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MILTON'S USE OF TIME: IMAGE AND PRINCIPLE

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MILTON'S USE OF TIME: IMAGE AND PRINCIPLE

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MILTON'S USE OF TIME: IMAGE AND PRINCIPLE

CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

Time is the concern of every art, from the closed couplet to the free rhythms of free verse and jazz,¹ from pictorial art that can be apprehended immediately to sculpture which has a fourth dimension added because of its complexity.² This concern for time is exhibited in different forms. Art can attempt to overcome time, as in Shakespeare's sonnets: "do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong, my love shall in my verse ever live young." Keats' Grecian urn overcomes time: "when old age shall this generation waste, thou shalt remain." Yeats desires a form of hammered gold and gold enamelling so that he can be gathered into the artifice of eternity. Art is one way to gain immortality and to conquer time.

¹A. A. Mendilow, Time and the Novel (New York: Peter Neville, Ltd., 1952), p. 12.

²Sigfried Giedion, Space Time and Architecture (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), p. 362.

Art can abolish time: myths and rituals reactualize the cosmogonic act, and the coincidence of the mythical instant and the celebrant's present moment depends upon doing away with profane time and upon the continual regeneration of the world. Primitive societies in the regeneration festivals try to annul past time, to abolish history and return to the moment of divine creation.¹

Art can use time. Milton demonstrates this in several poems where he changes a philosophic concept into a literary device. Milton's use of time involves on different occasions also the abolition and overcoming of it.

That little study has been made of Milton's use of time is perhaps traceable to David Masson's remark that "Shakespeare lived in a world of time, Milton in a universe of space."² Milton's spatial vastness has gained more attention than his temporal perspectives. Addison, one of the earliest commentators on Paradise Lost, says that it is impossible and uninformative to speculate about how much time is covered in the poem.³ It will be only an incidental part of this study to estimate the number of days which

¹Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1955), p. 35.

²William A. Neilson, quoted in Marjorie Hope Nicolson, "Milton and the Telescope," Science and the Imagination (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 96.

³Joseph Addison, Criticisms on Paradise Lost, ed. Albert S. Cook (New York: G. E. Stechert & Co., 1926), pp. 6-7.

the action of the epic takes; moreover, Grant McColley has already made one effort to do so. That it is impossible to calculate the exact number of days, however, has been the basis for a new interpretation of Milton's time scheme.

Very recently critical attention has been directed to Milton's use of time, probably as a result of the twentieth century preoccupation with time. Arnold Stein in his book on Paradise Lost believes that not only is Milton very conscious of time, but that his space is an aspect of time. In his book on Paradise Regained, Mr. Stein finds something similar to the basis of the present work--two kinds of time: Satan's and God's. Incidental treatments of Milton's use of time can be found in other books, such as Don Cameron Allen's Harmonious Vision where Allen says that Milton distills the everlasting from the opposites of past and present; Rosemund Tuve in Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton also works with the "Nativity Ode," similarly observes Milton's creation of a peace that is in, and yet beyond time. Walter Clyde Curry in Milton's Ontology, Cosmogony, and Physics says that there are different concepts of time in Paradise Lost, but he never defines these concepts and seems actually only to mean timelessness and an earlier or later in time. He repeats Milton's statement that all times are swallowed up in the abyss of eternity. This paper will work more extensively with the latter idea, showing how Milton's use of myth

contributes to the swallowing up of time.

George Whiting devotes a chapter of Milton and this Pendant World to "Time and the Pattern of Eternity," where he works chiefly with the survey of history at the end of Paradise Lost. Whiting's conclusion is that Milton followed the traditional division of the world's history into six ages to parallel the six days of creation.

Although there has been no major treatment of Milton's concept of time, some articles have taken specific notice, such as "An Instance of Milton's Use of Time," in which Edmund Reiss shows that Milton in Naturam Non Pati Senium refutes the theory that the world was decaying and being eaten up by time, because the spirit of God was in created matter, and time could not destroy God. E. E. Stoll comments in "Time and Space in Milton" that for Milton time is not so much a devouring spectre as an added dimension. Lowry Nelson, Jr. finds time a means of structure in the baroque lyric. "Gongora and Milton: Toward a Definition of the Baroque" explains how the paradox of the perpetually crucified Christ is achieved through the changing tenses of the "Nativity Ode".

The aim of this paper, then, will be to supply a treatment devoted exclusively to a definition of Milton's concept of time and to his literary use of that concept. Milton's early poems show time in a typical and traditional way: he engages in the world-decay controversy, indicates

a consciousness of the carpe diem theme in "Comus," and in his sonnet on his birthday, he employs the usual iconography of time. In the "Nativity Ode," Milton begins to use the kind of time known to man to illustrate the timelessness of God, a technique he carries to perfection in Paradise Lost where he has three kinds of time--divine, mortal, and infernal--which work together to show the timelessness and infinitude of God. Milton uses a philosophical concept at the background of his literary reference to time, but as he works, he grows away from the abstract idea of time and seems to become increasingly concerned with human time, time as experienced by man. This is most fully exemplified in Paradise Regained, which illustrates kairos, the one great time of the one great man. Connected with this use of time in Paradise Regained is Milton's theory of history, because he, in the usual Christian tradition, considered time to be going in a straight line to the end from the high point of Christ's kairos, directed by God throughout.

A survey of ancient philosophy will serve as background for and explanation of Milton's theories of time. He drew on Plato, Aristotle and Augustine for his ideas about time. A survey of poetic treatments of time will give perspective to Milton's literary use of the concept. Homer and Dante provide background for the epic; Chaucer and Shakespeare will illuminate a likeness and a difference in Milton.

The poems of Milton that will be discussed are those which have been mentioned with the addition of a few short poems such as "On the University Carrier," and "On Time." The Christian Doctrine will give the most concise statement about the nature of time. The prose, Areopagitica and the "Seventh Prolusion" in particular, will contribute an occasional variation upon the traditional theme.

The problem of the relation between change and permanence, between Being and Becoming, goes back as far as the Vedas, Heraclitus, and Parmenides. The Greek practical attitude toward time divided daylight into a fixed number of hours, with longer hours in summer than in winter.¹ Because they were such creatures of the mind, however, the Greeks did more than deal with time practically. They tried to explain it. The picture of Chronos begetting and devouring children shows the early Greek idea of constant becoming and the transience of time.² Ancient insights into the nature of time, its developing and disintegrating, are shown in such stories as Penelope's unravelling the shroud, the Phoenix, or the symbol of the serpent or dragon

¹M. F. Cleugh, Time and Its Importance in Modern Thought (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1937), pp. 6, 43.

²J. A. Gunn, The Problem of Time (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1929), p. 17.

swallowing its tail (the ouroboros).¹

Heraclitus in the fifth century B.C. stressed the reality of change and compared time to a river into which no one can step twice. His metaphor is repeated. The river has flowed from Heraclitus and Ecclesiastes to Joyce, Eliot, and Thomas Wolfe. The most familiar symbols have been rivers, the sea, flight, and flowing.² The early Heraclitan image appears in John Davies of Hereford's "Sic transit gloria mundi": "'as we cannot bathe twice in one Brooke / Sith it still runnes the same and not the same.'"³

Heraclitus' contemporary, Parmenides of Elea, did not agree, however. He thought that the real was abiding and permanent, change illusory; he assumed an eternal, unchanging Being. The Eleatics saw no relation between changeless reality and everyday flux.⁴

The desire for something permanent which does not perish in flux may have resulted in the concept of eternity,

¹C. H. De Goeje, What is Time? (Leiden; E. J. Brill, 1949), p. 22.

²Hans Meyerhoff, Time in Literature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), p. 22.

³John Davies of Hereford, quoted in Franklin B. Newman, "The Concept of Time in Elizabethan Poetry," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of English, Harvard, 1947), p. 97.

⁴Gunn, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

an infinite extension of a single moment. Eternity has meant variously unending time, timelessness, and transcendence of time in infinity.¹ Recognizing our mortality means that we compare it to a being unlimited by time.² Plato's theory of time was that it is the image of eternity. The creator looked at his work (heaven, the world) and wanted to make it more like its model, like an everlasting being. It was impossible to give everlastingness to a creature, so he made a likeness, "a moving image of eternity." "So, in his ordering of heaven, he makes a likeness, proceeding by number, of everlastingness that abides in unity, the same we have named time." He made days and nights, divisions of time. The terms was and shall be signify created time and can be used with becoming that is in time, that is, with motion, but not with eternal being.³ In The Art of Logic Milton uses similar phrasing to report the common description of God: he is said to be is, was, and to be; but time is usually

¹Cleugh, op. cit. pp. 26, 79.

²Gustav E. Mueller, "Experiential and Existential Time and Their Relation to Eternity," Kant-Studien L (1958-1959), p. 100.

³Plato, "Timaeus," Timaeus and Critias, trans. A. E. Taylor (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1929), pp. 33-34.

not attributed to God, who is everlasting and eternal.¹

Time came to be with heaven, and it was born with it. Time was made like the everlasting, so heaven will be like the everlasting through all time. God made the sun, moon, and the five other stars to give birth to time,² and to help the universe be like the perfect animal through imitation of the eternal nature. Time is not merely a measure, it is an image to help the world to a better imitation of the eternal. The wanderings of the planets are identified with time, and both time and the planets help make the universe more like the eternal.³ Milton uses certain of Plato's ideas: the Timaeus, for example, shows in Milton's notion that cosmic dance gives man a measure of time and helps him contemplate the creator.⁴ The Platonic Great Year provides an image for Paradise Lost: "on such day / As Heav'n's great Year brings forth." But even in

¹John Milton, The Art of Logic, Works XI, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), p. 93. Throughout this thesis the Milton quotations are taken from The Works of John Milton, 18 vols., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1938); the references to prose passages and short poems are to volume and page; for the long poems, the references are to line number.

²Plato, op. cit., p. 35.

³John F. Callahan, Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 26.

⁴Irene Samuel, Plato and Milton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1947), p. 39.

this same passage Milton disagrees with Plato:

.....when on a day
 (For time, though in Eternitie, appli'd
 To motion, measures all things durable
 By present, past, and future) on such day.¹
 As Heav'ns great Year brings forth.....¹

According to A. W. Verity, Milton wants to give a reason for using day.² In Christian Doctrine Milton says there is no basis for the common opinion that time and motion could not have existed before the world began.³ In this respect Milton was heretical. Origen had said that there were other worlds created before this one and that others would be afterward; Basil had said there was an elder state outside of time; but Augustine established the orthodox belief when he formulated a difference between time and eternity. The fifth century theologian said that there was no time before creation, and eternity preceded creation.⁴ It is interesting to observe the similarity of phrasing: both Augustine and Milton say that it would be folly to ask what God did before he created the world. But the poet goes on to say that time was created before the world. He has a state prior to creation in which the apostasy in heaven occurred; moreover, there is a kind

¹Paradise Lost V, 579-583.

²A. W. Verity (ed.), Paradise Lost (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), II, 498.

³Christian Doctrine, Works XV, 35.

⁴Arnold Williams, "Renaissance Commentaries on 'Genesis' and Some Elements of the Theology of Paradise Lost," PMLA, LVI (March, 1941), 158-159.

of time in heaven, as Arnold Williams points out:¹

Where light and darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heav'n
Grateful vicissitude, like Day and Night.²

Later writers give an Aristotelian interpretation of Plato, saying that he has time as a measure of motion. This is not true, for the language of the Timaetus identifies time with the motion of the universe, not as a measure of motion. Time is the wanderings of the seven planetary bodies.³

Aristotle questions the existence of time. How can that which is made up of non-existent things have reality? Part of it has been, and part is yet to come, and more, now is not even a part because it is not a measure of the whole. Time is connected with movement; we apprehend time when we have marked motion before and after. "For time is just this--number of motion in respect of 'before' and 'after.'"⁴ It will be useful to examine Aristotle's statements at length because Milton uses his definition in Christian Doctrine. Aristotle discards the idea that time is the movement of the spheres because there would be more than

¹Ibid., p. 160.

²Paradise Lost VI, 6-8.

³John F. Callahan, Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 26.

⁴Aristotle, Physica IV, 10-12, trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 218a - 219b.

one time if there were more than one universe. Time is not movement because movement is measured by time, i. e., fast or slow movement. Time implies change; and since change and movement are related, time is related to, or an attribute of movement.¹ As a moving body and motion accompany one another, so do the number of the moving body and the number of the motion. "For time is the number of the motion, and the now corresponds to the moving body, and is like the unit of number." Time is the measure of motion, hence continuous, so the now may be considered the unit of number, and time may be defined as number: the mind perceives and numbers a series of discrete nows which are continuous. Each now then designates prior or posterior accordingly, and thus the now is time in that repeated, it is the unit taken to make number. Time is number, not measure.² Aristotle's now has two facets: (1) the end of the past and the beginning of the future; as such it has no actual existence, only potentiality; it is everchanging as the past moves into the future. Successive, it becomes number. (2) But now is in another way always the same, continuous, and thus is a measure.³ Aristotle echoes Plato in attributing to time an eternal

¹Louise Robinson Heath, The Concept of Time (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), pp. 57-58.

²Callahan, op. cit., p. 57.

³Heath, op. cit., p. 62.

cause outside the universe, and in saying that heaven's motion is imitation of divine perfection.¹

Milton repeats Aristotle's definition of time in the passage recently cited from Christian Doctrine:

Certainly there is no sufficient foundation for the common opinion, that motion and time (which is the measure of motion) could not, according to the ratio of priority and subsequence, have existed before this world was made; since Aristotle, who teaches that no ideas of motion and time can be formed except in reference to this world, nevertheless pronounces the world itself to be eternal.²

And in the second poem on the university carrier:

Time numbers motion, yet (without a crime
'Gainst old truth) motion number'd out his time.³

More Platonic, however, is the imitation by Comus and his crew of the starry choir, imitation of the dance by which the stars lead time.⁴ Milton can use both of the great philosophers when he makes a reference to time.

In the third century A. D., Plotinus surveyed the previous theories of time and decided that time could not be identified with motion, because motion is intermittent; and time is not motion, because motion is in time. However like Aristotle in not identifying time with motion, Plotinus seems more like St. Augustine, especially when he

¹Callahan, op. cit., p. 57.

²Christian Doctrine, Works XV, 35.

³"On the University Carrier," Works I, 33.

⁴Rosemund Tuve, Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 144.

says that time exists in an activity of the soul.¹ Time is the soul making actual one thought after another. Eternity is a manifestation of a steadfast and unchangeable God.²

St. Augustine introduces the Christian concept of time and it will be seen that Christian and pagan philosophers have about equal influence on Milton. Augustine saw a distinction between eternity as changeless and time as dependent on motion or change.³ God is eternal--he precedes all times past and survives all future times. "Thy years neither go nor come; but ours both go and come, that all may come. All thy years stand at once...." Time is not a part of God's nature, and Milton of course agrees with this: both he and Augustine give God and man different kinds of time, and Milton says that although God is said to be is, was, and shall be, time is not attributed to the eternal being.⁴ Like others, Philo the Alexandrian Jew for example, Augustine believes that Deity is beyond time, and that God created time with the world.⁵ He says that the motions of the heavenly bodies are not times, because at one man's prayer, the sun stood still, but time went on. Time is not

¹Gordon H. Clark, "Theory of Time in Plotinus," Philosophical Review, LIII (1944), 338-340.

²Callahan, op. cit., pp. 200, 92.

³Heath, op. cit., p. 47.

⁴Art of Logic, Works XI, 93.

⁵Gunn, op. cit., p. 28.

the motion of a body, because we perceive its rest as well as its motion--we say it rests twice as long as it moved. Time is measured in the mind.¹ But his mention of the battle day shows that he recognized that the heavenly bodies furnish man's measure of time.²

For St. Augustine, like Plotinus, "time is an activity of the soul by which man measures motion." Outside the soul, only the present phase of motion exists, and only the soul can bring together the past, present and the future and thus measure motion as continuous; thus time is given a psychological character. Only the present really is; past and future exist in men's minds. There are three times: the present of things past, the present of things future and the present of things present, that is, memory, expectation, and sight.³ Milton has a similar view: time is "the duration of things past, present, and future."⁴

Just what these philosophers thought man should do with time can be seen in the moral interpretation of time. Morally, time was for Plato an instrument to help man and the world perfect themselves by giving a model of goodness, beauty, and intelligibility.⁵ Thus, if one

¹St. Augustine, The Confessions of St. Augustine (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1927), pp. 284, 295-296.

