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GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE RHETORIC OF RECOVERY: MORAL DIDACTICISM IN MILTON'S MAJOR POETRY

A DISSERTATION

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

PAUL HART COX

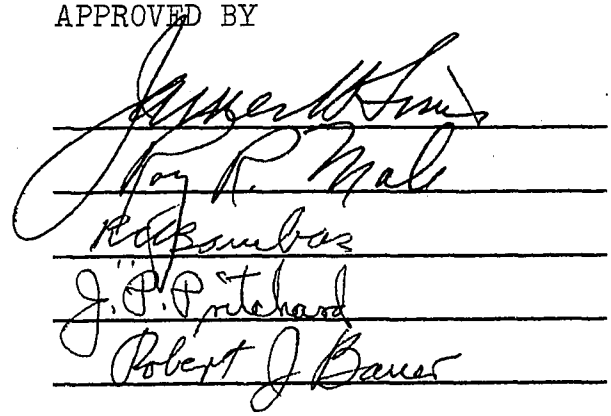
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1968

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IN MILTON'S MAJOR POETRY

APPROVED BY



DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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But to guide Nations in the way of truth
By saving Doctrine, and from errour lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more Kingly, this attracts the Soul
Governs the inner man, the nobler part . . . .

(Paradise Regained III, 473-477)

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THE RHETORIC OF RECOVERY: MORAL DIDACTICISM IN MILTON'S MAJOR POETRY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In his tractate Of Education Milton says: The end, then, of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright."[1] He then goes on to describe a program of education in which he proposes to repair the ruins in his students by a long and rather arduous program of studies. But the length and arduousness of the program does not seem to have concerned Milton, except as it might make procurement of qualified teachers difficult; in fact, he often describes the system as "easy" and "delightful." The difficulty of the method was conceived to be a matter of stamina and will, apparently, rather than one of unlikelihood that the student might master the learning: the aleatory element in twentieth-century education, which constitutes about its principal difficulty, does not seem to have been present in Milton's intentions. His students' risk was not of failure, but of exhaustion. At one point, after allowing that his program might be "laborious indeed

at the first ascent," he insists that it is so delightful a course that he expects one will "have more ado to drive our dullest and laziest youth, our stocks and stubs, from the infinite desire of such a happy nurture, than we have now to hale and drag our choicest and hopefullest wits to that asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles" that constitute current education.[2]

The basis for Milton's educational plan in this tractate is the logical and pleasant arrangement of the studies and the reinforcement of earlier lessons in later ones.[3] He intended to obviate many learning problems by reasonable and gradual transitions from easy lessons to hard. The object of this study is to discuss another educative program of Milton's which uses the same principles and is also directed toward repairing the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright. It is a pattern of moral didacticism running through Milton's major poetry by which Milton makes available to his reader what is necessary for the reader to recover in himself a Paradise "happier far" than the one lost by Adam and Eve. The discussion will begin with Comus rather than immediately with the major poems because Comus may be thought to begin the pattern of variations that marks the strain of didacticism in the major poems, and because Comus contains in small a similar pattern complete. The didactic objective of Comus is certainly different, of course, but the methods are similar.

Basically, though, the series of lessons this study is about begins in Paradise Lost, does its main work in the systematic lessons of Paradise Regained, and culminates in the effective implementation of the lessons in Samson Agonistes.

It is unnecessary, of course, to assume that Milton had the entire didactic plan in mind when he began Paradise Lost. Patterns may take shape as they are being filled out, and quite often do. It does Milton no more credit to assume he had conceived a master design such as I intend to describe before he carried out any of it, than discredit to assume the reverse. In other words, concern over "intention" is really beside the point in this discussion unless it is very carefully defined. I believe that if "intention" means an awareness of what one's poem is likely to accomplish, or of what one wishes his poem likely to accomplish, then this didactic course is Milton's intention, and therefore I will not hesitate to assume and state that achieved effects are desired effects. It may technically be fallacious to state that Milton had a zeal to do the will of God and that in his poems he intended to satisfy that zeal, but it is certainly true that he did feel that zeal and that his poems do tend to reflect what Milton expressed as the will of God in his Christian Doctrine. Whether that result is the product of careful planning, which I take to be the normal sense of "intention," divine inspiration, happy accident, or whatever, seems to me to make little difference: Milton

presumably intended to write his poems as he did. When I speak, then, of "desired" or "intended" effects in these poems, I mean effects which seem part of a plan, however unconscious, and which are not simply isolated, accidental effects.

My linking the three major poems together should not be thought to imply that I consider them to show a developing dramatic intent such as is sometimes suggested. E. L. Marilla, for instance calls them "a trilogy which represents a comprehensive definition of the intellectual and moral issues that forever confront man as he srives [sic] to recognize and fulfill the responsibility which, by the tenets of a Christian humanist, is the only justification for his existence."[4] Marilla's essay is valuable, but I would object to his use of "trilogy." These poems are joined by a didactic intent, but a trilogy is normally held together by a dramatic intent, and the levels on which these poems operate are much too different to allow that. The point may be small, but I believe it is important, for I will not attempt to identify any dramatic developments in the poems unless they form part of the didactic current I am trying to describe. Thus, for instance, the discussion of Samson Agonistes will not center on what is dramatically important, that is, the reawakening of Samson's will. And the discussion of Paradise Lost will not be especially concerned with how Milton succeeded in his intention to

"justifie the wayes of God to men," but with the pattern of moral didacticism. This limitation of scope is sometimes onerous, but obviously necessary.

The end of this moral didacticism is the regaining of Paradise for the reader. The method is to lead the reader through a set of temptations and conflicts arranged so that as the reader reacts to the various encounters either with the poetic characters or in his own person, he sees his own capacity for moral choice either rebuked or vindicated. From this set of experiences he is to become progressively able to make true moral distinctions, to find his way through mazy error. And as he progresses through the sequence, he becomes more and more able to understand lessons he encountered previously. Thus, for instance, a reader who rejects Manoa's offer of ransom for Samson as a suitable possibility, knowing why Samson must reject it, is better able to understand Christ's refusal to "save" himself as Satan suggested in Paradise Regained by turning stones to bread: the precept that one serves God best not by "saving" himself in the easiest way possible but by staying with the hardships of his proper service, taught by Christ in Paradise Regained, becomes a demonstrated fact of human experience in Samson Agonistes. The application of the lesson, that is, elucidates the lesson itself.

That is because the lessons progress from "easy" to "hard." The reader of Paradise Lost is not given much

opportunity to resist; he is practically dragged to realizations by the epic voice and by the manipulations of his sympathies. The lessons are great ones, requiring him to recognize his sinfulness and subjection to Satan, Sin, and Death, and the method of teaching them is to overwhelm the reader with them. But in Paradise Regained the role of the epic voice diminishes, and the method of manipulation becomes more subtle; in Samson Agonistes there is no epic voice, and the reader and Samson are alone. This development follows the pattern described in the tractate Of Education in its movement from general precepts to particular instances, and also in that the reader finds, presumably, that not only does mastery of the earlier lesson make the later lesson possible and even relatively easy, but also mastery of the later lesson allows him to go back to the earlier lessons with more understanding. The reader may repeat the sequence as often as necessary with increased wisdom at each repetition.

The reader is able to respond to these lessons because Milton involves him in the encounters along with the characters. Either the reader is manipulated into partisanship with a character in a temptation or conflict or the like, or he is forced to choose between offered alternatives, or he is led to identify with a character (this is especially true with Samson) who is making choices the reader must make, so that the reader becomes like a

character in the poems; he participates in their action. The degree of that involvement differs greatly among the poems, of course: in Samson Agonistes the reader is very closely involved, whereas in Paradise Lost he is simply manipulated into various sympathies and led toward unexpected reactions. But throughout the major poems the reader does more than just read about things happening to others. Things happen to him; he makes decisions and makes discoveries about himself as well as about Adam, about Christ, and about Samson. And when he makes the wrong decisions he is subject to penalties, ranging from anguish at the realization that he has become concerned for--not just about--Satan, whom he should of course abhor, to bewilderment when Christ refuses offers that seem appealing, to dismay when Samson insists on accepting his punishment and finally his degradation as a prelude to his exaltation in Samson Agonistes. His right decisions, however, are rewarded not by compensating pleasure, but by the realization of what was to Milton the most important truth: that the service of God is arduous, demanding, and often painful, but that it is the only way to exaltation in the eyes of God.

Most of these encounters in which the reader is involved are temptations. Milton, in achieving or trying to achieve the moral improvement of his reader by subjecting him to temptation, is following what he considered to be God's example. He observes in Christian Doctrine that man

is predestined to salvation from the beginning of the world;[5] not that a man cannot frustrate his salvation for himself, but that God, who originates everything, has originated nothing except for the eventual good of his creation: thus the Fortunate Fall. Whatever comes of these temptations comes for God's ends, and it is God's intention that everyone have opportunity and encouragement for salvation. Moreover, there are two kinds of temptation--good and evil--both of which serve God's purposes (Christian Doctrine, I, vii). A good temptation is a potentially evil one which is resisted. It manifests the strength of the person tempted and at the same time encourages humility in him: and it makes the resister of the temptation an example for others. Job is possibly the best example of one who has turned potentially evil temptation into good by resisting it, and Christ does much the same in Paradise Regained. An evil temptation is one in which the subject makes the wrong choice, or at least fails to make the right. These temptations are not sent to cause a person to damn himself, but instead to reveal hypocrisy already in the sinner, or to lead one whose heart is already hardened to an action which will, in the long run, promote God's ends. Evil temptations, then, manifest moral weakness on the one hand and give occasion for a manifestation of moral strength on the other: perhaps Samson's marriage to Dalila is such a choice.

In the same way God subjects man, or allows him to be subjected, to good and evil temptations in order to work his recovery, Milton subjects his reader to them to help him achieve his moral renewal. I do not mean to imply, either, that Milton takes the role of God with relation to his poems.[6] These temptations occur in artistic situations, so that they comment on the "real world" but differ from it in that one gets as many chances as he wishes to take to rectify his wrongs. A wrong decision made by a reader of Paradise Regained about a choice in the poem is relatively harmless, even salutary, in a way a decision to usurp a real throne (for instance) is not. Or, to put it more simply, this course of Milton's is education in the business of living morally, not the nearly irreversible process of actually living. The lessons are serious, but mistakes are not fatal.

The teaching is accomplished by variations in the moral types and abilities of the principals in encounters of temptation or conflict. A kind of moral spectrum extending from Christ at one end to Satan at the other with man somewhere around the middle would, if considered in relation to these poems, show that not until Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes do principals in encounters occupy equivalent positions.[7] Thus, to begin with Comus, the first full encounter involves a moral and mortal, if somewhat unusually stiff, young woman pitted against a supernatural

funster, and her brothers, who are young and innocent, in combat with evil as ancient as myth. Comus and the Lady are different kinds of creature--so different, in fact, as to allow one to argue that Comus is not even legitimately a creature--but their difference in kind is based on and reflects a difference in moral capacity. In Paradise Lost there is a series of encounters, all different. Satan, a fallen angel, is confronted by Death, an allegorical monster. Abdiel, an unfallen angel, opposes fallen angels. Unfallen man--or woman--is tempted by Satan, a fallen angel, and immediately Adam, unfallen man, is tempted by Eve, fallen.[8]

In these encounters, where the event is happy, the temptation often appears almost impossible; and where the event is unhappy, the reader wonders what could have happened to make such obvious chicanery work. Abdiel is firm against an entire host of minatory foes; but Eve, when she falls, has been warned against just this Fall. Always, however, there is a factor which renders the good temptations good, and the evil ones evil; there is always the possibility for good to win. Abdiel need not fear because, as one realizes on reflection, there is really no way the fallen angels can hurt him. Evil only appears stronger than good. Eve could have resisted the appeal of her hunger by turning to another tree as well as the appeal of Satan's sophistry by turning to Adam. Or in Comus, the Brothers

brandish swords against Comus bravely, but the reader knows they are powerless against his magic: until, that is, the Attendant Spirit provides a stronger good magic. The point is that there is always a good magic, there is always more strength to good than to evil; evil temptations are always the responsibility of the one tempted.[9]

But in none of the temptations preceding Paradise Regained does the reader feel immediately threatened. He is affected, to be sure, and in all of them--not excluding Comus--he is deeply involved, but not immediately challenged. The reader hopes for and expects good issue in the affair between the Lady and Comus, but he does not feel himself threatened by Comus. Similarly, no matter how strong his feelings in Book IX of Paradise Lost, he is not made to feel that Satan is tempting him, but rather one in whose fortunes he has a very great stake. He is made to feel the effect of the Fall, of course, and is made throughout the poem conscious of his sinful nature, but he does not participate in the Fall itself; he is guilty of it as Original Sin, not Personal Sin.[10] The reader does not fall with Adam; he is a fallen creature and in Adam's sin he sees how it happened.

Thus the reader is made to respond to temptations in an artistic world where all the effects of temptation are salutary; where, in other words, by Milton's decree, all temptations tend toward his eventual good, even if they

cause temporary discomfort. He learns from Adam's Fall without having to fear experiencing penalties from it other than the anguish which attends consciousness of imperfection. The anguish is important--it is, after all, one's penal lot for Adam's sin--but instilling it is hardly to be thought the entire didactic end of the poem. Instead, by awakening in the reader a desire for improvement, it tends to reduce the likelihood of his being subjected to sterner penalties.

The effect of this series of varied temptations which do not threaten is to add up to a set of preliminary lessons pointing out the reader's need for systematic teaching in morality. The effect to one who is made agonizingly conscious of his guilt through a reading of Paradise Lost is to infuse in him the humility necessary to learn what he must in Paradise Regained. The effect to one who has seen Satan in operation and has been shown the subtle fallacies of his arguments in Paradise Lost is to prepare him intellectually for Paradise Regained. The effect to one who has seen the hideousness of Sin and Death in Paradise Lost is to make him eager to undertake the rigors of Paradise Regained. Just as God's intention for man before the Fall was that he would be recovered and raised higher even than before, that, in other words, he would regain Paradise, so Milton's intention for his reader whom he has shown the loss of Paradise is that the reader then be shown the way to

recover it. Insofar as the didactic purpose of the poems is concerned, then, Paradise Regained is really the objective of lost Paradise.

If the encounters preceding Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes are always varied in the dispositions of their principals, the encounters in those poems constitute a final parallel variation in the pattern. In Paradise Regained the extremes of the moral spectrum meet, first in the persons of men, occupying a rough midpoint in the spectrum, and then in their own characters, as Christ cuts through the complicated hypocrisy of Satan's disguise.[11] In Samson Agonistes, fallen man, whose kinship with Adam is underscored by the peculiar nature of his fall, is tempted by fallen men. Each poem is organized around a set of three encounters: in each the first is a temptation to distrust the Fatherhood of God, the second is divided into two parts and develops the virtue of the hero, and the third is an insulting proposal which is turned back in triumph on the tormentor. I will argue the parallel relationship of the two poems later.

I have already mentioned the decrease in clear reader guidance that occurs as one goes through the major poems. The epic voice is always, or nearly always, felt in Paradise Lost. But in Paradise Regained the function of the epic voice is much less to comment overtly on the moral issues in the poem, and more simply to tell what happens.

It is true that, at least subliminally, there is a certain amount of manipulation of the reader in which the epic voice participates, but there is little overt guidance: nor should there be nor can there be, logically, for the issue in Paradise Regained is the voluntary acceptance of Christ's answers instead of Satan's suggestions. In Samson Agonistes, of course, there is no epic voice. The chorus, which might have had a similar function, does not have it. The chorus is dramatized, part of the action, and is therefore privileged to no more than mortal knowledge about it. It can serve as narrator, as a lyrical comrade, and as an aid to reflection, but it cannot point morals as an epic voice can with authorial authority.[12] More than in any other of the poems, whatever intelligence in Samson Agonistes is able to say "he speaks thus," or "here he errs," or "this is important," must be the consciousness of the reader assessing the scene. And if the reader can do that, if he is not baffled by the poem--baffled so as to fail to understand Samson's hostility to Dalila, for instance--then the reader has gone from the condition of a disciple, led by the epic voice or the intelligence behind it, to the condition of a a fellow of Samson, who can make his choices with him, or even, as he anticipates Samson's choices, feel responsive to Samson's opening plea: "A little onward lend thy guiding hand / To these dark steps."

The disappearance of the epic voice is owing to another simple but quite important difference between the two poems, one which is sometimes overlooked, as by Arnold Stein in Heroic Knowledge: Paradise Regained is an epic, not a drama, and Samson Agonistes is a drama, not an epic.[13] The involvement of the reader in the two imitations of actions is different. Paradise Regained, or at least the main action of it, is characterized by God when he says of Christ, "But first I mean / To exercise him in the Wilderness" (I, 155-56). Paradise Regained is an exercise in morality, which is undergone by Christ on man's behalf so that as man goes through it too he too can be exercised in virtue--"through all temptations tried." The satisfactory completion of Paradise Regained assures man of Paradise regained,[14] and as well displays how Christ has functioned and will function for man. The poem, then, is at once a didactic, psychological device, and the record of a symbolic, intercessory act. Paradise Regained is a symbol that carefully explains itself: its reader learns how to do his part in the recovery of Paradise for himself while he sees Christ accomplish his part in the symbolic recovery of it for him.

In this other way, too, Paradise Regained is unlike a drama: the reader is never allowed to believe that Christ will sin and fail. The possibility of Christ's sinning is not part of the Christian Doctrine that informs the poem:[15]

and we are denied even the possibility of suspending our foreknowledge of Christ's sure success, by a series of clear indications before the temptations that Christ is going to reject exactly the temptation that is about to be offered. The outcome is interesting not because it is in doubt, but because the reader helps bring it about and feels intimately affected by it. In Paradise Regained he becomes like Christ because he is doing what Christ is doing, not because he worries about whether Christ will accomplish his mission. Paradise Regained is not in a normal sense dramatic, then, in its intention, in its symbolic character, or in its design: it is a brief epic, and like its predecessor, the Book of Job, it is a model for virtue.

