

MILTON'S ANTIPATHY TO IRREGULAR
LINES AND SHAPES

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PREFACE

Many scholars have noted Milton's use of themes dealing with order and disorder. J. B. Broadbent, however, is the only writer, to my knowledge, who specifically observes that Milton uses this theme even in schematic qualities of his images. Even so, Broadbent does not seem to deal with the subject as thoroughly as it deserves. Therefore, I have used his observation in examining Milton's poetry and major prose to ascertain if the pattern of schematic awareness exists throughout Milton's works. An affinity both between simple shapes, straight lines, and goodness, and between irregular shapes, crooked lines, and evil, exists in Milton's writings. I have focused my attention primarily on the latter, since they more significantly illustrate Milton's use of lines and shapes for symbolic purposes.

In writing of the significance Milton gives to lines and shapes, I have not attempted to assert that the pattern is a rigid one that Milton always followed, nor have I dealt with all of the exceptions to this pattern. Examples from the Bible and from Milton's contemporaries are given to explain the pattern that Milton followed, and to give background information for the examination of Milton's imagery. In no way is the inclusion of the works of Milton's

contemporaries intended to suggest that schematic awareness is consistently present in all, or even in a major portion, of their writings.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about Milton's use of images to suggest good or evil. Somewhat overlooked, however, has been his association of evil with images of irregular shape and complex lines (indicating disorder) and of goodness with images of simple structure and straight lines (indicating order). In an examination of Milton's poetry and major prose, this pattern of his antipathy to irregular lines and shapes can be illustrated.

Some of the images which can be used to illustrate an affinity between simple structure and goodness are found in passages dealing with rays or beams of light, military formations, calm seas and lack of winds or tempests, and orderliness and discipline. Milton's antipathy toward irregular lines and shapes can be demonstrated in examining passages dealing with winds and waves of the sea; Chaos, brutes and monsters such as dragons, leviathan, and serpents; ornate buildings such as Pandemonium; and the like.

Many critics have discussed symbols of good and evil in these passages without giving association of shapes deserved attention. John M. Steadman¹ mentions the "perfect" and straight ranks of both the heavenly and fallen angels during their march. He

associates the ordered ranks with virtuous qualities, and explains why Milton attributes this quality to the fallen angels as well as to the heavenly angels.

In another discussion of Milton's interest in the art of warfare, James Holly Hanford notes that Satan's army "is colored with the hues and trappings of medieval chivalry," whereas the heavenly army resembles more the "trained armies of civilized warfare in antiquity and in Milton's own time."² During the war in Heaven, the fallen angels march in a hollow cube to hide their newly made weapons and cannons, thus distorting the classic battle formations. Hanford illustrates Milton's fondness for order and discipline and his knowledge of battle formations.

Milton scholars have frequently discussed the connections of light and virtue, but very few have noted the virtuous straight paths of light rays. Many writers have pointed out the familiar use of light to symbolize God or Truth. Kester Svendsen has noted this association along with the Renaissance belief that a sunbeam cannot be defiled.³ His discussion centers on the Miltonic concepts that a "blind and serpentine body" can be an obstacle to true vision.⁴ In writing about light-virtue and darkness-evil imagery, Svendsen does not associate the sunbeam's straight path with virtue.

Theodore Howard Banks notes that Milton uses light to symbolize goodness. "The sun is pure, powerful, and dazzlingly brilliant" notes Banks, and he cites several passages to support his state-

ments from the prose tracts, Paradise Lost, and Comus.⁵ Evil creatures such as Comus, it is observed, hate and avoid the sunlight and the dawn. D. C. Allen tells how Satan's followers were once famed as God's "Bright-harness'd Angels," but now spend their time plotting how to "affront" God's holy light "with thir darkness."⁶

J. B. Broadbent, who seems to come nearest a discussion of Milton's concern with shapes and forms, contends that Comus' conflicts are centered on light and good versus evil and dark.⁷ The Lady pleads for light, but Comus desires darkness. The Lady's brothers also desire light which, Broadbent states, "stands for them and the Lady as the heaven-sent token of reason and order in the soul." However, Broadbent does not examine the significance of the light beams in various of Milton's other works.

In an examination of images that are used to symbolize evil, Milton's antipathy to irregular lines and shapes appears Pandemonium, as the home of the fallen angels in Hell, is certainly associated with evil. The overdone architecture of the structure suggests a complex outline and irregular lines. Rebecca W. Smith parallels Pandemonium with St. Peter's in Rome, and suggests that the pinnacles, "towers, and juttings," which Milton might well have seen on St. Peter's during his visit to Italy, are similar to those on Pandemonium.⁸ Miss Smith is preoccupied to prove the prototype of Milton's Pandemonium and does not consider structural connotations relating irregular lines to evil.

The several images of Satan have interested many Milton critics. Analyses of the Satanic images frequently entail a discussion of Satan's assuming the form of animals and monsters. However, these analyses generally do not seem to deal with Milton's aversion to the shape of such animals. Addison mentions that Satan bounds over the walls of Paradise and assumes the shape of a "cormorant" and other animals in the garden in order to hear Adam and Eve's conversation. Addison only says of this, however, that Satan's changing of shapes "gives an agreeable surprise to the reader," and is "devised to connect" Satan's "series of adventures."⁹

Satan's shape and size are closely related throughout Paradise Lost, according to Frank S. Kastor,¹⁰ and Satan is portrayed largely through simile, metaphor, and symbol. While he does mention Satan's changing shapes and animal similes, Kastor is concerned with the fallen angel's size relative to his surroundings in Heaven, Hell, and Paradise, and not with the moral significance of shape being intrinsically good or evil. The changing size, says Kastor, is useful primarily to differentiate Satan's roles as Archangel in Heaven, Prince of Hell, and the Tempter on earth.¹¹ Kastor does not specifically observe that the irregular lines and shapes connote evil.

In Milton's allegory of Sin and Death, the change of Sin's shape, according to John M. Steadman, is an anticipation of "Satan's own metamorphosis in Book X" of Paradise Lost.¹² Sin's shape is described as it was usually portrayed by medieval and Renaissance

artists. This shape is said to be closely associated with the shape Satan assumed for the temptation of Eve, and is thus especially appropriate.¹³

Northrup Frye¹⁴ also describes medieval paintings portraying monsters, especially those of the harrowing of Hell by Christ, the dragon-killer. References to these monsters are probably somewhat influenced by Biblical accounts of monsters referred to as "leviathan," "Rahab," or "dragons," as well as by the allegory of St. George, who also slew such monsters. Frye mentions that in the Book of Revelation the monster figure becomes a dragon with seven heads and ten horns.¹⁵ Such monsters are irregular in shape and are generally associated with evil.

It has been noted by some critics that the sea is usually represented in Milton's writings as evil. Banks notes that Milton's seas sometimes impede sailing, and that they "should not be ventured upon without proper ballast."¹⁶ Satan's followers "applaud and sound like the sea."¹⁷ However, after making these associations, Banks puts more emphasis on the idea that Milton's blindness caused him to be more aware of sounds. Banks does not actually mention that these images link the sea with evil. Regarding the storms and winds, Banks again gives some excellent examples to illustrate an association of these images with evil, but is once more chiefly concerned with Milton's change of emphasis after his blindness.¹⁸

Steadman¹⁹ notes that in Paradise Regained, as in the Biblical

accounts of the tempest of the Sea of Galilee, Christ becomes victor over a storm. Christ represents calm and order, and Satan tempts Christ with a "demonic storm scene" in an effort to terrify "his destined victor." In this attempt Milton is likened by Steadman to Tasso and Gratiani in retaining "the tempest's conventional role as an obstacle to the achievement of a destined enterprise," but all three have changed the setting from sea to land.²⁰

The sea as evil imagery in Samson Agonistes is discussed by John Carey.²¹ Dagon, the Philistines' god, is a "Sea-Idol." In Paradise Lost, Dagon is presented as half-man, half-fish, and is definitely connected with the sea. Dalila's salt-water tears are enough to wreck Samson's glorious vessel. Carey discussed the details of the imagery, but does not suggest irregular shapes are part of the cause of Milton's antipathy to the sea. Carey also mentions Dalila as a serpent.²²

Although writers have approached the subject of Milton's antipathy to irregular lines and shapes, J. B. Broadbent seems to be the only one who really concerns himself with a statement regarding the subject. Even so, Broadbent does not seem to deal with the subject as thoroughly as it deserves. In an analysis of "The Nativity Ode," Broadbent speaks of the appearance of Christ, "the greater Sun," and the binding of the dragon's [Satan's] swinging tail":

These are the poem's hinges. Symbolizing the conquest by hard-edged right reason of the dim liquid allures of passion, they make the poem Miltonic, and relate it more clearly to his other poems than to prophets, gospels, or analogues: the same dark illusions are defeated in Comus, the same weltering waves and tangled hair of nymphs are transcended in 'Lycidas', the same mystical rays of solid light dazzle error in the prose and Paradise Lost, the same gigantic force ruins idolatry in Samson Christ's was a Miltonic victory, not of transformation but of arrangement: a schematic conquest.²³

Thus Broadbent recognizes the pattern of structural involvement in Milton's images. It is this schematic consciousness that I propose to illustrate. By touching lightly on parts of the Bible and the works of some of Milton's contemporaries, and by a more thorough examination of Milton's poetry and prose, I hope to demonstrate how this theme pervades much material yet unexamined with this idea in mind.

NOTES

¹ John M. Steadman, "Image and Idol: Satan and the Element of Illusion in Paradise Lost," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, LIX (1960), 640-654.

² James Holly Hanford, "Milton and the Art of War," Studies in Philology, XVIII (1921), 232-266.

³ Kester Svendsen, "Science and Structure in Milton's Doctrine of Divorce," Publications of the Modern Language Association, LXVII (1951), 435-445.

⁴ Alan F. Price similarly deals with the affinity of Truth and light in the images of Areopagitica. "Sun," "light," "knowledge," and "Truth" are carefully blended, notes Price, and as one might expect Milton also used the archetypal image of "Darkness = Error." / "Incidental Imagery in Areopagitica," Modern Philology, XLIX (1951), 220. /

⁵ Theodore Howard Banks, Milton's Imagery (New York, 1950), p. 111.

⁶ D. C. Allen, "Milton and the Descent to Light," Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism (New York, 1965), p. 187.

⁷ J. B. Broadbent, Milton: Comus and Samson Agonistes (Great Neck, New York, 1961), p. 12.

⁸ Rebecca W. Smith, "The Source of Milton's Pandemonium," Modern Philology, XXIX (1931), 189.

⁹ Joseph Addison, Criticisms on Paradise Lost, ed. Albert S. Cook (New York, 1926), p. 72.

¹⁰ Frank S. Kastor, "'In His Own Shape': The Stature of Satan in Paradise Lost," English Language Notes, V (1968), 264-269.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 267.

¹² John M. Steadman, "'Sin' and the Serpent of Genesis 3, Paradise Lost, II, 650-653," Modern Philology, LIV (1957), 217-220.

¹³ Ibid., p. 220.

¹⁴Northrup Frye, "Typology of Paradise Regained," Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Arthur E. Barker (New York, 1965), pp. 429-446.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 429.

¹⁶Banks, p. 119.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁹John M. Steadman, "'Like Turbulencies': The Tempest of Paradise Regain'd as Adversity Symbol," Modern Philology, LIX (1961), 81-88.

²⁰Ibid., p. 87.

²¹John Carey, "Sea, Snake, Flower, and Flame in Samson Agonistes," The Modern Language Review, LXII (1967), 395-399.

²²Ibid., p. 398.

²³J. B. Broadbent, "The Nativity Ode," The Living Milton (New York, 1961), p. 27.

CHAPTER II

AFFINITY BETWEEN VIRTUE AND SIMPLE SHAPES

In his writings Milton frequently uses imagery to connote virtue and goodness or evil. Because these images are so rich, they can be examined in different lights and on many different levels; thus the aspect of shapes and outlines of the various images in Milton's writings is sometimes quite close to other analyses, and is not always to be severely delineated from these. In showing the pattern of Milton's antipathy to irregular shapes, I hope to set up a classification that is useful in interpreting Milton's writings--rich as they are--on still another level of analysis.

The concern with lines and shapes in Milton's writings can perhaps be connected in some cases with his love of order and dislike of disorder. That Milton loved order is well known to scholars, but the connection with shape is not generally noted. This same pattern appears to an extent in the scriptures and some of the writings of Milton's contemporaries. Perhaps these have influenced, to some degree, Milton's treatment of images with regular and irregular lines, but to prove such is not my purpose here. Whether or not the Bible and the writings of Milton's contemporaries served as a source

for Milton in this light, a brief investigation of the affinity with regular shapes in some of these works seems beneficial in revealing the pattern Milton also followed.

Biblical writers frequently associate straight lines, directness, and ordered paths with simplicity, straightforwardness, and harmony. All of these qualities are considered virtuous. In describing the ark of the covenant, the ark of Noah, the oracle of the temple and the temple itself, all of which are instruments of God, scriptural writers give dimensions for the length, breadth, and height of the walls or sides. The implication is that these holy structures would all be box-shaped, with straight walls for sides.

Exodus 27:1 states:

And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be four-square: and the height thereof shall be three cubits.¹

Thus the altar, being "four-square," would seemingly have straight sides. In Ezekiel's vision of the temple, the length, width, and height of all the chambers in the temple are given. He states:

The posts of the temple were squared, and the face of the sanctuary; the appearance of the one as the appearance of the other. The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the table that is before the Lord (Ezekiel 41:21, 22).

The description therefore implies a regularity in the structure of the

temple and that straight and simple lines were predominant throughout the temple of his vision.²

The cross is perhaps the Christians' most obvious symbol of holiness, and is comprised chiefly of simple, straight lines. For the Romans, the cross was merely an instrument of execution, but it became, with Christ's crucifixion, a holy symbol for the Christian church.³ The moral goodness of Christ, therefore, is associated with the straight lines of the cross' structure.

Another means in which order and straightness are portrayed in a favorable manner can be found in Biblical association of God with rays of light. Passages which reveal this use of imagery recur frequently. In Psalm 104 we see God as light:

O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind . . . (Psalm 104:1-3).

The Lord covers himself with light and lays his beams in the waters; and rays of light are known to travel only in straight lines. Thus the portrayal of God as light is suggestive of perfection coinciding with straightness. It can also be noted that God controls the "wings of the wind" and thus harnesses disorder.