²Gunn, op. cit., p. 28.

³Augustine, op. cit., pp. 285-291.

⁴Art of Logic, Works XI, 93.

⁵Callahan, op. cit., pp. 201-204.

were to translate Plato into Christian terms, time would be an instrument of God, directed toward beneficence. Milton certainly shares this view:

...time may come when men
With Angels may participate, and find
.....
Your bodies, may at last turn all to Spirit,
Improv'd by tract of time....¹

While Plato says time leads man to eternity, Plotinus says man should go counter to it and rise to eternity. St. Augustine thought that the soul in a world of change must use time. This life is a moral distraction, and the soul must gather itself by God's grace from this dispersion and rise to a higher form of Life. It can hope to rise to a timeless contemplation of God.² It was a fairly common idea that contemplation is one way to escape time. Indian philosophy is full of it, and in Milton's "Seventh Pro-
lusion," contemplation is called the single way to the eternal life.³

The major points of agreement between Milton and the Greek philosophers have been noted, but there is one more. The Greeks believed that the circle was the perfect

¹Paradise Lost, V, 493-498.

²Callahan, op. cit., pp. 193-202.

³"Prolusion VII", Works XII, 255.

movement, the best representative of ideal intelligibility which is in itself and identical with itself. Movement and change are inferior forms of the ideal, but circular movement, because it repeats, is the best imitation of the ideal.¹ Milton's reference to Plato's great year, the idea of the eternal return, has been observed and explained as the convenience of a metaphor. In Paradise Regained, another passage recalls the Greeks. "And now too soon for us the circling hours / This dreaded time have compast...."² Milton's attitude is not Greek however. He believed in the Christian straight line direction of time. Milton's references to cyclical time furnish only an image, not a principle of belief.

Time involves predestination and foreknowledge, and Milton's ideas on this question are traditional. In connection with free will and providence, Boethius discusses time and eternity for which he uses Plato's, Plotinus's and Augustine's distinctions. Boethius reasoned that just as our observation of events does not make those events either necessary or unnecessary, so God's observation does not necessitate their occurrence. God's ability

¹Henri-Charles Peuch, "Gnosis and Time," Man and Time, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), p. 40.

²Paradise Regained I, 57-58.

to see all times as present does not make necessary the occurrence of events in man's future. God's knowledge is not of something future, but the knowledge of an everlasting, everpresent now.¹ Milton's theology is similar. In poetic form, "if I foreknew, / Foreknowledge has no influence on their fault, / Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown."² And in Christian Doctrine:

What then? shall we say that this foresight
or foreknowledge on the part of God imposed on them
the necessity of acting in any definite way? No more
than if the future event had been foreseen by any
human being.³

The Boethian distinction between eternity and perpetuity shows the relation between God and created things. The world is perpetual, but not eternal like God, because it cannot possess past, present, and future all at once. It tries to imitate the simplicity, the present quality of God, through motion. In this respect Boethius is like Plato in considering time an imitation of eternity, but more responsibility is laid on man (the world) in his obligation to imitate. Milton and Boethius are alike in giving man great responsibility in leading the right kind of life. Thus far Milton has shown many points of agreement

¹Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, ed. James Buchanan (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1957), vii-viii.

²Paradise Lost III, 117-119.

³Christian Doctrine, Works XIV, 83.

with both pagan and Christian philosophers in his theory of time.

But he seems to have been unaffected by the chief medieval contribution to the theory of time. Working from Aristotle, Aquinas said that as the nature of time is numbering before and after in movement, so the nature of eternity is in the apprehension of the uniformity of what is outside movement. That which is measured by time has a beginning and ending in time, because everything moved has a beginning and end. Whatever is immutable has neither succession, beginning or end; therefore, whatever is eternal has none of these qualities; it is simultaneously whole,¹ as Boethius said when he defined eternity as the "complete possession of an endless life enjoyed as one simultaneous whole."² Time and eternity received an addition from the scholastics, aeviternity, a dimension between time and eternity which participated in each. Eternity is the mode of changeless being, but there is a ground in between changelessness and changeability. The heavenly bodies are substantially unchanging, but they change places. So it is with the angels who have unchangeable being yet can change as regards understanding, action, and place. These beings

¹St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Q. 10, Art. 1, Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, I, ed. Anton Pegis (New York: Random House, 1945), 74-75.

²Boethius, op. cit., p. 62.

are to be measured by aeviternity.¹ This is the kind of time which Milton has in heaven.

Ancient and medieval theories generally show a relation between time and motion and change, from considering an identification of time and motion, to considering time as the interval of motion or rest.² Jewish philosophers occasionally tried different approaches. Gerson's time and motion were strictly finite and not eternal. Maimonides thought time was relative to motion, and that there was no time separate from motion.³ One definition of time current in Greek, Arabic, and Jewish philosophy down to and past Crescas was that the fundamental nature of time was duration, which was a mental activity. In the thirteenth century, Crescas tried to separate the Aristotelian unit of time and motion; he believed that time measures motion and rest between points. Like Augustine, he gave time a psychological interpretation, but for Crescas, it is what we suppose is the duration between motion and rest.⁴ Medieval thinkers distinguished between physical time and spiritual, the one made by heavenly motion and the other existing in the minds of the angels.⁵ As Maurice Kelley

¹Aquinas, op. cit., p. 81.

²Heath, op. cit., p. 76.

³Gunn, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

⁴Hasadi Crescas, Crescas' Critique of Aristotle (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), ed. Harry A. Wolfson, pp. 96-97, 289.

⁵Gunn, op. cit., p. 42.

has shown, Milton's theology was actually little affected by rabbinical readings, and it appears that his concept of time was also comparatively untouched by Jewish influence.

The connection between God and man and time was much pondered during the Middle Ages, and concern over man's role in the universe gave rise to theories of time and history. To Dante, for example, history was not solely man's activities, but a course of events directed by God. Society advances to the future end of the world and the millenium, with every step according to the divine plan. All creation represents the constant and perpetual activity of the divine love. Salvation is the goal of the future, but it is an old goal that has existed from eternity in God, and has been prefigured in the way that Adam prefigured Christ. Christ's triumph is both in and beyond time.¹

The idea of constantly recurring creation is a prevalent one. Medieval Christians saw no difference between existence and duration. Abiding things which were created by God were being created every moment in a way, because the Creator willed them to be and to endure. For man to "tend Godward" meant a continual receiving of one's existence from God. Man in the midst of change felt that he endured.

¹Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 194.

Change was the potential becoming active, but this did not necessarily take time. Matter (something not divine) prevented the immediate change of potentiality into actuality. The divine was not defective; matter was responsible for time because it resisted, slowing down and fragmenting the process. The inherent imperfection of matter prevented its instantaneous assumption of an ideal form. Time was potential permanence directed toward realization in the forms of being. The forms did exist and endure. The capacity of being for action existed in permanence. For the action to become act took God's help. God based time on permanence and actuality--the permanence of the capacity of being for action, and actuality which made time real. Actuality could be instantaneous, but in matter it was achieved through a temporal process which moved in a straight line toward a goal. This time differed from Heraclitan or Platonic time in that it had a direction; its purpose was to carry the Christian to God. Unlike the angels who could go from idea to idea without time, man has to use time to think and move. Comprehending, feeling, willing--man does only in time, but as the act of comprehending, feeling, willing, approaches perfection, it approaches release from time; the soul attains angelic uniformity and can contemplate God. Contemplation of the truth creates a perfect moment which transcends time.¹

¹Georges Poulet, Studies in Human Time, trans. Elliott Coleman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), pp. 3-7.

Milton's comment on the sole avenue to eternity being through contemplation has already been noted.

In the twelfth century Mystère d' Adam, Adam says that only the future son of Mary will help him, the embodiment of a future grace that is for God in the ever-present now. God's simultaneous present is more than medieval naivete, it is the future reaching back to the present. The change of chronology does give a simplified view for the simplest comprehension, "but this simultaneous overall view is at the same time the expression of a unique, exalted, and hidden truth, the very truth of the figural structure of universal history." Medieval liturgical drama was all figuration or imitation of Christ: the prophets, the Incarnation, the Passion, Christ's bride awaiting the return of the groom. It was a drama that symbolizes all history.¹

Literary time, as such, is not precisely philosophical time, but what may be called human time. Literature concerns itself with both the ordinary flow of time, outer time, and inner time, or the rarer "'moments of consciousness' which men of religion and art alike have described as the most real and important."² The philosophical theories previously described will recur in the survey of literary theories and uses of time, and they will recur with special

¹Auerbach, op. cit., p. 158.

²Frederick Carpenter, "Hemingway Achieves the Fifth Dimension," PMLA LXIX (September, 1954), 714.

frequency during the Renaissance and seventeenth century. The first poet to be considered, however, wrote before any of the philosophers whose theories have been examined.

Homer's Odyssey has been described by Eric Auerbach as having no perspective: the action takes place in the foreground and in the present. Working particularly with one incident, Auerbach comments that Odysseus could have recalled in his mind the story of getting the scar by which Eurycleia recognized him, but Homer's narrative technique is not to create a perspective; it has only foreground and present.¹ Samuel E. Bassett supports Auerbach's opinion, and says that Homer has no particular consciousness of time; in fact, Bassett's description of Homer's time even agrees with a popular theory that time has no distinct or separate being: when Homer says a certain number of days or years, he merely means a long or short duration with a certain emotional connotation. Homer's poetry is full of life, and his use of time reflects one of life and time's characteristics: progressiveness with irreversibility.² Life does not go backward, only forward. Homer does not describe

¹Auerbach, op. cit., p. 7.

²I say this because it is the general opinion of the nature of time and life, and was for many centuries, despite recent experiments which seem to show that particles of energy can go backward in time. See Hans Reichenbach, The Direction of Time (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956).

parallel actions; he keeps the action going forward.¹ So it is when Odysseus goes on the boar hunt. Eurycleia's recognition and his revenge are left suspended, and the story moves forward until the history of the scar is finished. Then without any sign of a shift from past to present, Odysseus lets his feet be bathed.²

Perhaps the treatment of time in The Divine Comedy is similar to that in the Odyssey: both have little narrative perspective of time; and in the Comedy, the reconciliation of the temporal and eternal is complete. They are inseparable.³ Like the medieval Mystere d' Adam, the Divine Comedy contains the whole historical world. The figural point of view shows the infinite in its phenomenal as well as eternal aspects, its immutability and its history. Eternal life for people in the Comedy is the result of their acts in life. History in the other world is remembrance of the earthly past, a consciousness in eternity of the earthly present and future.⁴ Dante asks Farinata to explain the soul's view of time:

¹Samuel Basset, The Poetry of Homer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948), pp. 33-35.

²Auerbach, op. cit., p. 7.

³M. F. Moloney, "The Enigma of Time," Thought, XXXII (Spring, 1957), 70.

⁴Auerbach, op. cit., pp. 197-201.

"It seems that you see beforehand what time brings with it, if I rightly hear; and have a different manner with the present."

"Like one who has imperfect vision, we see the things," he said, "which are remote from us; so much light the Supreme Ruler still gives to us;

when they draw nigh, or are, our intellect is altogether void; and except what others bring us, we know nothing of your human state.

Therefore thou mayest understand that all our knowledge shall be dead, from that moment when the portal of the Future shall be closed." ¹

This distorted view of time in Hell corresponds to what Perrin Lowrey calls the flawed view of reality held by the characters in The Sound and the Fury.² The people in Hell have a sense of time, and they recognize that time will end some day, "when the portal of the Future shall be closed." According to the Christian scheme of things, time will end with the destruction of the world. Not all of Dante's characters have the same interpretation of time, however. The angels have no need for a sense of time.

¹Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy, trans. Carlyle-Okey-Wicksteed (New York: Modern Library, 1950), pp. 56-57.

²Perrin Lowrey, "Concepts of Time in The Sound and the Fury," "English Institute Essays" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), p. 65. The Compson sons have a view of time which makes it difficult for them to live in this world. Although Dante's characters do not have a "romantic idea of 'the way things used to be'" like the Compsons, their vision of the present is nevertheless blurred. "None of them understands the relation between past and present and future; each has flawed vision of reality."

Wylie Sypher comments that Dante's time is the pilgrim's straight line route to the eternal. The Comedy achieves the eternal through its technique of passage¹ apparently in a way related to Milton's shifting and transferring times in the "Nativity Ode." Auerbach pays tribute to Dante's poetic creation by saying that it shows man's history in a timeless domain.²

Dante's time scheme is as allegorical as his story. The many references to time can be taken on a level above the literal. Such references as those to the time of day and night (the sixth handmaiden returning from the day's service) add up to a week for the action of the poem. Then there is a reference to the brevity of mortal time as compared to eternal time: "a thousand years...is shorter space to eternity than the twinkling of an eye to the circle which slowest is turned in heaven."³ The references to measured time support the general preoccupation with eternity, unmeasured time.

Dante's ideas about first things are those of traditional Christianity: matter, angels and the heavens were created first. Beatrice explains to Dante that she has

¹Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955), pp. 52-53.

²Auerbach, op. cit., p. 202.

³Dante, op. cit., pp. 260-255.

seen the place where every where and when meet, then goes on to tell how creation occurred. God in his eternity beyond time created simultaneously; everything came "all at once into its being, without distinction of beginning."

There was no before or after. Jerome erred, says Dante, when he wrote that the angels were created during a long stretch of time before anything else was made. And so would Milton err according to Dante's program of creation. These and the next few lines suggest Augustine, who said that God made time; therefore no times existed before God made time, an act which occurred with creation.¹

The passage of time is perceived and noted through memory, says Augustine, and Dante has a passage on memory which recalls the medieval definition of aevum and the angels' participation in divinity. Men on earth say that angels remember and understand and will; however,

These substances, since first they gathered joy
from the face of God, have never turned their vision
from it wherefrom nought is concealed;

wherefore their sight is never intercepted by a
fresh object, and so behoveth not to call aught
back to memory because thought hath been cleft.²

Man needs time, but the angels in heaven are in an ever-present now and consequently have no need of memory or anticipation. Then in a passage uniting several ancient,

¹Ibid., pp. 580-581.

²Ibid., pp. 581-582.

almost archetypal images, Dante describes his first glimpse of true reality:

And I saw a light, in river form, glow tawny
betwixt banks painted with marvellous spring.

From out this river issued living sparks, and
dropped on every side into the blossoms, like rubies
set in gold.

Then as inebriated with the odours they plunged
themselves again into the marvellous swirl, and as
one entered issued forth another.

"The lofty wish that now doth burn and press thee
to have more knowledge of the things thou seest,
pleaseth me more the more it swelleth.

But of this water needs thou first must drink,
ere so great thirst in thee be slaked." So
spoke mine eyes' sun unto me;

then added: "The river and the topaz-gems
that enter and go forth, and the smiling of the
grasses are the shadowy prefaces of their reality.

Not that such things are harsh as in them-
selves; but on thy side is the defect, in that thy
sight not yet exalteth it so high."

...no sooner drank of it [the stream] mine eye-
lids' rim than into roundness seemed to change its
length.

...so changed before me into ampler joyance the
flowers and the sparks, so that I saw both the
two courts of heaven manifested.¹

"A blinding flash of light enwraps the Poet, and
his sight then becomes such that naught can vanquish it;
whereon he sees (first in symbolic form, as by the stream
of Time; then in their true shapes, as gathering round

¹Ibid., p. 587.

the circle of Eternity) the things of heaven."¹ The image of the stream for time is as old as Heraclitus. The cleansing of the sight for a vision is repeated when Michael removes the film from Adam's eyes in Book XI of Paradise Lost. Another image which Dante uses in this passage is that of the circle as a symbol of perfection, eternity, and the highest reality. Here he seems to be using the Greek concept of the perfection of the circle. There is neither beginning nor end in a circle, no direction, no before or after. But Dante differs in the major respect of having a Christian concept of the direction of time. The cyclical theory of time which the Greeks held was, for Christians, negated by the Incarnation, a unique event which would not be repeated. Augustine sets the "right way," the straight direction of history from the beginnings in Genesis to the end in New Jerusalem, against the false circles of the pagans. For the Christian, time is a God-directed straight line with a beginning and an absolute end.² And for Dante, history is the same:

because, accordant with the way faith looked to Christ, these are the partition-wall whereat the sacred steps are parted.