Samson Agonistes, on the other hand, is drama. In the absence of a commentator on whose judgments one can rely, the reader is called upon himself either to approve or disapprove of Samson's acts. He is thus the reader's subject and his surrogate: his subject in that in his fortunes the reader must stand or fall, because he repeats the pattern the reader hopes he has mastered in Paradise Regained, and his surrogate in that his sin is Adam's and thus the reader's. Samson is so like the reader that his success or failure is the reader's as well, and in Samson the reader finds one who is prepared for a career of Christian heroism, with its mixture of exaltation and humiliation. Samson's justification is the justification of

the virtue prescribed in Paradise Regained. His choices and his victory can by the reader's because the course that Samson follows has been laid for man in eternity by Christ in Paradise Regained: man is predestined to salvation before the beginning of the world.

The drama of Samson Agonistes depends upon its having, like Paradise Regained before it, temptations unlike those in Paradise Lost and Comus exactly in that the reader is directly threatened by the possibility of his making the wrong choices, just as the possibility of his ultimate victory over his sin and death depends upon his mastering the lessons of those poems so as to make the right choices. The reader must be able to assent uncompromisingly to Christ's answers in Paradise Regained; if he could and did, he can feel complete gratification in Samson's choices, but if not, then, by the measure of his inability to assent in Christ's way with Satan, and the measure of his impatience with Samson, he is deficient morally; to lack Paradise is to be unable to follow Christ in Paradise Regained or to accompany Samson. And, on the other hand, the reader who has learned what Milton has been trying to teach him, can finally go with Samson to his triumphant end in full consciousness of Paradise regained, in "calm of mind all passion spent."

There are several studies of Milton's life and works which cover all his major poems, such as David Daiches',[16] Kenneth Muir's,[17] and, earlier than those, E. M. W. Tillyard's Milton (London, 1930). Tillyard's is perhaps the most important of these, not only because of its date and because it takes issue with Denis Saurat at a number of important points,[18] but also because it combines scholarly familiarity with its subject with a willingness to state opinions about contestable matters of interpretation. I will have occasion later in this study to take issue with Tillyard at times, not because his work is not valuable, but because it is. Tillyard's work on the epic, for example, is well known and respected.[19] But both there and in Milton he refuses, almost stubbornly, to account Paradise Regained an epic.[20] Later studies have established a tradition in which Paradise Regained is legitimately an epic;[21] but, of course, by Tillyard's definition, "epic" is used to mean what is often called "major epic" for purposes of the distinction. My point is that Tillyard is usually convenient and seldom equivocal; his Milton advances no thesis with which one would take strenuous issue, but it deals widely and openly with so many points that its value, both as a source of opinion and of knowledge, is great.

A work that deals not only with the major poetry but with much of the minor poetry as well in an attempt to explicate a common thread is The Harmonious Vision: Studies

in Milton's Poetry, by Don Cameron Allen.[22] Allen's thesis is that Milton's poetic career was devoted to the discovery of the way to accomplish the "harmonious vision," that is, a capacity to perceive the divine order in things, which is available to one who is prophetically inspired, but not to the despairing sinner. This vision is completely lacking in the discordancies of Hell and is pervasive in Heaven: it was available as vision to Adam and Eve, but lost; but it may be recaptured. Allen arranges the poems so that Paradise Regained is climactic, is the poem wherein the recapture of the vision, or the way to recapture of it, is seen. I think that stress needs to be laid on the quality of Milton's poetry which concerns itself with the struggle of the repentant sinner with evil, however, rather than simply on the tendency of Milton's poetry to seek a harmonious vision. This is not to deny the importance of the vision, but simply to observe that Milton arranged the order of the publication of his poems with Samson Agonistes in the climactic final position, either deliberately or not, and that that arrangement accords with what seems to be Milton's interest in the human drama of the battle against evil on the human level. In many ways I agree with Allen about the interpretation of Samson Agonistes. I prefer to avoid the word "despair" to describe Samson's state, but such points are minor; my principal reservation about The Harmonious Vision is that it seems, by rearranging Milton's

order for the poems, to miss an emphasis Milton may have intended by his arrangement.

There is one full-length study of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes together, Arnold Stein's Heroic Knowledge: An Interpretation of 'Paradise Regained' and 'Samson Agonistes.'[23] Sometimes Stein is rather more obscure than the poems he is elucidating, but his insights are often valuable. Stein undertakes a kind of moral-psychological examination of Christ and Samson (and incidentally others) in order to show the process by which the "heroic knowledge" is realized. Accordingly he is much interested in the motif of discovery, especially in Paradise Regained. Perhaps it is the necessity for providing a dramatic context in which discovery can be meaningful (even possible) that causes Stein to insist on the dramatic character of Paradise Regained, to become eloquent on Satan's strategy, and the like: to read Paradise Regained as an exciting series of moves and countermoves, devices and escapes between Satan and Christ. But, although I admire much of Heroic Knowledge, I cannot agree that Paradise Regained is psychologically dramatic either in form or in excitement. Its form is that of the brief epic. And it appears to me that one who admires exciting literature, with fascinating footwork and thrilling interplay of gambit and countergambit, will simply have to admit that Paradise Regained is, for him, rather dull. Stein's effort does not convince me that Milton

intended the poem to be other than what it seems, over and over, to be: a careful, solid, trenchant examination and exposition of moral virtue. It is no defect that Paradise Regained is not drama.

But as I have said, Stein's insights are often very illuminating, as, for instance, when he comments on Manoa's questioning of God: "It is easy to misjudge Manoa, especially if one is unacquainted with the Haggadah, or has never heard, on a grandfather's knee, the Old Testament God spoken of with respectful but authoritative familiarity. Manoa represents a people with an old, direct, and, as it were, family relationship to God with no real history, even in error, of not responding to or against that relationship" (249-50). It is on this level, and on the level of his general overview of the poems, that, it seems to me, Stein's study is most valuable; and on the level of his approach to Paradise Regained and his frequent obscurity that it is least valuable.

On Paradise Regained alone two books are especially valuable, Paradise Regained: The Tradition and the Poem, by Elizabeth Marie Pope (New York, 1962), and Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning, & Art of Paradise Regained, by Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (Providence, Rhode Island, and London, 1966). Miss Pope argues that Milton's use of traditional concepts about the temptation in the wilderness from exegesis, art, Bible commentary, and the like, kept his

reader on familiar ground, largely, and that, while the twentieth-century reader does not absolutely need to be familiar with this body of traditional material, awareness of it helps him to understand the poem. Probably the most important discussion in the book centers on the use of the "triple equation" as a means of organizing and developing the trials. In that rather complicated chapter Miss Pope threads her way through variations of the application of the flesh-world-devil pattern of temptations to Christ's experience in the wilderness, and shows how Milton's treatment conforms with received Protestant tradition, and the scenes of physical pleasure, such as the banquet, in the long second temptation enables the poem to identify the temptation of kingdoms with Adam's gluttonous response to his temptation. Miss Pope is careful to avoid the position that knowledge of the tradition is obligatory to the understanding of Paradise Regained.

Milton's Brief Epic is devoted to establishing the position of Paridise Regained in an epic tradition, to explicating the "meaning" of the poem, and to a commentary on the aesthetics. The most important of those are the first and second. In the section on the genre of Paradise Regained, Mrs. Lewalski shows at some length that "(1) A very considerable number of biblical epics and a majority of those on New Testament subjects are 'brief' epics (ca. 1,500-4,000 lines), very much shorter than the nearly ten

thousand lines of the Aeneid, and in many cases approximating the dimensions of Paradise Regained (2,070 lines). (2) A significant body of critical opinion in all eras has recognized and defended the epic character of the brief as well as the long biblical poems. (3) The brief as well as the long biblical epics utilize many of the narrative, structural, and stylistic devices of classical epic and of the various types of contemporary secular epic as a means of asserting their epic claims and enhancing their epic character. (4) The brief epics constitute a distinct subspecies of the biblical epic category, with characteristic features which were developed partly as a response to the common problems inherent in writing poems both "brief" and "epic," and partly because later writers were disposed to follow the famous patristic and humanistic precedents" (p. 39).

In the section on the "meaning" of Paradise Regained, Mrs. Lewalski argues that Christ comes to understand his nature and office fully in the poem and is tried at the same time, because he has emptied himself of his divine nature and receives "occasional accessions of power" (p. 159) both in Paradise Lost and in Paradise Regained. But the argument for these accessions of power is not convincing. One is said to occur, for instance, after the first temptation, when Christ announces the banishment of oracles (I, 454 ff.). But Christ does not need divine help to realize that: having

recognized Satan and begun to defeat him, Christ can easily predict by his own wisdom the failing influence of the groveling demon. Mrs. Lewalski seems to go from very helpful observations about Paradise Regained to less helpful: her discussion of the Kingly, Prophetic, and Mediatorial offices of Christ and their immersion in the poem is very complete and valuable; on the other hand, her argument that in the learning temptation Satan has offered human knowledge (scientia) as if it is wisdom (sapientia) and that Christ, rejecting it, becomes sapientia (p. 298-302) is, it seems to me, needlessly over-complicated.

As I have tried to suggest by the long quotation from the first section of Milton's Brief Epic and in my objections to two of Mrs. Lewalski's points, the book suffers from being rather seriously over-written: evidence is developed to unnecessary extents, and arguments are refined beyond helpfulness. But the very comprehensiveness of the study makes it valuable; it will be impossible to study Paradise Regained without taking it into account, and very difficult to develop a thesis on the poem that Mrs. Lewalski has not at least glanced at.

The two important full-length studies of Samson Agonistes both concern themselves with subjects that fall roughly in the category of "tradition." In Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in Samson Agonistes (Baltimore, 1937), William Riley Parker begins by saying unequivocally: "With

the exception of a few trivial details, everything in Milton's drama can confidently be traced to Greek tragedy, to The Book of Judges, to the poet's own experience, and to a very moderate exercise of dramatic invention. There is no need to look elsewhere" (pp. 3-4). And he concludes that "at least in respect to formal divisions, Milton's drama is purely and unassailably Greek" (p. 17).[24]

But F. Michael Krouse, in Milton's Samson and the Christian Tradition (Princeton, 1949), looks elsewhere. Krouse argues that Milton had a long and compelling tradition of Christian interpretation behind Samson that, whatever the form of the poem, governs the concept of Samson. Krouse offers interesting material on the development of Samson as a mythological character and on the epithet "agonistes," and his discussion of the typology of Samson, although it relies rather more heavily on background than on evidence in the poem, is probably more important than Mrs. Lewalski allows.[25]

Finally, on the subject of Milton's manipulation of his reader in order to accomplish didactic ends, Stanley E. Fish, in Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost (New York, 1967), argues that Milton sets traps and loaded situations in an effort to cause the reader to develop an awareness of his sinfulness and his relation to Adam. Fish's object and mine are obviously related, but where Fish is concerned largely with verbal and logical patterns, I

believe a better understanding of Milton's ways with his reader can be got from a consideration of larger patterns of dramatic development and strategies for the accomplishment of large didactic ends. Occasionally, it appears, Fish gets tangled in his texts; I will discuss at least one instance of that later. Fish's study of Milton's treatment of his reader in Paradise Lost is, nonetheless, valuable because it calls attention to what I believe to be an important part of Milton's poetic practice that deserves attention.

That part is not Milton's sources or themes or the like, such as have occupied the attention of most Milton critics, but the rhetorical strategy by which Milton seeks to impel his reader toward desired positions. I do not mean here anything about formal rhetorical devices or structural principles, nor do I make any assumptions about the nature of the reader himself, or what he is likely to make of the poem. I am concerned only with discernable strategical efforts of Milton's which seem designed to move his reader, and the pattern that strategy takes. I believe the largest element of that effort is to make a reader acknowledge his sinfulness and rectify it. The movement of acknowledgement and rectification is anticipated in Comus, and carries throughout Milton's major poetry. The rhetoric of recovery, then, is the means by which Milton hopes to help his reader to the state of moral perfection which is the Paradise within.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1]F. A. Patterson, ed. The Student's Milton (New York, 1930), p. 726. Unless otherwise indicated, all references will be to this edition. References to poetry will be identified in the text by book (where applicable) and line; references to the Christian Doctrine will list book and chapter in the text; references to undivided prose will be noted to the page in this edition.

[2]The Student's Milton, p. 727.

[3]The cyclical nature of Milton's educational theory is discussed by B. Rajan in "Simple, Sensuous, and Passionate," (RES, XXI [1945], 289-301).

[4]"Samson Agonistes: An Interpretation," Studia Neophilologia, XXIX (1957), 67-76.

[5]"The principal special decree of God relating to man is termed predestination, whereby God in Pity to mankind, though foreseeing that they would fall of their own accord, predestinated to eternal salvation before the

foundation of the world those who should believe and continue in the faith" . . . (I, iv).

[6]See Don Cameron Allen, The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry (Baltimore, 1954), p. xi.

[7]God, of course, does not fall at the other end of the spectrum from Satan because to put him on the scale would imply that God is somehow relative to his own creation; but he is not so: he is the moral absolute that the scale defines by its arrangement of relations.

[8]A similar sequence of imbalances occurs too in the scenes that present threats to fight, such (again) as Satan-Death, the Brothers-Comus, and finally, as an "even" contest, Samson-Harapha.

[9]The necessity for some sort of predictable outcome makes one encounter, the one between Satan and Death, simply impossible: there is no way for good to be triumphant.

[10]The terminology is, of course, from Christian Doctrine, I, xi.

[11]Satan continues to try to disguise himself after this point, but Christ is never fooled. For all reasonable purposes, then, Satan is unmasked from the first temptation. His refusal to recognize that he is found out and is looking

foolish is a symptom of the chronic self-deception that keeps him from accepting his defeat until Book Four.

[12]It can, of course, be wiser than it knows, and point morals ironically, but that is another matter.

[13]Heroic Knowledge: An Interpretation of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes (Hamden, Connecticut, 1965). Stein assumes that Paradise Regained is intended to be dramatic, and thus discusses "Some Problems and Solutions" (pp. 3-16) arising from that assumption.

[14]Milton uses the word "Paradise" in several senses. In Christian Doctrine I, vii, it may mean "the heaven of the blessed"; in Christian Doctrine I, xiii it is "some pleasant place" but "not heaven." The use of the word in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained seems to mean something like "a state of moral perfection" or "a state in which one is capable of responding with complete affirmation to the will of God."

[15]Christian Doctrine I, xi: "propensity to sin" is "engendered in us by our first parents," but "Christ alone was exempt from this contagion, being born by supernatural generation, although descended from Adam." Christ takes on the imputation of man's sinfulness, and thus his liability to punishment, but not the sinfulness itself.

[16]*Milton* (London and New York, 1957).

[17]*John Milton* (London, 1955).

[18]That is, with *Milton: Man and Thinker* (New York, 1925).

[19]*The English Epic and Its Background* (London, 1954).

[20]"It [*Paradise Regained*] is not an epic, it does not try to be an epic, and it must not be judged by any kind of epic standard" (Milton, p. 316). And in *The English Epic* (p. 447), Tillyard says "I turn to *Paradise Regained* only to give reasons for passing it over." *Paradise Regained* receives one brief paragraph at the end of a chapter devoted to Milton.

[21]Particularly Barbara Kiefer Lewalski's *Milton's Brief Epic*, discussed later.

[22]See note 5.

[23]See note 12.

[24]The question of the "Hebraism" or "Hellenism" is discussed by Sir R. C. Jebb (*Samson Agonistes and the Hellenic Drama* [London, 1908]), Frank Kermode ("*Samson Agonistes* and Hebrew Prosody," *Durham University Journal*, XIV [1953], 59-63), and others.

[25]*Milton's Brief Epic*, p. 172.

CHAPTER II

THEIR FATHER'S HOUSE: *COMUS* AS A DIDACTIC EXERCISE

Most modern readings of *Comus* refer, sooner or later, to A. S. P. Woodhouse's article on "The Argument of Milton's *Comus*."[1] In that essay, and in a later article,[2] Woodhouse offers a reading of Milton's mask which must be reckoned with in any sensible discussion, and which likely reflects, in the main, Milton's principal intentions in the poem. Woodhouse sees the Lady's journey, the principal metaphor of the poem, as between two orders, Nature and Grace; the poem, then, is a story about how a patient Christian--temperate and chaste--gets from this world to the next. In his reading, the Attendant Spirit represents something like heavenly providence, and, in the second article, Sabrina represents Grace. It is a theological reading which hovers between symbolism and allegory, and which, for both reasons, satisfies many curiosities about the poem. It is resisted gently by Sears Jayne, who offers instead a philosophical reading, in which the various elements assigned theological importance by Woodhouse are given as nearly equivalent

philosophical import as possible, and the Lady's destination is wisdom rather than heaven.[3] Following the idea of Woodhouse, Cleanth Brooks and John Edward Hardy, in their edition of the 1645 text of Milton's poems, offer an essay on Comus which is a masterpiece of subtlety, if it is not always convincing.[4] The essay is so subtle that it has moved R. M. Adams to accuse them and Woodhouse too of "over-reading" Comus.[5]

I expect that Adams is not so nearly right as Woodhouse about Comus. To be out of patience with Brooks and Hardy is one thing; to assume that Comus is not a wonderfully subtle production is not a valid conclusion to that impatience. And there is one thing certain: Comus makes sense in a complete and coherent way, and does so even though not all its elements are immediately clear. For example, the Attendant Spirit's haemony, which he gives the brothers to use in their encounter with Comus, makes sense because it is a mysterious good magic that offsets Comus's mysterious evil magic. If it were not satisfying--that is, if haemony seemed inappropriate to the logic of the poem--then Comus would seem a failure because of it. But that does not happen. Don Cameron Allen, for instance, insisting that Comus is a failure,[6] does not blame the haemony, nor does anyone else. In fact, rather than rejection, haemony has been met with fascination. And, despite the efforts of Edward LeComte, it still defies entirely convincing

explanation.[7] Here, then, it seems, is precisely what is required for at least one sort of valid scholarly and critical attention: an effect in a poem whose operation cannot be fully explained. In all likelihood the working of the haemony, not only on Comus himself but on the poem as a whole and on the reader, is so subtle as to make complete explanation of it eventually impossible. It can be explained in many ways, most to some extent satisfactory, none exhaustively so.[8] But that does not justify a retreat from the poem or that part of it, simply because there is not one and only one clear intention discoverable for it. It seems to have several values, and the more complex it is, the more complex its explanation must be. Adams may be partly right in saying that Comus is not inaccessible to its readers, but that admission does not alter the fact that Comus is both subtle and complex: in many places Comus is easier to understand than it is to explain.