Christ is also called the "true light," for John 1:9 states that Christ was "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into

the world." In Rev. 21:23 we are told "and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The familiar portrayal of Christ or God as light throughout the Bible seems to connect further, as stated above, perfection with straightness.⁴

Perhaps the closest association in Biblical writings of straightness and directness with goodness can be found in passages similar to Isaiah 42:16:

And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

God here promises not to forsake his blind children; rather he will guide them through unknown surroundings and crooked paths. Darkness will be made into light, and crooked things straight. Crookedness is undesirable for his children: the crooked paths will be straightened for their spiritual journey through the hostile world.⁵

A similar interpretation can be made of the admonition to the Hebrews, "wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed" (Hebrews 12:13). Here God's children are depicted as being spiritually lame, and as having hands which hang down and feeble knees. If these spiritually lame believers turn from the straight path, their

lame parts will suffer further injury. Their weak spirit will become weaker. However, if they follow the straight paths, their sickened spirits shall be healed. Straight paths are therefore Christian paths.

Milton's contemporaries likewise write of straight lines or directness in association with virtue.⁶ Many of these writers treat the image of God as light, already discussed in Biblical writings. John Donne's poem, "A Hymne to God the Father," discusses Christ as light, shining forth to aid Christians in need:

I have a sin of feare, that when I have spunne
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by thy selfe, that at my death thy sonne
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And, having done that, Thou haste done,
I feare no more (ll. 13-18).⁷

Christ, then, is light everlasting. The rays which radiate from him are thus holy, as illustrated in Biblical imagery discussed above.

Phineas Fletcher in The Apollyonists⁸ also utilizes light imagery with moral implications:

Spring-tides of light divine the ayre surround,
And bring downe heaven to earth; deaf Ignorance,
Vext with the day, her head in hell hath drown'd
Fond Superstition, frighted with the glaunce
Of suddaine beames, in vaine hath crost her round.
Truth and Religion everywhere advaunce
Their Conqu'ring standards: Errour's lost and
fled . . . (ll. 217-223).

The light beams of Truth and Religion chase away Ignorance, Superstition, and Error. Heaven is brought down to earth by the "spring-

tide of light divine."

In his poem "The Flower" George Herbert gives another use of straight lines connected with virtue.⁹

But while I grow in a straight line,
Still upwards bent, as if heavn were mine own,
Thy anger comes, and I decline (ll. 29-31).

Herbert, as a dedicated devotional poet, was very likely familiar with the Biblical admonitions to make straight paths. When the flower grows in a straight line upwards, it is as if heaven were opening its doors. Man, therefore, as the flower, seems near reaching heaven when his path is straight.

Milton's writings seem to exemplify the associations of good with straightness and evil with crookedness. Although it would certainly be imprudent to state rigorously that Milton always followed this pattern, one can find frequent examples of it throughout his poetry and his prose.

Milton was quite interested in battle formations, as James H. Hanford¹⁰ points out. In Paradise Lost, the loyal angels prepare to fight the rebel angels in heaven, and are described in their battle formation:

the Powers Militant,
That stood for Heav'n, in mighty Quadrate joyn'd
Of Union irresistible, mov'd on . . .
Indissolubly firm; nor obvious Hill,
Nor streit'ning Vale, nor Wood, nor Stream divides
Thir perfet ranks; for high above the ground

Thir march was, and the passive Air upbore
Thir nimble tread . . . (PL, VI, 61-73).¹¹

Here the ranks are portrayed as perfect--no wavering lines or lack of discipline and order.¹² These ranks are divided later by the Satanic cannon, but Christ restores order when he casts the rebels out of heaven.

When the battle between the forces begins, the fallen angels soon begin to feel pain. Their leaders are wounded and "quell'd" and the fighting sways in favor of the loyal angels as they force the rebels to retreat:

deformed rout
Enter'd, and foul disorder; all the ground
With shiverd armour strown, and on a heap
Chariot and Charioter lay overturn'd . . .
(PL, VI, 387-390).

The fallen angels are thus punished for the "sin of disobedience" and in the rout are contrasted with the Saints, who, receiving no wounds, are still marching:

Far otherwise th' inviolable Saints
In Cubic Phalanx firm advanc't entire,
Invulnerable, impenitrably arm'd:
Such high advantages thir innocence
Gave them above thir foes . . .
(PL, VI, 398-402).

The disorder in Satan's army makes apparent their loss of that day's battle. Discipline and order belong to the victors, God's angels.

Later in the battle, it is Satan's angels who form a cube-like battle formation, but notably it is a "hollow Cube" which their leader has "impal'd on every side with shadding Squadrons Deep" to hide the newly made weapons they will use in battle. The use of a masked battery is a distortion of the battle formation and is labeled a "fraud." Milton notes in his Church Government that "those smaller squares in battell unite in one great cube, the main phalanx, an embleme of truth and steadfastnesse."¹³ The hollow cube is a mere imitation of this emblem, and Satan's use of the straight lines of the formation points specifically to his trickery.¹⁴

Hanford notes that Milton strongly accents the elements of discipline and order in the battle scenes. In describing the army of heaven, Hanford indicates that "Milton obviously has in mind the trained armies of civilized warfare in antiquity and in his own time. The picture of the rebel host, on the other hand, is colored with the hues and trappings of medieval chivalry."¹⁵ Satan's forces wear helmets and carry spears, and possess "shields Various." They go to battle with "boastful arguments." The swords and weapons of the loyal angels are indicative of the classical, more disciplined soldiers--they enter battle with "serried" shields such as in classical warfare (Roman and Greek battle formations), and do not go into such "deformed rout" as Satan's army, even when surprised by the Satanic cannon.¹⁶

Book I of Paradise Lost reveals the fallen angels in hell after the

imperial ensign is unfurled at Satan's command. The fallen angels again appear in a huge forest of spears and thronging helmets:

Anon they move
 In perfect Phalanx to the Dorian mood
 Of Flutes and soft Recorders; such as rais'd
 To hight of noblest temper Hero's old
 Arming to Battel, and in stead of rage
 Deliberate valour breath'd, firm and unmov'd
 With dread of death to flight or foul retreat
 Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
 With solemn touches, troubl'd thoughts, and chase
 Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
 From mortal or immortal minds (ll. 549-559).

Here the fallen angels seem to retain some of their former glory; they are described in heroic terms.¹⁷ The ordered ranks associated with heroism are part of the glory from which they have fallen, and these ordered ranks are a temporary façade of order only. As Steadman says:

Though it [hell] possessed the likeness of a well ordered state, governed by a prudent and heroic leader, this was merely an appearance; its real foundations were "Non-sense." The reality underlying the affectation of a sound and stable polity was not order, but spiritual confusion.¹⁸

Milton really seems, then, to be mocking the fallen angels, for the difference between what the angels seem and what they really are is quite ironic. After the fall of Adam they appear as writhing snakes, an image more representative of their actual status. Thus the association of temporary glory exhibited by their heroic appearance with disciplined, orderly, marching ranks further illustrates

Milton's association of straight lines with bravery, a virtuous trait in traditional epics. The good angels have exhibited perfection in their ranks: their order is not a façade like that of the fallen angels, for nothing divides their ranks.

Milton also portrays God as light, similar to both Biblical and contemporary imagery. In the "Nativity Ode" he refers to Christ as the "Prince of light" (l. 62) and as the "greater Sun" (l. 83). He is "That glorious form, that Light unsufferable" and "that far-beaming blaze of majesty" (ll. 8, 9).¹⁹ The light beams are thought of as blazing forth from Christ, and would travel a direct path to the beholder.²⁰ In fact, the "rayes of Bethlehem" are so bright they "blind his [Osiris'] dusky eyn" and presumably frighten away "all the gods beside" (ll. 223, 224). As the shepherds are told of Christ's birth, a "Globe of circular light" "surrounds their sight." They hear and see cherubim and seraphim in "glittering ranks" while the light arrays the "shame-fac't night" with "long beams."

Even Satan in Paradise Lost recognizes the connection between the beams of light and God. As Satan escapes from Hell and views the creation, he sighs, fixing a look towards Heaven and the "full-blazing Sun":

O thou that with surpassing Glory crownd
 Look'st from thy sole Dominion like the God
 Of this new World; at whose sight all the Starrs
 Hide thir diminisht heads; to thee I call,
 But with no friendly voice, and add thy name
 O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams

That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell . . . (PL, IV, 32-39).

Satan associates the beams of light with the glory of heaven and with the Son, whose position caused Satan's envy and eventual downfall. Normally, "star-angels derive their light from the sun-God with the response of loving joy," observes Irene Samuel. But Satan's "perverse inference" here shows his alienation from the divinely created universe.²¹

In Animadversions Milton urges an acceptance of responsibility before it is too late: "Let us feare lest the Sunne for ever hide himselfe, and turne his orient steps from our ingratefull Horizon justly condemn'd to be eternally benighted."²² The punishment for not doing God's will is eternal darkness, a permanent removal of the beams of light. But the Son can prevent this by intercession for man. Milton prays "Which dreadfull judgement O thou the ever-begotten light, and perfect image of the Father, intercede may never come upon us"²³ But God has punished the evil-doers already:

Thou [God] hast discover'd the plots, and frustrated the hopes of all the wicked in the Land and chas'd them with sudden confusion and amazement before the redoubled brightnesse of thy descending cloud that now covers thy Tabernacle. Who is there that cannot trace thee now in thy beamy walks through the midst of thy Sanctuary, amidst those golden Candlesticks²⁴

The wicked have been routed in confusion and amazement before the light and beams of God. A brightness covers the tabernacle; and

false prophets, persecutors, and plotters are alien to God and his light.

In his discussion of Milton's imagery concerning Nature, Theodore Howard Banks cites several passages in which light imagery is given moral connotation by Milton. Banks states:

The great majority of light images, however, have strong moral connotation; light symbolizes goodness or knowledge, darkness evil or ignorance. This idea, commonplace in itself, pervades his writing, and the variations he plays on the theme are remarkable.²⁵

Milton thus seemingly uses light imagery in his writings to further differentiate evil from good, and the light rays further associate straightness and virtue. This is further illustrated in the Reason of Church Government, in which Milton objects to being "put from beholding the bright countenance of truth . . . to come into the dim reflexion of hollow antiquities."²⁶ Banks notes this, and observes that in Milton "truth is direct, error reflected light."²⁷ Although this thought is probably more similar to Plato's theories in the allegory of the cave in The Republic than to the scriptural portrayal of light, the passage still illustrates the idea that light which travels straight to the beholder is more virtuous than that which has traveled a crooked path. When Milton speaks of his wife in "Sonnet XXIII," he states:

Her face was vail'd, yet to my fancied sight,
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
So clear, as in no face more delight.²⁸

Virtue shines outwardly from her in his vision. Love, sweetness, and goodness radiate from his wife like light beams, flowing outward in direct, clear paths. In Of Reformation, Milton also associates Truth with straightness and light, and crookedness and darkness with sin:

"The very essence of Truth is plainnesse, and brightnes; the darknes and crookednesse is our own."²⁹

Thus, much as God is associated with beams of light, so is heaven itself, and so is God's Truth which is dispersed sparingly to mankind in doses only large enough to handle. Those who do not know how to utilize God's Truth are blinded by its light:

Such is the order of Gods enlightning his Church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the Sun itself, it smites us into darkness.³⁰

The word of God is also referred to as beams of light. In arguing against prelacy, Milton calls it an "English dragon" and a "great Python" which has been "bred up" in "a mass of slime and mud" by the "fat bishoprics." Prelacy seems to be generated of a "slavish and tyrannous life" and is likely, if allowed to live, to spread contagion to the whole kingdom. However, "like that fen-born serpent" prelacy can be "shot to death with the darts of the sun, the pure and powerful beams of God's word."³¹

A sunbeam was thought by Milton and other Renaissance writers to be impossible to defile. Milton's statement in The Doctrine and

Discipline of Divorce, "Truth is as impossible to be soil'd by any outward touch, as the Sun beam," is noted by Kester Svendsen. According to Svendsen, Renaissance writers seem to indicate a general belief that a sunbeam cannot be contaminated even by a sinful man.³²

As Price suggests, Areopagitica incorporates light images in several places. The concept of Truth is blended with the images of the sun, light, and the blazing beacon. But light and Truth "were not given merely to be gazed upon (an act which produces blindness, physical and spiritual) but for use, 'to discover onward things' (i. e., further "Truth")."³³

Many references to light imagery can be found in various works. In "Sonnet IX" Milton praises the Lady for choosing the "better part" with Mary and Ruth and for having "growing vertues." "Thy care is fixt and zealously attends/ To fill thy odorous Lamp with deeds of light," he writes, praising her goodness.³⁴ Again in Animadversions he associates those who do good deeds with light and beams of sunshine:

. . . when as we that have liv'd so long in abundant light, besides the sunny reflection of all the neighbouring Churches, have our hearts rivetted with these old opinions, and so obstructed and benumm'd with the same fleshly reassurings, which in our forefathers soone melted and gave way, against the morning beam of Reformation.³⁵

The Reformation, then, seems a new and refreshing resurgence of light resembling the dawn of a new day.

Similarly, in Comus the light is an emblem of good. The Lady, lost in the wood, pleads for the natural light of the stars. Comus, however, as a typical evil spirit in this respect, desires the darkening shadows and dislikes the "telltale Sun." The elder brother of the Lady also pleads for light:

Unmuffle ye faint Stars, and thou fair Moon
That wontst to love the travellers benizon,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that rains here
In double night of darkness, and of shades;
Or if your influence be quite damm'd up
With black usurping mists, som gentle taper
Through a rush Candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation visit us
With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Of Tyrian Cynosure. (ll. 331-342).³⁶

Here again light is a "levell'd rule" and flows in streams. The straightness is thus once more emphasized. However, even as he asks for light, the elder brother has confidence in the "radiant light" of the Lady's virtue to aid her in their absence (l. 374). One without this virtue would be "benighted" even under the "midday Sun," (l. 384) whereas he who has "light within his own clear breast" possesses sufficient light even in darkness. As light is virtue in general, so in l. 425 we see a reference to the "sacred rays of Chasity."

Broadbent sees Comus as a "divine drama," that is "a struggle between good and evil, light and dark."³⁷ The call of the Lady and

her brothers for light to guide them through the woods shows that light for them represents "the heaven-sent token of reason and order in the world and in the soul."³⁸

Many instances of light imagery can be found in Paradise Lost. The devils speak of "Heaven's purest Light," which even the blackest insurrection cannot darken (II, 136-137). The fallen angels find Hell is a dismal place of "waste and wild" where the flames emit no light and where doleful shades are prevalent (I, 64, 180). In contrast, Heaven is the "Realm of Light" (I, 85) or "Precinct of light" (III, 88). Satan's followers bring forth imitation light, building with gems and gold from the soil of Hell. Thus Satan and his angels, regretting their lost brightness, again show perversity by contriving imitations instead of following natural laws. The devils have high hopes of regaining their lost status by tempting man, and Bēēlzebub, coached by Satan, speaks:

perhaps in view

Of those bright confines, whence with neighbouring Arms
And opportune excursion we may chance
Re-enter Heav'n; or else in some milde Zone
Dwell not unvisited of Heav'ns fair Light
Secure, and at the brightning Orient beam
Purge off this gloom (PL, II, 394-400).