On this side, wherein the flower is mature in all its petals, are seated who believe in Christ to come.

¹Ibid., p. 585.

²Peuch, op. cit., pp. 40-46.

On the other side, where they are broke by empty seats, abide in semi-circles such as had their sight turned towards Christ come.¹

He follows the Christian division of time and history into before Christ and after Christ, the prophets of Judaism before and the believers after. To indicate chronological time, he will write such a verse as "Yesterday, five hours later than this hour, completed a thousand two hundred and sixty-six years since the way here to Hell was broken."² The appearance of Christ is the great focal point.

Although this is an early poetic reference to the Christian theory of time as a line, the "right way" in contrast to the pagan myth of the eternal return, the circle is not broken yet.

¹Dante, op. cit., p. 597.

²Ibid., p. 116.

CHAPTER II

THE POETIC BACKGROUND

The English poetical background of Milton's concept and use of time may be sketched in the practice of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and others, whose manner of working with time reflects the history of ancient ideas. To the Middle Ages, time was essentially a reminder of the glory of God and the insignificance of man. Examination of some of the Canterbury Tales will show how Chaucer indicates that the present time is ultimately worthless. Like Lydgate who would have us see the lesson of eternity in the fading grass, he has the attitude that one should prepare for the ultimate goal because this life is nothing more than a "moveable and transitorie moment."¹

Chaucer's handling of time in the tales of the

¹Geoffrey Chaucer, Boece, Book V, Prosa 6, The Works of Chaucer, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1933), p. 445. An exhaustive treatment of the concept of time in Chaucer, Shakespeare, and others is not intended nor is it pertinent; however a brief consideration of them will illuminate Milton's use of time.

Miller, Reeve, Shipman, Knight, and Prioress seems to indicate a theory underlying these stories: in these tales, Chaucer employs days, hours, or years in accordance with a philosophical idea which reflects the typical medieval attitude toward time.

The "Knight's Tale" does not lend itself easily to tabulation of the number of days or years taken by the performance of the action, though the source is fairly precise in time relationships, and here Chaucer's time reckoning resembles Homer's in its inexactness. Palamon and Arcite languish in prison while years and years and days and days pass; after the duel in the forest they wait a year for the tournament; after the death of Arcite and the passage of a certain number (not specified) of years, the tale is ended with the marriage of Palamon and Emily.

The action of the Miller's tale takes place in less than three days: on Saturday Nicholas goes into retirement, on Sunday he tells John of the impending flood, and on Monday night after John has worked all day, the story is completed with the falling of the tubs. In the Reeve's tale, only one day is necessary for John and Aleyn to gain revenge for the miller's trickery.

The Man of Law's tale is as long in time as is the Knight's. Constance, after being put out to sea by the sultan's mother, sails for years and days upon the ocean before she comes to Northumberland. She lives

there an indefinite length of time, and is again put out to sea where she floats for many a weary day. After re-joining Ailla who subsequently lives a year, Constance goes back to Rome and lives in virtue until she dies.

In the Prioress' tale, time is also comparatively unspecific. The little clergeon sings his songs day by day, and one day is lured into a death trap. That night his mother misses him and looks for him the next day. The boy is found, and on what seems to be the same day, the abbot removes the grain from his tongue. But this hardly gives time enough to hang and draw the Jews, so time is really not definite here.

The Shipman's tale fits into the pattern of those with a more specific time, or those tales of a briefer period of time. On the third day of Dan John's visit, the merchant goes to his counting house and the wife promises the monk that if he gives her one hundred francs, she will pay him on a certain day. The next morning the merchant went to Bruges, and on Sunday the monk came to give the wife the money. The merchant returned, talked with the monk, went home immediately afterward, and the tale ends with a discussion of debt and debtor.

In the tales which take a longer time for the action to occur, usually an indefinite time, Chaucer seems to be implying a different philosophy for the characters as

well as working in a different kind of artistic mode--the serious tale and the fabliau. The themes of the three fabliaux mentioned here might be summed up in a statement in the Man of Law's tale: "Joy of this world, for tyme wol not abyde; from day to night it changes as the tide."¹ Light pleasures cannot last long. The participants in the fabliaux are seeking Epicurean happiness, the plain delight of verily perfect felicity, the greatest pleasure and comfort that may be derived from life. In the fabliaux, days and hours are mentioned, the action takes place in a short sequence of certain days, and the characters are looking for the happiness of the moment. Those tales which occupy a longer period of time imply a longer search by man in the persons of the characters for ultimate happiness, and in this process they submit to the will of God--as do Palamon, Arcite, Emily, Constance, and the little clergeon. Chaucer's theory of time seems to be mingled with the ideas of eternity, immutability of the divine, and Fortune--a mixture which survived in the Renaissance complex of Fortuna - Occasio - Tempus associations and the frequent confusion of Time and Fortune, i.e., Chapman's "Time's restless wheel."² Fortune is present in Chaucer's concept of time in the stanza which immediately follows the lines

¹Chaucer, "Man of Law's Tale," ll. 1133-1134, Works, op. cit., p. 89.

²Samuel Chew, "Time and Fortune," ELH, VI (1939), 103-111.

quoted above from the Man of Law's tale: the delight of Constance and Alla lasts only a little while, because Death, who like Fortune takes of high and low his rent, takes Alla. Fortune seems to be the equivalent of mutability in Chaucer's terminology of time.

The association of Fortune and Time is of course not new. They were often mentioned together and evidently were related. In the Scottish Chaucerian Dunbar's Meditatioun in Wyntir,

And lat Fortoun wirk furthe hir rage;
 Quhen that no rasoun may assuage,
 Quhill that hir glas be run and past.

Fortune has an hourglass here, and in at least one drawing she has old time's scythe. Because Fortune can govern time, she comes to resemble the goddess who governs the opportune moment. When Fortune has the forelock, it is combined with occasion.¹ Time has by this present day a familiar association with the forelock: Greene introduced it to English in Menaphon in 1589;² Spenser uses the figure in Amoretti when he asks for a proper use of the present fleeting time.

¹Howard R. Patch, The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), pp. 115-116, quoting Dunbar.

²J. E. Matzke, "On the Source of the Italian and English Idioms Meaning 'To Take Time by the Forelock' with Special Reference to Bojardo's Orlando Innamorato, Book II, Cantos VII-IX," PMLA, VIII (1893), 332.

The long serious tales have an air of timelessness, an unconcern with temporality. In the short fabliaux, time is specific, and the characters may be thought of as looking only at the present, that which is philosophically considered the non-existent, the theologically false, that which cannot be measured but which is the only way a man of limited perception has of measuring and knowing experience. Augustine and Aristotle have comments to which there is a response in Chaucer's work. Augustine answers those who have difficulty with the time of the creation of the world: "eternity and time are rightly distinguished by this, that time does not exist without some movement and transition, while in eternity there is no change..."¹ Aquinas says that eternity and time are not the same, and nothing except God is eternal.² For Aquinas, God's everlasting being does not endure through endless time, but rather exists unchanging in the eternal present. Both Aquinas and Augustine emphasize the lack of change in God. As God and eternity are unchanging, so are the characters of Constance, Griselda, and the Prioress' boy. This is not to say that they are God-symbols or figures, but rather that they are approaches to the divine and

¹Augustine, The City of God, XI, 6, Augustine, ed. R. M. Hutchins (Chicago: William Benton, 1952), p. 325.

²Aquinas, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

eternal. With the eternal, there is no time, and these tales, with their lack of chronological or clock time, emulate the timeless and minimize the temporal, not only temporal time, but temporal values. So it is when Milton emphasizes the timelessness of God in Paradise Lost. Both the poets achieve the same effect of illuminating God's infinitude.

The medieval way to deal with time was to recognize one's own worthlessness in this world, but the Renaissance poet could stress change without being so absorbed in God and the other world.¹ In the Renaissance there was an awareness of vicissitude and the force that made vicissitude. God was a power that maintained things while they completed their role in the world. The attitude toward time was different from that prevalent in the Middle Ages: the fleeting character of each moment could be felt along with a joy in being in time. Time served man; it gave him a chance to gain personal immortality.² Humanism and the Reformation affected Renaissance ideas. Emphasis shifted from the other world to the time that man had.³ The here and the now, not eternity, captured man's attention.⁴

¹Newman, op. cit., pp. 58-61.

²Poulet, op. cit., pp. 8-10.

³Newman, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

⁴Moloney, op. cit., p. 72.

Spenser provides a smooth introduction into the Renaissance concepts of time because he is halfway between the medieval and Renaissance attitudes. One of the chief Renaissance attitudes is a concern with time's destructiveness, an attitude expressed more sadly by Raleigh than is usual in Spenser. In the poem whose last stanza was written the night before his execution,¹ Raleigh uses the carpe diem theme but ends with a statement slightly different from the ordinary feeling about time. First he depicts the beautiful mistress made by Nature who had washed her hands in milk and forgot to dry them--a mistress with eyes of light and violet breath, but time who does not even wash his hands--"The light, the belly, lips, and breath, He dims, discolors, and destroys." So far this is only typical of the Renaissance attitude, but the last two lines are not: Time,

When we have wandered all our ways
Shuts up the story of our days.

The Renaissance poet usually thinks that at least in story, in verse, he can gain immortality, but Raleigh, facing death, does not even have that much optimism. Many works of art exemplify the concern with time's destructiveness, and more typical is Spenser's emblematic Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings which pictures and describes the sudden downfall

¹Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 97.

and destruction of mortal monuments from temples to great ships, along with the unforeseen catastrophes that destroy the laurel tree, dry up fountains, and sadden the phoenix so much that he kills himself. It is interesting to compare one of Milton's sonnets with two in Theatre for Worldlings. Milton may have recalled them. Spenser's second poem is about a magnificent temple a hundred cubits high, diamond fronted with a crystal wall, and the "floore was iaspis, and of Emeraude. O Worlde's vainnesse." The third sonnet describes a shining diamond cinerary spire "ten feete eche way square, Iustly proportionde vp vnto his height." Both of these edifices are destroyed, one by a sudden earthquake, the other by a sudden tempest.¹ Spenser stresses the transience of earthly things, while with similar words, Milton describes the power of poetry:

when Temple and Towre
Went to the ground: And the repeated air
Of sad Electra's Poet had the power
To save th' Athenian Walls from ruine bare.²

"The Ruines of Time," presents in title a Renaissance emotion, in content the medieval view of this world's vain glory and "unstedfast state."³ Of traditional

¹Edmund Spenser, "A Theatre for Worldlings," The Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. Greenlaw et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1947), pp. 12-13.

²"Sonnet VIII," Works I, 60-61.

³Edmund Spenser, "The Ruines of Time," The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 472. All subsequent Spenser quotations in this study are from this edition.

metaphysic is the "termelesse time," the aevum of the angels in the "Hymne of Heavenly Love."¹ Sonnet XXVII of the Amoretti expresses both the medieval and Renaissance attitudes toward time; the world's glory is only dross and will be shrouded in the shade of death, but "this verse, that never shall expire...shal you make immortal."² Again and again the power of poetry to immortalize is expressed.

Thy Lord shall never die, the whiles this verse
 Shall live, and surely it shall live forever:
 For ever it shall live, and shall rehearse
 His worthie praise, and vertues dying never,
 Though death his soule doo from his bodie sever,
 And thou thy selfe herein shalt also live;
 Such grace the heavens doo to my verses give.

Milton on the contrary does not repeatedly stress the typical Renaissance emphasis on the immortalizing power of verse. In The History of Britain he does say that time cannot be conquered by conquerors, but writers and eloquence can help the conqueror overcome time,³ but on the whole, Milton makes comparatively few references to the popular idea.

One frequent Renaissance reference to time is in the carpe diem poems. Spenser has the customary view:

tell her the joyous time will not be staid
 unless she do him by the forelock take

¹Newman, op. cit., p. 160.

²"Sonnett XXVII," Amoretti, Works, p. 567.

³The History of Britain, Works X, 32-33.

Make hast therefore sweet love, whilst it is yet prime
for non can call againe the passed time.¹

Herrick's "To the Virgins to Make Much of Time" makes use of the classical sentiment, which Horace put forth in his odes. Herrick's Old Time is more than the old man with the scythe and hour glass, he is the recurring torment of man. Over half of the poem puts the ballad meter to good use to urge immediate action. The thought hurries along, the bud grows into the flower, today becomes tomorrow. The comparative adjectives move toward the superlative: higher, sooner, nearer, worse--"worst times still succeed the former."² The rhythm of the third verse reflects the dwindling deterioration. At the break between "Worst" and "Times," the peak is reached, and the way down is hurried along in "still succeed the former." Herrick, like Chaucer, is saying "make the best of life," but there is considerable difference in the aim.³

The carpe diem theme can be used for either secular or religious uses. Jeremy Taylor, for instance, converts the theme into the Christian message that he who makes best use of his present turns his condition to advantage.

¹"Sonnet LXX," p. 574.

²Robert Herrick, "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time," Poetry of the English Renaissance, ed. Hebel and Hudson (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1929), pp. 652-653.

³E. M. W. Tillyard, The Metaphysicals and Milton (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956), pp. 54-57.

Carpe diem can plead sensuality, as in Marvell's "To his Coy Mistress," or asceticism. When Guyon destroys the Bower of Bliss, he strengthens the cause of pitiless rigor. One can find in the Renaissance both the desire to gather roses and to gain the Christian crown of thorns. Wanting today and letting tomorrow slip is the common desire of courtier and Christian. Spenser makes no effort to reconcile these choices, but Milton does try in Comus to have the Lady refuse Comus without ascetically renouncing the flesh. Comus presents some persuasive arguments in his speeches. He tells the Lady not to be cruel to herself by believing the foolishness of the budge doctors of stoic fur who praise "lean and sallow abstinence." After all, nature gave bounteously for enjoyment, and if the world should peevishly feed on nothing but gruel and water, it would treat the gracious giver but ungratefully.

Beauty is natures coyn, must not be hoorded,
 But must be currant, and the good thereof
 Consists in mutual and partak'n bliss,
 Unsavoury in th'injoyment of it self.
 If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
 It withers on the stalk with languish't head.¹

The Lady's reply by itself is certainly no reconciliation of the asceticism-sensualism duality of the carpe diem motif; her answer is proud and presents goodness with too much power and grandeur. She blasts Comus for using his profane tongue "against the Sun-clad power of Chastity."

¹"A Mask," ll. 708, 738-743.

However, the Chastity speech of the Elder Brother and the epilogue together present an excellent answer. The Elder brother speaks of a chastity which does not deny the physical, rather it purifies it. The reconciliation is not total, but Milton does make an attempt at it. Nature and grace do harmonize rather than nature completely yielding to grace.¹

Milton varies the traditional treatment of carpe diem in another poem, too. The "Fifth Elegy" celebrates the coming of spring in figures that had been used by Horace to stress carpe diem, but Milton has none of the ephemeral philosophy.² The poem opens with a curiously Grecian metaphor:

Time, that rolls back upon itself in
never-ending circuit, is already, since
the spring is gaining in warmth, calling
back the new Zephyrs....³

But Milton is not thinking so much of history as cyclical. He seems rather to mean that the year is a cycle and that spring and winter follow in due course. The poem goes on to describe the lavishness of Earth in her awakening, her rich offerings, gleaming gifts, even her treasures hid beneath mountains--all her dowry to entice Adonis. The

¹Fredelle Bruser, "Comus and the Rose Song", SP, XLIV (1947), 625-644.

²Walter MacKellar, The Latin Poems of John Milton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), pp. 30-31.

³"Elegy the Fifth", Works I, 195.

emphasis is on the splendor and magnificence of spring and the resurgence of his poetic powers rather than on the need to seize the hasting day. "Let us two, each in his own part, chant the coming of spring,"¹ is the plea rather than a reminder that spring is brief. Not

We have short time to stay, as you daffodils;
We have as short a spring,
As quick a growth to meet decay,²

as Herrick would have us remember.

Perhaps the best short statement Milton makes about carpe diem is a six-line passage in one of the sonnets.