I have discussed haemony because I believe it is symptomatic of the nature of Comus as a whole. The poem lends itself, it seems to me, to several readings, often readings not entirely consistent with each other in all particulars, at the same time. Thus, to use just the Woodhouse reading: it would be hard to deny that the Attendant Spirit seems to offer something very kin to heavenly guidance, but at the same time, Sabrina seems to have few qualifications to enable her to stand for Grace other than

that her doing so is convenient for the Woodhouse contention. Moreover, to return to haemony, that plant should be more readily susceptible to convincing analysis in Woodhouse's terms if his understanding of the poem is exclusively correct. Although Woodhouse is in the main convincing, it seems that there remains much more that can be said about Comus--more ways, more or less systematic, in which the poem can be thought to operate. Basically Comus is about some children on an important journey. That journey can, I believe, mean many things; and I believe that Milton had several things in mind for it to mean.

Thus I wish to propose a reading of Comus to operate, in the main, in conjunction with such interpretations as that by Woodhouse. From time to time I will suggest what seem to me indications that Milton did not intend Comus to mean simply what Woodhouse suggests, but these will not, I trust, be thought to intend to invalidate his understanding. I would like, then, to argue that, in the framework of my understanding of it, Comus has multiple objectives, and a close relationship both to Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. Those objectives are three: to demonstrate the virtue and accomplishments of the Egerton children, to make a statement about education, and to present the three Egerton children, formally and ceremoniously, to their parents for approval.

It is in the matter of showing the virtue and accomplishments of the children that Comus most resembles Paradise Regained. God announces an intention of that poem in Book I:

> He [Satan] now shall know I can produce a man
> Of female Seed, far abler to resist
> All his sollicitations, and at length
> All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
> Winning by Conquest what the first man lost
> By fallacy surpriz'd. But first I mean
> To exercise him in the Wilderness,
> There he shall first lay down the rudiments
> Of his great warfare . . . . (150-58)

The children in Comus do not drive their tempter back to Hell, but they do resist his solicitations, and the mark is for them an exercise in the wilderness, in which not only do they lay down the rudiments of a great warfare, but conduct one phase of it.

In order to discover just what that warfare is and how at least one phase of it is conducted, we need to begin by paying especial attention to an unusual characteristic of Comus--its frequent reference to and invocation of circumstances of its own production, its violation of its own story terms to refer to facts about itself apparently not connected with its story.[9] This is a point often overlooked, but, it seems to me, extremely important. Comus

was originally written for production before John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, the Lord President of Wales. Allusions in the poem relate it to its first place of performance, Ludlow Castle. One character in the poem, Sabrina, is named so as to suggest the locality. The political importance of the father and the affairs of his children are spoken about almost directly early in the poem:

> all this tract that fronts the falling Sun
> A noble Peer of mickle trust, and power
> Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
> An old, and haughty Nation proud in Arms:
> Where his fair off-spring nurs't in Princely lore,
> Are coming to attend their Fathers state,
> And new-entrusted Scepter . . . . (31-35)

The children, moreover, who played those parts were in fact the Earl's children, and the relationships among them as characters in the mask are consistent with their family relationships. And finally, the person who played the part of the Attendant Spirit in the mask was Henry Lawes, in reality tutor to the children.[10]

The congruency between the relationships among the characters within the context of the mask and the people who play the characters' roles allows the inference that the mask intends to assert things about those people fairly directly. Whatever is asserted as true of a character within the terms of the mask is asserted to be true outside

those terms: if the action of the mask implies that the Lady is virtuous and her Brothers stouthearted, then, I believe, the audience is to infer that Lady Alice Egerton is virtuous and her brothers stouthearted. And, incidentally, if those children have an excellent Attendant Spirit, so must the children be fortunate in Lawes, _their_ attendant spirit.

Comus makes its statement about the children dramatically, by having them artificially tested in an exercise in the wilderness. But, as is true in _Paradise Regained_, in _Comus_ there is no element of suspense; the reader is not made to entertain the fear that the Lady will succumb to Comus's blandishments. In _Comus_ several factors obviate suspense: the very nature of the mask form itself, which is not characteristically unfortunate;[11] the fact that the Lady _is_ Alice Egerton, literally as well as by convention; even Comus's magical power, which, introduced as it is in the words of the Attendant Spirit, is bound (in the expectation of the audience) to be offset by a symmetrically placed good power; and the unconcern of the mask with any psychological realism, which suggests that we are operating on a level of principle, not accident, that we will be concerned with what people should do rather than with what they are likely to do.[12] _Comus_, then, is not the dramatic record of a real trial of virtue: it is a ceremonial examination of that virtue. The question is not _whether_ the

Lady will be virtuous. Her goodness is almost an *a priori* of the mask: her capability for exercising it is what we discover.

The observation in the preceding paragraph that the identity of Alice Egerton and the Lady helps obviate suspense assumes that the audience in question is aware of that identity. The original audience of *Comus*, the Earl, of course, was aware of it. Later readers (who will be called the audience, since it is important always to try to visualize the mask) do not have his advantage; and as far as the suspense is concerned, they do not really need it. But the audience of *Comus* should always be aware of its own identity. Even though *Comus* is about and features children, it is not, in the ordinary sense, *for* children only; it is not a "children's play." The children in it are being spoken *about*, not *to*: the mask is addressed to an adult audience. What the children establish during the course of the action is their eligibility, or their approach toward eligibility, to be accepted by those adults, their mastery, or approach toward mastery, of the equipment to enable them to take their place in an adult environment; to repeat--

> his fair offspring, nurs't in Princely lore,
> Are coming to attend their Fathers state (34-35)

--and, since that only implies their intended presence in their father's house, later the children are presented to their parents as "goodly grown" (968), with their virtues

"timely tried" by heaven (970), so that they can take their place among the adults.

If their father's presence, or an adult environment in general, is the condition the children are aspiring toward, with the delegated help of the Attendant Spirit, then it would seem that a mature grasp of moral issues is the norm of the work. In other words, the condition towards which the children aspire in Comus is maturity--the supposed condition of the reader. That maturity will enable them to attain the reward of virtue. It is particularly in terms of temperance and chastity that this maturity is defined, and, as I will show later, this double virtue was particularly associated by Milton with maturity.

It is true that the Attendant Spirit begins the poem by speaking of

> the crown that Vertue gives
> After this mortal change, to her true Servants
> Amongst the enthron'd gods on Sainted seats. (9-11)

But it is not immediately the attainment of a position "Amongst the enthron'd gods" that we are concerned with in Comus, but the means by which it is to be attained:

> Yet som there be that by due steps aspire
> To lay their just hands on that Golden Key
> That ope's the Palace of Eternity:
> To such my errand is . . . . (12-15)

It is, in other words, the mission of the Attendant Spirit to bring those who properly aspire to it to the condition of virtue, and that is a condition, as Milton makes clear in the famous passage in Areopagitica, of mature wisdom:

> Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us in trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an exeremental whiteness . . . .[13]

Here, then, is a fundamental difference between Comus and Paradise Regained. Whereas in Paradise Regained the moral standard for the reader is to be found in Christ, the one tempted, so that the reader learns virtue from him, and so that Christ translates the norm of virtue from his Father to the fallen reader, in Comus the audience, which is expected to be mature, is assumed to maintain the standard toward which the tempted children aspire, and what is communicated to the audience by the children, then, is not the terms of the virtue itself, but their relation to it, their progress in attaining maturity in wisdom and virtue and the means by which that progress is being made. In other words, one with a mature understanding knows at

once--the Attendant Spirit tells him--that Comus is not to be trusted, his cup not to be accepted. He knows too that the Lady will not, in the long run, succumb to Comus. The burden of the affair, as I have said, is the revelation of how the Lady spurns Comus. That is the burden in Paradise Regained too. But in Paradise Regained the reader is assumed to be in need of learning the very lessons which Christ enunciates, as much as the use he puts them to. In Comus the particulars of how the Lady overcomes evil are important in a different way; and for the purposes of this analysis, only important insofar as they help make more clear another purpose of the poem, which is, of course, the very fact that the Lady can say what she does and how she has come to know it. The reader is assumed able to judge her conduct, and of course, is expected to approve.

Thus in this reading of the poem, Comus makes a point indirectly. While temperance and chastity are the topics it discusses, its teaching is not simply about those: its audience is assumed to be familiar with them. An important teaching of Comus, I believe, is about teaching itself; it is about the process of equipping people "to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright," and "to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."[14] The effect desired on the Earl, I believe, was the demonstration of the quality of the training

his children were receiving, and discussion of that training. The ceremonial artificial dramatic lesson in Comus is a model statement, a didactic sampler offered to show not only the design attempted but the skill required to execute it.

As is clear from much of Milton's work, the process of education and the attainment of virtue are not separable for Milton. Man's goal is not to become intelligent independent of his religious and moral obligation; indeed, everything is to be directed toward the service of God: "I am long since persuaded that to say or do aught worth memory and imitation, no purpose or respect should sooner move us than simply the love of God, and of mankind."[15] Accordingly the educational metaphor in this poem--progress toward one's father's house--translates easily into the metaphor of the progress of the Christian soul to its Father's house. The language of virtue and of education is much the same, and the metaphor of the journey provides much of that language: "error," "transgress," "lost." Comus is thus about education, but this fact does not exclude its also being about salvation.

Before getting into the poem itself, one more observation: I doubt that any interpretation of Comus as strict allegory can be very satisfactory. The mask, it seems, has an allegorical center which is at times clear enough, and in that center the principal allegorical

equations must be made: the journey equalling life and the Attendant Spirit heavenly providence, for instance, or the journey equalling youth and the Attendant Spirit a good teacher. But when we try to treat the entire poem with a solvent concocted of such a formula, we find some insoluble parts--the haemony most notoriously, and the significance of Sabrina. These are not foreign matter: they fit harmoniously into the whole poem, but they just usually refuse to dissolve. And, if I am not over-straining my figure: the reason is that Comus is a variously compounded mixture intended to be swallowed whole, undissolved, un-solved. Part of its meaning is its combination of meanings, its lyric intractability to analysis. This is not to deny the meaningfulness of the mask or the seriousness of the meaning. I am simply suggesting that the meaning is not always susceptible to analysis and description, not always to be expressed "in other words." The use of haemony and the intervention of Sabrina magically solve problems that cannot be otherwise handled, but then the nature of that magic--or, if you will, that grace--defies analysis. And since these two mysterious processes are so much part of Comus, there can never, I believe, be a single restrictive allegorical reading of it that refutes all others.[16]

The mask begins with contrasted speeches by the Attendant Spirit and Comus. The Attendant Spirit is

presumably robed in such a costume as to indicate something of the qualities of "good magic" about him, for he takes off his "skie robes spun out of Iris Wooff" near the end of his speech to "take the Weeds and likenes of a Swain, / That to the service of this house belongs" (83-85). He has already identified the nature of his task as preventing the possibility that "here their [the children's] tender age might suffer peril" (40): the revelation of him in his own character--for presumably the likeness of a swain he assumes is his own identity as Lawes, a musical (pastoral) tutor--following that statement of purpose seems to identify the Attendant Spirit with the idea of education, or, more specifically, with a teacher: thus, a teacher, such a teacher as Henry Lawes, deserves to be considered as the Attendant Spirit of youth.

The Attendant Spirit has already issued a warning about Comus, and, when Comus then appears, the warning is born out: Comus is almost the exact antithesis of the Attendant Spirit. Their speeches have slight formal similarities: both begin with references to stars, related, in the Attendant Spirit's speech, to a super-mundane order of being--Jove's court--and, in Comus's speech, with an entirely natural, worldly order. Whereas the Attendant Spirit talks about those who "by due steps aspire / To lay their just hands on that Golden Key / That ope's the Palace of Eternity" (12-14), Comus and his crew merely "Imitate

the Starry Quire, / Who in their nightly watchful Sphears, / Lead in swift mound the Months and Years: (112-14). But the imitation is imperfect, even repulsive: his crew is "a rout of Monsters headed like sundry sorts of wilde Beasts, but otherwise like Men and Women, their Apparel glistering, they com in making a riotous and unruly noise, with Torches in their hands" (direction before 93).[17]

The effect of all this, of course, is to establish clearly the antithetical characters of the Attendant Spirit and Comus. If they are antithetical, and since the Attendant Spirit's job is to assist those who aspire to legitimate exaltation, then we may expect Comus to represent some worldly influence toward debasement for the children. The conflict, then, will be between the salutary, uplifting, educational influence of the Attendant Spirit and the harmful, debasing influence of Comus. These two characters, each in disguise as an ordinary man, will, in a strange way, vie for influence over the children.

When the Lady enters, her susceptibility to error is stated in several ways: she is lost in her journey to her father's house, suggesting her youthful innocence; she is in the dark; and she is trying to find her way to a noise she realizes means ill for her:

> This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
> My best guide now, me thought it was the sound
> Of riot, and ill manag'd Merriment,

Such as the jocond Flute, or gameson Pipe
Stirs up among the loose unleter'd Hinds,
When for their teeming Flocks, and granges full
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath
To meet the rudenesse, and swill'd insolence
Of such late Wassailers; yet O where els
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangl'd Wood? (169-80)

The lady is entirely alone and frightened. She questions the motives of thievish Night for sending the darkness, and she sees fantasies and begins to hear unintelligible sounds. The Lady's solitude and vulnerability anticipates Eve, who later is also alone, separated from Adam, her guide, and is also tempted. Eve, however, is confident in her solitude, and the effect of her vulnerability on the reader is increased by her confidence; the Lady's trepidation at finding herself alone leads her to an action which reduces the tension for the audience. She summons her virtues--Faith, Hope, and Chastity, a set perhaps designed for a young person--to restore her spirits and assure herself

That he, the Supreme good, t' whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistring guardian if need were
To keep my life and honour unassail'd. (216-19)

In response to this testimony of faith she is granted a little light.

But the simple excellence of the Lady's character will not be enough, as the action of the mask bears out. What the Lady needs is not just a gleam of light from a cloud, but a proper guide. She is young, and, although strong of character, susceptible to influence, and thus in need of proper training.

The Lady's song to Echo is revealing. This supplication may profitably be compared with the invocation to Sabrina later in the poem. The plight of Echo, the beautiful maiden in classical myth, who loved at a mute distance and was rejected by Narcissus, is in a way a measure of the Lady's own situation. Echo's imploring of Narcissus was in vain; and, although Echo was herself quite beautiful, her beauty did not avail to prevent her remaining forever in the forest. Moreover, the Lady's calling on Echo underscores her solitude, suggesting as it does the tendency to follow one's own reflection. Again Eve comes to mind: her first act is to look into a smooth lake and become enamored of her own reflection until Adam can call her away from her self-absorption. As I will discuss later in relation to the Sabrina episode, the Lady must move from the kind of futile self-reference of a child to the mature, externalized, objective reference, suggested by the episode with Sabrina.

The noticeable effect of the Echo song is that it enthralls Comus, who speaks of it as "inchanting ravishment" (244), and says that "something holy" lodging in her breast has moved the air with "raptures" (245-6). Comus's language is revelatory. The implication of physical captivity, even sexual violation, suggests his own intentions toward the Lady turned back on himself, and the fact that he is so captured--despite his originally declared purpose to ensnare the Lady (150-53)--clarifies that the Lady is actually the superior of Comus in at least one respect. It is a point worth pausing over: the Lady's superiority to Comus, of course, is moral, and this moral superiority gives her actual power over him. The Lady is not the passive victim of Comus until she voluntarily surrenders her advantage to him. Doing that puts her in his power, and loses for her the opportunity to effect any virtuous change in Comus. The possibility of her having a transformational effect on Comus is hinted at by his likening her to his mother Circe. That, of course, likens the Lady to Comus himself, since he is so like his mother, particularly in his ability to enchant and transform people. But whereas Circe's--and, presumably, Comus's--magic has a narcotic effect--"they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense, / And in sweet madness robbed it of itself" (259-60)--the Lady's enchantment is exactly the opposite in effect: "But such a sacred, and home-felt delight, / Such sober certainty of waking bliss / I never

heard till now (261-63). The Lady and Comus, then, both have strength, and have power over each other (Comus's physical power is not yet shown, for reasons to be discussed). At this point the natural virtue of the Lady is superior to the natural viciousness of Comus, and she has him in her power. But that advantage soon dissipates, simply because the Lady is lost, without a guide, so that she cannot efficiently direct her energy. If she were either on familiar ground--symbolically, that is, mature and confident of her strength in virtue--or accompanied by a guide--symbolically a teacher--then she would not need to go with Comus, and would not put herself into a position of being subject to him. But neither condition obtains, and she accepts Comus as a guide.

When Satan first encounters Eve alone in Paradise Lost he too is stunned into dropping his malice momentarily:

> her Heav'nly forme
> Angelic, but more soft, and Feminine,
> Her graceful Innocence, her every Aire
> Of gesture or lest action overawd
> His Malice, and with rapine sweet bereav'd
> His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
> That space the Evil one abstracted stood
> From his own evil, and for the time remaind
> Stupidly good, of enmitie disarm'd
> Of guile, of hate, of envie, of revenge. (IX, 457-466)

And he claims to want to make Eve "A Goddess among Gods, ador'd and serv'd / By Angels numberless" (547-48). Similarly, Comus's first intention while he is enraptured is to make the Lady his Queen. But, of course, although that sounds like an exaltation, it is not. Comus is evil, and thus cannot will anything for the Lady that is not evil. To be his queen would be an exaltation only in name; it is the kind of false exaltation that is directly opposed to that toward which one is helped by the Attendant, provided one aspires to it "with due steps," not by short-cuts.