The lack of light is one of the chief identifying characteristics of the fallen angels. They now know pain; they now have wounded pride; they now live in a "dungeon": but they also lament the loss of bright-

ness and light, and it seems to be a major loss.

Satan is characterized throughout Paradise Lost by a gradual lessening of his brightness. In Heaven he was Lucifer, the morning star: in Hell he is introduced as one whose "form had yet not lost all her Original brightness" (I, 590, 591), a look which befits an "Arch Angel ruind." But his degradation has begun:

As when the Sun new ris'n
Looks through the Horizontal misty Air
Shorn of his Beams, or from behind the Moon . . .
Dark'n'd so, yet shon
Above them all th' Arch Angel (PL, I, 594-600).

It is significant that at this point Satan can still be compared to the sun. Later he brings forth much humbler comparisons. But the sun he resembles here is disfigured by the mists even as Satan is disfigured by his sins. Being shorn of his beams, Satan is assuredly on his way to further deprivation. Even before the rebel angels are thrown from Heaven they have grown "gross" from sinning, although they were "purest at first" (PL, VI, 662). The more they sin, the more they lose the brightness they had as angels.

After the fall of Adam and Eve, Satan returns to Hell victorious in achieving his goal. On his throne his head and "shape" appear "Star-bright" or brighter, and he is "clad" with "permissive glory" or "false glitter" (X, 452). This contrasts sharply with the view of Satan later, for this last burst of light and glory for Satan is short-lived. We see Satan turn into a "monstrous Serpent on his Belly

prone" (X, 514), or a "Dragon grown" (X, 529). The brightness of the Archangel has been totally removed--Satan is distinguished among his fellow devils only in that he is larger than they as he leads them to the trees whose fruit turns to ashes in their mouths (X, 533).

As he searches for an animal form to use in the temptation of Adam and Eve, Satan becomes jealous of man. Earth is much like Heaven, and Satan would perhaps even prefer it to Heaven. Earth is, to Satan:

Terrestrial Heav'n, danc't round by other Heav'ns
That shine, yet bear thir bright officious Lamps,
Light above Light, for thee alone, as seems,
In thee concentrating all thir precious beams
Of sacred influence (IX, 103-107).

Though at times God might choose to appear to man and the angels "amidst thick clouds and dark" (II, 264), to his son he can show all his glory:

On his Son with Rayes direct
Shon full; he all his Father full expresst
Ineffably into his face receiv'd (VI, 719-721).

The rays of God's glory are shone directly to his son, who alone can behold God's powerful light.

Milton hails Christ as holy Light and calls God light in his invocation (III, 1-5), and invites the Celestial Light to shine inward, planting knowledge so that he can see and tell of things invisible to

mortal sight (III, 51-55). The light of God is "unapproachable," a "pure Ethereal Stream," an "Eternal Coeternal Beam," a "piercing Ray," the "dawn." God, the "Author of all being," is a "Fountain of Light," (III, 375) and in full glory is inaccessible; but even the angels whose resplendent locks are "inwreath'd with beams" cannot approach unless they veil their eyes with their wings (III, 382). Christ himself repeats the fountain of light image in Paradise Regained: "he who receives/ Light from above, from the fountain of light, / No other doctrine needs . . ." (PR, IV, 288-290).³⁹

Even the stars are influenced by the sun's power, for they are turned

By his Magnetic beam, that gently warms
The Univers, and to each inward part
With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible vertue even to the deep:
So wondrously was set his Station bright (PL, III,
582-587).

The sun's rays are even thought to generate valuable metals and gems in the earth's soil. In the garden the sun's rays gladly "impress'd his beams" (PL, IV, 150) on the fruits and flowers that Adam and Eve tend. Adam explains to Eve the sun's importance to the world and to nations not yet in existence, and says that the sun's potent ray helps all living things "apter to receive Perfection" (PL, IV, 673). Again, as Adam sits in Paradise, he sees the "mounted Sun" shoot down "direct his fervid Raies, to warme Earths inmost womb" (PL,

V, 300). Sunbeams are useful for the angels, too. As he comes to warn Gabriel that Satan is on his way to Paradise, Uriel slides down to earth on a sunbeam (PL, IV, 555) and returns the same way (l. 590).

The importance of beams of light in connection with virtue and goodness is further stressed when we are told that light is the first creation of God:

Let ther be Light, said God, and forthwith Light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure
Sprung from the Deep, and from her Native East
To journie through the airie gloom began . . .
God saw the Light was good (PL, VII, 243-249).

In Samson Agonistes, Samson refers to the creation of light, the "first created Beam" (l. 83).⁴⁰ God's "great Word, Let there be light, and light was over all" gave light for man and the world which were created later. However, Samson's blindness denies him the privilege of perceiving illumination.

As the presence of light (inner or outer) is beneficial and symbolizes the presence of God, so the absence of the rays of light has an affinity with evil. Samson laments that he has become inferior to the "vilest of man or worm" (l. 73) because his sight has been taken away. Light is "so necessary to life" it is "almost life itself" to Samson. He is a "fool" in the power of others--never in his own power--without light. If the body "dwells in real darkness" then:

Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
 The Dungeon of thyself; thy Soul
 Imprison'd now indeed . . .
 For inward light alas
 Puts forth no visual beam (SA, 155-161).

Bemoaning his darkness, Samson has no "hope of day"; he lives in the evil of an "Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse" (ll. 81, 82), for he has not been redeemed of his sin.

Similarly in Paradise Lost the fallen Satan is compared to the sun which "In dim Eclips disastrous twilight sheds/ On half the Nations, and with fear of change/ Perplexes Monarchs" (PL, I, 597-599).

Hughes notes that an eclipse of the sun was taken as an evil omen in Milton's day. This image of Satan in Paradise Lost was taken by Charles II's censors to be a veiled threat to the king.⁴¹ Shakespeare also used the image in a simile for introducing the appearance of Richard II:

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
 As doth the blushing, discontented sun
 From out the fiery portal of the east,
 When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
 To dim his glory . . . (Richard II, III, iii, 62-66.)⁴²

Thus the simile signifies a connection between a doomed ruler and a cloud-hidden sun or an eclipse.

In Lycidas again the eclipse is equated with evil. The sea was calm when Lycidas drowned, but it seems that the ship was cursed because of its connection with an eclipse:

It was that fatal and perfidious Bark
 Built in th'eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine
 (Lycidas, ll. 100-102).⁴³

Thus the building of a ship during an eclipse could be the cause of its sinking, and there is an affinity between the eclipse, the absence of light, and evil.

Quite important in Milton is the preservation of schematic order, a calmness which is viewed in the "Nativity Ode" on the night of Christ's birth and again in Lycidas and Paradise Lost. In the "Nativity Ode" the poet describes the peacefulness of the night when Christ began "His reign of peace on earth." "Peace" is sent from Heaven to disperse all clouds, and she strikes a "universal Peace through Sea and Land." Even the waves of the ocean are calm at his coming:

The Winds with wonder whist,
 Smoothly the waters kist,
 Whispering new joyes to the milde Ocean,
 Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
 While birds of Calm sit brooding on the charmed wave
 ("Nativity Ode", ll. 64-68).

The ocean is mild and its surface is smooth. The waves, having been charmed, are absent. Thus the surface of the ocean is not broken by curved and wavy lines: all is ordered and calm for Christ's coming. The stars are still; the sun, outshone by Christ "the greater Sun," defers and withholds "his wonted speed." Broadbent states:

The peace and harmony and light realize, with typically Miltonic solidity and force, what is an ideate condition: an architectural world founded in chaos, harmony metal-
 lically rung out of discord, the gleaming angels vertical against a globe of light in the midst of uncomprehending
 darkness⁴⁴

At Christ's coming, therefore, order came to the world. His victory is over chaos, and the disorder upon earth.

This calmness and order brought about by Christ is viewed again in Lycidas. The shepherds are urged to weep no more, for Lycidas was "sunk low" but is "mounted high" through "the dear might of him that walk'd the waves." Christ is not only able to conquer the waves and elude their formlessness, but is also able to rescue Lycidas from beneath the "wat'ry floor."

It is Christ who ends the discord in Heaven. The battle between the fallen angels and the loyal angels deteriorated into confusion with the two armies uplifting mountains and hills and hurling them at one another.

horrid confusion heapt,
 Upon confusion rose: and now all Heav'n
 Had gon to wrack, with ruin overspred,
 Had not th' Almighty Father . . . foreseen
 This tumult, and permitted all, advis'd:
 That his great purpose he might so fulfill,
 To honour his Anointed Son aveng'd
 Upon his enemies (PL, VI, 668-676).

So it is Christ who ends the great war as he drives the devils from Heaven. The "perverse Commotion" is defeated and calmed.

God again gives powers to his son at the creation. As Heaven's gates open, the Abyss is "outrageous, dark, wasteful, wilde." The winds and waves of Chaos seem to assault Heaven's very gates. Christ creates order and calm from this disorder:

Silence, ye troubl'd waves, and thou Deep, peace,
Said then th' Omnific Word, your discord end . . .
Chaos heard his voice: him all his Traine
Follow'd in bright procession to behold
Creation and the wonders of his might (PL, VII, 216-223).

From matter "unform'd and void," earth is created. The "Spirit of God" spreads his brooding wings upon the waters, and order is made from Chaos, as the spirit's "vital warmth" penetrated the "fluid Mass." Even before light, "the first of things," is brought into being, there is a prevalent "wat'ry calm" in obedience to God's command:

for as Earth, so he the World
Built on circumfluous Waters calme, in wide
Crystallin Ocean, and the loud misrule
Of Chaos farr remov'd (PL, VII, 269-272).

Smooth water surfaces, then, are usually connected with goodness in Milton's imagery.

Schematic order plays a large part in Milton's poetry and prose, as can be seen in the examples given. Undoubtedly Milton knew passages in the Bible which presented Christ as the victor over disorder. Certainly there are many passages dealing with God as

light. However, Milton uses the themes in a style which is peculiarly his own. The associations between God and light, between straight ranks in military formations and virtue, and between calmness and God's commands make it apparent that in Milton's writings straightness has a strong affinity with virtue. The converse is also true, that irregular lines have an affinity with evil, as can be shown from a further examination of Milton's writings.

NOTES

¹KJV. All further references to Bible passages will be to this translation, and chapter and verse will be given parenthetically in the text. Harris Fletcher, "Milton's Use of Biblical Quotations," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, XXVI (1927), 145-165, states that Milton usually used the KJV for the English translation, although he did use other translations such as Tremellius' Latin for the Old Testament, and Beza's New Testament in Latin and Greek and on rare occasions even the Vulgate. At times when these translations did not suit him, Milton used what was for him the ultimate authority for textual citations, the original Hebrew and Greek. For my purposes, however, the KJV seems most appropriate.

²Some ornamentation did exist, as palm trees and two-faced cherubim were described on the walls of the temple. However, the main structure of the temple seems to be chiefly made up of straight lines.

³Christ himself says that whosoever does not bear his own cross cannot be a true disciple of his (Luke 14:27). Also, Paul states "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

⁴There are many other references to God as light, including 1 John 1:5; Malachi 4:2; Revelation 22:5; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 43:3; Psalm 89:15; Luke 2:32; Isaiah 60:19, 20.

⁵Isaiah 40:3, 4 also refer to this: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." See also Luke 3:5; Lamentation 3:9.

⁶Classical allusions can also be found. Plutarch in his Lycurgus (XXII) gives an account of the Spartan battle formation. He describes the Spartans, marching to music of the Dorian mood, without any disorder in their ranks. Straight lines are associated with bravery and virtue. See Garland Ethel's discussion of Plutarch's influence upon Milton in "Hell's Marching Music," Modern Language Quarterly, XVIII (1957), 296.

⁷ John Donne, "A Hymne to God the Father," The Poems of John Donne, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson (London, 1912), p. 369.

⁸ Phineas Fletcher, The Apollyonists, in Giles and Phineas Fletcher; Poetical Works, ed. Frederick S. Boas (Cambridge, 1908), p. 135.

⁹ George Herbert, "The Flower," The English Works of George Herbert, ed. George Herbert Palmer (Boston, 1905), III, 307.

¹⁰ Hanford (p. 265) says that "in the marshalling of men under the discipline of civilized armies Milton saw primarily the beauty and effectiveness of order," and (p. 262) that Milton's consideration of "the art of war in the large sense . . . exercised an influence of considerable importance on his broader thinking, entering into his conception of human character and coloring his philosophy of life."

¹¹ John Milton, Paradise Lost, The Works of John Milton, ed. Frank Allen Patterson et al, II (New York, 1931), beginning on p. 7. All future references to Milton's works will be to this edition. First reference to each poem will have volume and beginning page cited in the notes. All line numbers of poetry will be given in the text. References to the prose will be cited in the notes, giving volume and page number.

¹² Milton says in The Reason of Church Government Urg'd Against Prelaty, III, 185, "Hence in those perfect armies of Cyrus in Xenophon, and Scipio in the Roman stories, the excellence of military skill was esteem'd, not by the not needing, but by the readiest submitting to the edicts of their commander. And certainly discipline is not only the removall of disorder; but if any visible shape can be given to divine things, the very visible shape and image of vertue."

¹³ Ibid., p. 217.

¹⁴ Hanford observes that Milton speaks of the 'small divided maniples' of the Protestant sectaries in their combined attack on the Church of Rome 'cutting through his ill-united unwieldy brigade.' An "ill-united" and "unwieldy brigade," which would seem to be lacking in discipline and possibly in order of ranks, in its connection with the Roman Church would assuredly have Milton's antipathy (p. 248).

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁶ J. B. Broadbent, "Milton's Hell," ELH, XXI (1954), 188,

states: "Chivalric imagery is restricted almost entirely to the devils . . . who appear as purely military, feudal characters."

¹⁷Garland Ethel, in offering proof that Milton was influenced by Plutarch's Lycurgus, compares the fallen angels in this passage with the heroic Spartans (p. 297).

¹⁸Steadman, "Image and Idol," p. 657.

¹⁹"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," I, 1.

²⁰Arcades (I, 72), written for the Countess Dowager of Harefield, pictures her in a similar manner:

Mark what radiant state she spreads
In circle round her shining throne,
Shooting her beams like silver threads,
Sitting like a Goddess bright,
In the center of her light (ll. 14-19).

Also, in "On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough" (I, 95), Milton says of the child, "something in thy face did shine/ Above mortality that show'd thou was divine" (ll. 34-35).