To measure life, learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;
For other things mild Heav'n a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.³

The key to understanding Milton's carpe diem is found in his meaning of Temperance, which, as in Plato and Spenser too, is a golden mean, but it is in addition "control of all powers, mental desires as well as physical desires, by the rational element in the soul."⁴ Milton would not thank the all-giver ungraciously, by a peevish refusal to indulge in moments of gaiety, rather, he would use all with grace and temperance.

¹Ibid., p. 197.

²Herrick, "To Daffodils," Poetry of the English Renaissance, op. cit., p. 659.

³"Sonnet XXI," Works I, 68.

⁴Edwin Greenlaw, "Better Teacher Than Aquinas," SP, XIV (1917), 211.

If he is unlike Spenser in treatment of the carpe diem theme, Milton is more like him elsewhere, for example in the Garden of Adonis section of the Faerie Queene.¹ Spenser describes the eternal substance from which all things are made, a substance which lies in the wide womb of the world in hateful darkness and deep horror. It is unaffected by death and life; it changes only in appearance. Milton's chaos is described in comparable language, and the use to which the eternal substance is put is similar for both poets, as it was of course for many others too.

They view'd the vast immeasurable Abyss
 Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
 Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
 And surging waves....²

Another aspect of Spenserian time is mutability: everything decays and draws to its end. Were it not for this law, the dwellers in the garden would have no trouble, for time is the only disturber there. The mutability cantos imply that time depends on motion, and that it is measured by the revolution of the heavenly bodies. Jove says that the gods control time since they control the planets. One result of this is the cyclical nature of time:³

¹Greenlaw has noted the similarity in other respects of the same book. Greenlaw, op. cit., pp. 196-217.

²Paradise Lost. VII, 211-214.

³Newman, op. cit., pp. 179-184.

the souls go into the world from the garden "till thither they returne, where first they grew: / So like a wheele around they runne from old to new,"¹ as the souls do in The Aeneid.

The cyclical theory is old and frequently represented in art. Fortune's wheel symbolized a medieval belief in the cycles of human affairs.² A Fortuna-Occasio-Tempus set of associations recurs in literature, with the parts used interchangeably, especially in iconography. Time traditionally has the forelock, but Chapman in May Day and Shakespeare in Othello have references to seizing occasion by the forelock. Time and fortune should be separate, but they were mixed: Chapman, for instance, says "There is a deep nick in Time's restless wheel / For each man's good; when which nick comes, it strikes." From the notch of the clock-wheel cogs comes the first OED recorded use of the phrase "nick of time." Shakespeare in the Rape of Lucrece says that one function of time is to turn Fortune's wheel.³ In the same poem, Opportunity is called the servant of time; thus it is closely associated though separate. This last function of time seems to be related to the function of time as that which enabled man to gain

¹Faerie Queene III, vi, 33.

²Newman, op. cit., p. 185.

³Chew, op. cit., pp. 103-111.

personal immortality. Milton's contribution to the Fortune-Time figure occurs in "Of Prelaticall Episcopacy": "Whatsoever time, or the heedlesse hand of blind chance, hath drawne down from of old to the present..."¹ equates time and chance, an apparent equivalent to Fortune.

The near synonymity of time and fortune can be traced back to ancient Greece. The forelock has been the tail which wagged the figure about. Whenever Fortune has a forelock, it is combined with occasion.² The Greek sculptor Lysippus made a statue to represent kairos (opportunity) which had tumbling curls only on the front of its head; the back was bald. A Latin fable of Phaedrus, describing a similar figure in a poem called "Tempus," shows a confusion between Tempus and Occasio. The mixture persisted: Ariosto in Orlando Furioso substitutes Time for Fortune; Greene in Menaphon has a reference to taking opportunity by the forelock.³ In ancient art, time was shown either as aion or kairos, the moment which makes a turning point in the life of an individual or the universe--opportunity. Opportunity was a young man, originally nude, usually moving, with winged heels and shoulders, and a pair of scales balanced on the edge of a shaving knife

¹Of Prelaticall Episcopacy," Works III, 91.

²Patch, op. cit., p. 116.

³Matzke, op. cit., pp. 312-332.

for which was later substituted wheels. This bald figure with a forelock lasted up to the eleventh century and then became identified with Fortune.¹ Just as a Renaissance poem could be a product of Judaeo-Christian-Greek influences, so the concept of time was the accumulation of many influences.

Aion was described in Mazdean cosmogony as a limited time which holds long domination, but eternal time is also called aion sometimes in that it furnished the pattern for limited time to imitate.² Mithraic images were winged figures surrounded by snakes or handsome youths in the middle of the zodiac.³ One of the few beautiful images of time comes from the Mazdean philosophy. Ohrmazd created time "'in the form of a youth of fifteen, luminous, clear-eyed, of tall stature, full of vigor resulting from a perfect endowment and not from a brutal and violent nature.'"⁴ Lysippus' statue was apparently a relative: "'Kairos was a boy, blooming in the very flower of youth from head to foot; handsome in mien, his hair -fluttering at the caprice of the wind, leaving his locks

¹Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 71-72.

²Henry Corbin, "Cyclical Time in Mazdaism and Ismailism," Man and Time, op. cit., p. 117.

³Panofsky, op. cit., p. 73.

⁴Corbin, op. cit., p. 121.

dishevelled; with rosy complexion, showing by the splendour of body its perfection."¹ Milton probably was not influenced by this image; however, his usual opinion of time is more favorable than the typical monster which had developed by the time of the Renaissance.

Early images do not have the hourglass, the scythe and sickle of destruction, or the crutches of old age and decay; they show swiftness and delicate balance, fertility, power. The symbols now familiar developed because of the similarity of Chronos to Kronos (Saturn), the Roman agriculture god who did have a sickle. Saturn was old, and eventually was identified with the highest and slowest planet. The father of gods and men, Kronos, could merge with the father of all things, Chronos. In the fourth and fifth centuries, Kronos-Saturn acquired new legends and symbols of temporality: he carried a snake eating its tail and he was said to eat his own children (he devoured all things).² The classical Kronos had been dignified, gloomy, veiled, had had no wings,

¹Callistratus, quoted in Matzke, op. cit., pp. 312-314.

²A modern statement of this particular habit of time occurs in Thomas Mann's Tales of Jacob: "'Together they sewed up Yitschak in a ram-skin, with his knees under his chin, and thus they gave him to time to devour, to time which devours his children that they may not set themselves over him, but must choke them up again to live in the same old stories as the same old children.'" Quoted in Helmuth Plessner, "On the Relation of Time to Death," Man and Time, op. cit., p. 241.

staff or crutches; the medieval Saturn was old, poor, close to death. Death had had a sickle from earliest times. Arabic astrological imagery emphasized the unhappy aspects of Saturn (those born under him had the possibility of being cripples, grave diggers, privy-cleaners, and so forth) and he was frequently depicted with a mattock or spade instead of a sickle, and this turned into the crutch of old age. The Moralized Ovid illustrators showed Saturn being castrated and eating a child. Then for Petrarch's Trionfi, the illustrators combined "Temps" with Saturn, with the resulting conglomeration of wings, decrepitude, crutches, scythe, hourglass, zodiac, and the dragon biting its tail.¹

Thus Father Time's familiar figure is classical, medieval, western, oriental, a philosophical principle and a concrete destroyer. This richness of meaning explains the many Renaissance references to time.² Time has many facets. In Samuel Rowlands' poem A Terrible Battle between the Two Consumers of the Whole World, Time and Death, Time is a fiend, "'foul misshapen monster...with cloven feet,'" whose scythe symbolizes the destroyer.³ In the Winter's Tale, Father Time merely shows the

¹Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 73-80

²Ibid., p. 81.

³Chew, op. cit., p. 106.

passing of time. Time may be a destroyer or revealer. One frontispiece of the Renaissance period shows Time "gnawing away at the Torso Belvedere." Time may reveal, rescue, or vindicate truth, innocence, and virtue.¹ Veritas filia temporis was a popular motto, and was adopted by Mary Tudor.

Milton, however, in "Of Prelaticall Episcopacy" contradicts the popular notion of Truth's parentage:

...we doe injuriously in thinking to tast better the pure Evangelick Manna by seasoning our mouths with the tainted scraps, and fragments of an unknown table; and searching among the verminous and polluted rags dropt overworn from the toying shoulders of Time, with these deformedly to quilt, and interlace the intire, the spotlesse, and undecaying robe of Truth, the daughter not of Time, but of Heaven....³

Considering the context, it is easy to see why Milton denied that truth was the daughter of time, especially when one recalls the use of the legend. Veritas filia Temporis, ancient saying of a lost poet, was widely used in the Renaissance, from Austria to Italy to England. When Mary Tudor came to the throne, she thought that at long last truth had been vindicated and re-established. Cardinal Pole wrote to her "I could not believe that the blood of those to whom God had given the grace to die... should not prove efficacious, when to His providence the

¹Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

²Newman, op. cit., p. 115.

³"Of Prelaticall Episcopacy," Works IV, 91.

time seemed opportune. "That time is...now come...in order that...the true religion and justice return...into the kingdom."¹ This association of truth and Catholicism would have been enough to make Milton reject the popular idea of truth as the daughter of time. In a passage which rails against the Catholic legacy of episcopacy, Milton would naturally dissociate truth from the verminous rags of the Roman church. Truth was a very precious and pure thing to Milton, and was rightly put in the company of Heaven, something everlasting, rather than with that which decays.

Passages from other of Milton's works can be cited in support of showing his dislike of Mary Tudor and almost anything associated with her. "In Quintum Novembris" has Satan in the form of the serpent tell the pope to help his own sons in England so that the days of Mary will return to the land.² Tenure of Kings describes the plight of pastors with words reminiscent of the sonnet on the Piedmontese slaughter: "These were the Pastors of those Saints and Confessors who flying from the bloody persecution of Queen Mary, gather'd up at length thir scatterd

¹Cardinal Pole, quoted in Franz Saxl, "Veritas filia Temporis," trans. D. V. Thompson and G. Bing, Philosophy and History, ed. Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 208.

²"In Quintum Novembris," Works I, 246.

members...."¹ Svendsen quotes a passage from Eikon Basilike which compares the king's failures to Mary's false pregnancies. This quotation closely follows another from the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce which tells of the birth of truth.² Milton's description differs from the emblematic tradition, which is typically illustrated in Whitney's emblem on Truth the daughter of time: there, whitehaired old Time is letting Truth out of the cave where Envy, Strife, and Slander had long kept her.³ But Milton has a different genealogy:

For Truth is as impossible to be soil'd by
any outward touch, as the Sun beam. Though
this ill hap wait on her nativity, that shee
never comes into the world, but like a Bastard,
to the ignominy of him that brought her forth:
till Time the Midwife rather than the mother of
Truth, have washt and salted the Infant,
declar'd her legitimat, and Churcht the father
of his young Minerva, from the needlesse cause
of his purgation.⁴

Thus in two different passages Milton denies the traditional association of truth with time.

Mary Tudor's use of the phrase may have been enough to make Milton change tradition, but there are other

¹Tenure of Kings, Works V, 51-52.

²Kester Svendsen, Milton and Science (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 188-189.

³Geoffrey Whitney, A Choice of Emblemes and Other Devises (Leyden: Francis Raphelengius, 1586), p. 4.

⁴Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, Works III, pt. II, 370.

examples which can help to explain his statement. Rubens in Triumph of the Eucharist had shown Time helping Truth escape her enemies Luther and Calvin; Richelieu was to use Veritas filia Temporis as the theme for the decoration of his apartments.¹ According to Milton's opinion, the motto had not been in very good company.

Milton does not depart from the traditional iconographical figure of time, however. His description is hardly more hideous than those already mentioned. Here time is a filthy, corrupting, aged figure, quite at home in the old Saturn tradition.

One of the usual Renaissance accoutrements of time was a bag, perhaps the most famous of which is described in Ulysses' speech in Troilus and Cressida: "Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back, / Wherein he puts alms for oblivion, / a great-sized monster of ingratitudes." There is a comparable bag in the ballad The Travels of Time: Loaden with Popish Trumperies, 1624, where time carries on its back a "'load of vanity, this pedlar's pack, this trunk of trash and Romish trumperies, deluding shows, infernal forgeries.'"² Milton has a similar picture of the heritage

¹Troilus and Cressida, III, iii, 145-147, The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. Hardin Craig (New York: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1951). All Shakespeare quotations in this study are from this edition.

²Chew, op. cit., p. 108.

of Rome:

Whatsoever time or the heedless hand of blind
 chance, hath drawne from of old to this
 present, in her huge dragnet, whether Fish,
 or Sea-weed, Shells, or Shrubbs, unpickt,
 unchosen, those are the Fathers.¹

Milton may have got his linking of time and chance from the old complex of Fortune-Occasion-Time, but there is a biblical analogy too. In Ecclesiastes 9:11, it is said that nothing favors men, but "time and chance happeneth to them all." The two are linked together as a singular force, not as two separate entities. The singular verb shows their singular nature.² The figure of time in Milton has many traditional aspects. It is like the foul and mis-shapen monster, but its role in the world is also to preserve the good. In these views Milton has much company and background. Like other writers of the Renaissance though, Milton does not have a single view of time. More will be shown later.

Shakespeare has numerous ways of treating time: he defames, challenges, and promises to overcome it. He has a kind of relativity: time ambles with some, trots, gallops, and stands still for others.³ "Let him have time

¹"Of-Prelaticall Episcopacy," Works III, pt. I, 91.

²George Curme points out that the translators of the King James version used th throughout as the verb ending for the third person singular. Syntax (New York: D. C. Heath and Company, 1931), p. 53.

³As You Like It, III, ii, 326.

to mark how slow time goes / In time of sorrow, and how
 swift and short / His time of folly and his time of
 sport."¹ Milton has relativity too. In a letter to
 Peter Heimbach he recognizes that time does not always have
 the same measure, and that longing for a particular thing
 may cause one to misreckon time.²

Time is a main theme in Shakespeare's sonnets,
 where it is mentioned seventy-eight times.³ One analysis
 of Sonnet V shows how Shakespeare creates the effect of
 time's passage through meter and tense.

For never-resting time leads summer on
 To hideous winter and confounds him there.⁴

The present participle first suggests that the action is
 happening now, and this is reinforced by the present tense
 verbs. The line goes on smoothly to the indeterminate on
 which runs on into the next line in much the same way that
 one moment of time runs into the next. The first line is
 like the movement of time falling and pushing onward, and
 its ending suggests the run-on movement.⁵

Shakespeare probably knows best the infinite

¹The Rape of Lucrece, ll. 99-992.

²Familiar Letters, Works XII, 83.

³Newman, op. cit., p. 307.

⁴"Sonnet V," p. 472.

⁵Newman, op. cit., p. 328.

ways that man thinks of and experiences time. The Rape of Lucrece shows many of these ways: time is a monster, a revealer, a healer; it calms contending kings and brings truth to light; during periods of grief time passes with agonizing slowness. Both the Winter's Tale and King Lear seem to be a working out of the motto Veritas filia Temporis: "Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides." Man can conquer time through poetry, and many of the sonnets provide familiar examples. In the main, Shakespeare emphasizes the destructive aspect of time, but he also shows that time can be overcome. He differs from Milton in that he only says so and does not use anything to illustrate his meaning, as Milton uses the mythic device in Paradise Lost.

CHAPTER III

TIME IN THE MINOR POEMS AND PARADISE LOST

If Shakespeare thought of time chiefly as a destroyer, he held a popular belief. The new science and conflicts in belief mixed with the idea that the world would live only six thousand years and caused apprehension when men realized that there had already been two thousand years of nature, two thousand of Mosaic law, and almost two thousand years of Christian dispensation.¹ John Lightfoot's computation that the world had been created at 9:00 a.m., October 23, 4004 B.C. could give firm ground to speculation concerning the world's age and imminent decay.² Pessimism, sceptical and conflicting philosophies, belief in a dying world ran through the minds of men. Donne thought three-quarters of the last hour had struck. Spenser, Shakespeare, Browne, Donne, and many others were appalled by the phantom.³

¹Douglas Bush, op. cit., p. 218.

²George Whiting, Milton and This Pendant World (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), p. 175.

³Bush, op. cit., p. 218.