His means of persuasion is interesting. He feigns knowledge of her brothers after cunningly finding out from her all the particulars about them he needs to know. He organizes his information and his rhetoric well:

> I saw them under a green mantling vine
> That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
> Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots,
> Their port was more then human, as they stood;
> I took it for a faëry vision
> Of som gay creatures of the element
> That in the colours of the Rainbow live
> And play i'th plighted clouds. I was aw-strook,
> And as I past, I worshipt; if those you seek
> It were a journey like the path to Heav'n,
> To help you find them. (293-302)

The Lady's brothers are here imaginatively transfigured by Comus, pictured in an elysium, and the way to them is "like the path to Heav'n." His intention, obviously, is to get the Lady to follow him down what she thinks is that path. But the Lady should be wary of Comus's suggestion. In the first place, she should recognize in this scene a temptation to illegitimate aspiration, because her brothers' transfiguration is itself illegitimate. This is not real Heaven with "solemn troops in sweet societies" Comus is picturing, but a garish pseudo-Heaven where they play gaily among brightly colored clouds. Such a jolly heaven as that might appeal to an immature mind even though it is false; it is precisely mature wisdom that the Lady needs to help her see through Comus's trick. And in the second place, the speech implies that the brothers are not directly transfigured, but are in the grave. They are beneath the vegetation on the side of the hill, and besides, the "path to Heav'n" ordinarily leads through the grave. Underneath the pleasant felicity of Comus's picture, then, lies the unpleasant reality of what he means for the Lady--premature death. Her acceptance of Comus's leadership would, then, be at least symbolically fatal, because his proposed destination--an illegitimate exaltation--has as its corollary destination the grave. And in fact her decision to go with Comus gains her not reunion with her brothers but paralysis.

Thus the Lady is wrong in accompanying Comus. Her destination is not a "low but loyal cottage" where she can be safe from the dangers of living--the undertone of the grave sounds in that phrase, too--but her father's presence. As I will discuss later, the Lady's error here is related to the first temptations in Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes: Christ's turning the stones into bread to "save" himself and Samson's accepting Manoa's "ransom" would both be weak abdications of their real responsibilities, avoidance of their true paths, which are full participation in the human process of overcoming evil, defeating death on its own terms. For both Christ and Samson, "their Father's house" is a destination to be achieved not by diversion into safety but by perseverance.

The Lady's prayer to "blest Providence" that she not be tried above that she can resist shows her misgiving about what she is doing. She errs fondly overcome, but not entirely unaware. She does err, however, and her penalty is her paralysis and concomitant susceptibility to evil--she cannot, when paralyzed, flee Comus's presence. I have mentioned her earlier resemblances to Eve, because they, coupled with this error which makes possible her further temptations--and indirectly her virtuous refusal of them--suggest that her slip is to be considered alongside Eve's sin. This is not to say that the Lady really "Falls" at this point. It is not a re-inactment of the Fall because

the effects of it are limited to the Lady herself, and there is nothing to equate with the judgment and punishment that followed Eve's Fall. In other words, the Lady's slip does not amount to as much as the Fall. But it suggests the Fall in that it serves to make the effects of Eve's Fall apparent in the Lady. Hereafter her virtue is not the blank virtue of simply an allegorical good girl, but is the virtue which can contemplate vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures and yet abstain. The reader knows now that the Lady can err; her paralysis underlines her susceptibility. Her need for guidance now is clear, in that the good magic of the Attendant Spirit must release her from her paralysis; the strength of the training she now has is to be tested.

When the Brothers enter, their own failing is apparent: they have abandoned their sister. They are themselves, then, erring, wandering, lost, and they enter asking for light. Their conversation turns on the subject of their sister's chastity, but their conclusion is not entirely convincing, because their deliberations leave out the possibility of such evil as Comus represents. The Elder Brother's argument boils down to an assertion that, since the Lady is chaste, her motives are pure, and she is therefore safe from sin, because she will not will to do evil. But he neglects that evil does not always wait for the corruption of will, that purity of motive does not exempt one from harm.

He has forgotten, in other words, that harm and sin do not always go together. His error is that his assumptions leave out the very reason he was attending her: to protect her. Thus his ringing but largely unconvincing declaration:

My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine, she has a hidden strength
Which you remember not.

2. Bro. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heav'n, if you mean that?

Eld. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength
Which if Heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own:
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that, is clad in compleat steel,
And like a quiver'd Nymph with Arrows keen
May trace huge Forests, and unharbour'd Heaths,
Infamous Hills, and sandy perilous wildes,
Where through the sacred rayes of Chastity,
No savage fierce, Bandite, or mountaneer
Will dare to soyl her Virgin purity,
Yea there, where very desolation dwels
By grots, and caverns shag'd with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblench't majesty,
Be it not don in pride, or in presumption. (413-31)

The Elder Brother shows in this scene a proper willingness to instruct his younger brother and a developing capacity to discuss moral philosophy. But he also

displays a need for mature guidance. And that guidance quickly arrives in the person of "The attendant Spirit habited like a Shepherd," who describes the danger their sister is in and gives them the haemony.

When we find the Lady again she is in Comus's physical power, and he seems to have escaped her spiritual power. The Lady observes that Comus cannot "touch the freedom of [her] mind," though he has her "corporal rind . . . immanacled" (663-65); that is true, but no matter how safe the Lady's soul, her body is still in desperate circumstances. The Lady's training so far and the natural excellence of her character will enable her to resist Comus's attempts, but she is not yet fully mature. She still requires the efforts of the Attendant Spirit to enable her to overthrow Comus.

The exchange of power between Comus and the Lady has had one good effect on her: in moving from the dark forest to the lighted palace, she has been enabled to see Comus for the evil he is, and her own need to resist him. Now that the Lady can recognize Comus, of course, he must resort to the manifestation of his physical superiority as he did not need to before. The Lady has, perhaps, exchanged her innocence (at least insofar as Comus is concerned) for experience: she is no longer blindly lost (susceptible to seduction) as before: she is now confronted with the necessity of defending herself from a frontal rhetorical

attack. While the Lady's being in Comus's power (she is not yet paralyzed, apparently, although we are never clearly shown when the paralysis occurs) prevents her continuing her journey, as discussed before, she can at least avoid losing further ground.[18]

The scene in which the Lady is formally tempted does not, obviously, attempt psychological realism. The Lady's outburst, "Fool do not boast . . . " (662) establishes clearly her attitude toward Comus: it is scarcely to be thought that he will talk her into anything else. Milton's purpose, then, is not involvement of the reader psychologically in the temptation (through the Lady as surrogate), since no one in the scene thinks for an instant that Comus's proposals will help the Lady to her father's house or any other acceptable destination. Nor is any member of the audience likely to urge the Lady to accept Comus's offerings. The question, then, is not whether the Lady will succumb, but how she will resist: the Lady must, for the scene to be effective, rehearse why she refuses Comus's offers. This is consonant with what I believe to be Milton's purpose: to display, in a ceremonial exercise of virtue, the armament of virtue against evil. It is thus didactic in two ways: it reveals the excellence of the Lady's training, thus reflecting a didactic accomplishment; and it displays for the edification of the audience not only the refutation of those offers, but also the terms in which

a child--admittedly a rather precocious one--grasps and can present that refutation.

Those terms are surprisingly like Christ's in Paradise Regained.[19] First, Comus's offer of the narcotic cup is similar to Satan's offer of the banquet. Each follows a five point plan: (1) why resist (Comus 666; Paradise Regained II, 368), (2) since no pain attaches to acceptance of the offer (Comus 667-68; Paradise Regained II, 369-71), (3) but instead benefit will result from acceptance (Comus 668-78; Paradise Regained II, 372-73); (4) the offer is Nature's reward, which you owe to yourself to accept (Comus 679-90; II, 374-77); (5) so accept (Comus 689-90; Paradise Regained II, 377). The Lady's answer is in two parts, each of which is echoed in Paradise Regained. First she declares that she knows Comus to be other than he seems--a liar, a conjuror, and head of an evil band; the speech resembles Christ's line when he discloses his recognition of Satan: "Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art" (Paradise Regained I, 356). Then the Lady declares

> Were it a draft for Juno when she banquets,
> I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none
> But such as are good men can give good things,
> And that which is not good, is not delicious
> To a well'govern'd and wise appetite, (701-05)

which calls to mind Christ's refusal of the Banquet before it is offered:

> Tell me if Food were now before thee set,
> Would'st thou not eat? Thereafter as I like
> The giver, answer'd Jesus. (Paradise Regained
> II, 320-322)

The point of this parallel of the Lady's temptation with the early temptations in Paradise Regained is that they share that second didactic purpose: the exposition of how one is to resist temptation. As Christ is the exemplar of virtue for Christians, it is natural that Milton would have the Lady reject Comus in ways similar to those he would later present as appropriate for Christ.

Comus's next attempts are to persuade the Lady to abandon temperance and chastity. The issue of chastity is, of course, a later addition to the text, but in the long run the temptation adds up to practically the same with the added emphasis on chastity as without it. As Milton made clear much later in the Christian Doctrine, chastity is in fact a category of temperance, involving the proper use of the body as a natural gift: "Chastity consists in temperance as regards the unlawful lusts of the flesh . . . " (Christian Doctrine II, ix). Temperance is one of "the first class of special virtues connected with the duty of Man towards himself" (Ibid.). It denominates all of a category (including sobriety, chastity, modesty, and decency) of virtues which "have reference . . . to bodily gratifications." It is, of course, useless to argue that the Christian Doctrine

represents Milton's firm theological position at the time he wrote Comus, and that chastity is therefore singled out from among many virtues that could have been celebrated. It seems reasonable to suppose that at this time in his life Milton could have felt especially strongly about chastity,[20] or he may even simply have felt, as suggested before (p. 47) that it was especially appropriate to the subject at hand. The point is that temperance, not simply chastity, is the key virtue celebrated here, even though chastity is the specific form of temperance.[21] It is impossible to accent chastity without accenting temperance in the scheme in Christian Doctrine: the fact that the passage is not in the first version of the mask suggests that that may also have been true at the time of Comus. Temperance, including chastity, moreover, is the virtue which is proper to be celebrated in Comus, because it is the virtue Milton seems to have considered very closely associated with mature understanding. This is clear, for instance, from Areopagitica:

> I conceive, therefore, that when God did enlarge the universal diet of man's body, (saving ever the rules of temperance,) he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dieting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity.[22]

and later:

> . . . the high providence of God, who, though he command us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us even to a profuseness all desireable things.[23]

These passages are concerned with temperance as a function of maturity in the face of God's bounty. In Paradise Lost Michael, after the Fall, instructs Adam in the necessity of temperance for a successful mature life:

> if thou well observe
> The rule of not too much, by temperance taught
> In what thou eatst and drinkst, seeking from thence
> Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
> Till many years over thy head return:
> So maist thou live, till like ripe Fruit thou drop
> Into thy Mothers lap, or be with ease
> Gatherd, not harshly pluckt, for death mature.
>
> (XI, 530-37)

If then, as it seems from these passages, temperance is a virtue the development of which is allied to maturity, then the importance given to temperance in Comus is justified, and, further, one is encouraged to see the children's growth to maturity as an important aspect of Comus.

After the Lady's defense of temperance and chastity, Comus's stunned aside ("She fables not, I feel that

I do fear . . . [800 ff.]) directs affirmation to the passage, and, it seems, underscores it as the key to the moral intent of the poem: to urge temperance as the most important virtue of the education of a child.

When the Lady has resisted Comus by her assertion of the poem's cardinal virtue, and thus completed (for the moment) her phase of the encounter with evil, her Brothers rush in "with Swords drawn" and rout Comus and all his crew. They are not accompanied by the Attendant Spirit until Comus and his crew are dispersed, but they are successful because provided by him with haemony. Thus the Brothers have their own successful encounter with evil. The Attendant Spirit is not physically present through it, because the students must, if their training has been good, be able to face evil alone. In the original production the scene was no doubt an amusing counterpoint to the Lady's stern moral refutation of Comus, as the boys--ages nine and eleven--rushed on stage with a clatter of swords and a clutch of haemony and dispersed a rout of cowering "oughly-headed Monsters." But it would have been more than just charming. It would represent a defeat of evil by the Brothers on their own level. They are younger than their sister (and perhaps more apt at swordsmanship than disputation), and have had less training; their encounter with evil is thus as appropriate for them as hers for her, and they demonstrate their valor,

their prowess as swordsmen, and, of course, the excellence of their tutor.

When the Lady is released it is by three agencies: the doughtiness of her Brothers, inspired by the Attendant Spirit, the efficacy of the haemony, provided by the Attendant Spirit, and the anointment of Sabrina, conjured by the Attendant Spirit. The effect of all these is reasonably clear: the Brothers' stoutness is necessary because of the need for strength on the part of one who will find the right way (the Lady has demonstrated her strength in her debate); the haemony, associated with moly by the Attendant Spirit (636), is associated with temperance, for moly is thus identified in Sandys' translation of Ovid,[24] and seems to be thus identified by Milton in Elegy I to Diodati;[25] and Sabrina is identified with chastity, specifically virginity by repeated references such as

> For maid'nhood she loves, and will be swift
> To aid a Virgin, such as was her self
> In hard besetting need . . . . (855-57)

The invocation of Sabrina and her intervention not only suggest the locality of the mask, but, I believe, they are intended, as I suggested earlier, to counterpoise the Echo song. Lovely though Echo is, her misfortune was largely the result of her own inability to master her love for Narcissus: the object of her passion, one might say, <u>was</u> her passion, and the "echo" effect of this rebounding,

like the acoustical phenomenon she identifies, suggests the futility of the introversion of energies such as the Lady is caught up in--early in the poem--when she is alone. Sabrina, however, is able to help the Lady. Her first description by the Attendant Spirit shows her virtue and her reward: one must read it at least twice to escape the impression that somehow she, like Lycidas, has been made guardian genius of virgins as a reward for exceptional purity.[26] The song with which she is invoked refers to her, again obliquely, as one who habitually helps distressed maidens, with its references to "dear honours sake" (864), and the repeated request that she "listen and save" (866, 889). Sabrina, then, is presented as one whose energies are directed outside herself to others: it is not the futile and repetitive self-absorption such as is suggested by Echo that characterizes her. I believe that the Lady has then, in a sense, with the help of the Attendant Spirit, progressed from a stage where she, alone, identifies Echo as her mythological patroness, to a stage where Sabrina is successfully recommended to her, and that her advance in this respect is an advance to greater maturity and wisdom.

The children are then presented to their parents, and in a song the Attendant Spirit expresses one of the objectives of the mask:

> Noble Lord, and Lady bright,
> I have brought ye new delight,

Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own,
Heav'n hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless Praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O're sensual Folly, and Intemperance. (966-75)

It is not convincing to say, as Enid Welsford does, that "The concluding speeches and dances form a beautiful, but inessential, epilogue, the omission of which would in no way affect the unity and intelligibility of the piece."[27] It is usually understood, as by Woodhouse, to develop the idea of the opposition of a natural order with a higher order. It is not necessary to assume that these two planes of existence suggested by the opposed scenes in the epilogue represent levels through which the children have passed; it seems to me likely that they suggest levels on which the attitudes and ministrations of the adults toward the children could have been conceived--the natural order involving imperfect or defective training, and the spiritual order involving complete moral training. I would simply like to observe that the scene of Cupid and Psyche gives promise of the birth of Youth and Joy (1010); this higher order, then, is celebrated as one which gives good issue to childhood, which allows, in other words, youth to be at its best.

In Comus, then, the children go through a process similar in small to the one I believe the mature reader goes through in the major poems, except that in them the reader is simultaneously in the position of reader (audience in Comus) and disciple. The ends of both instructive courses are similar: the children arrive at and are shown to have arrived at a mature wisdom which has its analogue in grace and which is, because the poem means more than one thing at a time, a kind of grace; the reader of the major poems does the same. And as I have implied before, the pattern too is similar: the Lady goes through the pattern succumbing to a temptation which makes her subject to evil (because of a glozing tempter), resistance to evil, specifically intemperance and brutalizing unchastity, and intercession. Moreover, her intercessor functions as teacher to her in real life: those roles are similarly combined in the major poems.

The first of the variations in the disposition of the principals in temptation encounters occurs in Comus: the Lady is apparently overmatched by Comus, but shows herself to be not completely unable to resist. The Brothers appear hopelessly overmatched, but haemony and stage swordsmanship--both provided by their tutor--enable them to overcome evil. The issue of the contest between good and evil is still on a restricted level--note that there is really no genuine moral combat between the Attendant Spirit of Sabrina and Comus--in this poem; Milton is not ready yet

for the great encounter between the Prince of Darkness and the Prince of Light. Evil on this level has the appearance of being greater than man, but man always has the capacity--if not the inclination--to stand.

In conclusion, then: Comus, with its pattern of development to mature wisdom represents in small the pattern I will be discussing in the major poems, and with its apparent disparity between the Lady and Comus, begins the very pattern whose completion it anticipates.

NOTES

[1]UTQ, XI (1941), 46-71.

[2]"Comus Once More," UTQ, XIX (1950), 218-223.

[3]"The Subject of Milton's Ludlow Mask," PMLA, LXXIV (1959), 533-43. Also in Arthur E. Barker, ed., Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism (New York, 1965), 88-111.