²¹Irene Samuel, "Satan and the 'Diminisht' Stars," Modern Philology, LIX (1962), 246.

²²Animadversions Upon the Remonstrants Defence, Against Smectymnuus, III, 146.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 147.

²⁵Banks, p. 125.

²⁶Reason of Church Government, III, 241.

²⁷Banks, p. 125.

²⁸"Sonnet XXIII," I, 69.

²⁹Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England, III, 33.

³⁰Areopagitica, IV, 350.

- ³¹Reason of Church Government, III, 275.
- ³²Svensden, p. 439.
- ³³Price, p. 220.
- ³⁴"Sonnet IX," I, 61.
- ³⁵Animadversions, III, 146.
- ³⁶A Mask, I, 97.
- ³⁷Broadbent, Milton: Comus and Samson Agonistes, p. 12.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 23.
- ³⁹Paradise Regained, II, 469.
- ⁴⁰Samson Agonistes, II, 331.
- ⁴¹Merritt Y. Hughes, ed., Milton's Poetry and Major Prose,
by John Milton (New York, 1957), pp. 226-227.
- ⁴²William Shakespeare, Twenty-three Plays and the Sonnets,
ed. Thomas Marc Parrott (New York, 1953), p. 326.
- ⁴³Lycidas, I. 76.
- ⁴⁴Broadbent, "The Nativity Ode," p. 27.

CHAPTER III

ANTIPATHY TO IRREGULAR LINES AND SHAPES

Milton's imagery indicates an antipathy to irregular lines and shapes. Possibly this is connected on certain levels with his antipathy to disorder and a departure from the organization and order of the "simple" and "natural." In any case, the dislike of complicated shapes and complexity of structure does exist, as can be ascertained from a survey of Milton's imagery.

Once again an examination of Biblical sources and contemporary analogues seem pertinent to illustrate the pattern Milton also followed. Biblical writers illustrate this antipathy to irregular lines and shapes in many references to the sea and the creatures that live in its depths.

Waves of the sea are frequently associated with moral evil in the Bible, for they represent disorder and deviation, and as such are adversaries of God.¹ James 1:6 states "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." Man is advised to have faith, not to waver. One who wavers, who does not have faith, is like the waves of the sea, disordered and evil.

Again in Psalm 107:27 men without God are likened to waves of the sea: "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." Their staggering paths are evil, like the waves of the sea. But God "maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still . . . so he bringeth them / the men / unto their desired haven" (vv. 29, 30). God calms the waves, and provides a smooth and ordered haven for his followers in their need.

The waves of the sea in Job 38 are referred to as "proud waves" which God has stayed as he "shut up the sea with doors" (v. 8), and said "Hither shalt thou come but no further" (v. 11). The disorder of the waves is conquered by the Creator, who set boundaries for the unruly sea. His power is greater than that of the evil forces of the sea which fight against order and straightness.

Sea monsters and dragons are also associated with evil in the Bible, and they are generally thought of as having an outline made up of many curved and wavy lines. Isaiah 27:1 represents leviathan and the dragon as adversaries of the Lord, who will punish them: "in that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan the crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Leviathan, a "crooked serpent," will be punished by God for his evil, and the dragon in the sea will be slain. The curved and wavy lines in the outline of the form of leviathan and the dragon are thus a part of evil.

Ezekiel relates God's command to tell his people:

Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that liest in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales (Ezekiel 29:3, 4).

The dragon, here symbolizing Egypt, is the enemy of the Lord. God threatens to throw him into the wilderness, and put hooks into his jaws. The passage refers to the scales of the dragon, which indicate an outline of curved lines of the monster, similar to that of a crocodile or fish. Crooked and irregular lines are again a part of evil.

Revelation 20 relates the dragon to Satan: "And he [the angel] laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (v. 2). The association is clear: the Evil One himself is represented as a dragon and a serpent in opposition to God. Again in Revelation 12 Satan is referred to as "the great dragon" who was cast out of heaven. The dragon is described as "having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads" (v. 3). Thus the shape of the dragon could be considered irregular. Again we can associate the irregular shape with evil, for the seven-headed dragon stands before a "woman clothed with the sun" and is ready to devour her child.²

In the Bible also, God advises his children to make straight paths, not deviating from truth and faith. Crooked ways are undesirable for Christians; ordered and direct paths are advocated. Men without God follow crooked paths; they turn from God's ways. God threatens to punish these: "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity" (Psalm 125:5).

Another indication of the undesirability of crooked lines is found in Luke 3:5: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth." For Christ's coming the crooked shall be straightened, and the rough made smooth. Even the mountains and valleys shall be brought level, in universal conformity to straightness and goodness at his coming.

Similar to the Bible, Milton and his contemporaries at times use imagery composed of irregular lines and shapes in association with evil. In sea imagery, the waters of the sea do not possess a regular shape, but must be confined by the shores. Milton, and in some cases his contemporaries, do not generally portray the surface of the sea as smooth and calm, unless commanded so by God. Rather they portray the sea's surface as broken by many powerful waves and crests which are tossed and driven by the wind. The unruly waves, the antithesis of order and straightness, are forces adverse to goodness. Giles Fletcher, in Christ's Triumph After Death,

writes:

And if great things by smaller may be ghest,
 So, in the mid'st of Neptunes angrie tide,
 Our Britain Island, like the weedie nest
 Of true Halcyon, on the waves doth ride
 And sayling softly, skornes the waters pride:
 While all the rest, drown'd on the continent,
 And tost in bloodie waves, their wounds lament,
 And stand, to see our peace, as struck with woonderment.
 (IV, 161-168).³

Neptune's tide is "angrie" and the waves are bloody, symbolizing religious and political strife which drowns the countries on the continent. The waves are disordered and create a rough surface, and do considerable evil to man.

Phineas Fletcher's description of Sin and Hell in The Apollyonists may have given Milton some suggestions for the infernal scenes of Paradise Lost.⁴ Sin, the porter to the infernal gate, is

A shapelesse shape, a foule deformed thing,
 Nor nothing, nor a substance: as those thin
 And empty formes which through the ayer fling
 Their wandring shapes, at length they'r fastned in
 The Chrystall sight (ll. 83-87).

To those approaching her, she appears beautiful, but her beauty is mere deception. Thus to those who can see her true nature she is "crawling carrion." Her shape, formless and opposed to order, connotes evil.

In a poem titled "Quickness," Henry Vaughan speaks of false life as a "foul deception of all men" which curtails truth. Vaughan

metaphorically compares this evil, false life to "a dark contest of waves and winde," a "meer tempestuous debate."⁶ Thus in this poem the waves, wind and stormy elements are associated with evil. On the other hand, life itself--not false life--is a "knowing Joy," a "discerning light," which is "ever bright," "calm and full" (ll. 11, 12). Thus here order, calmness, and light are desirable and good.

Milton's images associating curved lines with evil seem to recur more frequently than his images connecting straight lines with goodness. In Paradise Lost, for example, Pandemonium, Satan's castle in Hell, is described by Milton as being:

Built like a Temple, where Pilasters round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With Golden Architrave; nor did there want
 Cornice or Freze, with bossy Sculptures grav'n;
 The Roof was fretted Gold. Not Babilon,
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
 Equal'd in all thir glories, to inshrine
 Belus or Serapis thir Gods, or seat
 Thir Kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxurie (PL, I, 713-722).

The castle of the fallen angels is ornate, and its lines are complicated and complex. Broadbent calls Pandemonium "artificial, temporary, illusory" and a monument "to the devils' folly and barbarity."⁷ The oriental similes as used by Milton in this passage give the effect that the devil's palace is "a primitive, over-decorated, vulgar place, the home of cruel and heathen despotism."⁸ The architecture of the building, artificial and over-decorated, would

suggest its being made up of a complexity of curved lines, forsaking the simple and straight for the ornate and rich.

Smith equates the rich, complicated lines of the structure with those of St. Peter's, which Milton surely saw on his visit to Rome. Smith cites a contemporary of Milton's, John Evelyn, who wrote in his diary about St. Peter's:

On the battlements of the Church . . . you would imagine yourself in a town, so many are the cupolas, pinnacles, towers, juttings⁹

The complicated architectural lines of St. Peter's are reminiscent of Satan's vision of Rome in Paradise Regained. In tempting Christ, Satan focuses on the "Imperial Palace":

compass huge, and high
The Structure, skill of noblest Architects,
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets and Terrases, and glittering Spires
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd Artificers
In cedar, Marble, Ivory or Gold (PR, IV, 51-60).

The structure, with its "carv'd work," is ornate and overdone and seems tasteless. Christ makes clear that the vision does not appeal to him, for he replies unmoved:

Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
More then of arms before, allure mine eye
(PR, IV, 110-112).

The structure is only called magnificent by Satan. For Christ it is not so. Thus Milton deprecates the complex lines of the palace in the temptation.

In the seventeenth century also this desire for ornateness appears, and Milton again condemns it. In The Reason of Church Government, Milton criticizes the ornateness of the churches: "what an excessive wast of Treasury hath beene . . . in the Idolatrous erection of Temples beautified exquisitely to out-vie the Papists, the costly and deare-bought Scandals, and snares of Images, Pictures, rich Coaps, gorgeous Altar-Clothes . . ." ¹⁰ Milton connects the money spent on decoration of the Temple and ornamentation with idolaters. The values of these people are seemingly distorted-- it is much better to have simplicity and to dispense with some or all of the costly trappings the Church is collecting. Those in the Church also

began to draw downe all the Devine intercour, betwixt God, and the Soule, yea, the very shape of God himselfe, into an exterior, and bodily forme, urgently pretending a necessity, and obligation of joyning the body in a formall reverence, and worship circumscrib'd, they hallowed it, they fumed it, they sprincl'd it, they be deck't it, not in robes of pure innocency, but of pure Linnen, with other deformed and fantastick dresses in Palls, and Miters, gold, fetcht from Arons old wardrobe, or the Flamins vestry ¹¹

They again place a value on the ornate, the "be deck't." Thus lack of simplicity, being "deformed" in this case, and lacking in

innocence, can be associated again with the evil of those who emphasize the material rather than the spiritual.

As complicated structure is present on buildings or ornamentation on statues associated with evil, so a winding pathway which could mislead a traveller is also to be condemned. Thus a labyrinth, maze, or crooked path would be dangerous and should be avoided. George Herbert, in "The Pearl,"¹² calls the ways of the world "labyrinths" through which God leads him on the path to heaven. As it is used here, the term "labyrinths" implies crooked paths of the world from which men must be extricated in order to achieve salvation. In Milton's "A Mask," the Lady attributes her difficulties partly to a labyrinth. She is lost in the forest, but begins the search for her brothers:

yet where els
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangl'd Wood
(ll. 178-180).

This forest maze is to blame for the Lady's difficulty, as she tells Comus:

Comus: What chance good Lady hath bereft you thus?
Lady: Dim darknes, and this leavie Labyrinth.
(ll. 276, 277).

A labyrinth or maze which would lead the lady astray is obviously evil. Since labyrinths and mazes imply irregular, winding lines,

the example is another instance where irregular lines and evil coincide. Broadbent notes that Milton's wild wood "gives place in the last scene to 'Ludlow Town and the Presidents Castle' that suggest an unthinking preference for institutions, government, law, over the wild wood."¹³ Thus Broadbent sees a connection between the mazes of the wild forest and disorder, which Milton disliked.

Christ must similarly find his way in a pathless wilderness in Paradise Regained. The temptations of Satan take place in this wilderness, which Milton refers to as a pathless Desert, dark with horrid shades (I, 193, 296; II, 241). Christ, after forty days of fasting, says

Where will this end? four times ten days I have pass'd,
Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite (PR, II, 245-247).

Similarly, dense forests are mentioned in "The Nativity Ode" as the home of some of the pagan gods which are routed by Christ's coming. These gods lament their displacement from "haunted spring and dale/ Edg'd with poplar pale." The nymphs, who have their hair woven with flowers, mourn Christ's birth in "twilight shade of tangled thickets." The sun's rising sends the "yellow-skirted Fays" away from their "Moon-lov'd maze." These nymphs, unlike the fairies in Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, are evil. They are classified with the false gods who mourn Christ's coming.

Of course, there are some references to mazes and labyrinths

which are not as apparently connected with evil, but it does not seem that Milton connects them with virtue. In Paradise Lost the angels dance in "mazes intricate," but Milton explains that this "eccentric, intervolv'd" pattern is regular by Ptolemaic heavenly standards. It is our earthly limitations, evidently, which prohibit our perception of the harmony involved. To us, the pattern is a maze-- to the angels it would not be.

These symbolic mazes can also show the evil of invisible mazes in reasoning. Milton seems to appreciate straight-forward reasoning and he compares inconclusive thinking to being lost in a maze. In Hell the fallen angels occupy themselves while Satan makes his way to the Garden of Eden:

Others apart sat on a Hill retir'd,
 In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
 Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate
 Fixt Fate, free will, foreknowledg absolute,
 And found no end, in wandring mazes lost
 (PL, II, 557-561).

The devils argue about good and evil, about happiness and misery-- but their minds are lost in a maze: they can reach nothing but "vain wisdom" and "false Philosophie."

Adam fares somewhat better. Though he first avoids the issue of his own guilt in the Fall, his evasions and reasonings finally lead "though through Mazes" to his own conviction, "first and last/ On mee, mee onely as the source and spring/ Of all corruption" (PL,

X, 831-833). God later shows Adam that he is not to bear all the blame, so the thoughts led through a maze also here somewhat miss the truth.

Actually one should come to the truth as directly as possible, using no evasions and figurative "straying from the path," for as Milton states in Animadversions,

Onely if it bee ask't why this close and succinct manner of coping with the Adversary was rather chosen, this was the reason, chiefly that the ingenuous Reader without further amusing himselfe in the labyrinth of Controversall antiquity, may come the speediest way to see truth vindicated and Sophistry taken short at the first bound. ¹⁴

Even as God's children should follow straight paths, so the reader or thinker should follow straight paths of reasoning to the truth. Labyrinths are made up of irregular lines and lead one astray.

The schematic consciousness of Milton seems to extend to an awareness of complicated lines on the human form. In Lycidas Milton mentions the tangles of Neaera's hair:

Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise . . .
to scorn delights . . . (ll. 67-72).

Such tangled hair would consist of complicated, irregular lines. A "clear spirit" rises above the temptations of the common man to "sport" in the shade with the tangles of hair. Desire for fame raises

one above surrender to such delights. In "Sonnet IV, to Diodati," entangling tresses are also to be avoided:

I, who have always shown contempt for Love and have been wont to ridicule his wiles, have fallen into that trap which ensnareth on occasion the best of men. Not golden tresses nor rosy cheeks have thus dazzled my eyes, but rather a fascinating Beauty exemplifying an Idea unknown¹⁵

Tresses are an "ensnaring" weapon which could trap a man, although they did not in this case. "Dancing tresses" are after all "golden nets" which the "Prince of tricksters," Cupid, can use as a weapon.¹⁶ If one gets ensnared in such curls and tangles he will be taken from higher purposes.