One of the popular controversies of the period was whether the world was actually in a state of decay or not. Never one to refrain from controversy, Milton got into this one too. He takes a view contrary to that expressed in Donne's Anniversaries and Browne's Urn Burial and shows the influence of the Protestant belief in progress.¹ The theory of world decay was a medieval legacy to the Renaissance. Godfrey Goodman in 1616 published The Fall of Man, or the Corruption of Nature in which he said that the effect of the Fall extended to nature, and that nature was decaying because of the curse. In 1627 George Hakewill in Apologie spoke against the decay theory because he thought it irreligious.² In the year following, Milton wrote Naturam non Pati Senium which follows Hakewill's reasoning. The decay theory had been fostered by the belief that the sun sank a few degrees lower than it did when Ptolemy made astronomical measurements. Naturam non Pati Senium hits this argument forcibly.³ Because he was only nineteen when he wrote this poem, most critics have said that it represents youthful optimism that the world did not decay, and therefore is not a reliable guide to Milton's thinking.

¹E. M. W. Tillyard, Milton (London: Chatto and Windus, 1946), p. 26.

²Victor Harris, All Coherence Gone (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 1-5.

³Merritt G. Hughes, (ed.) Paradise Regained, The Minor Poems and Samson Agonistes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1937) pp. xxix-xxx.

Joseph M. Bryant has said that Milton's political theory worked on the idea of degeneration, but not his cosmology. The reference in Paradise Lost IX, 44, about an "age too late" possibly having damped his wing, is rhetoric, not fear. There is no mention of decay in the historical survey of the world at the end of Paradise Lost.¹ Thus it would seem that the early poem, if not a guide to Milton's later thinking, is at least in accord with it.

Milton asks first if Nature will become barren. "Shall the loathsome lapse of time and the neverending hunger of the years and squalor, and mouldy decay harry the stars?" He gives prediction of what can happen -- the heavens might fall, Phoebus might plunge down like Phaethon, mountains could be hurled downward if time were given its wonted way. In answer Milton thunders no, that God thought for all things when he created, and bid everything to keep its way without change. Saturn has not slowed down, and Mars is just as fiery as of old. Phoebus still warms with the same vigor, nor has the earth lost strength. He affirms that the "righteous series of all things will go on into endless time, until the final fires shall lay waste the ... universe...."²

Two lines in the poem present a kind of crux:

¹Joseph A. Bryant, Jr., "Milton's Views on Universal and Civic Decay," SAMLA Studies in Milton (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1953) pp. 1-5.

²Naturam non Pati Senium, Works I, 261-267.

"An & insatiabile Tempus / Esuriet Caelum, rapietque in viscera patrem?" Time has been shown as the devourer of all that he creates, but here, Milton is asking if time can destroy his father, his own creator. Milton takes the old image and changes it for his own purposes. Edmund Reiss says that the poem speaks of "time as destroying the world and devouring its own father," and that the usual explanation of this is that Milton confused Cronus with Chronos. Reiss goes on to point out that it would have been unlikely for Milton as a student of myth to fall into this confusion, and then he goes on to explain what Milton does mean: the answer can be found in Milton's idea that all things are of God; hence time couldn't destroy the world because that would be destroying the matter of God.¹ This argument is based on an incorrect interpretation of the lines. The poem does not speak of time's devouring its father, it asks if it can, with the implied (later explicitly stated) answer that it cannot. Milton asks in the preceding lines if stars are going to be vexed by age and years. Then, in the lines in question, he asks "Shall insatiable Time devour the skies, and whirl his own sire into his vitals?" It seems here that Milton is not thinking anything about when time was created -- prior to the six days or whenever. Rather he is here using the Platonic identification of time and

¹Edmund Reiss, "An Instance of Milton's Use of Time," MLN, LXXII (June, 1957), 410-411.

the heavenly bodies. When the stars move, that is time, and in this way the heavens are the father of time. The question is asked to show the impossibility of time's devouring what makes it. Thus, nature is not subject to decay. M. M. Mahood says that in the "Prolusion VII" on the other hand, Milton accepts for a moment the idea that the world was dying so that he can use it against his opponents.¹ Sir Thomas Browne was some years later to phrase the theme of the opposition:

And therefore restlesse inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations seemes a vanity almost out of date, and a superannuated peece of folly We whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off for such imaginations.²

Milton says that it may be futile to produce books and noble monuments of learning when the world is about to burn up; he does not deny it. But he then says that an eternal life will never let the memory of those deeds die, and consequently we should try even harder to merit the praise which we will be able to hear and to receive the gift of wisdom in the eternal life. Still he does not really accept the idea of decay, only the idea of the end of the world.³

¹M. M. Mahood, Poetry and Humanism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 231.

²Sir Thomas Browne, Hydriotaphia, The Works of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Faber & Gwyer Limited, 1929) IV, 45.

³"Prolusion VII," Works XII, 279-280.

Milton's view of time is generally different from that view which deplored time. For him, it is seldom a destroyer; it is usually something else. It may be, for instance, an instrument of God's beneficence, a period granted for improvement, as in "time may come when men / With Angels may participate...Improv'd by tract of time."¹ The background of "tract of time" is interesting. The phrase is Spenser's, from the "May Eclogue," and Milton quotes it in Animadversions.

'But tract of time, and long prosperity
 Lulled the Shepherds in such security
 Some gan gape for greedy governance.'²

Use of the phrase in Paradise Lost and in the prose passage indicates that Milton has the traditionally complex Renaissance concept of time. Even the same phrase is used to imply different kinds of time, the way of God and the way of the world with time. Extent of time may improve the lot of the fallen angels as well as that of man. That "Our Supream Foe in time may much remit / His anger" is the hope of Belial, and he believes that the mere passage of time may help them to become accustomed to their torments.³ Related to this notion of time as an instrument of God is

¹Paradise Lost V, 493-498.

²Animadversions, Works III, 166.

³Paradise Lost II, 210-211.

the idea that it offers a period of trial. In Paradise Regained, Christ says, "I endure the time, till which expired, / Thou hast permission on me."¹ Abdiel tells the rebel host to appease God "While Pardon may be found in time besought."² Time can give opportunity for beneficence and redemption. M. M. Mahood says that books XI and XII show the reinstatement of man to God's purpose through time.³

In one of Milton's short poems which deals specifically with time, several attitudes can be found. Time is first described with the traditional iconography: "How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth, / Stol'n on his wing my three and twentieth year !" Here is the typical winged figure of fleeting time, and in the usual way, unfavorable words describe time: "subtle thief", though not a worn image, nevertheless expresses an old attitude, hatred of time which takes life and possessions. Halfway through the poem the attitude toward time begins to change, with the phrase "timely-happy spirits", with its multiple meanings of implied envy at those spirits' good fortune, the idea that the time is right for them, and that they are ready for time. Time has changed from being a villain, a thief. It is now more neutral, shading toward good,

¹Paradise Regained IV, 174-175.

²Paradise Lost V, 844.

³Mahood, op. cit., p. 186.

and in the next lines, it does become good.

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.¹

What accounts for the metamorphosis of time from a sneak thief to an instrument of Heaven? One reason for the change appears in the first line -- "the subtle thief of youth." Youth is relatively unimportant, according to Milton's scheme of life. He planned to be a great poet, but knew that preparation would be long, and that only at manhood would he be ready to begin making his contribution. For example, consider his despair in "When I consider how my light is spent, / Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide," written at the age of forty-two,² as evidence that he knew adulthood would be his time for contribution; hence he mourns any impairment of his ability. In addition, after the initial remarks on the sly character of time, Milton recognizes it as a period given to man so that he may become worthy of God's grace. Just as the sonnet on his blindness begins by railing against a misfortune

¹"How Soon Hath Time..." Works I, 60.

²On November 19, 1651, Milton signed Christopher Arnold's album with a reference to II Corinthians 12:9, "'my strength is made perfect in weakness'" which indicates that he was reconciled to the loss of his sight. The words "is spent, ere half my days" are probably based on his life expectancy of the age which his father reached, eighty-four. W. R. Parker, "The Dates of Milton's Sonnets on Blindness," PMLA, LXXIII (1958), 198-199.

and ends by accepting the will of God, so does this sonnet begin with recrimination and end with recognition of God's grace and the opportunity furnished by time for man to make the best of himself.

The other short poem which presents the traditional iconography of time is "On Time." Again time is given wings: "Fly envious Time," and is derided in conventional terms. Time is voracious, as of old, and Milton tells it to "glut thy self with what thy womb devours," in an image appropriate to the Saturn figure.¹ But like Shakespeare's devouring time, this figure of time too can only ravine what is valueless.² True values will survive, and time will only entomb what is bad. But unlike Shakespeare, Milton emphasizes the worthlessness of what time takes rather than the sad fact of time's theft.

Milton uses a common interpretation when he says that time will be swallowed up in eternity.

For when as each thing bad thou has entomb'd
And, last of all they greedy self consum'd,
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
Attir'd with Stars, we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee O Time.³

¹"On Time," Works I, 25.

²Cleanth Brooks and John Edward Hardy, "On Time," Poems of Mr. John Milton (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1951), p. 112. An Italian admirer compliments Milton in comparable terms: "Exalted worth eternal cannot fall prey to the tooth of Time!" Antonio Francini, "Ode to John Milton," Works I, 159.

³"On Time," Works I, 26.

Brooks and Hardy explain the association of death and time in the last line as having already been made in line six with "Mortal dross" and later the mention of Eternity. Then they say "Chance must be shut out from the world of Eternity because Eternity is a realm of perfectly harmonious order."¹ There is more tradition that can be used to explain the association though: the biblical linking of time and chance, and the old fusion of Time-Fortune-Occasion.

Because the poem was written to be set on a clock, it is instructive to contrast a contemporary poem which was also inspired by a time piece. William Strode takes the opportunity to plead the cause of carpe diem,² but as he did once before in the "Fifth Elegy," Milton does not follow the trend and ask for full enjoyment of the present. He is as always interested in the future with the implied requirement of right living for the present. Unlike many of his Renaissance predecessors, Milton was not haunted by time.³

Both of Milton's poems on the subject of time have

¹Brooks and Hardy, op. cit., p. 113.

²William Strode, "On a Gentlewoman's Watch That Wanted a Key," The Poetical Works of William Strode, ed. Bertram Dobell (London: Bertram Dobell, 1907), pp. 36-37.

³E. E. Stoll says that time was a spectre for Milton only once, and in that passage which describes night as the eldest of things (P.L. II, 962), time is a shadow, but more of an added dimension. E. E. Stoll, "Time and Space in Milton," From Shakespeare to Joyce (New York: Doubleday, 1946), p. 416.

two parts: "How Soon Hath Time" first decries time as a thief and then praises it as an agent of Heaven; "On Time" gives sections on time and eternity. Writing of the latter poem, Tillyard comments on the appropriate slow rhythm of the first section which is concerned with time. Lines 1-8 are slow and slow down even more, like the "leaden-stepping hours," but in the second section, which is concerned with eternity, the rhythm swells and expands to the final Alexandrine,¹ suggesting a difference between a time contracted between a beginning and an end, and an eternity which has "Neither beginning nor end," as Milton defines it in Christian Doctrine.² Milton's concept of time reflects his religious ideas.

Poetically, Milton's most explicit acceptance of the Aristotelian definition of time as the number of motion occurs in the second poem on the university carrier. Milton pays a light tribute to the man who was in motion all his life:

Time numbers motion, yet (without a crime
'Gainst old truth) motion number'd out his time:
And like an Engin mov'd with wheel and waight,
His principles being ceast, he ended strait.³

The Aristotelian statement here is used as the springboard for wit in a poem full of puns: "Ease was his chief

¹Tillyard, op. cit., p. 63.

²Christian Doctrine, Works XIV; 43.

³"On the University Carrier," Works I, 33.

disease," "He died for heaviness that his Cart went light," and so forth. Aristotle is only half-denied in a playful spirit, and the definition provides the basic metaphor for the poem. There are many turns on the idea of time:

"Meerly to drive the time away he sickn'd," "His leasure told him that his time was com," the comparison of the carrier to a clock and to the moving spheres of the sky. All these reference work together to show a difference between human time which must end and eternity: "But had his doings lasted as they were, / Had been an immortal Carrier," but all that remains of Hobson is this super-scription. On the whole, however, there is not much real depth in the idea of time in this poem.

In one of his greater poems, though, the philosophic background unites with the religious interpretation to produce an effect at once philosophical and esthetic. "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" illustrates this. The time, according to Milton, is December 25, 1620; but his poetic time, or real time, is the hour just before the beginning of the Christian age, in the land of palms and snow. Milton reconciles the temporal conflict by stressing the everlasting effect of the Incarnation.¹ The shepherds hear the song of the angels, then the music of the spheres, and then,

¹Don Cameron Allen, The Harmonious Vision (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1954), p. 26.

....if such Holy Song
 Enwrap our fancy long,
 Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold....¹

After reference to the redemption and final Judgement and the imprisonment of the pagan gods, the poem closes with the guardian angels, thus describing a timeless event which belongs to the present as well as the past.²

The "Nativity Ode" is a baroque lyric which uses time as a means of structure. In the Introduction, Christ's birth is spoken of as in the past; in the third Stanza Christ is the Infant God; the magi journey in the present tense. The beginning of the Hymn is past, then it shifts to present, and so on, even up to a kind of future:³

I

It was the Winter wilde,
 While the Heav'n-born childe,
 All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies:
 Nature in awe to him
 Had doff't her gawdy trim,
 With her great Master so to sympathize:
 It was no season then for her
 To wanton with the Sun, her lusty Paramour.

II

Only with speeches fair
 She woo's the gentle Air....

¹"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," ll. 133-135.

²Kenneth Muir, John Milton (London: Longmans Green and Company, 1955), pp. 26-27.

³Lowry Nelson, Jr., "Gongora and Milton: Toward a Definition of the Baroque," Comparative Literature, VI 1954, 54-58.

III

But he her fears to cease,
 Sent down the meek-ey'd Peace,
 ...She crown'd with Olive green, came softly sliding
 . . . strikes . . . universal peace through Sea and Land.¹

The stars stand fixed in the present tense, but they "will not take their flight," and they "did glow." The tenses shift less frequently as the angels draw near. In stanzas 12-17 we move back to the past and forward to the future, and there is almost a literal encirclement: "Time will run back." From 12-15 the tenses leap and try the identification of the two times, the Christ of the past, the Christ was, and the Christ of the present, who is yet a babe; but he must grow up and suffer what he has already. The paradox is familiar in the phrase "sinners crucify Christ," and in the poem, the paradox is artistically accomplished through the tense variations. The final judgment is seen:²

XVI

The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep,

XVII

With such a horrid clang
 As on mount Sinai rang
 While the red fire, and smouldring clouds out brake:
 The aged Earth agast
 With terrour of that blast,
 Shall from the surface to the center shake;
 When at the worlds last session,
 The dreadful Judge in middle Air shall spread his throne.

¹"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," ll. 29-52.
 Italics mine.

²Nelson, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

XVIII

And then at last our bliss
 Full and perfect is,
 But now begins; for from this happy day
 Th'old Dragon under ground
 In straiter limits bound,
 Not half so far casts his usurped sway....¹

"But now begins" is present, and the present tense takes over. The rout of the pagan gods is described chiefly in the present tense, in terms of continuous movement, and is concluded by an image of the rising sun. The poem's last tense is an everlasting present: "Bright-harvest Angels sit in order serviceable." We are circled by both time and the angels met at the beginning.² The meaning is linked to the tenses, and "Tense not only reflects or produces action, it also contributes to the poetical 'proof' of doctrine." A single action can recur, as each Christmas is a rebirth of Christ, and this paradox provides a way of conquering time. The use of the mythical instant to provide a past and present that never die is at the heart of Paradise Lost, too. This use of time accords with the Christian view of time bounded at both ends, with the possibility of a simultaneous present, at least in the mind of God. The poet manages time more as an element of poetic structure than as part of empirical chronology.³

¹"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," ll. 156-170.

²Muir, op. cit., p. 27.

³Nelson, op. cit., p. 60-63.

Milton's view of Christ can be illuminated further by examination of Crashaw's hymn on the same subject; it has a somewhat similar use of tenses, though not as varied. The poem is set in the past--the shepherds are to tell the sun what has happened while he delayed his rising. Some of the narrative is in the present tense, but most of it is surrounded by the past:

Poor world, said I, what wilt thou do
 To entertain this starry stranger?
 Is this the best thou canst bestow....¹

The greatest number of present tenses refers directly to The Babe, and this surrounding of the present tense by a past and future gives a suggestion of the all-inclusive quality of eternity, which is elaborated in the next to last stanza, where Christ the "bright dawn of our eternal day," is the one who encompasses time.

