lost are to be found in the state of mind that prompted the Defensio Secunda, it may be legitimate to allow the ideas found in the Defensio to guide our search for the ideas that are of real importance in Paradise Lost.  
 (Tillyard, p. 196)
39. Ross, p.83.

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