In Paradise Lost before the Fall, Eve has flowing gold "loose tresses" (IV, 496). Eve's hair is long, and is waved into ringlets, like a "Vine curls her tendrils, which impli'd/ Subjection" (PL, IV, 307, 308). Her tresses are unadorned, thus no complicated lines of ornate decorations exist, but her locks are "dishevell'd." After the Fall, her tresses are "all disorder'd" (PL, X, 911). Eve's natural curls do not seem evil; but they do imply subjection. Her disordered locks after the Fall could possibly indicate more complex lines than "dishevell'd," but at least "disordered tresses" fits in with the general disorder which occurs in Eden after the Fall (X, 705). Thus the wearing of these tangling tresses applies specifically to those who artificially induce such curls into their

hair, for although Samson has long flowing hair, his "sunny locks" are a gift from God, and are symbolic of "the laws waving and curling about his god-like shoulders." His "puissant hair" signifies "the golden beames of Law and Right."¹⁷ Thus, although humanly induced complications are frequently portrayed as evil, it seems that God-made curvatures, such as naturally curly hair, are not.

Other passages relating to the human body can also be used to exemplify Milton's antipathy to irregular lines and shapes. In Book X of Paradise Lost, Adam calls Eve a "fair defect," for she was made from

a Rib
Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister from me drawn
(PL, X, 885-887).

As Hughes observes, Adam at this point is reflecting anti-feminist traditional lore which states that Eve was made from a crooked rib from Adam's left side. Woman, being made from a bent rib, is therefore an "imperfect animal--she always deceives."¹⁸ Crookedness indicates a flaw, an imperfection.

A survey of Milton's concepts of nature and the universe seems to indicate that the antipathy to irregular lines exists also in the images concerned with these areas. Hell contains a hill "whose griesly top/ Belch'd fire and rowling smoak" (PL, I, 670, 671).

This hill contains gold to which the devils, led by Mammon, hasten with "wing'd speed." Milton states that Mammon was "the least erected Spirit that fell/ From heav'n" (ll. 680, 681) for he coveted the gold on Heaven's streets. Thus the hill is the object of the lust and greed possessed by the followers of Mammon, and symbolizes evil. The curved and rugged outline of the hill with its "griesly top" and volcanic eruptions conveys an impression of organic disorder and implicit evil.

One element of nature that receives much attention from Milton is the sea. Although the sea itself is generally portrayed as evil by Milton, as shown earlier, calmness and order of the sea and the elements are associated with goodness. A further examination of Milton's sea imagery illustrates that even as a calm surface on the sea, one quieted by Christ, is good, so a sea broken by waves or unconfined by shores is harmful and evil to man.

Milton's imagery of seas broken by waves resembles that of the Bible in its symbolizing of evil by use of curved and wavy lines. According to Broadbent, Milton's use of "maritime imagery for bad subjects" was traditional, especially from the Bible, since the Jews, as opposed to the Phoenicians of Tyre and Sidon, were landsmen. Accordingly, Milton's frequent use of sea imagery represents his "horror of the limitless and unmanageable--of, we should say these days, the unconscious."¹⁹

Milton's awareness of the Biblical portrayal of seas as evil can

be seen in his paraphrases of a number of the Psalms. In "Psalm LXXXVIII," for example, God's wrath is likened to the seas, for the Psalmist states:

Thy fierce wrath over me doth flow
 Thy threatnings cut me through.
 All day they round about me go
 Like waves they me persue (ll. 65-68).²⁰

The waves are too strong for the Psalmist to bear, for he cries "Thou breaks't upon me all thy waves, / And all thy waves break me" (ll. 31, 32). Shorelines restrain the formless sea from harming man, but God can also banish the sea when desired, as Milton's paraphrase of Psalm 114 indicates. The descendants of Abraham are led by "the strength of the Almighty's hand" out of captivity to Canaan; and at the Red Sea, Israel is shown more of "Jehovah's wonders." The people saw:

. . . the troubled Sea, [which] shivering fled,
 And sought to hide his froth becurled head
 Low in the earth . . . ("A Paraphrase on Psalm
 CXIV," ll. 7-9).

Waves of the "troubled" sea are portrayed as "froth-becurled," and represent a complicated surface on the changeable seas.

In Paradise Lost Milton again refers to the Red Sea and the passage of the Israelites through it as on dry land. Michael tells Adam the future of the world after the Fall. Pharaoh, the

"River-dragon," finally lets the "sojourners" depart, but he regrets his decision and pursues them. The "Sea swallows him with his Host," but lets the Israelites "pass as on drie land between two christal walls" (PL, XII, 195-197). Notably, when controlled for the purpose of saving God's people, the sea here is not described as full of waves and froth. Rather it has the appearance of a smooth crystal wall. The sea, for Pharoah, once again becomes a destructive force, and the "walls" are transformed into waves in the description:

Moses once more his potent Rod extends
Over the Sea; the Sea his Rod obeys;
On thir imbattelld ranks the Waves return,
And overwhelm thir Warr . . . (PL, XII,
211-214).

Because of God's power, the sea did not represent an evil threat for the chosen people. Milton again refers to God's power over the seas--the Red Sea in particular--in his paraphrase of Psalm 136. The Psalm speaks in praise of God's power and reveals that "the ruddy waves he cleft in twain/ Of the Erythraean main" (ll. 35, 36). The "flouds stood still like Walls of Glass" while the Hebrew bands passed through (ll. 38, 39). The waves were used as a destructive force, however, for Pharaoh (the "Tawny king") and his army, for the sea "devoured" them.

The early paraphrases can be connected to a metaphorical use

of the evil of the Red Sea later in Milton's writings. In Animadversions those who create a schism in the church (those of the views of the prelates) are identified with Pharaoh's army. Those of Milton's views, the saints, are comparable to the Israelites. Milton trusts God to bring peace to these factions eventually, but only after destruction of the prelatists:

When thou hast settl'd peace in the Church, and righteous judgement in the Kingdome, then shall all thy Saints ad-dresse their voyces of joy, and triumph to thee, standing on the shore of that Red Sea into which our enemies had almost driven us. ²¹

Thus again there is a victory over the Red Sea--a deliverance for God's children from perishing in its waters. The prelatists, however, like Pharaoh's army, will be destroyed by the waves.

Of course the portrayal of the seas as evil is much broader in Milton's writings than references to one sea in particular. In Paradise Regained Satan's temptation of Christ is likened to waves beating against a rock:

As a swarm of flies in vintage time
About the wine-press where sweet moust is pour'd
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dash't, the assault renew,
Vain battry, and in froth or bubbles end,
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever; and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o're though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues (PR, IV, 15-24).

The waves of the sea rage in disorder and chaos against the imposed restraints of rocks on the shore, becoming bubbles and froth. When associated with Satan in the simile, their impotence becomes evident. Hughes believes that this passage is one which reveals the whole essence of Milton's poem, for it symbolizes the triumph of truth over falsehood. Hughes thinks that Milton may have been influenced by Malory's symbols of evil, and he uses the waves splashing against the rock to symbolize Satan's falsehood encountering Christ's truth:

The poet and Platonist was attracted by Malory's embodiment of the deceptive mystery of iniquity in his fiends, while the designer of a poem that was itself to be a symbol of the triumph of truth over falsehood saw the essence of his work in the defeat of Antaeus and the Sphinx, and in the repulse of the waves by the rock.²²

Therefore in Hughes' estimation the falsehoods of Satan are embodied in the waves which splash ineffectually against the rock. It is not difficult to visualize the irregular lines of the surging, splintered waves striking the rock.

Lycidas also portrays the sea as evil, for the sounding seas in which Lycidas was drowned bear him perhaps to the "bottom of the monstrous world." Although the waves were calm at the time of his death and it seems that the "fatal and perfidious Bark" is therefore responsible, Lycidas is still born away by the "whelming tide," perhaps even to the "monstrous world." Thus the sea is still

considered an agent in the death of the poet, since he has sunk "beneath the watry floor" (l. 167). A smooth surface on the sea may not be as evil as one broken by waves, but the sea is still formless matter which can be treacherous to man and controlled only by God. Thus, "through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves," he who was "sunk low" is "mounted high," and becomes guardian for others that "wander in that perilous flood" (l. 185). Christ is again mightier than the seas; he raises Lycidas from their evil power, Lycidas can thus assist others who venture upon the evil or "perilous" seas.²³

Milton also uses sea imagery in Samson Agonistes. Carey notes that in both Lycidas and Samson Agonistes salt water is portrayed as being "chaotic and destructive." In Lycidas, states Carey, the last traces of salt water are "wiped away as 'tears'" (l. 14).²⁴ Samson is unable to combat the sea's powers, for, he admits with shame:

I . . . like a foolish Pilot have shipwreck't
My Vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a tear,
Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of God
To a deceitful Woman (SA, 198-202).

Carey comments upon the passage, indicating that Dalila's relationship with the sea makes her a dangerous threat to Samson:

It is bitterly ironic that a 'tear' of Dalila's--so small a quantity of salt water--should have been enough to wreck

Samson's glorious vessel, and the irony lends her later tears, to which both she and the Chorus draw Samson's attention, a dangerous potency.²⁵

In the ship-simile passage Dalila is further connected with the sea. She is "bedeckt, ornate, and gay," like a stately ship with "all her bravery on, tackle trim, sails fill'd, and streamers waving." The Chorus asks at her entrance: "But who is this, what thing of Sea or Land"? This description, together with the phrase "gloriously rigg'd" indicates the ornateness and lack of simple lines in Dalila's make-up. The connection with the sea, like the Philistines who worship Dagon the "Sea-Idol," re-inforces the image of evil to Samson.

In Paradise Lost Satan awakes in Hell and finds himself in a burning lake. The fires which engulf him and his followers resemble waves, and the fallen angels are forced to lift their heads up to keep above these waves. Satan is able to leave the burning lake:

Forthwith upright he rears from off the Pool
His mighty Stature; on each hand the flames
Drivn backward slope thir pointing spires, and rowld
In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid Vale. (PL, I,
221-224).

The fiery waves resemble a sea, rolling back in billows as Satan arises. It can be noted also that these "waves" of flames possess a "pointing spire," which indicates irregular lines. The setting

is especially fitting for the evil one and his followers.²⁶

Notably, on his journey to Earth Satan also sees a "bright Sea/ Of Jasper, or of liquid Pearle" beneath the stairs to Heaven (III, 518, 519). However, this sea is quite different from the image of dark, fearful waters portrayed as evil throughout Milton. The waves are absent--a bright sea of liquid Pearl gives the impression of a smooth surface abounding in light.

Adam sees the oceans as the destructive force of his descendants when, in Book XI, Michael gives a vision of the future of mankind. In the vision, men have grown evil and have turned to the evils of luxury, feast, dance, adultery, and civil disorders. To destroy them, God sends the rain, changing the earth to a vast sea from which only those on Noah's ark can be saved. The ark "rode tilting o're the Waves," but "all dwellings else" are "Flood overwhelmed." All their pomp is covered by the rolling waves, until "Sea cover'd Sea, Sea without shoar" and sea-monsters "whelp'd and stabl'd" in the palaces where luxury had reigned before. Thus the flood with its waves and formlessness unrestrained by shores is here a destructive weapon used to rid the earth of Adam's evil sons and daughters. Yet although controllable by God, the sea maintains its evil and uncontrollable force for man--Noah must be protected from it by his ark. Certainly it is a power which man might fear, for as the ark lands on a mountain top, "With clamor

thence the rapid Currents drive/ Towards the retreating Sea thir
 furious tyde" (XI, 853, 854). God promises, however, to never
 again "let the Sea surpass his bounds" (l. 893) to destroy the world.
 God can control the sea, but man cannot, and this inability makes
 the oceans a threat to mankind.

An allegorical treatment of waves and seas is given in Paradise
 Lost, when, after Adam's sin, he begins to see the effects of evil
 upon the world. Now fallen from his former glory, he sees animals
 become hostile, he sees Discord arising, and his conscience flings
 him into a "troubl'd Sea of passion." Hiding in gloomiest shade,
 Adam can see the growing miseries about him, but feels worse
 within. Hughes compares Adam at this point to Isaiah 66:20, which
 states: "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest."²⁷

As shown earlier, at Christ's birth the sea is remarkably absent
 of waves:

But peacefull was the night
 Wherein the Prince of light
 His raign of peace upon the earth began:
 The Winds with wonder whist
 Smoothly the waters kist
 Whispering new joyes to the milde Ocean,
 Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
 While Birds of Calm sit brooding on the charmed wave
 ("Nativity Ode," ll. 61-68).

Waves generally defy order and control; they can rage or "rave"
 without constraint, for against them man is helpless. But Christ
 can control them; he can resist their disordered power. When he is

born, peace exists everywhere in the world--supposedly no wars are being fought between the nations. This calm of the waves is also important schematically. The wind, frequently portrayed as evil in Milton, raises no ripples; the water is so smooth that "Birds of Calm" can nest. Certainly the smooth surface of the ocean plays a large part in the schematic triumph of Christ over the forces of evil. Broadbent sees Christ's coming as a specifically "Miltonic victory, not of transformation, or of love over law, but of arrangement: a schematic conquest,"²⁸ for "the shame, awe and obedience of Nature, wind and water, stars, and the legendary calm of the halcyons, are unusually submissive responses to the event."²⁹

Christ again calms troubled "seas" when in Book VII of Paradise Lost he sends back the unruly waves of Chaos to create the world. As Chambers notes, the Sea of Chaos contains no "water"--it is "unmistakably pre-elemental," for it is comprised of sea, shore, air, and fire mixed confusedly.³⁰ But Chambers notes too that Milton "o'ersteps the bounds of literal truth to render palpable and sensible that which 'surmounts the human sense.'"³¹ Even though Chaos is not a sea comprised of salt water, its characteristics are that of a sea. The noise, waves, and disorder are all symptomatic of more familiar bodies of water. In Chaos, disorder reigns, as in a sea, before the creation:

from the shore
They view'd the vast immeasurable Abyss

Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
 Up from the bottom turn'd by furious windes
 And surging waves, as Mountains to assault
 Heav'ns highth (PL, VII, 210-215).

Christ and the angels stand on a "shore" to view the waves which assault heaven. The seas of Chaos and disorder are synonomous, and the calming of these troubled seas is another form of the same conquest of disorder as Christ's birth in "The Nativity Ode."