[4]Poems of Mr. John Milton: The 1645 Edition with Essays in Analysis (New York, 1951). Brooks and Hardy observe, for instance, that "The [Attendant] Spirit is on hand partly, indeed chiefly, for the benefit of the audience, to help reveal the meaning of the dramatic action. But what function he does have within that action is only to reveal; he does not interfere; he is, in short, precisely what he is named, not the moving spirit of the play, but the attendant" (p. 190). That is like saying that Comus only watches as the Lady tempts herself. Certainly the Attendant Spirit (or Comus, of course, for that matter) does not take over the souls of the children, but he most certainly does not just watch and point. He does interfere: he sets up the

Brothers' attack on Comus, arms them with haemony, without which they would fail, and calls in Sabrina. That is interference. When the action is ending, he justifiably puts himself in position to take at least part of the credit for the happy event.

[5]"Reading Comus," MP, LI (1953), 18-32; also, with a few changes, in Ikon: John Milton and the Modern Critics (Ithaca, New York, 1955).

[6]"Milton's Comus as a Failure in Artistic Compromise," ELH, XVI (1949), 104-19; also, with changes, in The Harmonious Vision as Chapter II, "The Higher Compromise."

[7]"New Light on the 'Haemony' Passage in Comus," PQ, XXI (1942), 283-98. Also see the "Haemony" entry in LeComte, A Milton Dictionary (New York, 1961).

[8]There are at least four ventures for haemony alone, besides the interpretations of it made in conjunction with other studies, listed in John Milton: A Bibliographical Supplement, 1929-1957, compiled by Calvin Huckabay (Pittsburgh, 1960).

[9]Occasionally a mask would refer to persons not in it, by a polite allusion or graceful address; see the discussion of the reference to the King, who was not a masker,

in Jonson's Vision of Delight in Stephen Orgel, The Jonsonian Masque (Cambridge, 1965), p. 66. But that, of course, is a much different thing from the strict locality of Comus.

[10]Although some of these references are lost to all but the original audience, the principal identifications, such as the Attendant Spirit's suggesting a teacher, and the Lady and her Brothers suggesting immature youth, remain clear enough. It is not really necessary to the point of the mask to invoke precisely the Severn, or the personality of Henry Lawes; simply a virtuous "domestic" mythological patroness and a good teacher are required to make the point.

[11]For an analysis of the mask as a form see Orgel, or the more venerable Enid Welsford, The Court Masque: A Study in the Relationship Between Poetry & the Revels (Cambridge, 1927).

[12]Not that psychological realism is required for an unhappy event, but simply that a performance introduced and governed by a heaven-sent Attendant Spirit and showing little tendency to be guided by psychological realism instead of his beneficent influence is not likely to be guided into ill.

[13]The Student's Milton, p. 738.

[14]Of Education; The Student's Milton, p. 727.

[15]*Of Education*; *The Student's Milton*, p. 725.

[16]Mention should also be made of three other studies of *Comus* which have been helpful: Rosamond Tuve, "Image, Form, and Theme in *A Mask*," in *Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton* (Cambridge, 1957), 112-61; A. E. Dyson, "The Interpretation of *Comus*," *E & S*, n. s., VIII (1955), 89-114; and George F. Sensabaugh, "The Milieu of *Comus*," *SP*, XLI (1944), 233-49.

[17]If, as is likely, Milton felt about meter at the time of *Comus* as he did in the statement of principle ("The Verse") before *Paradise Lost*, then the meter of Comus's speech--octosyllabic couplets--is "lower" than the Attendant Spirit's blank verse.

[18]Sears Jayne (*Ibid.*) describes as the second of the three stages of human life the soul being stopped in its descent into the flesh so that it can struggle with the flesh and finally return victorious to heaven.

[19]John Ades, in an article entitled "The Pattern of Temptation in *Comus*," (*Papers on English Language and Literature*, I [Summer, 1965], 265-71), argues that the temptation of the Lady has three stages corresponding to the "triple equation" and to the temptations in *Paradise Regained*. His thesis is interesting, and is a little like mine, but I believe he rather oversimplifies the

relationship between the two poems, straining at some reluctant points to do so. Thus he says that Comus's argument by violence occurs after his speech at 805 ff. ("I must dissemble, / And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more, / This is mere moral babble, and direct / Against the canon laws of our foundation; / I must not suffer this . . . . ") and urges "If the stage directions were included here, they would likely indicate that Comus should try to force his cup on the Lady." But there is no real reason to hold this likely; in fact it is unlikely, since to do so would violate completely the whole symbolic purpose of offering the cup, and since Comus continues talking and trying to persuade (not compel) the Lady to drink.

[20]See, for instance, James Holly Hanford, "The Youth of Milton," in John Milton: Poet and Hamanist (Cleveland, 1966), 54.

[21]Woodhouse holds that chastity is a form of temperance which is partly both a natural virtue (as temperance is altogether) and a religious virtue (as virginity is altogether), and that the Lady affirms these before going on.

[22]The Student's Milton, p. 737.

[23]The Student's Milton, p. 741

[24]According to Douglas Bush in The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton (Boston, 1965), 110.

[25]"But I, while the indulgent mood of the blind boy permits, am preparing to leave these happy precincts with all convenient speed, and to keep away from the ill-famed halls of treacherous Circe, using the help of divine moly" (in the Student's Milton, p. 86). Specifically sexual abstinence seems conveniently to be the character of moly in this passage.

[26]Milton's treatment of the Guendolen-Locrine-Sabrina story in his History of Britain (Book I; in F. A. Patterson, ed. The Works of John Milton [New York, 1931-38], X, pp. 15-16) says little about Sabra at all, and centers instead on the transgression of Locrine and the wrath of Guendolen.

[27]The Court Masque, 317.

CHAPTER III

BECAUSE THOU HAST DONE THIS: THE LESSON OF *PARADISE LOST*

Paradise Lost is addressed to fallen man. Though it has in it the seeds of man's eventual regeneration, though God's mercy is a dominant fact in it, the emphasis is unmistakably on the loss, not the recovery, of Paradise. That subject must wait for *Paradise Regained*. In God's economy the Fall is subordinated in importance to the regeneration of man; and, in a sense so it is in Milton's: one of the most important didactic purposes of *Paradise Lost* is to clear the way for *Paradise Regained*. This discussion will be concerned with a way in which Milton prepares his reader for *Paradise Regained*, or, if not that, for addressing himself to his recovery from sinfulness somehow. He does so, I believe, by impressing on the reader a sense of the immediate urgency of his having fallen with Adam--that is, heightening as much as possible the reader's and Adam's kinship--and by revealing to the reader the conditions which since they applied to Adam as well as to him, make him ever liable to sin and its dreadful consequences.

Paradise Lost seeks to accomplish these ends by educating the reader and educating Adam. The reader approaches the Genesis story from a long historical perspective. He is fallen and always has been; he has certain knowledge which is developed or refined, certain assumptions which are verified or altered, certain attitudes and sympathies which are manipulated or rebuked. He is expected to have at least some knowledge of the Biblical source of Paradise Lost to know who Adam is and how he fell. The reader, of course, learns what Adam learns, as Adam learns it, by overhearing Adam's tutors. Adam differs from the reader in that he remembers Eden, and is, at least until the Fall, morally perfect. The education of Adam,[1] then, assumes that he has different experience from that of the reader--in one respect much more limited, but in another respect wider because he has Right Reason unimpaired and angelic tutors. Adam knows nothing of death, for instance, but is, presumably, better able to resist Satan's wiles because his intelligence is uncorrupted. It is, of course, the residual prelapsarian Adam in the reader--man insofar as he is capable of innocence--that I mean when I speak of Adam as the recipient of the poem's education.

The three didactic subjects I will be concerned with are the nature of Sin and Death, the power and guile of Satan, and the sinfulness of man. Those are not the only didactic concerns of Paradise Lost, of course. But an

examination of how those three are treated in the poem will show, I believe, how Milton prepares his reader for Paradise Regained.

Certain assumptions of mine should be announced. First, I think it is clear from what has been said so far that I consider the "crisis" of Paradise Lost, the important fact of it, to be the Fall itself. Certain critics of the poem, such as E. M. W. Tillyard and Millicent Bell, have held that, for one reason or other, the eating of the fruit in Book IX is not the cataclysmic moment of original sin, but that the sin is somehow spread out over considerable ground, so as to de-emphasize it and cast greater emphasis on God's merciful intention to restore man.[2] Mrs. Bell, for instance, feels that, since Adam and Eve are supposedly perfect before the Fall, then the Fall could not be justified, and that therefore Milton has had to spread their sin out somehow so that they will already be slightly corrupt before the final act of disobedience. But that view is unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, it assumes that causes are effects and effects causes. Corruption is not necessarily the cause of sin; it is the effect. Adam and Eve could have sinned from a status of moral perfection, contrary to Mrs. Bell's assertion, precisely because perfection of any kind, including moral, includes openness to all options. It is in their power to sin because of their perfection: it is in their power to do anything. Corruption, in turn,

removes options: one who is corrupt cannot avoid sinning. Thus the original sin is as bad as it is, for one reason, because Adam and Eve could so easily have avoided it. There may be a problem of supplying psychological reasons for the Fall, but those can be found; and besides, Mrs. Bell requires moral reasons. The second failure of that position is the simple fact that Milton, as I will discuss later, is at such pains to observe until the moment of the Fall almost that Adam and Eve are "sinless." There is, I believe, a reason for those reminders, and, as I will discuss later, I believe that Milton had in mind just such difficulties as Mrs. Bell's article presents when he made them.[3]

I will not enter the battle on earth over whether Satan is a hero or a fool.[4] At times he seems to me some of both. But as we progress it will be clear that I consider that Milton deliberately manipulates reader reactions to things, and particularly to Satan, largely because of the didactic ends he is pursuing. Not only will the reader's estimate of himself, as he is made or let to see more of himself, or of the ideal self he would like to be, reflected in Satan. As God uses Satan for His own ends, so Milton feels free to use Satan for his--believing that his end and God's are, in this respect, the same.

The subject of Paradise Lost is announced in the first line: "Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit." If Empson's double grammar is real, "fruit" comes to mean

not only the apple itself but at the same time the fruit of sin, or death. The exact character of the sin is spelled out to be disobedience; the character of the fruit is rather vague so far. The reasons for that are not hard to speculate: sin can, in the expectation of the reader, take many forms, with which he is already at least roughly familiar, as in fact he is with disobedience. Death, in the expectation of the reader, takes one form, and again, he is already roughly familiar with it. A student of Milton knows, of course, that sin and death are not really so simple as all that. The famous catalogue in the Christian Doctrine of what Adam's sin includes,[5] and the four-fold nature of death are really behind this simple assertion of disobedience and fruit. But the reader can scarcely be expected to know all these things at this point about sin and death, and the subject of the poem must be dealt with.

Moreover, it must be dealt with in the context of a poem about a time in which neither has really occurred in any way the reader can know about. In fact, both have occurred in the chronology of the poem, committed by and visited upon Satan and his followers. But the poem begins in medias res, and thus in the reader's experience of the poem they have not yet occurred. (What has happened to determine the reader's moral condition is another matter.) Since sin and death cannot be precisely defined yet, Milton begins with a problem Homer, for instance, did not have.

When Homer announced the wrath of Achilles as a subject, he and the reader (or audience) could safely be expected to share the understanding of what wrath is. The purpose of the Iliad is not to instruct the reader in the nature of wrath; it is to inform the reader about events shaped by wrath. But Milton's reader knows only roughly what sin and death are in relation to what he will learn: part of Milton's job is to educate him about them. The problem, then is how to use the reader's limited understanding of sin and death so as to focus the subject of the poem, and still retain the opportunity to define the concepts later with some care.

The solution, of course, is to divert the reader from sin and death for nearly two books to allow an examination of the politics of pain, so as to provide a context, and then simply to seize upon the reader's rough ideas of sin and death and transmute those ideas into equally rough but powerful and didactically useful reactions of horror and fear. That is the effect of the allegory of Sin and Death in Books II and X of Paradise Lost: to display to the reader the hideousness of sin and death as he already knows them to be, before he finds out particularly what Milton thinks about them. Or, from Milton's point of view, the reader whose real and reliable knowledge of sin and death have been obscured by his necessary attention to other things and who is accustomed to considering sin and death from his theologically unreliable experience is capable of

appreciating sin and death as hideous things at least. Later that same reader who has been humbled into recognition of his bond with Adam by consciousness of his guilt, who is thoroughly afraid of Satan, and who is so impressed with the hideousness of Sin and Death that he wants desperately to avoid them, can discover their nature.

When one encounters Sin and Death in Book II of Paradise Lost he has been prepared. Hell has seemed vaguely horrible so far, but the reader has been lured into almost forgetting just what Hell really is. The condition of evil, as is clearly implied throughout the poem and in the Christian Doctrine (I, xi), is essentially a condition of powerlessness, of inability to manage. Satan falls from great power in heaven to a point where even Zephon is clearly more powerful than he (IV, 851-61). His power is in fact so diminished that in order to encounter man he must hide in the serpent. But in the first two Books of the poem the reader can almost forget all that. He sees Satan huge as Leviathan with an immense spear.[6] He sees him rouse his defeated troops and call them to council. Most impressive, perhaps, he sees Satan manipulate those comrades with wonderful subtlety and skill--comrades who are so capable themselves that they have just constructed Pandaemonium very swiftly out of the matter of Hell. And, just before Satan sets out grandly on his mission, he has seen the fallen angels set out to explore and, they hope, subdue Hell. In

fact they do not subdue it, a fact which may (conveniently for Milton) nag at the reader's mind, but one is not likely to have his developing admiration dashed therefore. One is thus led to go easily with Satan as far as his encounter with Sin and Death feeling that Hell is Satan's, that Satan dominates and informs Hell: that, in other words, Satan is as powerful in Hell as he thinks he is.

The encounter with Sin and Death makes Hell suddenly more terrible. These are figures Satan is surprised at, and they thus represent an entirely new disorderly element (disorderly in that Satan's effort so far has been to impose order on what he knows of Hell) that must be taken into account in our assessment of Hell. Moreover, existing as they do independently (at least so it first seems) of what has seemed until now the whole population and affairs of Hell, the existence of Sin and Death shifts the center of gravity in Hell somewhat, and has the effect of unsettling and therefore making more fearful, more hellish, what had seemed well on the way to being settled. The double horror of Sin and Death, then, has first the horrifying effect of making even Hell look worse than it seemed, and, curiously, makes Satan seem to look almost good. Since Sin and Death are the worst things the reader has encountered in Hell so far, and since Hell is now worse than he realized, then Sin and Death become doubly horrible, infected by the ugliness they infect Hell with. And later when one discovers who these

creatures are, that they are, in effect, the objects of Satan's mission (as far as the reader is concerned), then suddenly the real character of Satan's mission becomes dramatically and awfully clear.

The particular effects of Sin and Death are slightly different. Sin is basically loathsome. Everything is done to make her disgusting. She is physically malformed in a way that must have been peculiarly loathsome to Milton, mixing as she does the features of a fair woman with those of a serpent. In her description the implications of sexual perversion heighten and in fact make up the main part of her loathsomeness. Robert C. Fox points out that the particular misshapenness of Sin and her sexual nature, which lends to her comparison with Scylla, make her represent the sin of lust.[7] Likely so; I would simply add that, for our purposes here, the suggestion of lust operates to make Sin uglier. The effect is further increased by the mixture of fair and foul. Sin "seem'd Woman to the waste, and fair" (II, 650), and a few lines later the hell-hounds have the privilege of hiding in her womb "if aught disturb'd thir noyse" (657). In a particularly gruesome way, both of these qualities anticipate Eve's sin and her sinfulness, but for the moment the mixture of fair and foul in the description and the evilly winsome "maternal protectiveness" of the creature serve primarily to emphasize her loathsomeness.

Death, however, is primarily fearsome. Whereas Sin is disgustingly misshapen, Death is frighteningly unshapen. This lack of definition to Death's shape not only makes him frightening (because totally and permanently unfamiliar and thus perpetually dangerous) but makes him frightening in the context of Hell itself. Death is not only fearful as Hell: worse, he is fearful in Hell. As I mentioned before, when one encounters Sin and Death he has been led to feel almost that Hell is not so terrible a place. But twice in his description Death is set against Hell for terror and power (671; 676). He moves on Satan as if to defend Hell as his territory against an intruder. The expected conflict begins to shape up to the puzzlement of the reader. This obviously cannot be a good creature; his description shows that. But one wonders what other kind of creature would oppose Satan now, knowing that the one who will finally oppose Satan is Christ. If the reader does not think of Satan's eventual opponent himself, Milton gently reminds him: "never but once more was either like / To meet so great a foe" (721-22). The oblique negative comparison of the power of Death to the power of Christ deepens the impression of his fearsomeness.

It is never made clear just how this conflict would be resolved--it is really, of course, an impossible conflict--because of the intervention of Sin who explains who everyone is in relation to the others. This revelation,

following as it does on the heels of the description of Sin in all her anonymous ugliness and Death in anonymous fearsome defiance, suddenly attaches labels to these beings. The labels are ones with which the reader can be assumed to be roughly familiar, as I had said, and their application in this way to creatures (or, properly, beings) toward whom his reaction has been so carefully guided makes him realize in a way the tentative splendor of all that has gone before could not have, just what a terrible matter it is this poem is about. A. J. A. Waldock worries that Satan is degraded after this point.[8] But the thoughtful reader who now realizes so graphically just what it is Satan is about likely needs no help hating him--and may even feel somewhat embarrassed by the admiration he might have started to feel--and ashamed that he and Satan share such an ugly thing as sin.

In contrast to the reader, Adam knows nothing of the character of sin or the nature of death. He has been warned to shun the one and fear the other if he does not, but it is not really clear to him from experience just what constitutes sin or death. As Adam learns these things the reader learns with him more exactly what sin is and exactly what the first sin was (which includes so many other sins in it), and learns fairly precisely the nature of death.