Welcome, all wonders in one sight!
 Eternity shut in a span,
 Summer in winter, day in night,
 Heaven in earth, and God in man.
 Great little one, whose all-embracing birth
 Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heav'n to earth.²

All the seasons and measures of time are encompassed in the one night, a night which gives hope in the present tense verbs lifts and stoops with their suggestion of recurrence as well as simultaneity.

¹Richard Crashaw, "In the holy Nativity of our Lord God," Poetry of the English Renaissance, op. cit., p. 769.

²Ibid., p. 770.

Like Crashaw's "eternity shut in a span" is Milton's idea that the role of Christ is to create a perpetual peace. Milton's poem celebrates the incarnation and a peace that is in and yet not within created time. Time is halted-- "This is the morn"--yet it is all Christmases. We move from one time to another, from history, through poetry and ritual. Moving around thus in time gives the metaphors timelessness,

even for Milton's most historical figures like the roll of silenced false gods. The actual stopping of Time, which he will presently use to add a philosophical force to his figure of Natura creata facing her creator, is to occur at the moment just before the sun (or the Sun) arises, when 'all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright.'¹

As nature in awe wants to do something different, so does the sun, and it stops.²

In stanza XVI, not yet answers nature's idea that now is the time of restored harmony ("Nature that heard such sound / Beneath the hollow round.../ Now was almost won / To think her part was done...), and human nature's idea that Time is running backward to the age of gold and the purity of the first creation. Still describing the golden age Milton has time run forward.³

¹Tuve, op. cit., pp. 37-39, 45.

²The sun as the maker of time is an old philosophical idea--the motion of the planets as the maker of man's time and the measure of time. Milton makes use of the concept in several poems. In Comus, for example, Comus and his crew imitate the movements of the starry quire in their dancing which makes time pass. Tuve, op. cit., p. 14.

³Tuve, op. cit., pp. 58-60.

Thus the ode on a specific event in time is pervaded by negations and extensions of time. The same kind of thing occurs in Paradise Regained, and again a unique event is given timelessness through manipulation of time.

Milton's poems show how he engages in that most significant of human quests, the effort to find a timeless dimension in experience, art, and self. Myths suggest, in their secular setting, a timeless perspective on the human situation, and give a feeling of continuity and identification with mankind in general.¹ In his treatment of one of the universal myths, Milton conveys both the timeless perspective and the feeling of continuity with general mankind. Myths and rituals are reactualizations of the cosmogonic act, and the coincidence of the mythical instant and the celebrant's present moment is based on abolition of profane time and the constant regeneration of the world.² If then a ritual represents a desire to abolish time, to return to the original moment of creation, how much more a poem which spends three books lovingly recreating each facet of creation represents a desire, or if not a conscious desire of, at any rate the actual achievement of an abolition of time.

If myth and ritual annul time, Milton has an advantage to begin with by his choice of subject for Paradise

¹Meyerhoff, op. cit., p. 80.

²Eliade, op. cit., p. 35.

Lost, but he enhances this advantage by his poetic technique. Milton creates the illusion of the past being still present by dislocating time sequence.¹ All the themes of the poem - love, creation, battle, fall, praise, and their opposites - are repeated in Heaven, Hell, Eden, "in and out of time." The themes come together for the subject, the "relation between God and man throughout time and eternity."² In Paradise Lost Milton uses the terms and measures of mortal time to show its ultimate valuelessness from the perspective of God's time.

Before an examination of the chronological scheme of the poem may be undertaken, it will first be necessary to examine Milton's ideas on creation: how long it took, when time was created, and the idea of time in eternity. To begin with the beginning, let us consider God. What did God do before the creation of the world? Agreeing with Augustine, Milton says it would be folly to ask. Quoting I Corinthians 2:7 as evidence that God ordained a hidden mystery before the world,³ Milton would perhaps consider this an area to "Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid." God is everlasting or eternal. Time is not generally attributed to him. Everlastingness is "eternal duration,

¹W. B. C. Watkins, An Anatomy of Milton's Verse (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), p. 44.

²Joseph H. Summers, "The Voice of the Redeemer in Paradise Lost," PMLA, LXX (1955), 1083.

³Christian Doctrine, Works XV, 3.

in Greek aiōn, as though...ever existing."¹ Considering eternity as an attribute of God, Milton lists several Old Testament passages from which he deduces that God is truly eternal, that is, without beginning or end: Job 36:26 "'neither can the number of his years be searched out'" and Psalms 102:27 "'but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.'" He finds the New Testament clearer because there the word for eternal means "to exist for ever," but all Scriptural words used for eternity often mean only antiquity, as in Job 20:4 "'knowest thou not this of old' or 'from eternity, since man was placed on the earth?'" Thus Milton concludes that there is no proper word for eternity in the Hebrew language,² and the idea is expressed through comparison and deduction.³ God is eternal, and it is unbelievable that he would have spent eternity in decreeing what would be created in six days, a creation that after limping along through various kinds of govern-

¹Art of Logic, Works XI, 93-95.

²An interesting feature of the Hebrew language is pointed out by Vendryes in Language: "'in Semitic as in Indo-European it is expression of duration of time that dominates, and not the kind of time.'" Hebrew tenses do not give time, but stages of development. What matters is the interaction of living ideas and the speaker. S. G. F. Brandon, Time and Mankind (New York: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1951), p. 21. Of Milton's knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, George N. Conklin says it was that of a scholar, though not a philologist, but Milton was a "first rate student of Scripture and a competent Biblical critic." Biblical Criticism and Heresy In Milton (New York: King's Crown Press, 1949), pp. 40, 85.

³Christian Doctrine, Works XIV, 45-47.

ments for some few thousand years, would ultimately be received into an immutable state with himself or else be utterly rejected from him.¹

The revolt took place before the creation of the world.² The angels were made before the creation. The argument to the first book of Paradise Lost, as well as Christian Doctrine, mentions this. Satan tells his cohorts of a new world yet to be created,³ for many ancient Fathers believed the angels existed long before visible creation. "Certainly there is no sufficient foundation for the common opinion, that motion and time (which is the measure of motion) could not, according to the ratio of priority and subsequence, have existed before this world was made."⁴ So time does exist in eternity:

(For time, though in Eternitie, appli'd
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future).....⁵

The next question to be answered is, when was time created?

¹Christian Doctrine, Works XV, 3-5.

²This is a theological belief, but Merritt Hughes gives Milton an additional reason for favoring the tradition that the revolt took place before rather than after creation, because then Satan could go through Chaos to look for the earth. Paradise Lost (New York: Odyssey Press, Inc., 1935), p. 33n.

³Robert H. West, Milton and the Angels (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1959, p. 125. See also Williams, op. cit., pp. 151-164.

⁴Christian Doctrine, Works XV, 35.

⁵Paradise Lost V, 580-582.

It would seem that the answer is connected to Aristotle's definition of time as the number of motion. Aristotle says that there is an inseparable connection between motion and change. Milton says that God is immutable. If God is immutable, there would be no change, or motion, or time. Creation took place at a moment in time,¹ and it would seem that at the moment God created anything he created the kind of time that Milton describes in Paradise Lost:
 "Time, Though in Eternitie, appli'd / To motion, measures all things durable / By past, present, and future." Time was created before the world. Raphael even describes the time in heaven to Adam:

Eev'ning now approach'd
 (For wee have also our Eev'ning and our Morn,
 Wee ours for change delectable, not need).²

Light and dark make "grateful vicissitude" like night and day in heaven.

Spenser's influence on Milton has been noted by many, and Grant McColley shows how stanzas four, eight, ten and twelve of the "Hymne of Heavenly Love" parallel Books V, 577-707 and IV, 43-51 of Paradise Lost. There is much similarity, and both of the poems raise the problem of time. Spenser describes the period before creation:

Before this worlds great frame, in which al things
 Are now containd, found any being place

¹Christian Doctrine, Works XV, 19.

²Paradise Lost V, 627-629.

Ere flitting Time could wag his eyas wings

 That high eternall powre
 of it selfe begot
 Like to it selfe his eldest sonne and heire,

 With him he raignd, before all time prescribed.

After the creation of the Holy Spirit, the angels were created, and this is where Spenser and Milton begin to differ:

Both day and night is unto them all one.
 For he his beames doth still to them extend,
 That darknesse there appeareth never none,
 Ne hath their day, ne hath their blisse an end,
 But there their termelesse time in pleasure spend...¹

Spenser's heaven does not have night and day like Milton's. The "termelesse time" of Spenser's angels is the old medieval aevum, and time as it is known commonly seems to have been introduced with the revolt of the angels. Milton's time in heaven is like that old scholastic dimension of aeviternity, that which is between time and eternity and participates in both. The angels, according to Aquinas, have unchangeable being, but can change as regards understanding, action and place. Milton's angels have endless existence though they were created in time: for one to die would destroy the idea of eternal wrath and grace.²

Grateful vicissitude is the mark of time division in heaven, but earth has a different measure:

¹"An Hymne of Heavenly Love," ll. 22-75.

²West, op. cit., p. 107.

Again th' Almighty spake: Let there be Lights
 High in th' expanse of Heaven to divide
 The Day from Night; and let them be for Signes,
 For Seasons, and for Days, and circling years.¹

The stars have three tasks - to give light to the earth, mark time, and divide day from night.² Harris Fletcher traces Milton's interest in time back to his early interest in astronomy, and gives as substantiation of his remark a list of terms taken from the Phaenomena, a treatise in Greek on astronomy by Geminus, a first century B. C. Rhodian, which Milton may have used in teaching his schoolboys. Prominent in the list are elements that indicate time measurement, such as Aequinoctialis, Circle, Colure, Cycle, Planets seven, zodiac, and Seasons.³ The poem is of course saturated with astronomical references, as Svendsen has pointed out, and these same terms recur frequently.

Even though earth has its stars to measure time, there nevertheless was time before the creation of the world, according to Milton. Like the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo, which could give Judaism the idea of eschatological time (if there were an absolute beginning, there could be an end),⁴ the doctrine that time began with the

¹Paradise Lost VII, 339-342.

²Svendsen, op. cit., p. 76.

³Harris Fletcher, The Intellectual Development of John Milton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956) I, 374.

⁴Gerardus Van der Leeuw, "Primordial Time and Final Time," Man and Time, op. cit., p. 346.

world became orthodox.¹ But Milton disagrees with them both. Creation is from God, and time existed before the world.

There are inconsistencies in the poem: in VII 244, Milton calls Light "first of things"; in II 962, Night is "eldest of things." Uriel at the end of Book III seems to describe a kind of instantaneous creation; Raphael later tells Adam about the six days of creation.² These and other inconsistencies are the reason that it is impossible to work out a systematic and accurate time scheme for the poem. But the inconsistencies reveal something in themselves - the difference between mortal and divine time. Therefore it is now necessary to examine the action of the poem in order to find these variations.

Grant McColley has worked out a time scheme of thirty-one days:

(1) Exaltation of Christ: Satan deserted at midnight.
 (2-4) Battle in heaven. (5-13) Satan and his host dropped into chaos and hell. (14-22) Satan and his angels lay stunned on the fiery lake. (18) God began the six days of creation. (23) Sixth day of Creation: Creation of Adam and Eve; their marriage. Council in hell; Satan came to Paradise. Second

¹Williams, op. cit., p. 159.

²Harry F. Robins, "The Crystalline Sphere and the 'Waters Above' in Paradise Lost," PMLA, LXIX (1954), 909, points out that Raphael's speech is an echo of Uriel's description of instantaneous creation. The poem does seem to have this notion of immediate creation, though Christian Doctrine says nothing of it. See Maurice Kelley, This Great Argument (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 127.

Exaltation of Christ, and revelation of the Incarnation; first justification of God. Satan attempted, unsuccessfully, to seduce the sleeping Eve. (24) Raphael warned Adam of his enemy, and described such past events as the rebellion in heaven and the creation of the world. (30) The temptation and fall; coming of Sin, Death, inclement weather, discord, and strife. (31) Michael expelled Adam and Eve from Paradise, having first revealed future events and promised Adam the Messiah.¹

This chronology is wrong, as the following pages will show.

To work out a time scheme for Paradise Lost, one may disrupt the epic order and arrange events in chronological sequence, the order in which Allan Gilbert thinks Milton wrote the poem.²

The earliest chronological scene is in Heaven, the day of the Son's exaltation. That night Satan led the rebels away to the north and a three day battle followed. After Satan's forces were pushed out of heaven, "Nine days they fell," and "Nine times the space that measures day and night to mortal men, he with his horrid crew lay vanquish't, rolling in the fiery gulf." Sometime while the angels are falling or rolling in torment, God speaks of creating the world, and

¹Grant McColley, Paradise Lost. An Account of Its Growth and Major Origins, with a Discussion of Milton's Use of Sources and Literary Patterns (Chicago: Packard and Company, 1940), pp. 16-17.

²Allan H. Gilbert, On The Composition of Paradise Lost (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947).

to what he spake
 His word, the filial Godhead, gave effect.
 Immediate are the Acts of God, more swift
 Than time or motion....¹

Later Raphael describes the creation as having taken six days after which God rested on the Sabbath. The six days of creation took place while the fallen angels were still in hell. During that time Raphael had been sent forth to spy, and he had found the gates "barricado'd strong." What did emerge from behind the gates, however, was noise of loud lament and furious rage which corresponded with the noise preceding the great consult.

On the sixth day, man was created. According to the events which take place in the lives of Adam and Eve, there were at least four days in the Garden: the day of creation, the day of Raphael's visit, the day of the fall, and the day of expulsion from Eden. But we must consider Satan's activities. Satan left Hell, and Gilbert gives him a journey of nine days upward through Chaos, basing his assumption on the fact that the natural motion of spirits is upward and thus it certainly would not have taken Satan longer to rise than to fall; however, Satan fell into a vacuum and would still have been falling had it not been for a wind of ill chance which lifted him up. There is no indication as to how long he fell. Moreover, loss of some of his original lustre may have slowed him too.

¹Paradise Lost VII, 174-177.

Satan landed on earth at night, lost, "Till at last a gleam of dawning light turn'd thitherward in haste His travell'd steps." He talked to Uriel at noon, went on into Eden, and was discovered in the middle of the night at the ear of Eve by Ithuriel and Zephon. After talking with Gabriel, Satan "fled murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night." He circled the earth the space of seven continued nights, returned to the garden on the eighth night and went into the body of the serpent.

Meanwhile, time in the Garden has passed smoothly for Adam and Eve. Eve awakes and tells Adam her dream, which seems to have occurred the night of the first day, but Eve says she dreamed, "not as I oft am wont, of thee... but of offence and trouble." Earlier in the poem she has said, "That day I oft remember, when from sleep I first awaked, and found myself reposed under a shade." So the assumption of only four days will not work. We have here the suggestion of the timelessness of the mythic situation. The number of days can be accurately counted, however, from the day that Eve tells her dream. That day Raphael comes to warn the pair, the next is the day of the fall, and on the third and last day of the poem Michael leads Adam and Eve from the garden.

Now, notice the different kinds of time: Satan circled the world for seven continued nights, having started his globe circling the night that he inspired

Eve's dream. We have seven days for Satan, one and a half for Adam and Eve, because Satan reappears in Eden the day after Eve's narration of her dream, according to Eden chronology.

This discrepancy is similar to that presented in Sin's account of her creation, an account which differs from Raphael's report on the war in Heaven.

Out of thy head I sprung; amazement seisd
 All th'Host of Heaven; back they recoiled affraid
 At first, and call'd me Sin, and for a Sign
 Portentous held me; but familiar grown,
 I pleas'd, and with attractive graces won
 The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft
 Thy self in me thy perfect image viewing
 Becam'st enamour'd, and such joy thou took'st
 With me in secret, that my womb conceiv'd
 A growing burden. Mean while war arose,
 And fields were fought in Heav'n.¹

Sin describes the conspiracy as being a gradual development. She was created, Death was conceived, and meanwhile war arose. It is generally thought that Sin was the product of Satan's first rebellious thought. But Raphael says that on the day the Father honored the Son and proclaimed him Messiah King, "Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour," Satan, angry and jealous, wakened his companions and led them to the north. These inconsistencies have been erroneously explained as the results of Milton's absorption in his allegories,² or the inconsistencies can be dispensed with, as Addison does, saying "a great part of Milton's

¹Paradise Lost II, 758-768.