The waters are commanded to be calm:

Silence, ye troubl'd waves, and thou Deep, peace,
 Said then th' Omnific Word, your discord end
 (VII, 216-217).

Chaos hears and obeys, acknowledging the Creator even as Osiris, Baalim, and the other gods are routed by Christ's arrival on earth. Even the "brooding wings" of the Spirit of God call to mind the "Birds of Calm" which sit brooding on charmed waves in "The Nativity Ode," for after setting the boundaries of the world:

on the watrie calme
 His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspred,
 And vital vertue infus'd, and vital warmth
 Throughout the fluid Mass (PL, VII, 234-237).

When Satan travels through the waves of Chaos on his way to earth in Book II, he has an easier journey when he nears the walls of Heaven. There is less of a hostile din, less of a tumult. He can with ease "waft on the calmer wave" as he enters the realm of light

(ll. 1040-1042).

This journey opens the way for Sin and Death to bridge Chaos, following Satan's path. The two allegorical figures parody the creation and calming of the troubled seas when in Book X they make their way to Earth after the Fall. They "hover" upon the waters and are "tost up and down" as in a raging sea (ll. 284, 287). Instead of vital warmth, however, "they infuse cold and petrification" into the seas. But notably the sea is so uncontrollable and limitless that Sin and Death cannot conquer it; instead they build an arched bridge over it, winning an artificial conquest. But the sea of Chaos wars against their passageway "with many a stroke" of "indignant waves" (X, 311).

Milton's personal venture upon the "seas of Chaos" is referred to in The Reason of Church Government. He greatly laments having to leave the calmness of solitude and his studies to enter the disputes concerning prelacy. After digressing upon his plans for a future epic, Milton writes:

. . . I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingnes I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no lesse hope then these, and leave a calme and pleasing solitarynes fed with cherful and confident thoughts, to imbarke in a troubl'd sea of noises and hoars disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightfull studies to come into the dim reflexion of hollow antiquities sold by the seeming bulk³²

The region of calm air is one of virtue in Comus also, for the Attendant Spirit speaks of "bright aerial Spirits" who live "in

Regions milde of calm and serene air" (ll. 3, 4). Thus Milton reluctantly forfeits his solitude to enter an area where confusion reigns, an area similar to Chaos in its noisy and troubled sea and schematic complexities. Too, in that troubled atmosphere, there are merely dim reflections of hollow antiquities instead of the bright countenance of truth with straightness of beams which Milton could behold in his region of calm air.

Similarly, when Adam and Eve sin, the "high Winds" of "Passions, Anger, Hate, Mistrust, Suspicion," and "Discord" begin to shake the "inward State of Mind" of Adam and Eve which was "calm Region once/ And full of Peace" but now is tossed and turbulent (PL, IX, 1122-1130). Again the schematic complexities which Christ must conquer at his birth become apparent.

Even as calm air and smooth waters are desirable, so storms, winds, and tempests are causes of disorder and irregularities in nature and are generally represented as evil by Milton. In Paradise Lost Adam's Fall brings about the corruption of nature. Winds are originated, "with bluster to confound/ Sea, Aire, and Shoar" (X, 664, 665). The climate on earth changes--in a sinless world all "pinching cold and scorching heate" was non-existent. After the Fall, however,

These Changes in the Heav'ns, though slow, produc'd
Like change on Sea and Land, sideral blast,
Vapour, and Mist, and Exhalation hot,
Corrupt and Pestilent: Now from the North . . .

Bursting thir brazen Dungeon, armd with ice
 And snow and haile and stormie gust and flaw,
 . . . rend the Woods and Seas upturn . . . (PL,
 X, 692-700).

Therein lies the evil of the winds and storms: the disorder they inflict upon Earth, especially the seas. This is the "outrage from lifeless things" when Discord, Daughter of Sin, came to the world (l. 707). Calmness and ordered structure were upset: a wind which "rends woods" and upturns seas is evil to mankind.

As Sin and Death leave Hell for Earth after Satan's victory over Adam and Eve, they are simulated to "two Polar Winds blowing adverse" upon a sea, which "together drive Mountains of Ice" (X, 290). Again winds are pictured as being evil, by association and by description. Satan's confrontation with Death at the gate of Hell is compared to two black clouds which collide when the winds blow the signal. As Hughes notes, the middle air was traditionally thought to be a place where demons dwelled. There too, lightning, thunder, clouds, wind and rain were generated.³³ These disruptive forces bring havoc to Earth.

Hell itself is made up partly of a frozen continent, dark and wild, which is

beat with perpetual storms
 Of Whirlwind and dire Hail, which on firm land
 Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
 Of ancient pile . . . (PL, II, 588-591).

Havoc and disorder are apparent. Smoothness and simplicity and order are not present in true form in Hell. Similarly in Chaos, "Ever-threatening storms" are present and a loud tempest shakes the air (PL, III, 425). In the "windy Sea of Land" which makes up the Paradise of Fools, all of the "unaccomplisht works of Natures hand"--abortive or monstrous--are found (III, 455). The wind is one of the most notable characteristics in the description, associating it with deformities in nature.

At the end of the second temptation in Paradise Regained, Satan conjures a ruinous storm which is probably designed to frighten Christ into yielding to the third temptation. This tempest, like the sea, is powerful and boundless, its force unleashed to wreak havoc on earth:

the Clouds
 From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
 Fierce rain with lightning mixt, water with fire
 In ruine reconcil'd: nor slept the winds
 Within thir stony caves, but rush'd abroad
 From the four hinges of the world, and fell
 On the vext Wilderness, whose tallest Pines,
 Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest Oaks
 Bow'd thir Stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
 Or torn up sheer . . . (PR, IV, 410-419).

Christ is unshaken by all these terrors, even though he is surrounded by shrieking Hellish furies. The storm causes disorder upon Earth--even the strong trees of nature are uprooted and felled. The extent of this disorder that Milton wanted to convey in

this passage can be realized by the fact that Milton thought (though it is not so) that the pine trees were "rooted deep as high." Thus, when the trees are felled, considerable damage is done. Christ, however, is able to overcome this disturbance: he is unhurt. This schematic disruption, created by Satan, is his last new device to overcome Christ before the third temptation, and it is destined to failure.

In his third attempt to conquer Christ, Satan tries to convince him that the storms were symbols of ill-will from Heaven:

Yet as being oftimes noxious where they light
 On man, beast, plant, wastful and turbulent,
 Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
 Over whose heads they rore, and seem to point,
 They oft fore-signifie and threaten ill:
 This Tempest at this Desert most was bent;
 Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st
 (PR, IV, 460-466).

Christ is aware, however, of the origin of the tempests, and shows his victory over them by stating that the only harm done to him is being wet from the rain. Satan can cause external, structural disorder, he can change the exterior appearance of some shapes-- but Christ is "unappall'd in calm and sinless peace" (l. 425). The inner quietude cannot be shaken by Satan. The bright dawn after the stormy night and the sun, which shines with even more "effectual beams" in contrast to the night just passed, are symbolic of the conquest over the evil attempts of Satan.

Steadman sees in this passage concerning the turbulencies and

storms a similarity to epics of Tasso and Gratiani. In both works evil enchanters call forth a tempest as Satan does in Paradise Regained. In Tasso's epic, Ismeno's evil spirits are armed with thunder, lightning, and tempest which "represent the deceitful arguments" that "show us honest travails and honourable danger under the shape of evil."³⁴ In Gratiani's poem the infidel sorcerer Alchindo sends evil spirits to terrify Christians. Alchindo's evil spirits "assume terrible and monstrous shapes; others frighten the Christians with nocturnal terrors." All three writers, Steadman concludes from his examination, "retain the tempest's conventional role as an obstacle to the achievement of a destined enterprise, but change its setting from sea to land."³⁵ We can see from this comparison also an allusion to demonic shapes in all three tempests. Ismeno sends forth evil spirits, Alchindo sends forth "monstrous shapes," and Satan sends forth "infernal Ghosts" and "Hellish Furies" as a part of the tempest. Structurally these all have no form, like Death at Hell's gate, or have the irregular shape of a monster, both of which can be identified with evil.

In Samson Agonistes Dalila accuses Samson of possessing an unappeasable anger that is similar to a tempest:

I see thou art implacable, more deaf
 To prayers, then winds and seas, yet winds to seas
 Are reconcil'd at length, and Sea to Shore:
 Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
 Eternal tempest never to be calm'd. (SA, 960-964).

By his anger Samson is able to resist Dalila--thus overcoming her power connected with the sea by assuming a similar power. This image is carried through, as Carey notes, in the scenes that Samson destroys the Philistines. Carey writes:

Just before the noise of the calamity is heard, Manoa speaks of his son's locks 'waving down' (1493)--a word which clarifies the sea-echoes of the earlier 'redundant locks' (568)--and, as the messenger relates, it is 'with the force of winds and waters' and 'with burst of thunder' (1647-51) that the pillars are tugged down. The destructive and amoral power of the sea, which, at the opening of the drama, was specifically associated with the Philistines, has now been transferred to Samson. His last bloody act of vengeance, which the surface-voice of the drama invites us to applaud, is condemned, at a deeper level, by the progression of imagery.³⁶

Samson's act of vengeance would seemingly be considered un-Christian in that it does not forgive, but destroys. Like the tempest in Paradise Regained, the tempest of Samson's anger brings temporary destruction and disorder. But after the tempest comes the calm. In the Prologue, Milton mentions that one can purge the mind of passions such as fear and terror by tempering them with passions well imitated, as in tragedy. Nature would have us use a like formula, for "things of melancholic hue and quality are us'd against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humors."³⁷ Samson takes on the powers of the sea and destroys the Philistines, whom we have seen are associated with the sea--Dagon, the Sea-Idol, is their god, and both Dalila and Samson are associated with the sea and tempests.

Harapha is similar to a tempest in attitude--he would like to destroy Samson. The Chorus introduces him as a tempest, and mentions that a "wind hath blown him hither" (l. 1070). Like Samson in his anger, Harapha would like to destroy; he can scarcely resist the temptation to "render death" to Samson, but whether from fear of his blind and chained enemy or from other reason, leaves without physical violence, but vowing to do evil in some manner to his opponent.

Associated with the evil of the seas, along with tempests, are the sea-monsters which Milton rather frequently refers to in his imagery, both in poetry and prose. Such monsters are complex in structure, sometimes having scaly bodies or winding, serpentine forms. This monster imagery in Milton is quite similar to that found in the Bible.

For example, in Book I of Paradise Lost Milton compares Satan to:

that Sea-beast
 Leviathan, which God of all his works
 Created hugest that swim th' Ocean stream:
 Him haply slumbring on the Norway foam
 The Pilot of some small night-founder'd Skiff
 Deeming some Island, oft, as Seamen tell,
 With fixed Anchor in his skaly rind
 Moors by his side under the Lee, while Night
 Invests the Sea . . . (ll. 200-208).

The scaly rind indicates Milton's association of a complex outline for the sea-beast which is likened to Satan. Moral evil is thus attached

to the sea-beast leviathan in the comparison to Satan lying on the burning lake. Northrup Frye has noted that Milton was probably influenced by passages from Isaiah, Ezekiel, Revelation, Job and Genesis in his use of leviathan and the serpent as symbols for Satan in Paradise Lost.³⁸ It can be noted that Isaiah refers to leviathan as "that piercing serpent, that crooked serpent" (Isaiah 27:1).

Of the leviathan image, Banks observes that Milton tries to express the moral hideousness of Satan, but also awe:

Like Leviathan the greatest individual thing of his kind, Satan is also a thing of evil in his untrustworthiness; he has deceived the angels and will deceive man, just as the sea beast of the travelers' tales deceived the sailors, and as the Biblical Leviathan, according to the tradition of the Church Fathers and the bestiaries, is intentionally treacherous.³⁹

Like the sea in which it lives, the Leviathan can be treacherous to man.

In "The Nativity Ode," Christ overcomes the dragon at his birth. After "this happy day/ Th' old Dragon" is forced to live underground (ll. 167, 168), and his power is limited:

Not half so far casts his usurped sway,
And wroth to see his Kingdom fail,
Swindges the scaly Horrour of his fouled tail
(ll. 171-173).

Satan, the dragon, is conquered by Christ. The scaly body, the folded tail are evidences of a complex outline and are here also

are symbols of evil, for they are descriptive of Satan. In Paradise Lost Satan is again compared to a dragon. In Book IV the chief of the fallen angels is on his way to earth to introduce whatever evil he can, and is referred to as "the Dragon, put to second rout" (l. 3). Here Milton speaks of Satan much as he would a serpent--for the evil one "back recoils upon himself," distracted by horror and doubt of his mission (l. 17). The plans of his attempt at revenge by causing the fall of man are "nigh the birth" and are rolling, boiling in his "tumultuous breast." These descriptions of Satan seem to uphold the portrayal of the dragon and the later change into serpent form, for disguise and then for punishment. Satan is again referred to as a dragon in The Reason of Church Government, where he is called "the old Red Dragon."⁴⁰

Dragons and sea-monsters are connected with others of Satan's forces also. Comus' incantation to Cotytto to come forth reveals that she is never called except when the "Dragon womb of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom" (Comus, l. 130). Comus himself enters with a train of monsters. They are "headed like sundry sorts of wilde Beasts, but are otherwise like Men and Women." Comus resembles his mother Circe, who transforms men into beasts (l. 56). Broadbent observes:

Renaissance pictures show Comus as a Bacchus-like figure attending as master of the revels on courtly dances. But the spirit has already shown he is a bad character. His badness has been established by sight and sound

'Oughly-headed monsters' are fearful no doubt for psychological reasons; they are abhorrent in Christian art because they recall the gods of Egypt⁴¹

Dagon in Paradise Lost is said to resemble a sea monster, also.

He is one

Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive Ark
Maim'd his brute Image, head and hands lopt off
In his own Temple, on the grunsel edge,
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his Worshipers:
Dagon his Name, Sea Monster, upward Man
And downward Fish . . . (I, 458-463).

After Dagon is introduced, we are told of Osiris, Isis, Orus and their followers, who take "monstrous forms" and abuse Egypt, making the people seek their Gods in "brutish forms" rather than human (I, 480, 481). These gods, like Satan, are irregular in shape. Dagon's scaly half-fish body categorizes him similar to Satan's dragon and serpent images.

Dragons, like tempests, inflict destruction upon the land, for as Milton writes in The Reason of Church Government, the English prelates are like the "huge dragon of Egypt breathing out wast, and desolation to the land, unlesse he were daily fatn'd with virgins blood."⁴² The monster of Egypt inflicts desolation on the land, in contrast to Christ, who can bring inner calm.