The first sin is precisely disobedience of God's direct commandment; that is clear. But to say so is not

enough; it is more complicated. In Christian Doctrine I, xi, Milton points out that there is the sin which is "common to all men" and "the personal sin of each individual." Everyone is guilty on both counts, and, of course, one way Paradise Lost works is by combining these two in Adam and Eve, so that their personal sin becomes the original sin. Personal sin is divided into two parts, "namely, evil concupiscence, or the desire of sinning, and the act of sin itself" (I, ix), or Actual Sin. In Paradise Lost Milton is very careful to make it absolutely clear that Adam's sin is Adam's own fault, not by any means God's, and absolutely clear just what that sin was and what it was not. Thus God's commission to Raphael is to set out on a course of instruction. In order that it will be absolutely clear where the guilt will lie Raphael is instructed to

> tell him withall
> His danger, and from whom what enemie
> Late falln himself from Heav'n, is plotting now
> The fall of others from like state of bliss;
> By violence, no, for that shall be withstood,
> Least wilfully transgressing he pretend
> Surprisal, unadomonisht, unforewarned.
> So spake th'Eternal Father, and fulfilld
> All Justice . . . (V, 238-47).

Thus, before we encounter the Fall itself, determinant conditions for it will be set, justice thereby fulfilled.

The Fall is preceded by a set of warnings (which will be discussed later), clear indications of what is not sin but might be taken for it (as by Mrs. Bell), and a model of how to resist it.

That model is Abdiel. Abdiel has the privilege in the poem of identifying and crying out the first sin. The context in which he does so is important. Raphael, in pursuance of God's commission, early stresses the necessity for Adam of obedience (V, 501) and they discuss it (505 ff.). That warning is, reasonably enough, followed by the account of Satan's revolt. I will discuss that revolt later, when I discuss Satan. For now it is important to realize that, since Satan's sin is not precisely the same as Adam's--in one sense Satan's sin has the better claim to be called the original Sin--its particular character is not stressed. What is stressed is Abdiel's refusal to be corrupted by it. Abdiel specifically names Satan's sin (V, 877-78), and thus precipitates the first uneven conflict. (First chronologically, that is; the meeting with Sin and Death in Book II is the first in the poem.) This conflict establishes the possibility and necessity for innocence to overcome evil even when apparently overwhelmed. (It should be noted that Abdiel, unlike the Lady in Comus, who is a representative of a fallen species, is not subject to harm from Satan unless he allow Satan to corrupt his will. For him to evince fear under the minatory looks of the fallen angels would show

defective faith. Satan is thus in fact powerless against the unfallen Abdiel--a point which Milton, for obvious reasons, plays down.) Adam should be learning from the story of this uneven conflict that temptation can be for good; that resistance to evil is possible and good.[9]

As the conversation enters Book VII, Adam asks for more information, dealing with creation, but cautiously:

> if unforbid thou maist unfould
> What wee, not to explore the secrets aske
> Of his Eternal Empire, but the more
> To magnifie his works, the more we know. (VII, 94-97)

The request is perfectly reasonable (as in fact it was when Satan made it of Uriel [III, 667-80]); Raphael commends Adam's caution and relates Creation: "This also thy request with caution askt / Obtaine: (111-12). The point is continued in Book VIII, when "Adam inquires concerning celestial Motions" (Argument to Book VIII), and is answered "doubtfully." Here an interesting point concerning curiosity and evil is implied: this would have been an excellent point for Raphael to have admonished Adam on moral grounds, if Adam had been wrong in his curiosity. But he pointedly does not do that. Instead, he answers to the effect that such speculation is silly:

> To ask or search I blame thee not, for Heav'n
> Is as the Book of God before thee set,
> Wherein to read his wondrous Works, and learne

His Seasons, Hours, or Days, or Months, or Yeares:
This to attain, whether Heav'n move or Earth,
Imports not, if thou reck'n right, the rest
From Man or Angel the great Architect
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought
Rather Admire; or if they list to try
Conjecture, he his Fabric of the Heav'ns
Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
His laughter at thir quaint Opinions wide
Hereafter . . . . (VIII, 66-79)

But since the Heavens are the "Book of God," the implication seems to be that Adam is welcome to what knowledge he can gain about them. It is to be hoped that he will not foolishly put small things above great (98-99). But the point is that his curiosity is not blameable. As I will discuss later with reference to Paradise Regained, Milton does not reject learning itself as evil, but rejects speculation as useless because unreliable and, more important, unfruitful. This then, is practical advice, not moral admonition:

But whether thus these things, or whether not,
Whether the Sun predominant in Heav'n
Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun,
. . . . . .
Sollicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,
Leave them to God above, him serve and feare;

Of other Creatures, as him pleases best,
Wherever plac't, let him dispose: joy thou
In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
And thy fair Eve: Heav'n is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowlie wise.
(VIII, 159-173)

In and before Book IX, where the actual transgression takes place, Milton is thus continuously careful to show that Adam and Eve's sin is exactly disobedience, and not anything else that goes before. After Eve's newly-created moment of narcissistic vanity, after her suspicious dreams, after her cajoling Adam to let her go out alone; after Adam's argument with God for a mate, after his curiosity, after his agreeing against his better judgment to let Eve go out alone: still Eve almost until the very moment of her decision to eat the fruit is, we are told, "yet sinless" (IX, 659); and still Adam, almost until the moment of his transgression, awaits Eve in innocence (IX, 838-49).

When in Book IX the sin itself occurs, it is clearly divided for both Adam and Eve into evil concupiscence and Actual Sin. That is not remarkable, for it is usual in an epic for people to talk about things before they do them. But it is nonetheless true that Eve's speech before her sin (XX, 745-79) and Adam's speech before his (IX, 921-59) each reflect a decision being taken and, at the end, finally completed. Especially in the case of Eve's eating, the speech

must absorb much of the climactic effect of the entire action; its importance as part of the sin, rather than as simply prelude to it, is perhaps suggested by the almost anticlimactic character of her act.

Death is the consequence of sin, and at the moment of the sin we begin to discover what death is. The first degree of Death is guiltiness and terrors of conscience (Christian Doctrine I, xii), the most important of the evils that lead to death. Guiltiness seems to be the simple fact of our sinfulness, which renders us inevitably subject to the other degrees of death. The ramifications of the first act of disobedience, then, constitute the first part of the first degree of death,[10] and the second, terrors of conscience, beset Adam and Eve so sorely and so lastingly that I cannot detail all of the fact. The terrors of conscience perhaps begin when, after their sin, they sleep, and have "grosser sleep / Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams / Encumberd" (IX, 1049-51). Their shame at their nakedness is, of course, a token of guilt and of their sinfulness. It is that token of guilt and terrified conscience that, in fact, "betrays" Adam before the judging Christ:

> I heard thee in the Garden, and of thy voice
> Affraid, being naked, hid my self. (X, 116-17)

This hesitancy, of course, is for Adam the final stage in the first degree of death, "a diminution of the majesty of the human countenance, and a conscious degradation of mind" (Christian Doctrine I, xii).

The second degree of death is spiritual death, which also dates from the moment of the Fall. The first manifestation of it is "the loss, or at least . . . the obscuration to a great extent of that right reason which enabled man to discern the chief good" (Christian Doctrine I, xii). John Diekhoff has analyzed Eve's rationale in her speech of concupiscence, pointing out that Eve's use of the Areopagitica argument to justify her eating the fruit of knowledge is invalid because the fallen condition of man is the premise of the argument of Areopagitica.[11] Adam's speech is disastrously unreasonable. He begins by suggesting that the prohibition against the tree is likely no longer in force:

> Perhaps thou shalt not Die, perhaps the Fact
> Is not so hainous now, foretasted Fruit,
> Profan'd first by the Serpent, by him first
> Made common and unhallowd ere our taste.
>
> (IX, 928-31)

In both its literal and its figurative sense the fruit has been tasted by the serpent. But Adam's poor reasoning comes from his assertion that the tree is sacred in that they are forbidden to taste it, and that the serpent's touch has "unhallowd" it. But it is not the tree that is to be protected; it is man: the serpent's touch has thus not really altered anything. Adam goes on in that speech to decide rather alarmingly that God probably will not invoke

his announced penalty of death on them for disobeying his commandment, since to do so would make God seem fickle:

> so God shall uncreate,
> Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour loose,
> Not well conceav'd of God. (IX, 943-46)

And he finally, as if in admission that his reasoning so far has been a failure, Adam asserts his real reason for participating in the sin: uxoriousness--

> However I with thee have fixt my Lot,
> Certain to undergoe like doom, if Death
> Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;
> So forcible within my heart I feel
> The Bond of Nature draw me to my owne,
> My own in thee, for what thou are is mine;
> Our State cannot be severd, we are one,
> One Flesh; to loose thee were to loose my self.
> (IX, 952-59)

Thus Adam falls, "not deceav'd, / But fondly overcome with Femal charm" (IX, 998-99). And then, in the continued gorging on the fruit and lascivious sexual indulgence (when the poet touchingly invokes the beauty of flowers as if in ironic contrast to the beautiful innocence of their former relationship [IX, 1039-41]), we see evidence of the beginnings of a "slavish subjection to sin and the devil" (Christian Doctrine I, xii); Adam and Eve are, as Adam said to Eve, "Defac't, deflourd, and now to Death devote" (IX, 901).

The first two degrees of death are fairly subtle, and this brief notice does not intend, obviously, to exhaust all that Milton makes of them in Paradise Lost, but only to indicate that Milton did not intend his treatment of them in this poem to be entirely unsystematic. These first two degrees are the least likely to be recognized by the reader, because he is here meeting them with Adam. With the third degree, physical death, the reader is presumed familiar, at least in its exterior aspects, whereas Adam is not. But the reader must nonetheless see physical death as part of the whole process, or the pattern of death is incomplete. The simple visitation to the world by Sin and Death in Book X is not enough, because they have come to mean (from Book II) something like just the loathsomeness of sin, and just the fearsomeness of death: they do not themselves communicate the fact of dying to the reader any more than they do the actual process of sinning. But for obvious reasons the reader should not be let to see Adam himself fall and die at once. Not only would that be impossible for the practical reason of preventing the birth of Cain and Abel (or Milton or the reader, for that matter), but also because the practical truth equals the symbolic reason: subjection to death does not mean that man is "uncreated" as Adam thought, but that he must live with death; he is mortal--as no creature before him was. In order to represent the third degree of death, then, Milton must give Adam a reversed

historical perspective. He and the reader must look at physical death in Adam's future and the reader's past, and their removal from it in time but inevitable connection with it in history underline the now accomplished fact of their mutual mortality: Adam laments

> But say
> That Death be not one stroak, as I suppos'd,
> Bereaving sense, but endless miserie
> From this day onward, which I feel begun
> Both in me, and without me, and so last
> To perpetuitie; Ay me, that fear
> Comes thundring back with dreadful revolution
> On my defensless head; both Death and I
> Am found Eternal, and incorporate both,
> Nor I on my part single, in mee all
> Posteritie stands curst: Fair Patrimonie
> That I must leave ye, Sons. (X, 808-19)

The third degree of death must await the revelation of history in Michael in Books XI and XII. The first scene shows Adam the first physical death.[12] As a direct result of his sin--

> Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold
> Th' effects which thy original crime hath wrought
> In some to spring from thee (XI, 423-25)--

he is shown the murder of Abel by Cain. When the crime is completed Adam does not know what has happened:

O Teacher, some great mischief hath befall'n
To that meek man, who well had sacrific'd;
Is Pietie thus and pure Devotion paid? (XI, 450-52)

When he is told, his reaction is interesting:

Alas, both for the deed and for the cause:
But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
I must return to native dust? O sight
Of terrour, foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel! (XI, 461-65)

But Michael is not through. He continues to show Adam, and Milton continues to show the reader, the effects of his Fall, until Adam is overcome:

Immediately a place
Before his eyes appeared, sad,noysom, dark,
A Lazar-house it seemd, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseas'd, all maladies
Of gastly Spasm, or racking torture, qualmes
Of heart-sick Agonie, all feavorous kinds,
Convulsions, Epilepsies, fierce Catarrhs,
Intestin Stone and Ulcer, Colic pangs,
Daemoniac Phrenzie, moaping Melancholie
And Moon-struck madness, pining Atrophie,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting Pestilence,
Dropsies, and Asthma's, and Joint-racking Rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans, despair
Tended the sick busiest from Couch to Couch;

> And over them triumphant Death his Dart
> Shook, but delaid to strike, though oft invok't
> With vows as thir chief good, and final hope.
> Sight so deform what heart of Rock could long
> Drie-ey'd behold? Adam could not, but wept
> Though not of Woman born; compassion quell'd
> His best of Man, and gave him up to tears . . . .
>
> (XI, 477-97)

This is precisely the reaction I believe Milton intends the reader to have upon his discovery of the horrible figure of Death in Book II. Michael deepens that impression in Adam to impress upon him in all the finality possible the objective of this didactic subject: the hideousness of sin and death.

I have deferred mention of the entry of Sin and Death in Book X because with the strategy of the revelation of the nature of death to Adam now clear, we can see more clearly the whole strategy of the treatment of the didactic subject of sin and death. The effects of the entry of Sin and Death in Book X (229-410) are several. First, the speed and alacrity with which they construct their bridge stands in a strange kind of parodic relationship with Creation. Second, coming immediately as it does after Christ's judging of Adam and Eve, it increases largely the horror of the Fall: the evil eagerness of Sin and Death keeps one from reacting to the Fall of man as some have to the fall of Satan. And

third, since the instruction of Adam is, of course, directed toward the Adam in the reader, that instruction is let to take place before one who has just been reminded of the fact that this very sin and death he is learning about are the referents of the double allegorical horror he reacted to in Book II. The poem draws toward its close, that is, with an integrated vision of sin and death, the reader's final understanding of it is not one in which he puts aside his original rough understanding of those, but one in which the initial reaction of vague but powerful horror and fright is made basic to his total understanding of them. The reader of Paradise Lost is made thoroughly alive to sin and its fruit.

The decision in Hell is whether the fallen Angels--I will call them Devils for convenience--will continue their strife with God by power, that is, immediate violence with hostile intent, or guile. Power is suggested first by Moloch--"My sentence is for open Warr . . . (II, 51 ff.)--but is soon disposed of. The reason is that Moloch forgets, or perhaps overlooks, that power has already been tried and clearly beaten. The defeat of power as an option for the Devils is so clear that God dismisses it as a possibility in his commission to Raphael (V, 242-43). The only real option left to the Devils is guile, by the time Paradise Lost begins, and it is thus about Satan's guile--the Devils'

guile concentrated in Satan--that the reader and Adam are warned.

For reasons just mentioned, it is not really necessary to warn the reader about Satan's power affecting him as a practical possibility. The reader is already fallen. Paradise Lost addresses the reader as a child of Adam fallen, as himself a fallen creature, and since his fall was accomplished by guile, not power, he need know little about Satan's uses of power, but he does find out something about it. Not so, however, with unfallen Adam--man insofar as he is capable of innocence. Even though God has ruled out in Raphael's presence the possibility of Satan's using his power against man, Adam must learn about Satan's exercise of power for the simple reason that it is the only sort of evil exertion Satan has tried in Raphael's experience, and Adam must somehow be warned about the greatness of Satan's capacity for evil through some means. I do not mean to charge Raphael (or Milton) with defective imagination here. I only want to point out that since Adam needs to be fully warned about what Satan is capable of, and since so far the outstanding exertion of Satan's evil has been in his war in heaven, then Raphael is logically bound to recount it. And Raphael may even be more sedulous to indite warrs than he would admit.

We need not spend long on the battle of Heaven. For our rather straitly limited purposes at this point the battle

shows two things. First, Satan's power is immense. Fallen man as well as unfallen is made to notice that by such things as the Devils' ability to invent and manufacture overnight sophisticated weaponry (like cannon). Indeed, at one point Satan's host appears to be gaining the advantage over the unfallen Angels. The effect, then, of all the epic qualities of the battle is, if nothing else, to convince the reader overhearing Raphael, and Adam as his student, that Satan is no trivial foe. C. S. Lewis for one holds that Satan is mocked and ridiculed throughout Paradise Lost, and Arnold Stein feels that the battle in Heaven especially makes Satan ridiculous.[13] Not, however, to man: man--fallen and unfallen--must recognize in Satan a genuinely formidable foe. But second, however immense Satan's power is, God's is immeasurably (literally) more immense--so much more that from God's perspective Satan's exercising his power this way is ridiculous: and therefore, from any perspective except a depraved one, for Satan to challenge God to war is foolish. God has, to begin with, command of the disputed terrain, a military advantage, and has Satan outnumbered at least two to one. But even those great advantages are not really what makes Satan's presumption ridiculous. It is simply that God is, after all, God: He is by definition omnipotent. Fractions do not measure the relation between omnipotence and limited power, no matter how great. Therefore God's "pulling his punches" in Raphael's account can only be an elaborate

mechanism to further underscore what is not obvious only because Satan is blind to it (and man is fallen): that it is categorically impossible for Satan's power to triumph over God.[14] In Book I the Devils, especially Satan, sometimes brag about their power and their military accomplishments (as at I, 105, 128ff., and elsewhere), but those speeches are clearly only campaign rhetoric. One effect, then, of what is chronologically the second uneven conflict is to make the point, fairly often missed, that for good reason power is banished from Satan's arsenal, but man must not, having seen this exercise of power to illustrate Satan at his least effective, underestimate his foe.

Satan employs guile everywhere: in Hell, in Heaven, and on Earth. He uses it against everyone: fallen Angels, unfallen Angels, and Man. He meets, as we shall see, several degrees of fortune: complete success, total failure, and qualified success.

In Hell we see Satan using guile within guile. The events there are those unknown to Adam and so are directed (in Milton's strategy) toward the reader. The method of this trickery, then, should sensibly be to use something that will strike a responsive chord in the reader's experience. Thus the trickery in Hell is cast in a political metaphor. This may or may not mean that Milton had something in mind that the politics in Hell, the particulars of the manipulation, "stood for." All it means is that Milton

bothered to conceive the manipulation as something the reader could see around him in the kind of political manipulation with which every latter-day son of Adam is familiar.