²Gilbert, op. cit., pp. 136-150.

story was transacted in regions that lie out of the reach of the sun and the sphere of the day," so the reader cannot be gratified with a calculation of the days covered.¹

But both these explanations are unsatisfactory and careless. At the heart of the answer to the inconsistencies is immateriality, not of purpose, but immateriality of substance.

One may work through Paradise Lost, collecting scattered references to the number of days that specific events take, numbers which Milton carefully translates into terms comprehensible to men's minds, which do not measure time in the same way that the divine mind does, and the reader will observe that the most striking fact about the time sequence is the number of inconsistencies. One cannot chart an exact number of days in the poem because of such differences as that seen in comparing Satan's seven days to Adam and Eve's one and a half. There is a difference between the way time is measured in the Garden and in the life of Satan.

If one accepts the terms that Milton uses to indicate the passage of time to enable man to understand it, then it would appear that he is using time as measured by man, or human time, as a standard or point of reference. Measured by mortal time, demonic time seems to pass at a different pace, as does the time of God. Throughout the poem, mortal

¹ Addison, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

time is the basis for comparison: God's acts are more swift than time or motion, but they are described in such a way that man can understand. For example, Raphael tells the story of creation as having taken six days, but in the same speech he has just said that God's acts are immediate. In another instance, a difference can be seen between the number of days that Satan spends going around the earth while a lesser number of days pass in Eden. It seems then, that Milton is using a kind of reflector technique, in which he uses human time as a reflector to illuminate kinds of time unknown to man. Human time is used to explain heavenly time; Raphael says in his description of the war in heaven that two days have passed, as days are computed in heaven. The implication is that there is a difference between the way men and angels compute days. Milton uses the reflector technique to help his didactic purpose, because it is essential that as much as possible be understood of the divine nature, in order for men to benefit from a reading of his epic.

The idea of implying different kinds of time was not necessarily an invention of Milton's. He may, for example, have been using Bruno's idea: "Since motion appears different when regarded from different stars, there must, if it is to be taken as the measure of time, be as many times in the universe as there are stars."¹ Milton

¹Heath, op. cit., p. 84.

clearly states in Christian Doctrine that time is the measure of motion, and the three places of the poem, roughly comparable to different stars, have three different times. Milton does recognize the possibility of more worlds: Raphael tells Adam that he will see other suns and other moons, but that he should not be concerned with these other worlds.

The dialogue between the Father and Son at the beginning of Book III reflects one very important aspect of Milton's ideas about the kind of time appropriate to God. To describe the Father, Milton carefully chooses the present tense, although he gives a narrative set in the past. To describe God, the only tense proper would be the present, since past and future do not apply, as Milton said in the Art of Logic. Here is the poetic use of that precept:

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
 From the pure Empyrean where he sits
 High Thron'd above all highth, bent down his eye,
 His own works and their works at once to view:
 he then survey'd
 Hell and the Gulf between, and Satan there
 Him God beholding from his prospect high,¹
 Wherein past, present, future he beholds.¹

When he describes God directly, Milton uses the present tense: he sits, and he beholds past, present, and future. God is eternal; he does not participate in time. But Milton is telling a story of past events and so he can in

¹Paradise Lost III, 56-78.

narrative speak of the actions of God in the past tense. God is eternally present, but for man, some of his actions are past. Man has a different kind of time which is measured in terms of past, present, future. Milton's attention to tenses is not unique. Stephen Gilman has made some remarkable observations on the Poema del Cid and epic tenses in general. In that Spanish epic, tenses are most irregular and mixed, as in this quotation: "They loosed the reins; they think to go. / Near approaches the deadline for leaving the kingdom. / My Cid came to rest.... The loyal Cid is going out of his country....he passed through Alcobella." Gilman says this is not the haphazard work of a popular poet unconcerned with a "grammatical awareness of time and space." Tense usage in dialogue is regular, though not in the narrative. According to Gilman, in its stressing of the past, the epic has an equivalent stress on presentation of the events for present wonder and emulation. The past is meaningful to the present in that it is a myth re-created or relived in the present. Gilman finds the preterite used to describe the actions of the hero because it is a perfective tense; it represents concluded, "perfect" action, the heroic deed. This kind of tense usage is possible in the epic because it "lacked a point of view, a single perspective from which tenses could

be anchored in sequence."¹

Milton's epic does not have a single temporal point of view either. He refuses to locate the time of the poem at any one date. He presents his ideas in timelessness not only through his choice of myth, but in such ways as his frequent references to his own present time, and to a future for Adam and Eve. But the one thing unaffected by time is God. Even his decrees are unchangeable and eternal; throughout God's purpose is called eternal, and God asks Adam, "Seem I to thee sufficiently possest / Of happiness, or not? who am alone / From all Eternitie.....?"² Only God is eternal, without beginning or end.³

If God's eternity is unchanging, there is, however, change for Adam and Eve. For them Christ becomes the mediator between eternity and time. The final view of the human pair is between the past and future: their actions are past to the reader, but their future is promised to them. Adam and Eve move into the "sunset-dawn of human time." Arnold Stein finds Milton's technique a poetic

¹Stephen Gilman, "Time and Tense in Spanish Epic Poetry," Explorations, IV (February, 1955), 72-81. Anna Granville Hatcher has noted a mingling of tenses in the Roland without apparent regard for temporal distinction, but she found upon examination that the usage is purposeful. "Tense Usage in the Roland," SP, XXXIX (October, 1942), 597-624.

²Paradise Lost VIII, 404-406.

³Walter Clyde Curry, Milton's Ontology, Cosmogony, and Physics (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), p. 32.

representation of the concept of time in the Timaeus, the moving likeness of eternity. Milton achieves this by allusion, epic simile, imagery, and structural references which relate the foreground events to eternity.¹

Satan has no real understanding of time. In argument with Abdiel, he gives God no credit for creating the angels, and insists that they were self-begotten because "We know no time when we were not as now."² Satan in his deficiencies never gets beyond the idea of experienced time. He goes back to hell after the fall and tells his legions, "I am to bruise his heel; / His seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head."³ Satan doesn't understand what God's time is, but Adam is shown at the end of the poem what God's time is, and time becomes more than experience; it is a part of God's plan.

How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,
Measur'd this transient World, the Race of time,
Till time stand fixt: beyond is all abyss,
Eternitie, whose end no eye can reach.
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart.⁴

Adam and all men are thus instructed in the meaning of time.

Throughout his poetry, Milton is able constantly at will to achieve a kind of ever-present present, a

¹Arnold Stein, Answerable Style (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1953), pp. 128-131.

²Paradise Lost V, 859.

³Ibid., X, 498-499.

⁴Ibid., XII, 553-557.

simultaneous present, in which the past is in the present and the future is in the past. He creates the illusion of the past being still present by dislocating the time sequence and the cumulative effects and the energy of language.¹ This begins to sound like the concept of duration later formulated by Bergson, and it seems to be similar. It can be called duration, the fifth dimension, or other names. But it does seem to be a poetic technique to translate the idea into an effect. It is an effect which Milton describes in another context: a learned survey of history and man is the way to live "in every age as if alive, to be born as though a contemporary of time itself. Surely, when we have peered into the future for the glory of our name, this will be to extend and stretch life backward from the womb and wrest away from fate a kind of immortality in time past."²

Milton's concept of time pervades his work. The terms of time are used to reinforce his aesthetic statements of religious belief. The inconsistencies in the time schemes are used consciously to create the illusion of reality. The human mind can accept ideas of great magnitude when they are couched in terms with which it is familiar. Milton describes the acts of God "So told as earthly notion can receive," "Though to recount Almighty

¹Watkins, op. cit., p. 44.

²"Prolusion VII," Works XII, 267.

works What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice, Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?" Milton tries to make clear the nature of God to man by using terms familiar to man, and in his very use of these terms accomplishes a vagueness that suggests the infinitude and non-materiality of God, "the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal."¹

In Paradise Lost, "we move up and down in the wide territories of a universe fresh in time," but it is a universe that contains all of man's time surrounded by eternity and the result is a kind of timelessness. Hermes Trismegistus advised one to keep clear of the corporeal and rise above time to become eternal and to know God.² Milton uses time to rise above it, and this is how he does it.

¹Samuel T. Coleridge, The Statesman's Manual: Complete Works, ed. Shadd (New York, 1853), I, 437-438, quoted in Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1956), p. 178.

²Allen, op. cit., pp. xvii, 14.

CHAPTER IV

THE END OF TIME

Milton's shorter epic poem, Paradise Regained, has more references to a certain time, a time suitable and ordained for a special event than does the twelve-book narrative of man's fall.¹ These numerous references are bound up with the point of the poem: the right and proper amount of time has passed, the span necessary to bring about recovered Paradise, and the forces of Satan are now going to receive their due:

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 has compast, wherein we
Must bid the stroak of that long threat'n'd wound...²

The kairos is here.

What does kairos mean? An answer involves a statement of Milton's theory of history, which is in reality a belief about the direction of time. To fill in the

¹Laura E. Lockwood, Lexicon to the English Poetical Works of John Milton (New York: Macmillan Company, 1907), p. 563: seven references in Paradise Lost; sixteen in Paradise Regained. Mere numbers can be impressive.

²Paradise Regained I, 55-59.

background of his theory, some attention must needs be devoted to the ancients. There has been controversy over the direction of time for centuries. The ancient Greeks believed in cycles, but Augustine gave strong impetus to the idea of a straight line; Browne in the seventeenth century spoke again of cycles:

The Lives, not only of Men, but of Commonwealths, and the whole World, run not upon an Helix that still enlargeth, but on a Circle, where, arriving to their Meridian, they decline in obscurity, and fall under the Horizon again.¹

Nietzsche afterward emphasized cycles, and so the argument continues. Probably the prevailing opinion since Augustine, now supported by belief in evolutionary progress, has been that time moved in a straight line towards the end of the world. That Milton held this view, despite Northrup Frye's and Arnold Stein's comments that he held a cyclical theory of time will be demonstrated in this chapter, with the main purpose being to explain Milton's emphasis on time in Paradise Regained.

The Greeks never developed a philosophy or theology of history.² They saw everything as recurring. Ultimate meaning in history is based on an expected future. Hebrews and Christians had such a future directed view; they believed that the past was preparation for the future. But

¹Sir Thomas Browne, quoted in Marjorie Nicholson, The Breaking of the Circle (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1950), p. xx.

²Peuch, op. cit., p. 42. -

the Greeks thought the future would be like the past: they did not believe a single event could have universal significance. Herodotus's history shows the Greek time theory--cyclic, repetitive.¹ Time and history are related; repetition and eternal return are cosmic time. The same events will occur within the cycles. But there is no real beginning or end in a circle, and thus time had no direction.²

With their idea of creatio ex nihilo, the Hebrews could conceive of a beginning and end.³ The Hebrews discovered the meaning of history as an epiphany of God, and the Christians adopted this idea too. Revelation, under a monotheistic scheme of things, happens only once and at a definite place. It does not repeat itself like the cycles; it is irreversible. Early Christian writers tried to stamp out cyclicism and renewals, but the idea survived. For Christians, the Incarnation is a unique event, and time gets its meaning from the Redemption, a one-time event. The linear concept was briefly described by Irenaeus in the second century, then developed by Basil, Gregory, and Augustine, but the cyclical theory and the concept of astrological influence were accepted by other fathers and

¹Karl Lowith, Meaning in History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 5-7.

²Peuch, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

³Plessner, op. cit., p. 237.

writers.¹ In the third century Origen was called heretical for believing in cyclical time.² The conflict continued into the seventeenth century.

For the Christian, each of God's manifestations makes a kairos, a significant moment in history. History thus becomes teleological. The Greeks were unable to develop a philosophy of history because they had no central point, no fixed reference. Christ gave that to Christianity and divided history into two periods. Among biblical passages which describe the uniqueness of Christ's life, the Epistle to the Hebrews, 9 and 10, and I Peter 3:18 insist upon the one-time occurrence of Christ's death.³

But Augustine speaks of the "right way" in contrast to the false circles of the pagans who believe that the works of God repeat themselves in circles from eternity. Arguing against those who believe that if God were ever idle, cycles are bound to occur, Augustine says these people lead us in a circle, as opposed to the right way.⁴ Since the Christian interpretation of history is fixed on the future, pagan cycles had to be refuted, and Augustine did this by referring to Scriptures which are true because the prophecies have been fulfilled. He began with faith,

¹Eliade, op. cit., pp. 104-105, 143-144.

²Peuch, op. cit., p. 49.

³Ibid., pp. 48-49.

⁴Augustine, The City of God, op. cit., p. 352.

faith in creation, in the Incarnation, and the end of things. To give his faith a sound basis, he had to disprove the Hellenistic time theory. After doing this to his satisfaction, Augustine divides the history of the world into six epochs.¹

He was one of the first to draw up the ages of the world in parallel to the days of creation.² The first age extended from Adam to the Flood; the second from the Flood to Abraham; the third from Abraham to David; the fourth from David to the Babylonian exile; the fifth from the exile to Christ's birth, and the sixth, the present age. The seventh age will be like the Sabbath, and the eighth will be eternal day. Hexameral literature dealt with the celestial cycle, and many writers added a survey of biblical history.³

¹Lowith, op. cit., pp. 160-169.

²Such a division probably came from Chaldean astrology, where each planet governed an age. The Persians had a seven age mythical history. Hartwell has shown the influence on Milton of Lactantius, and the influence on Lactantius of the Mazdean ideas has been shown by Windisch. God created the world in six days, rested on the seventh, and so the world will last six aeons, when evil is triumphant. In the seventh age, the prince of demons will be imprisoned to give the world a period of just peace. He will escape for more fighting, but will be recaptured at the end of the eighth millenium, and the world will be recreated for eternity. Lactantius and the Iranian Bahman-Yast prophesy decay of the world and man, with a purifying fire to end and free the world. The Hebrews also limited the world to seven millenia, but did not encourage mathematical speculation about the date of the end. Eliade, op. cit., pp. 125-127.

³McColley, op. cit., p. 3.

George Whiting proves that Milton uses this same division in the survey of the world's history at the end of Paradise Lost. There were many other writers to establish the tradition for Milton. Isidore of Seville uses the same scheme and adds more historical information. The Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493 with the rich illustrations of Adam, Eve, the Expulsion, the first murder, the building of the ark, and so on may have influenced Paradise Lost. The Chronicle too has the customary division into scriptural ages. The first two ages are biblical - the creation up to the flood, and from the ark to Sodom and Gomorrah - but the third introduces European history with pictures of Paris, London, and other cities. Several pages at the end are blank "'For none of us can do everything.'" After the blank pages comes a description of the seventh age, the rule of the demon, and the coming end of the world. Anti-Christ is defeated and the dead rise for a Dance of Death.¹ Other chronicles use the same division: Grafton's Chronicle at Large and Meere History of the Affayres of Englande, Lambertus Danaeus' Wonderful Workmanship of the World, and others. According to Whiting, this is the same division that Milton follows.

¹Isaiah 26:19 describes this: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of the herbs, and the earth shall be cast out of the dead."

Critical commentary on the last two books of Paradise Lost has recently turned to justifying their presence. For a time the survey of history was considered merely epic trapping and dull stuff at that. But in recent years, they have been considered under the heading of necessary completion of Milton's ideas. Svendsen shows that Adam's soliloquy is "partial justification for the eleventh and twelfth books, which have often been criticized as padding."¹ M. M. Mahood, for example, thinks they show the reinstatement of man to God's purpose through time.² Hanford agrees that they demonstrate the salvation of man in the process of time.³ W. B. C. Watkins says that they are a description of human time in an effort to approximate God's simultaneity.⁴ Arnold Stein finds Christ there the mediator between time and eternity.⁵ A study of the historical survey can illuminate Christ's role and prepare for a discussion of the kairos of Paradise Regained.

The longest part of Milton's history is the first age which includes the deluge. In the second age a godly

¹Kester Svendsen, "Adam's Soliloquy in Book X of 'Paradise Lost'", CE, X (1949), 366.

²Mahood, op. cit., p. 186.