Monsters and beasts can be associated with other evil qualities in Milton's imagery. Tyranny, for example, is an "ambiguous monster," one which must be slain in two shapes. The latter shape is

the Roman Catholic Church, but the restorers of the Church and the Commonwealth were not "taken with her miter'd hypocrisie, nor terrifi'd with the push of her bestiall hornes, but breaking them immediately forc't her to unbend the pontificall brow, and recoile."⁴³

One gets the impression here that the monster is similar to the dragons in Revelation and in Milton's Latin poems also referring to the Roman Church. In an English translation of a poem on the Gunpowder plot, Milton asks "Was it thus you essayed to present [King] James to the skies, you monster skulking on the seven mountains?"⁴⁴ In another poem on the same subject, Milton again criticizes: "James derided the fires that purge the soul, without whose aid the house of them that dwell above is not to be approached! This made the Latin monster, with its triple crown, gnash its teeth," and "caused its ten horns to shake with threats horrific."⁴⁵ The beast in both poems, according to Hughes, is the monster described by St. John as rising "out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns . . . and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (Revelation 13:1).⁴⁶ This monster, irregular in shape and connected with things evil to Milton, illustrates Milton's antipathy to such unnatural forms.

Other examples of monster imagery can be found in Lycidas, where the poet mentions that the "whelming tide" perhaps carries Lycidas to the bottom of the "monstrous world" (l. 158). The sea monsters here are again a threat to mankind.

Frye gives a survey of leviathan-dragon imagery in the Bible,

and states that for Paradise Regained:

From this [use of leviathan symbolism in the Bible] is derived the conventional iconology of Christ as a dragon-killer, such as we have in medieval sculptures portraying him with a dragon under his feet.⁴⁷

As Michael explains to Adam in Paradise Lost, the "agon of Christ and Satan will not be a physical but a spiritual and intellectual, the cutting weapons used being those of dialectic and the true dragon being a spiritual enemy."⁴⁸ Thus Christ in Paradise Regained overcomes the dragon, his spiritual enemy. Also, at Christ's coming in the wilderness the wild beasts grow calm, the fiery serpent flees, and the noxious worm or serpent is overcome (PR, I, 310-312). All these writhing, crooked animals, adversaries of Christ, are overcome by him.

In Samson Agonistes the Semichorus refers to Samson as "an ev'ning Dragon" which assailed domestic fowls. It is when he goes to the feast of the Philistines that he is compared to the ev'ning dragon; after he pulls down the temple on the Philistines, the Semichorus compares him to an Eagle (ll. 1691, 1695). Hughes, like many editors, glosses the "ev'ning Dragon" as "snake." However, Cox disagrees, and feels that Milton's hero and God's "faithful Champion" could not be simulated to a snake, for it would be "an incongruous, indecorous choice of figure."⁴⁹ A dragon is frequently associated in the Old Testament with judgment, desolation,

and physical destruction:

"Ev'ning Dragon" strikes a familiar Scriptural tone in an account of doom. I would suggest, too, that Milton . . . has in another sense of the word ev'ning, suggested by his mention of "nests in order rang'd" that the "ev'ning Dragon" will bring down the order he sees before him, he will make all even-balanced, just, calm. None of these evocations in the word clash; all support the complex imagery developed in the word Dragon.⁵⁰

Thus the dragon can be associated with the powers of the tempest Samson was connected with earlier. The destructive powers of the tempest and of the dragon are evil, but Samson uses them as in the "like cures like" homeopathic principle, and conquers evil with evil, to restore, at the end of the tragedy, "calm of mind, all passion spent" (l. 1758).

Sin and Death are pictured as monsters in Paradise Lost. Although Death is a formless creature, black as night, he is referred to as a "monster" with a "dreadful Dart," fierce as "ten Furies," "terrible as Hell" (II, 671-675). Satan himself refers to Death as an "execrable shape." Like the sea, Death is formless and evil, and after the Fall inflicts man with the death-rendering darts.

Sin, while also called "a formidable shape" like Death (II, 649), has a definite, but irregular, form. She supposedly sprang from Satan's head and is the embodiment of evil. Milton describes her clearly:

The one seem'd Woman to the waste, and fair,
 But ended foul in many a scaly fould
 Voluminous and vast, a Serpent arm'd
 With mortal sting (II, 650-653).

Thus Sin is serpentine in form below her waist, and the scaly folds accentuate the idea that irregular lines and shapes are coincidental with evil in Milton. But that is not all of Sin's description:

about her middle round
 A cry of Hell Hounds never ceasing bark'd
 With wide Cerberian mouths full loud, and rung
 A hideous Peal . . . (II, 653-656).

Sin is tormented by these Hell Hounds which creep back into her womb when they are disturbed. Altogether, Sin is much more frightful in appearance, we are told, than Scylla or the Night-Hag (probably Hecate). For Steadman, Sin is much similar to the serpent of Genesis 3, but how far Milton wanted the likeness to go is uncertain. Steadman observes:

In Heaven she [Sin] has been his [Satan's] 'perfect image' 'likest to thee in shape and Count'nance bright.' Now in hell she wears a shape conventionally associated with his execution of the very enterprise he has just undertaken The punitive deformities of Satan and his daughter are modelled in part on conceptions of the serpent of paradise.⁵¹

Thus Sin's shape can readily be construed as a punishment and a symbol for the deeds she and her father/lover have instigated.

Of all monsters, the serpent is most frequently alluded to, and

is complicated in shape, often described lying in coils, tangles, folds, or mazes. Even as Sin is half-serpent, half-woman, so Satan, false gods, and evil persons are often portrayed as serpents. Satan, especially, is so closely identified with serpents that his name is interchangeable with "infernial Serpent" (PL, I, 34). Several times Adam is reminded by Michael that his seed will bruise the serpent's head (PL, XII, 149, 234, 383), meaning that Christ will conquer Satan. Of course, the identification of Satan with the serpent has to do with his "foul descent" into the disguise of the serpent form to tempt Eve in Eden. The snake which tempts Eve at first appears beautiful and almost majestic to her, but this is merely a part of the deception of Satan and his change in shape. When Satan first looks for a disguise to assume, he sees the serpent in Eden:

close the Serpent sly
 Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
 His breaded train, and of his fatal guile
 Gave proof unheeded . . . (PL, IV, 347-350).

The serpent then, even before Satan assumes his shape, can be pictured in coils, winding his body around itself like a Gordian knot. Even though the serpent has not yet played its role in the Fall of man, by shape and by description ("sly," "insinuating"), it already is of questionable repute. In Book IX when the temptation takes place, Satan again finds the serpent:

In Labyrinth of many a round self-rowld
 His head the midst, well stor'd with suttile wiles . . .
 Fearless unfeard he slept: in at his Mouth
 The Devil enterd . . . (PL, IX, 183-188).

Thus the "Serpent suttlest Beast of all the Field" (IX, 86) becomes an instrument of the temptation. Assuming the animal form is not appealing to Satan. His ego is bruised that he must take the form of a "Serpent sleeping" in "mazie foulds" (IX, 160). As Bush notes, Satan here must be fully committed to "evil, prideful spite against God and man, mingling with a self-pity aggravated by his 'foul descent' into a serpent's body."⁵²

To tempt Eve more effectively, Satan gives the serpent whose shape he has assumed a deceptive beauty. Satan, disguised as the serpent, still appears in coils, for he travels

on his reare,
 Circular base of rising foulds, that tour'd
 Fould above fould a surging Maze, his Head
 Crested aloft, and Carbuncle in his Eyes;
 With burnisht Neck of verdant Gold, erect
 Amidst his circling Spires, that on the grass
 Floted redundant: pleasing was his shape,
 And lovely, never since of Serpent kind
 Lovelier . . . (PL, IX, 497-505).

As he travels, Satan "curld many a wanton wreath" (IX, 517). He leads Eve by swiftly rolling "in tangles" and makes the "intricate seem strait" (l. 632). All of this attention given to the tangles, coils, folds, mazes, and curls of the serpent form seems readily to convey an association of these with the temptation. Such a coiled

or complicated form is all the more evil in its deception, as the serpent fools Eve by his physical appearance of making an intricate path seem straight. He later does this figuratively by making Eve think God simply wants to keep man beneath him instead of letting her see the intricate problems involved with eating the forbidden fruit.

Kastor sees these changes in form connected with Satan's role as tempter on Earth. Thus a change in shape is indicative of Satan's gradual loss of glory from his form as an angel. Kastor seems to be concerned with size, however, noting that Satan's size is reduced as his glory diminishes.⁵³ He does not acknowledge the importance of curved lines to the interpretation of the imagery. Svendsen does note that "a blind and serpentine body" is one of the many obstacles to true vision.⁵⁴ Svendsen refers, however, to Milton's prose tracts, and not the passage in Paradise Lost.

Pecheux suggests that Satan's unwillingness to assume the serpent form "specifically parallels Christ's ascent-through-descent with Satan's further-descent-through-descent."⁵⁵ Thus Pecheaux observes that the serpentine form is indeed evil and debasing, but she does not observe that the complicated structure is an important consideration in further interpreting the imagery.

After the Fall, Satan's resumption of the serpent form is not of his own choosing, but is inflicted as a punishment. He hears, instead of "universal shout and high applause," a dismal universal

hiss" (X, 505, 508). He finds his "Legs entwining" and down he falls "a monstrous Serpent on his Belly prone," and he is punished "in the shape he sin'd" (l. 516). Hell is now full of serpents, and they are more "complicated" than most snakes:

now were all transform'd
Alike, to Serpents all as accessories
To his bold Riot: dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the Hall, thick swarming now
With complicated monsters, head and taile,
Scorpion and Asp . . . (PL, X, 519-524).

These serpents roll "in heaps" (l. 558) and climb the trees which resemble the forbidden tree in Eden. There they sit "thicker than the snakie locks/ That curld Megaera" (l. 560). Their shape is termed "that dire form." The rolling, swarming, curling snakes again illustrate the attention Milton gave to shapes. Later in Paradise Lost comes the repeated promise that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, so the form of the fallen angels is quite obviously appropriate.

In Paradise Regained God fulfills the promise of Paradise Lost. Christ, in the wilderness, calms wild beasts, but significantly also causes "the fiery serpent" and the "noxious Worm" to flee (PR, I, 312). Satan has "snaky wiles" during the temptation of Christ (I, 120), and when his arguments are defeated by Christ, must pause to collect his "Serpent wiles" (III, 5). Angelic choirs sing of Christ's victory over Satan's temptation, and refer to Satan again

as "Infernal Serpent" (IV, 618).

Other evil beings are associated with serpents in Milton's imagery. Samson says that Dalila is "a poysnous bosom snake" with whom he was entangled (SA, 763). In Of Reformation Milton writes that Tradition is "the Serpents Egge that will hatch an Antichrist wheresoever, and ingender the same Monster as big, or little as the Lump is which breeds him."⁵⁶ Under the "fat Bishopricks" and "covetous and ambitious hopes of Church-promotion," the Church has become "like a great Python from her youth to prove the general poyson both of doctrine and good discipline in the Land."⁵⁷ Like "that fenborn serpent" she can be "shot to death with the darts of the sun, the pure and powerful beams of God's word."⁵⁸ In An Apology Milton's opponent is called a Serpent, who poisons "from his own stuff magazin, and board of slanderous inventions, over and above that which he converted to venome in the drawing."⁵⁹ Likewise in Animadversions Milton writes "Because your dissever'd principles were but like the mangled pieces of a gash't Serpent, that now began to close, and grow together Popish againe."⁶⁰ Thus the serpent form in Milton's imagery is given to those whose beliefs Milton finds offensive. By examining the various passages relating to the serpent it can be concluded that the serpent is associated with evil. Therefore once again irregular, curved lines appear on a symbol of evil.

This pattern therefore exists throughout Milton's imagery. Although there are exceptions to the pattern, a survey of Milton's

imagery makes it possible to conclude that Milton did have an antipathy to irregular lines and shapes, whether in buildings such as Pandemonium, Chaos, seas and tempests, monsters or serpents, or even the human body. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that this pattern can be illustrated in such a wide range of Milton's images. This antipathy to complex schematic structure in the visual imagery also leads to similar patterns of antipathy in other, more abstract, considerations of Milton's imagery.

NOTES

¹Other references which illustrate this use of waves imagery can be found in : Psalm 99:3, 4; Jeremiah 5:22; 51:42, 44; Jude 13, Isaiah 51:15.

²Other references to dragons, leviathan, or Rahab in association with evil can found in Job 41:1, Psalm 74:14, 89:10, Isaiah 51:9, and Lamentation 4:3.

³Giles Fletcher, Christ's Triumph After Death, Giles and Phineas Fletcher; Poetical Works, ed. Frederick S. Boas (Cambridge, 1908), p. 80.

⁴Alexander M. Witherspoon and Frank J. Warnke, ed., Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry (New York, 1957), p. 778.

⁵Phineas Fletcher, p. 131.

⁶Henry Vaughan, "Quickness," The Works of Henry Vaughan, ed. Leonard Cyril Martin, II (Oxford, 1914), p. 538.

⁷Broadbent, "Milton's Hell," p. 178.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Smith, p. 189. Smith is here quoting John Evelyn, who visited Rome in 1644 and wrote about it in his diary (Diary of John Evelyn [London, 1906], I, 179).

¹⁰Of Reformation, III, 54.

¹¹Ibid., p. 2.

¹²Herbert, I, 383.

¹³Broadbent, Milton: Comus and Samson Agonistes, p. 18.

¹⁴Animadversions, III, 108.

¹⁵"Sonnet IV, Diodati, e te'l Dirò," I, 55.

¹⁶"Elegia Prima," I, 173.

¹⁷Reason of Church Government, III, 176.

¹⁸Hughes, p. 427.

¹⁹Broadbent, Milton: Comus and Samson Agonistes, p. 52.

²⁰"Psalm LXXXVIII," I, 151.

²¹Animadversions, III, 148.

²²Hughes, p. 481.

²³It is interesting to note that Herrick was similarly puzzled by the evil of the sea, for in his poem "Faire shewes deceive" he writes of two girls to whom the smooth sea "seem'd to call" to play. But

the Sea soone frown'd
And on a sudden both were drown'd.
What credit can we give to seas,
Who, kissing, kill such Saints as these?

In several other poems ("The Way," "The Goodnesse of his God," "The Pillar of Flame") Herrick writes of the sea as being evil, but it can be calmed by "a peep of light" after prayer to God. (The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick, ed. J. Max Patrick [New York, 1963], p. 387).

²⁴Carey, p. 395.

²⁵Ibid., p. 396.

²⁶The fiery waves of Hell are referred to again in PL, II, 581.

²⁷Hughes, p. 424.

²⁸Broadbent, "The Nativity Ode," p. 27.

²⁹Ibid., p. 16.

³⁰A. B. Chambers, "The Sea of Matter in Paradise Lost," Modern Language Notes, LXXXVI (1961), 693. Chambers traces the source of the sea of Chaos not only to the "deep" over which the Spirit of God moved in Genesis, but also to classical sources in which God is sometimes pictured as a "helmsman" who steers the "ship" of the universe through confusion and disorder.

³¹Ibid., p. 695.

³²Reason of Church Government, III, 241.

³³Hughes, p. 249. In Paradise Lost, I, 540, the demons "ride the Air in whirlwind." That some of Satan's crew rules the middle air is also mentioned in I, 515.

³⁴Steadman, "'Like Turbulencies': The Tempest of Paradise Regain'd as Adversity Symbol," p. 86.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Carey, p. 397.

³⁷Hughes (p. 549) notes that the Italian critic Minturno applied the principle that "like cures like" to Aristotle's theory of tragic catharsis. Hughes quotes Minturno as saying that "Medicine has no greater power, by means of poison, to expel poison from an afflicted body than tragedy has to purge the soul of its impetuous passions by the skillful expression of emotion in poetry." Seemingly, Milton might have applied this principle to some of the imagery involved in Samson Agonistes.

³⁸Frye, p. 227. Lulu Wiley states that in the Bible "Meanings given to leviathan are 'a wreathed animal,' 'a twisted animal (gathering itself into folds),' 'one spirally wound,' 'the whale (a mammal)'" (Bible Mammals [New York, 1957], p. 313) Emma Phipson (The Animal Lore of Shakespeare's Time [London, 1883], p. 438 as quoted in Lewis S. Cox, "Ev'ning Dragon in Samson Agonistes: A Reappraisal," Modern Language Notes, LXX [1961], 580) states that the chief characteristics of the heraldic dragon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are "the head of a wolf, the body of a serpent, four eagle's feet, bat-like wings, and barbed tongue and tail."

³⁹Banks, p. 150.

⁴⁰Reason of Church Government, III, 274.

⁴¹Broadbent, Milton: Comus and Samson Agonistes, p. 114.

⁴²Reason of Church Government, III, 274.

⁴³An Apology For Smectymnuus, III, 337.

⁴⁴"In Eandem (On the Same)," I, 225.

⁴⁵"In Eandem (On the Same)," I, 226.

⁴⁶Hughes, p. 13. Edward Henry Pember ("On the Conception and Treatment of Satan in Paradise Lost and The Inferno," Milton Memorial Lectures [New York, 1908], p. 61) mentions that Milton stayed closer to the "Hebraic legend" than did Dante, and that Revelation seems to be Milton's source for the symbol of Satan as a dragon in Paradise Lost. Satan is identified as "that old Serpent called the Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world."

⁴⁷Frye, p. 227.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 228.

⁴⁹Cox, p. 578.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Steadman, "'Sin' and the Serpent of Genesis 3," p. 220.

⁵²Bush, p. 152.

⁵³Kastor, p. 266.

⁵⁴Svendsen, p. 440.

⁵⁵Mother Mary Christopher Pecheux, "'O Foul Descent,' Satan and the Serpent Form," Studies in Philology, LXII (1965), 195.

⁵⁶Of Reformation, III, 54.

⁵⁷Reason of Church Government, III, 275.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹An Apology For Smectymnuus, III, 295.

⁶⁰Animadversions, III, 117.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Milton's antipathy to irregular lines and shapes has various ramifications throughout his writings. Acknowledgement of this antipathy aids in lending a new level of interpretation to Milton's works, and bears out the theory that Milton gave moral significance to almost every image he uses in his poetry.

Much attention is given to shape throughout Milton, as we have seen. At least forty-one references to "shape" can be found in Paradise Lost alone. By the examination of the moral significance of some of these references in relation to their schematic innocence or evil, we can better understand some of the others which do not as visibly point out evil in a tangible structure--or the evident lack of it. For example, in The Reason of Church Government Milton deals with the abstract concept of "discipline." In trying to establish his point, he refers to the visible shape this quality would take, if embodied:

And certainly discipline is not only the removall of disorder, but if any visible shape can be given to divine things, the very visible shape and image of vertue, whereby she is not only seene in the regular gestures and

motions of her heavenly paces as she walkes, but also makes the harmony of her voice audible to mortall eares.

Regular gestures are characteristic of the visible shape of virtue. Discipline, which is, as has been noted, associated with virtue, here is even so much associated with it as to be synonymous with the term.

This consciousness of shape seems present also in Milton's "Letter 7, To Charles Diodati," where Milton writes:

Not with so much labour, as the fables have it, is Ceres said to have sought her daughter Proserpina as it is my habit day and night to seek for the idea of the beautiful, as for a certain image of supreme beauty, through all the forms and faces of things (for many are the shapes of things divine) and to follow as it leads me on by some traces which I seem to recognize.²

Even as discipline could be visualized as having a definite form, so Milton intends to search for a shape or form of supreme beauty. Such may take many shapes, but the most virtuous would probably be, as can be seen from an examination of Milton's attitudes concerning shape, a simple form without excessive ornamentation and without irregular, unnatural lines.

The importance of simplicity and virtuous, uncomplicated shape to Milton is again exemplified where, in The Reason of Church Government, Milton speaks of the temple of Ezekiel. Milton states that the description is "shadowie," but this much is

clear to him: God gave an important description for the physical temple, thus he would surely care much more about man's mental temple. Milton writes:

Should not God rather now by his owne prescribed discipline have cast his line and levell upon the soule of man which is his rationall temple and by the divine square and compasse thereof forme and regenerate in us the lovely shapes of vertues and graces, the sooner to edifie and accomplish that immortall stature of Christs body which is his church in all her glorious lineaments and proportions.³

God thoroughly planned the temple spoken of in Ezekiel, thus man's soul, the rational temple, would surely receive God's attention, and would be molded into "lovely shapes of vertues" by discipline. The church was never intended to be "patch't" and "varnis't over with the devices and imbellishings of man's imagination."⁴ Thus a concrete, visible object serves as an emblem for spiritual and mental guidance.

Therefore according to Milton, man should learn that simplicity is the better path to follow. The prelates, however, do not seem to realize this, for the simple purity of God's word has been clouded:

We see again how Prelaty sayling in opposition to the main end and power of the Gospel doth not joyn in that mysterious work of Christ, by lowliness to confound height, by simplicity of doctrin the wisdom of the world, but contrariwise hath made it self high in the word and the flesh to vanquish things by the world accounted low, and made it self

wise in tradition and fleshly ceremony to confound the purity of doctrine which is the wisdom of God.⁵

The prelates have forsaken simplicity for tradition and ceremony.

This complexity leads men astray; it confuses them. In "Of Prelaticall Episcopacy," Milton condemns Ignatius in particular for writing in a complex style which is contrary to the simple style used in the scriptures, which Milton thinks should be exemplary.

Milton states:

Had God ever intended we should have sought any part of usefull instruction from Ignatius, doubtles he would not have so ill provided for our knowledge, as to send him to our hands in this broken and disjoynted plight; and if he intended no such thing, 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 guilt, to interlace the intire, the spotlesse, and undecaying robe of Truth, the daughter not of Time, but of Heaven⁶

Ignatius' style is inappropriate to any expression of truth. The meaning of his words is clouded; if he were to try to express truth, he would be unable to, for his style and truth are incompatible. If he cannot write simply and with truth, then we have no reason to read his statements. Truth must have simplicity and straightforwardness.

Again in Animadversions, Milton emphasizes the importance of simplicity:

A plaine unlearned man that lives well by that light which he has, is better, and wiser, and edifies others more towards a godly and happy life than he: The other is still using his sophisticated arts and bending all his studies how to make his insatiate avarice, & ambition seem pious, and orthodoxall by painting his lewd and deceitfull principles with a smooth, glossy varnish in a doctrinall way to bring about his wickedest purposes.⁷

We would be wiser to imitate the simple man than a wicked learned man. A "smooth, glossy varnish" represented as good is used by the deceivers to mask their sophisticated arts. Such deceptions are evil; an unlearned, simple man is better and wiser.

Such wicked, sophisticated inventions and arts of evil men are to be condemned. Milton is even thankful to God for punishing those whose complicated arts lead men into crooked paths:

But ever-blessed be he, and ever glorifi'd that from his high watch-Tower in the Heav'ns discerning the crooked wayes of perverse, and cruell men, hath hitherto maim'd, and infatuated all their damnable inventions, and deluded their great Wizzards with a delusion fit for fooles and children.⁸

As Christ overcomes Satan, so God overcomes and punishes those who lead others into crooked paths. As the scriptures caution against following any but straight paths, those whose inventions delude men into following crooked paths are punished by being deluded themselves. They are unable to think clearly; they cannot reason as well as fools or children. To Milton this punishment is most fitting.

Comus also uses deceptive arts, in which his abilities even exceed those of his mother Circe. To deceive the Lady, Comus, like the wicked men who use smoothness and simplicity to hide their complicated arts, dresses like a simple peasant. He debates with the Lady, using lies and complex pretenses to tempt her into submission. But the Lady, being virtuous, is able to see the truth:

this Juggler
 Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
 Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb
 (ll. 757-759).

On a concrete level, Comus tries to deceive by assuming the simple dress of a peasant, thus charming the Lady's "eyes." On an abstract level, Comus similarly attempts deception, trying to charm the Lady's judgment by concealing his "false rules" of his sophisticated art. The Lady defeats Comus' arguments with her "Sun-clad power of Chastity," and is saved by her brothers and the Attendant Spirit. Thus again a wicked user of sophisticated arts is defeated by the advocates of virtue.

Similarly, in Book IV of Paradise Lost Satan begins to tempt Eve by squatting "like a Toad" to use his "Devilish art to reach/ The Organs of her fancy" (ll. 802, 803). Ithuriel discovers and surprises Satan, and when touched by the angel's spear, the evil deceiver "returns of force to his own likeness." Satan again uses deceptive arts and complex arguments, but this time with success,

in tempting Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit in Book IX. His words to Eve are "persuasive" and seem "impregn'd with Reason, and with Truth" (l. 736). Again his figurative complexities are masked with seeming truth, and he leads Eve to the Fall.

Although Eve does not realize the evil of Satan's complexities of argument, Christ is able to recognize Satan's purpose. Again in Paradise Regained Satan persistently avoids simplicity. He uses double meanings to tempt and confuse. Man might fall prey to this device, such as Eve did in Paradise Lost, if he is not on guard. Christ, however, sees through the method and overcomes it, even as he has conquered Satan on a more concrete schematic level.

Christ states:

That hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lyes,
But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
Ambiguous and with double sense deluding,
Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
And not well understood, as good not known?
(PR, I, 431-436)

Satan is the antithesis of simplicity, as he is the antithesis of good and order. As Frye notes, "something of the double entendre runs through all of Satan's speeches" in Paradise Regained.⁹ Satan's purpose is to confuse, as he confused Eve in the Garden of Eden by making the "intricate seem straight" in his disguise as a serpent. Frye observes about Satan's speech in the first book of Paradise Regained:

As in the previous conflict, Satan is 'scoffing in ambiguous words,' and the opening colloquy between Satan and Christ in the first book is already a clash of oracular powers. Satan's dialectal instrument is the evasive or quibbling oracle; Christ's is the simplicity and plainness that Milton prizes so in Scripture, especially the Gospels.¹⁰

Like the Sphinx in Oedipus, Frye suggests, Satan tell riddles which threaten human life. Christ destroys Satan just as Oedipus destroys the Sphinx.

It is apparent that Milton is quite interested in the symbolic power involved with shape and form, and that these have meaning not only on the literal level, but also on various interpretive levels, from concrete to abstract. Perhaps the affinity with simple, regular shapes and the antipathy to complex, irregular lines and shapes can best be summarized by an association with Milton's love for order and dislike of disorder.

As Broadbent notes, a conflict between order and disorder is present in Comus, for Comus' music "is jazz lulling or frenzied, opiate, or Dionysiac; it spellbinds, drugs, ensnares; it makes the listener mad, beside himself." In contrast, the Lady's song "symbolizes the harmony--the original order and necessarily happy ending--of the universe as created by God."¹¹ This song also symbolizes "the rational, stabilising power by which God created the universe out of Chaos."¹² This power, as Broadbent notes, is exemplified in "The Nativity Ode":

When of old the sons of morning sung,
 While the Creator Great
 His Constellations set,
 And the well-ballanc't world on hinges hung,
 And cast the dark foundations deep,
 And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep
 ("The Nativity Ode," 119-124).

The creation represents a schematic victory over the forces of Chaos, a creation of order from disorder.

The creation is portrayed again in Paradise Lost. Christ's power over disorder is made clear as Uriel describes the creation to Satan, who is disguised as a cherub:

Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
 Stood rul'd, stood vast infinitude confin'd;
 Till at his second bidding darknes fled,
 Light shone, and order from disorder sprung
 (PL, III, 710-713).

With the Fall of Adam and Eve, harmony and order are disturbed, and conflict and discord on earth begin. Animals no longer can live together in harmony, and death is introduced to disrupt peace for both man and animals. Bush says of Paradise Lost:

Paradise Lost is a "myth" about the actual and perpetual war between good and evil in the world and in the soul of man. In its total scheme it is a divine comedy, a tragic vision of human experience and history which ends with a measure of happiness and hope. It depicts the results of disobedience, of secular pride rebelling against the divine order, the order of love in harmony with law.¹³

Order on earth is temporarily lost at the Fall of man, as we have

seen, but is regained with Christ's promised victories over Satan.

In Paradise Regained Christ withstands Satan's temptations, thus defeating the evil one and restoring hope to the world. The victory brings peace, as the quiet ending of the poem testifies. With the conquest of Satan, Christ has regained a "fairer Paradise" than Eden. The "snares are broke"; the "Son of the most High, heir of both worlds" (IV, 633) has saved mankind. The order and peace on earth seen in "The Nativity Ode" for Christ's birth reappears through another conquest of the dragon, Satan.

So in Milton the imagery in the major poetry and prose can be compared to the victory of Christ over the false gods, of simplicity over complexity, of order over disorder. As good wins over evil in the images, so man can, like Adam, look for the hope of victory in Christ, the key to schematic conquest.

NOTES

- ¹ The Reason of Church Government, III, 185.
- ² "Letter 7, To Charles Diodati," XII, 27.
- ³ The Reason of Church Government, III, 191.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid., p. 248.
- ⁶ "Of Prelaticall Episcopacy," III, 91.
- ⁷ Animadversions, III, 163.
- ⁸ Of Reformation, III, 60.
- ⁹ Frye, p. 436.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Broadbent, Milton: Comus and Samson Agonistes, p. 20.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Bush, p. 146.

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