³James Holly Hanford, A Milton Handbook, 4th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1946) p. 215.

⁴Watkins, op. cit., p. 46.

⁵Stein, op. cit., p. 128.

pastoral society is brought to degeneration by the tyrant Nimrod. Abraham begins the third age which is concluded by the return to Canaan. The fourth age encompasses David's kingship, Solomon's idolatries, and the destruction of Jerusalem. The period from the captivity of the Jews to the dethroning of David's sons is the fifth age which is ended by the birth of Christ. The sixth period is the last age of the world, the ministry of Christ. Whiting goes this far with his analysis of the historical survey,¹ but he might as well have gone further instead of ending with the sixth age. The sixth age, it would seem, describes the life of Christ and his assumption into heaven. Then, like the seventh age of the Nuremberg Chronicle in which the antichrist reigns and the end of the world approaches, the last age of the world is described:

Truth shall retire
 Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith
 Rarely be found: 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

 to dissolve
 Satan with his perverted World, then raise
 From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,
 New Heav'ns, new Earth, Ages of endless date....²

¹Whiting, op. cit., pp. 175-190.

²Paradise Lost XII, 535-549.

Raphael finishes his prophecy, and Adam says

How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,
Measur'd this transient World, the Race of time,
Till time stand fixt: beyond is all abyss,
Eternitie, whose end no eye can reach.¹

Thus the history of the world has moved in a straight line from the beginning to the end. Whiting, without realizing the obvious distinction to be made between the pagan cycles and Christian ideas about time, remarks that "the events of Paradise Lost do not follow or correspond to the classical divisions of time."² Naturally Milton would not follow a pagan scheme of time in his Christian epic. For Milton, time and history are related; they furnish the opportunity for man to return to God. This of course is Milton's aim in all areas, as in education: "The end then of Learning is to repair the ruines of our first Parents by regaining to know God aright."³ History is the record of what men have done to repair that wrong, and its course is directed by God. He is traditional in this respect, for Jews and Christians thought of history as the history of salvation.⁴ When Milton records history, it has an ethical bias. In The History of Britain, for example, he says the Normans

¹Ibid., 553-556.

²Whiting, op. cit., p. 174.

³Of Education, Works IV, 277.

⁴Lowith, op. cit., p. 5.

conquered the natives easily because of corruption among the English. Morality and prosperity are connected, according to Milton.¹

This time or history moved in a straight line, not in a circle, as Stein indicates when he says that all leads to "God's idea of time, which includes as a smaller circle man's creation, fall, and redemption. The great circle... proceeds from God to God..." Stein quotes Book III to prove his point, and here are the lines.²

Hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Mean while
The World shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New Heav'n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell
And after all thir tribulations long
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With Joy and Love triumphing, and fair Truth.
Then thou thy regal Scepter shalt lay by,
For regal Scepter then no more shall need,
God shall be All in All.³

There seems to be no basis for interpreting these lines as representing cyclical time. The events described move from start to finish rather than in a ring. There is not going to be another Creation, Fall, and Redemption. Another who thinks Milton's time is circular is Northrup Frye:

The Bible, as Milton saw it,
transcends all secular knowledge, but
comprehends it too, and is also

¹Hanford, op. cit., p. 118.

²Stein, op. cit., pp. 156-157.

³Paradise Lost III, 332-341.

encyclopaedic, though on a far bigger scale. It begins where time begins, at the Creation; it ends where time ends, in the Apocalypse; and it surveys the entire life of man between these two points. Yet these two points are at the same point in the eternity of God, and thus time goes in a circle, proceeding from God and returning to him.¹

Frye is correct in saying that all times are the same in God's eternity, but again there seems to be no reason to call the movement of secular history a circle. Frye goes on to say that the action of Paradise Lost is a cycle from the creation of the Son to the reabsorption of everything in God, "transformed by the heroic quest of Christ to release man from his bondage."² Here Frye mentions Christ, but does not consider his importance in the Christian theory of time. Milton recognizes the importance of Christ's appearance in history and gives it great emphasis in Paradise Regained as well as at the end of Paradise Lost.

The Greeks had two words for time. Chronos meant clock time, and kairos designated a meaningful moment. For the biblical authors, kairos meant fulfilled time, the time set for the coming of Christ.³ Not the telos,

¹Northrup Frye (ed.), Paradise Lost and Selected Poetry and Prose (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1956), pp. xvi-xvii.

²Ibid., p. xvii.

³Paul Tillich, "Kairos," The Meridian (Spring, 1958), p. 5.

but the life of Jesus was the center of the Christian time sense. The unique event gives time a direction. The divine ephapax is a "once and for all."¹ In the New Testament, words for time are used to give theological meaning.

"Kairos and aion show best the biblical conception of time.

Kairos means a definite point, aion a duration or extent.

One meaning of kairos is a part of redemptive history:

Acts 1:7, "'the kairoi, which the Father in his sovereign power has fixed"; I Timothy 6:14-15, "'the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, which the blessed and only Sovereign will show at the appropriate kairoi.'" Kairoi are always a part of God's plan. John 7:6 is the classic illustration of the difference between a divine and secular kairos.

Jesus replies to his brothers who urge him to go to Jerusalem: "My time (kairos), is not yet come: but your time (kairos): is alway ready." The brothers can decide whether the kairos is appropriate; their actions make no difference. But the kairoi of Christ are appointed by God, and he is in the plan of salvation. His acts have significance in the line of the history of salvation.² Critical commentaries point out that in this verse occurs John's only usage of the word, kairos, and that he means the

¹ Gilles Quispel, "Time and History in Patristic Christianity," Man and Time, op. cit., p. 87.

² Oscar Cullman, Christ and Time, trans. Floyd V. Filson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), pp. 35-40.

fitting time for public action had not come, "the best time for that public manifestation of Himself as Messiah, which He would make when He went up to the Feast of the Tabernacles," the divinely appointed time.¹

The number of references which Milton makes to a specific time, as appropriate time, have already been noted. Further evidence to support the theory that Paradise Regained is an illustration of *kairos* is the fact that although Milton takes the story of the temptation from Luke, he quotes the same verse from John 3 that has just been analyzed.

My time I told thee, (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come...396-7.

Throughout the poem, Milton reiterates the importance of the right time, the *kairos* for public manifestation.

As in Paradise Lost, there is more than one kind of time: here is a clear contrast between two times, God's and Satan's. As it is to be expected, Satan has an inferior kind of time; he lives and reigns in a realm of petty time. He is the manipulator of time whose clever timing is wrong.² He tries to get Christ to act before

¹J. H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), I, 269. Heinrich A. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1893), p. 317. G. Abbot Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1956), p. 226.

²Arnold Stein, Heroic Knowledge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), p. 92.

his time (kairos) but ultimately fails, and in the process even mocks himself and what he offers.

Paradise Regained starts immediately with a reference to time. Milton's announcement of his subject, recovered paradise, is an echo of the first lines of Paradise Lost, "till one greater Man / Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat." Satan's report of the baptism of Christ to the powers of hell introduces the second kind of time, his own, with the lament that the "many ages, as the years of men" during which they have held the earth, though they have been full of apprehension about when the Seed of Eve will come, are nevertheless too soon compassed. God has predicted that in the fullness of time, Christ would be sent to redeem mankind:

And be thy self Man among men on Earth,
Made flesh, when time shall be, of Virgin seed.¹

Satan simply does not understand the idea of God's time. His concept of time is circular, and this is contrary to Milton's theory of the direction of time.

And now too soon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compast, wherein all
Must bide the stroak of that long threatn'd wound.²

Milton here uses the idea of cycles as a metaphor to suggest Satan's error. Though he recognizes a difference between his and God's time as can be seen in his line "for longest

¹Paradise Lost III, 283-284.

²Paradise Regained, I, 57-59.

time to him is short," the old idea of the psalmist that God's thousand years are as a day,¹ he still does not understand the difference between the two kinds of time. Satan truly goes in circles, the kind which Augustine said the pagans opposed to the "right way." Satan's blindness and lack of understanding of God's ways can of course be seen in other ways, for example in his version of the baptism where he saw "thence on his head / A perfect Dove descend, what e're it meant."² He sees without comprehension. This is Milton's way of showing the basic ignorance of evil, though showing this without diminishing Satan's power as an antagonist. Greenlaw demonstrated that Milton's idea of virtue was based on Greek philosophy in that virtue, guided by temperance, the rational part of the soul, when confronted by evil will choose the good.³ This is the Socratic idea of voluntary goodness based on knowledge. Christ will "vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles."⁴ Stein in his study of Paradise Regained portrays Christ as a hero of knowledge, who has within himself the "internal endowment of judgment," which is the basis for knowledge. Milton believes we must have a judgment capable of receiving

¹Stein, Heroic Knowledge, op. cit., p. 37.

²Paradise Regained I, 82-83.

³Greenlaw, op. cit., p. 200.

⁴Paradise Regained I, 175.

wisdom.¹ This is precisely what Satan lacks - the inner capacity for judgment. It is what hinders his understanding.

Merritt Hughes and E. M. W. Tillyard have commented that the theme of Paradise Regained is the relation of contemplation and action,² but it seems there is a necessary addition to be made: Milton shows that the contemplative Christ is the victor in the struggle between contemplation and action, because he acts at the right moment in time, neither too soon nor too late. The brief epic on the model of Job shows the patience necessary to understand God's will. Different from Paradise Lost in language and theme, it is not different in history. The end of Paradise Lost actually showed the recovery of Paradise through Christ, and at the beginning of the second epic God tells Gabriel that the atonement will come.³ Christ does not have foreknowledge. He spent his early years wondering how to begin God's work, dreaming of the ways to accomplish it, whether by "victorious deeds" "to subdue and quell o're all the earth / Brute violence and proud Tyrannick pow'r," or more humanely, by winning words.

¹Stein, Heroic Knowledge, op. cit., p. 101.

²Merritt Y. Hughes, "The Christ of Paradise Regained and the Renaissance Heroic Tradition," SP, XXXV (1958), 254-277. E. M. W. Tillyard, Studies in Milton (London: Chatto and Windus, 1955), p. 105.

³H. J. C. Grierson, Milton and Wordsworth (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956), pp. 132-133.

Not until baptism by John does he know:

And last the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounc'd me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
The Authority which I deriv'd from Heaven.¹

Christ waits the "time prefixt" before he makes any move. Throughout, he has a kind of passive acceptance, but this acceptance leads to wisdom and right acting: "For what concerns my knowledge God reveals." It is an acceptance that is echoed by Andrew and Simon after they pray for the God of Israel to send the Messiah, for the time is come. Again and again in the poem, the idea of the fulfilled time, the kairos, is voiced.

After the temptation in which Satan offers the power and glory of a conqueror who could free Israel, Christ says that there is no need for freeing these people who abandoned their God, even though "he at length, time to himself best known,"² may restore Israel. Christ will leave Israel to God's due time. He is constantly aware of the order of God's time and plan. Milton's comment is that this answer invalidates Satan's wiles, as the encounter between truth and falsehood always ends with truth being the victor. Satan's time is false time and so

¹Paradise Regained I, 283-289.

²Ibid., III, 433.

it will lose.

The time of the devil is related to a figure met before, the forelocked figure of occasion. Satan continually tries to get Christ to act in his time, rather than God's. He makes the temptation strong, as in

Zeal and Duty are not slow;
But on Occasions forelock watchful wait.¹

Opportunity may slip by if not grabbed by the forelock; Satan's appeal is like that of the old Comus - seize the day. Satan is still trying hard in the next to last temptation. He tells Christ that he would have been able to set him on the throne of all the world "in short time with ease," now at Christ's best moment. Satan here does not seem to recognize kairos so much as opportunity: "Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season, / When Prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd." Proof that he lacks understanding of God's time can be found in his description of Christ's kingdom to come:

A Kingdom they portend thee, but what Kingdom,
Real or Allegoric I discern not,
Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefixt
Directs me in the Starry Rubric set.²

Satan has no comprehension of the rightness of the moment, only of opportuneness. "Each act is rightliest done, /

¹Ibid., III, 172-173.

²Ibid., IV, 380-381, 389-393.

Not when it must, but when it may be best." The Devil has no conception of God's plan. He has his own time, and he tries to seduce Christ into acting at the wrong time. Numerous scholars have discovered the various divisions of the temptations, but it seems that at the basis of every one is the temptation to act at the wrong time, a motif which runs through all the episodes and ties them together.

Christ's answer is always the same. He explains to Satan that his time is not yet come, and that it is probably fortunate for Satan that it has not. In a section on the prophecies, Jesus says:

All things are best fullfill'd in their due time,
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said;
If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told,
That it shall never end, so when begin
The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
He in whose hand all times and seasons roul.¹

He refutes Satan who said he could see no time set for the kingdom. Jesus knows when it will be time, and at yet another place, Christ can say words recorded by John, "My time I told thee...is not yet come, / When that comes think not thou to find me slack."² This has been the theme of Christ's rejections of Satan's temptations throughout the poem. His confidence is conveyed to the poet, who can end the poem with calm assurance that men shall dwell secure

¹Ibid., III, 182-187.

²Ibid., III, 396-398.

"when time shall be." The emphasis is on due time, right time, fulfilled time, kairos.

This study of Milton's use of time has demonstrated the theory of time in image and principle. As far as image is concerned, Milton's references to time are few. There are the two short poems on time, some prose references, and only one line in Paradise Lost which draw on the traditional iconography of the emblem books and art for a description of time with scythe, wings, beard, and the other familiar signs. As image, the idea of time is most effective and vivid in the prose where Milton emphasizes its age, raggedness, corruption, and indiscriminateness. He divorces Truth from this vile figure in contrast to the almost frozen metaphor of Veritas filia temporis. This gives a greater purity and beauty to the truth which he revered so highly. Milton differs from his contemporaries in another respect: he does not think of time as a destroyer. It can be for him an instrument of beneficence, a period for men to be restored to God, a period for training, or a time for repentance. Upon one occasion when Milton might emphasize the terror of time, he removes it entirely. Chaos is a place of fearful darkness and turmoil, but it is without time.

As principle, time becomes a more important element in Milton's poetry. He bases his concept of time on the philosophical definitions made by Plato, Aristotle, Augus-

time, and Aquinas. The philosophy will occasionally appear almost verbatim in the poetry, as it frequently does in the prose. The minor poem "On the University Carrier" is a poetic enlargement of Aristotle's statement about time. There is Aristotelian time in the eternity of Paradise Lost, as well as a kind of Platonic Great Year. There seem to be three kinds of time in Paradise Lost - divine, mortal, and diabolic, with the mortal time used as the basis for comparison. Milton draws on man's experience of time to provide further depth to his poem. Thus he has both an abstract and a personal kind of time. The three different times of Paradise Lost are brought about in part through a series of discrepancies in the chronology, and in part through the manipulation of tenses; the latter technique is developed to perfection in "On The Morning of Christ's Nativity," where Milton, as he was to do later, extracts the everlasting from the temporal by a skillful management of the terms of time division as man ordinarily thinks of them. This emphasis on timelessness and eternity is a key to Milton's use of time. He is a devoutly religious poet whose eye is constantly on God. He wants to make the best of the present so that it will be remembered favorably in eternity. Milton's concept of the world involves a belief in the end of that world, an end of time, where all is swallowed up in the abyss of eternity. This course of the world is directed by God, and it moves in a straight line

to the end. The high point in history is the kairos of Christ, and Milton works extensively with the idea of kairos in Paradise Regained, with the idea that God's providence has set a due time for everything, and that time must be observed if one is to fit in with God's will. The end of Paradise Lost shows in a few hundred lines what the Miltonic concept of history is. He takes the traditional biblical scheme of history from Genesis to Revelation. Everything moves forward, not in cycles. The occasional, infrequent references that Milton has to a cyclic kind of time, are insignificant compared to his larger concept of time. The cycles probably represent the fusion of pagan and Christian learning that a Christian humanist would have. The pagan is subordinated, and Milton's basic belief is that time will end; it will stand immovable when eternity is established, but all things must happen in their due time, in God's time.

Erwin Panofsky has commented that no period has been so preoccupied with the concept of time as the Baroque, and Milton fits into his age as far as a concern with time is considered. His last, or next to last poem, however one considers Paradise Regained, is intensely concerned with time. But Paradise Lost does indeed seem to be a "moving likeness of eternity." Time is for Milton both image and principle.

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