George W. Whiting has a brief article in which he discusses a "paper war" waged in London between 1763 and 1764 over "The Politics of Milton's Apostate Angels."[15] The details are unimportant to this discussion. What counts is that the disputants debated whether Book II of Paradise Lost was Whig or Tory politics, and that the most intelligent position taken was that if Milton intended to comment on contemporary political affairs, the comment was not Tory; but that likely there were no such allusions intended. It is an attractive debate, but one to be avoided. Even if Milton did draw on sources in his experience, his clear intention is to write about the guile of Satan, not of a person; and the guile is that of the Father of guile, not a son.

In Book II there are two manipulators: Satan, who is evil, and Milton, who desires our eventual good (and who is, of course, thus in the position of God, who "lets" Satan do what he does). Satan's manipulation extends to the responses of the other Devils, letting them explore certain alternatives to the course of action he will offer and progress through that process to a willingness to surrender control to him. Milton's object, I believe, is to show the reader the extent of Satan's guile, and that that

guile can operate through means--political rhetoric--which can affect him directly and practically.

Satan has curiously announced his end in Book I:

> Henceforth his might we know, and know our own
> So as not either to provoke, or dread
> New warr, provok't; our better part remains
> To work in close design, by fraud or guile
> What force effected not: that he no less
> At length from us may find, who overcomes
> By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
> Space may create new worlds; whereof so rife
> There went a fame in Heav'n that he ere long
> Intended to create, and therein plant
> A generation, whom his choice regard
> Should favor equal to the Sons of Heaven:
> Thither, if but to prie, shall be perhaps
> Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere.
>
> (I, 643-56)

This is spoken to the assembled Devils, but is soon covered over by the building of Pandaemonium. Thus when the Hellish consult begins in Book II, the reader may or may not remember it--although in one sense he certainly does, since he knows the Genesis story--but the Devils seem not to. Satan opens the consult with a speech designed to provoke just such a reply as Moloch makes. Satan's keynote is a kind of jingoistic defiance. His speech never directly

counsels open war, but it is stirring enough to prompt military fervor. Thus it begins on a note that calls for fierce applause:

> Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heav'n,
> For since no deep within her gulf can hold
> Immortal vigor, though opprest and fall'n,
> I give not Heav'n for lost. (II, 11-14)

He next says he expects a kind of fortunate fall for the Devils, and then asserts his right to leadership and the logic by which other Devils should not object to that leadership, but in warlike terms:

> who here
> Will envy whom the highest place exposes
> Formost to stand against the Thunderers aime
> Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
> Of endless Pain? (II, 26-30)

Finally, the choice, which is between "open Warr of covert guile" (I, 40), is somewhat loaded: all the associations of "open" make it preferable to anything "covert" (assuming that the semantics of fallen Angels operates predictably). Following as it does such a speech, it seems inevitable that the first answer should be that of Moloch.

Moloch's speech fails to convince for reasons often noted. One does not really need to be especially subtle to see that: the course he proposes is obviously disastrous. Belial notes the weakness of Moloch's plan. The plan is

desperate, and Moloch's is the voice of angry despair (I, 45, 107). When Belial himself speaks he utters too a speech of despair--in the etymological as well as the ordinary sense--which lacks Moloch's anger. And finally, as C. S. Lewis notes, Mammon proposes that they find an imitation happiness, since they can never recover the real thing.[16]

The point is that all three of these suggestions are made from despair. The three variations run something like this: (1) we cannot recover our lost bliss, so (2a) let us reject everything else (Moloch), (2b) let us passively accept our prediction and hope for numbness (Belial), and (2c) let us embrace prediction and like it (Mammon). But basic to all three is despair at regaining bliss, a despair so fundamental to Moloch's provoked speech that it pervades all the others as if inevitably. Mammon's speech is received with great applause, and justifiably, because it makes the best case for accomodation with despair. It is a climactic moment in the debate, but it was really inevitable. The alternatives in despair are few, and a proposal such as Mammon's, coming as it does on the heels of such grim prospects as outlined by Moloch and Belial, would certainly be applauded--especially by fallen creatures.

These speeches cover in despair the possibility of ever getting out of Hell, but they do something else too. In his speech, Moloch, for all his foolishness, at least resists Hell. Belial is willing to accept it passively, and

Mammon wants actually to embrace Hell. The tendency of the speeches, then, is toward deeper and greater involvement in Hell--that is to say, the speeches follow a course of increasing depravity.

Beelzebub's speech is nicely timed. He interrupts the deepening despair of the other proposals by offering not an extension of hellishness (he thinks) but an escape. It is just the escape suggested by Satan in Book I, and, as the epic voice indicates, the suggestion of it by Beelzebub was really Satan's idea (II, 379-85). All that is left, then, is to choose Satan to make the expedition. But that decision has been considered too: one of the topics of Satan's introductory speech was his exclusive fitness to rule over the Devils, and the unreasonableness of any Devil's wishing to supplant him. The entire proceeding, then has been governed by the despair introduced by Satan and developed by others, increasing depravity, inevitable after Moloch's speech, Satan's claim to leadership, and his plan to corrupt man, developed by Beelzebub. Thus Satan has introduced the elements into the consult that allowed it to be manipulated, and has manipulated it to serve his ends.

Milton's manipulation is not so much different from Satan's as we might expect. As we discussed earlier, the construction of Pandaemonium and the beginning of what looks like an orderly debate in Hell is likely to make the reader begin to think of Hell as a decreasingly painful place--the

change from "Chain'd on the burning Lake" (I, 210) to "High on a Throne of Royal State" (II, i) is rather dramatic. "Citizenship" in Hell comes to seem less terrible.

When Moloch counsels open war, the epic voice seems neutral: there is a kind of admiration for Moloch in these lines:

> He ceas'd, and next him Moloc, Scepter'd King
> Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
> That fought in Heav'n; now fiercer by despair:
> His trust was with th' Eternal to be deem'd
> Equal in strength, and rather then be less
> Car'd not to be at all; with that care lost
> Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse
> He reckd not, and these words thereafter spake.
>
> (II, 43-50)

But when Belial is to begin, the reader is warned not to believe--"all was false and hollow" (II, 112). The reader must trust the epic voice, of course; it is part of the assumption in such a poem that the narrator understands it. But Belial's analysis of Moloch's error (II, 124 ff.) is correct. Those are precisely the reasons why one cannot do as Moloch suggests. And the increasing coziness of Hell--absurd as it sounds--makes Belial's suggestion of acceptance of Hell seem a better idea all around than Moloch's. When Belial finishes, the epic voice once again urges the inferiority of his thinking. At this point the reader may

begin to be morally confused. He may wonder just where he is going. Hell, he knows, is a place to be avoided. The epic voice tells him that the speech he has just read is specious--and, as Stanly Fish shows, it is.[17] But the reader is likely not to have noticed that, because the speech satisfies all the demands for sense the reader could have wished for, in that it is a convincing refutation for Moloch, and that its acceptance of Hell confirms his impression that Hell is getting more comfortable. What is happening, I believe, is that the reader is being led to a situation where he is uncomfortably aware of two things: the ability of Hell to attract, and the difficulty in himself of resisting that attraction.

Mammon's speech continues that strategy. At last the reader sees something constructive. Mammon's reasoning, again, is refutable, of course, but the reader is again unlikely to notice that. Here is why: when Moloch reasoned ill, Belial corrected him. The reader knew that Moloch had to be wrong, because his advice countered our manipulated wish, and Belial verified that feeling. The epic voice has told the reader that Belial is wrong, to his puzzlement, but before he could go back and find out how, Mammon shows him, relieving his confusion. The reader's critical faculty thus is allowed to lapse (the word is intentional) since he can so easily let the Devils think for him. But at the same time, as I said before, the reader is never quite let to

forget that he should be on his guard. To look at it another way, the reader is being pulled along in a discussion he knows he should be above. But then Mammon's proposal, followed as it is with applause, presents a course of action that is not only safe, but seems constructive, and, involving as it does a play of ingenuity, is interesting. If only the plans had stopped there, everything would be all right, one feels. The Devils would create an exciting empire in Hell and make themselves respected and admirable for their industry and inventiveness. They would have been likely to behave, being too busy with their projects to get into trouble. The point is of course ridiculous: Mammon's plan would not have worked. These are Devils, not a loyal opposition. But my point in offering it is to suggest that the reader, because he has been led to it by the diminishing terror of Hell and by his inborn desire to participate in ordering and improving his world, has been tricked into letting himself think of himself as a citizen of Hell, or if not that, he has been led to think of Hell with a kind of sympathy.

But with Beelzebub's speech the horror of the whole thing dawns. The proposal names Man, the reader himself, as its victim. And the reader realizes what he might have forgotten: that this was "first devis'd / By Satan" (II, 379-80), and he has likely planned it all in advance. The idea is acclaimed by the other Devils:

The bold design

> Pleas'd highly those infernal States, and joy
> Sparkl'd in all thir eyes; with full assent
> They vote. (II, 387-89)

These are the very Devils with whom the reader has been in consult. And the bland evil of their enthusiasm is laconically underscored by the epic voice which passes no judgment in its report: the design is called merely "bold," not evil, and the Devils assent with "joy," not malignity, sparkling in their eyes.

Milton has, then, by strategic use of the epic voice and by careful alignment of appeals to the reader, led him to a clear recognition not only of just how Satan's guile works, through letting the reader have the trap sprung on him just as it was on the Devils, but also of how deadly Satan's guile can be, by having the object of the trap be to him so terrible. Had Satan simply announced his plan to the Devils, it would have been every bit as dangerous to Adam and Eve, and for the children of Adam and Eve, as it is this way. But this way is worse for the reader, because his own weakness, his own sinful nature, his own obscured reason have kept him from recognizing Satan's consummate guile until too late. This reader then is well advised to fear such guile from his enemy, to shun that which seems at least fair but ends foul.

Our bitter feelings toward Satan as the result of this scene need to be quickly ameliorated, so that we do not sympathize wrongly in his encounter with Sin and Death. Thus, then, the "heroism" of Satan's volunteering, and the observation by the epic voice:

> Towards him they bend
> With awful reverence prone; and as a God
> Extoll him equal to the highest in Heav'n:
> Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd,
> That for the general safety he despis'd
> His own: for neither do the Spirits damn'd
> Loose all thir virtue; least bad men should boast
> Thir specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
> Or close ambition varnisht o're with zeal.
>
> (II, 477-85)

And thus the industrious effort of the Devils to conquer Hell.

At this point the reader of the poem has been warned about Satan's guile--which, of course, he employs fairly regularly henceforth--but not Adam. Adam is warned to feat Satan by the Battle in Heaven, but Satan's power in battle is not the same as his guile, and it is the guile Adam must fear most.

Adam's first knowledge that something is wrong comes when Eve relates to him her dream in Book V. The reader has seen Satan already in Eden, and just saw in Book IV Satan

"close at the eare of Eve" (IV, 800). In the passage between this sight and Eve's awakening at the beginning of Book V the reader sees a clear illustration of the defectiveness of Satan's power, but is not really relieved, because he is painfully aware of the extent of Satan's guile. But Adam does not see any of this. When Eve tells the dream Adam is "sad" (V, 94) and fears the dream "of evil sprung" (98). He is right, of course, but soon is distracted from his moral explanation of the dream to a physiological explanation, since he reasons that Eve is not evil and therefore a moral explanation need not be sought. It is, of course, only reasonable that he do so, and that they put the whole thing out of their minds as they do. The reader psychology, of course, is excellent: one feels compelled to try to warn them but is powerless even to know just what to warn them of.

But they are immediately warned. Raphael's visit then comes, and along with much else, Raphael recounts the fall of the angels, including Satan's seduction of them. Adam should recognize the first step in his approach. Satan in the dark of night whispers into his sleeping confederate's ear. His opening words are faintly reminiscent of the opening words of Eve's dream: "Why sleepst thou Eve? now is the pleasant time: (V, 38), and "Sleepst thou Companion dear, what sleep can close / Thy eye-lids?" (V, 673-4). When the whispering is over Raphael ambiguously says: "So spake the

false Arch-Angel, and infus'd / Bad influence into th' unwarie brest / Of his Associate" (V, 694-96). The rest of the passage makes it clear that Beelzebub awoke during the experience, but the reference to the "unwarie brest" allows the momentary impression that, as he did to Eve, Satan has suggested an evil dream to Beelzebub. The examination of Satan's perfidy here breaks off in Raphael's account while God and the Son exchange observations about the revolt, warning each other and preparing to "arm" themselves--just as this visit from Raphael is to warn Adam and let him "arm" himself.

When the story of Satan's revolt is resumed, Satan is seen as grand and imposing. His speech turns only on sly twists of the truth. Thus, for instance, he suggests that to give homage is, for Angels, worse when there are two recipients than when there is only one. But that makes sense only for Satan: he is in the highest order of Angels, and those under him are already at least two steps removed from God. Thus the freedom from authority he seems to offer is valid for himself only (and not really valid then, of course); for them it is only a change in loyalty. These lines,

> Will ye submit your necks, and chuse to bend
> The supple knee? ye will not, if I trust
> To know ye right, or if ye know your selves
> Natives and Sons of Heav'n possest before

> By none, and if not equal all, yet free,
> Equally free; for Orders and Degrees
> Jar not with liberty, but well consist,
>
> (V, 787-93)

are subtly illogical. The Angels are here enjoined by their heavenly freedom to resist the lordship of the Son. But if Order and Degree do not spoil liberty, then that lordship will not inhibit them. And if they are free in Heaven under God's authority, then the Son of God will scarcely alter their freedom. Satan himself, by the logic of this speech, should welcome that lordship, if Orders and Degrees are welcome to him.

But nearly one third of the Angels are convinced by it. In their conviction Adam should take warning: he is being shown that Satan is dangerously wily. Further to arm Adam, Abdiel provides a model for resistance by reminding Satan hotly that he <u>is</u> subject to God's law (V, 810-31), that Satan is wrong to revolt against his Maker (V, 831-45), and that he should repent (V, 845-48). The exchange then turns on the Son's creation, which Satan denies; and Abdiel, faithful in the face of Satan, leaves.

In this exchange two points have been brought up: Satan's power in relation to God's (or at least his enforceable authority), and creation. As if to demonstrate Satan's wrongness, the conversation between Raphael and Adam then turns to those two points. Book VI recounts the

Battle in Heaven, showing Satan's lack of enforceable authority, and Books VII and VIII recount the creation of the world and of man. (But Eve is absent when the creation of man is discussed in Book VIII, hoping Adam will tell her what was said. When Eve falls in Book IX, one of the arguments she succumbs to is Satan's favorite one, questioning God's creatorship.) Adam should not miss the warning: Satan is guileful and convincing, but altogether wrong. He should know, moreover, from Eve's dream and the speech whispered into Beelzebub's ear, what way Satan is likely to work. The reader then, as child of Adam, is told that he can know how Satan works, that he must not plead ignorance of the workings of evil either in the person of Adam or as himself.

Adam has no excuse for his Fall. He was carefully warned about Satan and about what Satan might do. But any excuse, even any warning, diminishes in importance beside the real point: Adam succumbed to Satan's attack and man is fallen. The fallen reader is compelled to recognize that central fact. He is compelled to recognize and fear the tremendous power and guile of Satan, and Satan's influence over him.

I mentioned earlier that one way Paradise Lost works is by making personal sin and original sin the same for Adam and Eve. In turn one effect of that is that the reader, insofar as he realizes himself not likely to have done any

better in Eden than Adam and Eve did, is made to realize his sinful, Adamic nature perhaps more immediately than he did before. In other words, as Adam and the reader look at history in Books XI and XII from different ends of it, they share the fact that they are fallen. They look at history in near memory of the Fall, with the fact of their sinfulness dominant in their minds. The view of history in Books XI and XII is offered as with the caption, "The effect of man's sinfulness." Adam has brought himself to share the condition of the fallen reader; and the reader has witnessed at first hand the event which was his Fall. The reader and Adam re-integrate at the end of Paradise Lost into the modern Adam that the reader really is. There is only the difference of time between Adam and the reader.

At this point the reader has been brought, or should have been brought, in no haphazard way, to a position of great moral humility. The third great didactic subject of Paradise Lost, as I have said, is the sinfulness of man. That sinfulness is established in relation to his potential grandeur, which is seen in Adam and Eve before the Fall.

But before Adam and Eve are ever encountered, the reader has been made uncomfortably aware of his shortcomings. I have already discussed the manipulation of the reader in Book II. That is part of a pattern of traps, such as are discussed by Stanley Fish in Surprised by Sin. Fish's point is that Milton, by ensnaring the reader into assenting to

evil propositions, or by leading the reader to react improperly to things, and then rebuking him through the epic voice, arouses the reader's sense of his sinfulness. Thus in the description of Eve--

> Shee as a vail down to the slender waste
> Her unadorned golden tresses wore
> Dissheveld, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
> As the Vine curles her tendrils, which impli'd
> Subjection (IV, 304-8)--

the reader has base carnal responses suggested to him by the language ("Dissheveld," "wanton," and even "wav'd"), but at the same time consciously rejects them for the idea of Eve because he knows that Eve is in fact innocent and pure. Actually, according to Fish, "the evil he sees under everyone's bed is his own."[18] I will not cover Fish's ground; there is a continuing use of such devices throughout Paradise Lost that serve to bring home to the reader the fact of his sinfulness.

When the reader does encounter Adam and Eve, though, he is manipulated not only to see his own sinfulness, but also the possibility of grandeur they represent. That manipulation begins as Book IV begins. First we encounter Satan, in a famous speech, remorseful, despairing, confirming himself in evil:

> Me miserable! which way shall I flie
> Infinite wrauth, and infinite despaire?

Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatning to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.
(IV, 73-78)

One point of this is Satan's discomfort, his powerful sense of constriction. Hell is for a moment un-localized, and Satan is as it were compressed within himself.[19] In the next passage Earth is expansive, lovely, and comfortable as he approaches it:

And of pure now purer aire
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair: now gentle gales
Fanning thir odoriferous wings dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmie spoiles. (IV, 153-59)

Then we find Satan leaping the wall of Eden, and he is shown in degrading images: he is like a "prowling Wolfe" (183), a Thief (188), and, finally, on his porch, like a Cormorant (196). He sees, and the reader sees with him, Eden: for nearly eighty lines (205-85) Eden is described in terms that leave no doubt of its magnificence. Finally, then, Adam and Eve are spied, and described in a passage too familiar to require citation to establish that they are noble.

This alternation between pleasant and unpleasant associations is part of a reader manipulation that has at least three effects. First, the degrading of Satan in relation to this context of magnificence makes the reader despise him. Second, the reader sees here humanity in perfection in a perfect setting, set off by the ugly Satan. But third, he sees that perfection in terms that specifically exclude what the reader has become.

For the reader first sees Adam and Eve in effect through the eyes of Satan; in a sense, having been with Satan so long the reader is already corrupted by him. He comes to Earth with Satan, and the Earth they encounter is, I suggest, although beautiful, made to seem as remote to the reader by the exotic place names as it is unavailable to Satan:

> As when to them who saile
> Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
> Mozambic, off at Sea North-East windes blow
> Sabean Odours from the spicie shoare
> Of Arabie the blest, with such delay
> Well pleas'd they slack thir course, and many a League
> Cheard with the greatful smell old Ocean smiles.
>
> (IV, 159-65)

It is Satan, not man's seat Earth, that is familiar: the Wolf, the Thief, the staring bird are more familiar than those remote places alluded to. Eden too is remote in the same way:

Eden stretchd her Line
From Auran Eastward to the Royal Towrs
Of Great Seleucia, built by Grecian Kings,
Or where the Sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar. (IV, 210-14)

When we see Adam and Eve they seem at first "strange" (287). "In thir looks Divine / The image of thir glorious Maker shon" (IV, 291-92), but this Maker is the unpersonal God of Book III, whose countenance is unimaginable except by man's, and who has seemed so little like anything a fallen reader can feel at one with; the reader has been more able so far, I suggest, to identify his image with that of Satan, who has recognizable emotions, who has wielded a spear, who errs. Adam and Eve are formed for ideal purposes, not such pursuits as are necessary to manage in a modern society of fallen men:

For contemplation hee and valour formd,
For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace.
(IV, 297-98)

Most noticeably, they are naked--a token, as I have said, of their innocence--and the reader is told by the epic voice to notice that difference:

Nor those mysterious parts were then conceald,
Then was not guiltie shame, dishonest shame
Of natures works, honor dishonorable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubl'd all mankind

With shews instead, meer shews of seeming pure,
And banisht from mans life his happiest life,
Simplicitie and spotless innocence.
So passd they naked on, nor shund the sight
Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill.
(IV, 312-20)

Such equanimity is not available to the reader, of course, and that it was to Adam and Eve is a reminder of the difference between them.

The reader is confined to Satan's perspective throughout this entire scene, both by virtue of his sinfulness and by virtue of the simple formal point of view of the scene. When Satan leaves, the reader must go with him; he cannot remain behind with his ancestors. And Satan's presence spoils the first view of Paradise for the reader, by reacting with pain and hatred to what the reader would like to be left alone to admire. When Adam presses Eve's "Matron lip / With kisses pure" (IV, 501-2), the reader, who may be reacting with impure thoughts to the description of the scene, nonetheless does not join Satan as he turns aside "with jealous leer maligne" (503). He may leer, but not with malignity.

This partial sharing of Satan's reactions and simultaneous rejection of them makes the reader's position uncomfortable. Satan's reaction to the kissing Adam and Eve is:

> Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two
> Imparadis't in one anothers arms
> The happier Eden, shall enjoy thir fill
> Of bliss on bliss, while to Hell am thrust,
> Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
> Among our other torments not the least,
> Still unfulfill'd with pain of long pines.
>
> (IV, 504-11)

The reader, of course, does not feel such hatred. He sympathises with Adam and Eve and, capable of love as Satan is not wishes to participate in the scene. But he is kept from doing so by the distance imposed on him from Adam and Eve by both the point of view of the scene and the difficulty he has found in believing himself more kin to them than he is to Satan. He cannot escape his fallen, sinful state, which, for the moment, he shares with Satan as an outsider to bliss. This view of prelapsarian perfection and joy serves to show him how far he has fallen.

The reader, then, is shown the extent of his sinfulness by the combination of subtle snares with the painful identification with Satan he makes at his first sight of Paradise.

Adam and Eve receive their lesson at greater length. Their visit from Raphael establishes at length, as if they did not already know it, the goodness of God and of their life. It is neither possible nor necessary to detail the

lengths Raphael goes to in order to impress on Adam the greatness and goodness of God, and the happiness of his life in Eden. It is the matter of most of Books VII and VIII.

Thus, when the Fall is complete and man has lost it all, he spends the last two Books of the poem being shown at length the effects of his fall. In Book XI Michael shows Adam death, as we have noted before, and the depravity that leads to the Flood. This long specification of the effects of Adam's sinfulness so move Adam that he cries:

> O Visions ill foreseen! better had I
> Liv'd ignorant of future, so had borne
> My part of evil onely. (XII, 763-5)

But that could not be. Adam cannot escape from the consequenses of his sin merely because of his historical position: no man is permitted to escape the consequences of the original sin. In Book XII Michael foretells the coming of Christ to man, and Adam imagines a simple, painless victory over Satan for him:

> Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise
> Expect with mortal paine: say where and when
> Thir fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victors heel.
> (XII, 383-85)

But Adam has forgotten for a moment the Fall; and Michael reminds him that God's justice must be fulfilled (XII, 401 ff.) and that Christ's mission will involve suffering and pain:

thy punishment

He shall endure by coming in the Flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death,
Proclaming Life to all who shall believe
In his redemption, and that his obedience
Imputed becomes theirs by Faith, his merits
To save them, not thir own, though legal works.
For this he shall live hated, be blasphem'd,
Seis'd on by force, judg'd, and to death condemnd
A shameful and accurst, naild to the Cross
By his own Nation, slaine for bringing Life.
(XII, 404-14)

But this is followed by a recital of the recovery of Paradise, leaving the final effect of the speech not despair but optimism and humble gratitude:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good. (XII, 469-71)

Michael's objective (Milton's objective) is not to leave Adam or the reader despairing, certain of his damnation at the end of Paradise Lost: it is to make him receptive to the possibility of his regaining Paradise. That receptivity is accomplished in Adam, as he reveals in his last speech:

Henceforth I learne, that to obey is best,
And love with feare the onely God, to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe

His providence, and on him sole depend,
Merciful over all his works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deemd weak
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek; that suffering for Truths sake
Is fortitude to highest victorie,
And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life;
Taught this by his example whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest. (XII, 561-73)

This is the speech of a man aware of his imperfection, and yet hopefully willing to undertake the steps necessary to the regaining of Paradise for himself. Insofar as the reader and Adam are re-integrated by this point, joined in the Fall, it is, I believe, expressive of the sentiment Milton hopes to have induced in the reader. The reader of Paradise Lost has learned with Adam about sin and death, about Satan, and about the sinfulness of man. He has been left with a promise of a saviour if he proves faithful, by whose help he can achieve "A Paradise within [him], happier farr" (XII, 587). This reader, humble and hopeful, is the one Milton has in mind, I believe, at the beginning of Paradise Regained.

NOTES

[1]I mean this in a sense slightly different from the usual one, such as is intended by George Williamson in "The Education of Adam," MP, LXI (1963), 96-109; reprinted in Arthur E. Barker (ed.), Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism (New York, 1965), 284-307.

[2]Tillyard, Studies in Milton (London, 1951); and Millicent Bell, "The Fallacy of the Fall in Paradise Lost," PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 863-883.

[3]H. S. V. Ogden refutes Mrs. Bell's article similarly in "The Crisis of Paradise Lost Reconsidered," PQ, XXXVI (1957), 1-19.

[4]With C. S. Lewis (A Preface to 'Paradise Lost,' [New York, 1961]), E. E. Stoll ("Give the Devil His Due: A Reply to Mr. Lewis," RES, XX [1944], 108-24, and "A Postscript to Give the Devil His Due," PQ, XXVIII [1949], 167-84), Allen H. Gilbert ("Critics of Mr. C. S. Lewis on Milton's Satan," SAQ, XLVII [1948], 216-25) et al.

[5]"It comprehended at once distrust in the divine veracity, and a proportionate credulity in the assurances of

Satan; unbelief; ingratitude; disobedience; gluttony; in the man excessive uxoriousness, in the woman a want of proper regard for her husband, in both an insensibility to the welfare of their offspring, and that offspring the whole human race; parricide, theft, invasion of the rights of others, sacrilege, deceit, presumption in aspiring to divine attributes, fraud in the means employed to attain the object, pride, and arrogance" (Christian Doctrine I, xi).

[6]Stanley E. Fish, in Surprised by Sin, falls into a tiny trouble over this simile. It reads

> His spear, to equal which the tallest Pine
> Hewn on Norwegian Hills to be the Mast
> Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand. (I, 292-4)

Fish twits "responsible critics" for saying that this means that Satan's spear is the size of a ship 's mast (p. 23), and goes on to discuss the figure well. But then he says that the wand is to the Pine as the Pine is to the spear in size (p. 27). That is not what the simile says either, though. It says that the Pine would seem to be a wand in relation to the spear, but the wand is not compared with the size of the Pine, or with anything else. The only real assertion of the simile is the imaginary diminution in size of the Pine: if one understands from that that the spear is huge, he is led to that understanding by strong inducements that carefully do not include, upon examination, any particulars about the changeable size of Satan. The importance of the

point may appear small, but Mr. Fish intends to be reading the poem especially closely.

[7]"The Allegory of Sin and Death in Paradise Lost," MLQ, XXIV (1963), 354-64.

[8]"Milton and the Technique of Degradation," in Paradise Lost and Its Critics (Cambridge, 1947); reprinted in Milton: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Louis L. Martz (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966), 77-99.

[9]Allen H. Gilbert, in "The Theological Basis of Satan's Rebellion and the Function of Abdiel in Paradise Lost," MP, XL (1942), 19-42, maintains reasonably that another function of Abdiel is to dramatize the "idea" of the poem--"moral and physical heroism."

[10]Maurice Kelley, in This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's 'De Doctrina Christiana' as a Gloss upon 'Paradise Lost' (Princeton, 1941), 146-48, shows how all the sins in Milton's catalogue in CD are included in the Fall.

[11]"Eve, the Devil, and Areopagitica," MLQ, V (1944), 429-34.

[12]This rather curiously puts Adam in a position similar to God's (as Satan promised Eve the sin would), in that he now knows that if he and Eve have children they will have to suffer sin and death. He could, of course, decide

not to have any children, and perhaps celibacy as a penance is really a possibility for him; at any rate, he does not refuse to reproduce. The choice is difficult for him (not pleasant, as Satan had implied). And, of course, the whole point may be entirely accidental.

[13]Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost; Stein, Answerable Style: Essays on 'Paradise Lost' (Minneapolis, 1953).

[14]Thus Satan is admirable from man's perspective and foolish from God's. One does not need to break Milton into "poet" and "moralist" to understand the complexity of Satan, as G. Rostrevor Hamilton does in Hero or Fool? A Study of Milton's Satan (London, 1944).

[15]Notes & Queries, CXLIII (1932), 384-86.

[16]A Preface to 'Paradise Lost,' pp. 106-7.

[17]Surprised by Sin, p. 15 ff.

[18]Surprised by Sin, p. 102.

[19]Merrit Y. Hughes discusses Hell as a psychological state of Satan and a locality outside the universe, and says that Milton uses both ideas, in "Myself am Hell," MP, LIV (1956), 80-94.

CHAPTER IV

IN PERFECT DIAPASON: PARADISE REGAINED AND SAMSON AGONISTES

Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes were published together in 1671. Although doubt has been raised by W. R. Parker about the date of the composition of Samson Agonistes,[1] I believe Ants Oras is right in the observation that there is no necessity to believe Samson Agonistes was written earlier than Paradise Regained but a strong likelihood that it was composed last of the three major poems.[2] Although it is not a primary objective of this paper to comment on the date on Samson Agonistes, it may be inferred from my conclusion that Samson Agonistes was written last, because of its position in the pattern of moral didacticism.

The previously noted incidental similarities between Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes--e.g., their joint publication, their nearness in length--are part of a relationship between them that has not before been stated.[3] They are, I believe, a roughly parallel statement of the didactic point that Paradise Lost leads up to. In that poem the reader, as I have said, is made aware, both by his

consciousness of his failings and by his foreview of history, of his sinfulness and his subjection to Satan, Sin, and Death. Now in Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes the reader learns more fully what he can do to avail himself of the offer of a "paradise within," and, what is more, since the attainment of that state is a matter of gaining wisdom (as opposed to simple knowledge),[4] then to master a rigorous program of moral instruction such as these poems represent is what he must do. That is, as one discovers the way, he is being led down it; as Christ in Paradise Regained outlines the bases for moral choices, the reader has to be making these choices.

The poems are designed to achieve this effect by being constructed so as to present sequences of closely related temptations first to Christ and then to Samson.[5] Christ is tempted by Satan; Samson by fallen men. I have remarked before that conflicts, including temptations, threats, battles, and the like, tend, when they are important, in Paradise Lost, and incidentally in Comus, to be unbalanced in the disposition of those involved, so far as their relative positions on a kind of moral-and-power scale is concerned: thus Comus and the Lady, Eve and Satan, Satan and Death, Abdiel and the many fallen Angels, and so on. In Paradise Regained, though, these variations in the arrangements of the principals in conflicts cease. Christ meets his counterpart Satan in an extended encounter; and,

in Samson Agonistes, Samson, a rather pointedly fallen man, is tested by fallen men.

The parallelism of the arrangement of their temptations will be discussed later. But at this point it is important to note that I do not mean that I consider Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes to be simply parallel treatments of the same idea, ordinary companion poems like L'Allegro and Il Penseroso. There are great differences between them both in technique and theme. Samson Agonistes is not just a Paradise Regained acted on a human level; it is a dramatic poem of which the emotional logic and hence the distribution of the parts is different, and in which the didactic end is slightly different. While the arrangement of the temptations is sufficiently similar to allow one to recognize that they complete together the same pattern, it is not identical. I will consider the differences first, and then consider the temptations together to show the parallelism.

Paradise Regained is for the repentant reader. He has had shown him in Paradise Lost his need for repentance: his subjection to sin and death, his susceptibility to Satan, and his sinfulness. The reader of Paradise Lost has had rough treatment. He has been presented with a rather complicated and important action, told in a learned, subtle manner. But more, he has been pushed this way and that by the epic

voice--the poem's umpire conscience--so that he has been led to reactions with which he was uncomfortable so that he would come to realizations he did not like about subjects he did not enjoy; not until late in the poem is there relief. Thus in Book II, for instance, as I showed in the preceding chapter, the reader is made to recognize the full extent of Satan's perfidy and danger by his being led in Hell to begin to assent to the comfort of the mortal enemy of his entire species: he finds Satan's evil stuck to him like something unclean, and his revulsion is not only to Satan but to his own contamination. The reader is even more harassed than Stanley Fish claims. But this rough treatment has a good end--the demonstration of a moral need in the reader--and, one should remember, the poem is not unpleasantly painful: for hundreds of years readers have derived intense pleasure rather than scalding pain from it, probably it <u>is</u> a poem, a controlled creation of the human mind that ministers to the reader's advantage, and in which the didacticism is dramatic and the statement metaphoric.

But <u>Paradise Regained</u> is much quieter. There is an epic voice, to be sure, and it does sometimes take the prerogative of seeing farther than the reader can, but never for the purpose of manipulating the unwary reader into self-incrimination. It is used as an instrument of manipulation, but subtly, by making comments that are never quite surprising, and never wide of the reader's experience. To

recall: in Paradise Lost II, 108 ff., the epic voice tells the reader about Belial before he speaks:

> he seemd
> For dignity compos'd and high exploit:
> But all was false and hollow; though his Tongue
> Dropt Manna, and could make the worse appear
> The better reason, to perplex and dash
> Maturest Counsels: for his thoughts were low;
> To vice industrious, but to Nobler deeds
> Timorous and slothful; (110-17)

and after:

> Thus Belial with words cloath'd in reasons garb
> Counsel'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloath,
> Not peace. (226-28)

But the speech itself, as I have suggested, must seem to the reader fairly sensible. In Paradise Regained, when a similar situation occurs, the reader finds:

> amidst them rose
> Belial the dissolutest Spirit that fell,
> The sensuallest, and after Asmodai
> The fleshliest Incubus. (Paradise Regained II, 149-52)

His speech then, suggesting that Satan tempt Christ with voluptuous women, fits this description of him perfectly; it is a luxor's advice and silly strategy to use against Christ. The observation of the epic voice is not really very noticeable, then, because what it says is so meet. The epic

voice is very sparing in its judgments,[6] and when it does offer commentary, the commentary is never quite unexpected. That reticence may seem surprising: since the moral direction of the pilgrim reader is so important, we might expect Milton to attend to the direction of the reader with greater zeal than before. I think there are two reasons. First, Paradise Lost as I have said, is addressed to the reader as a fallen man. It requires him to examine his sinfulness, to watch it occur, to discover his enemy, to acknowledge his weakness. The peculiar power of Paradise Lost to capture the imagination needs no argument here. The poem wields that power in an effort to move the reader to a self-awareness that is marked by humility. But Paradise Regained is addressed to the pilgrim reader, who has been shaken by Paradise Lost so that he is newly amenable to instruction. Accordingly, not only is Paradise Regained not so watchfully full of the remonstrating voice, it is noticeably less adorned with "beauties." There are few "sublime," "noble," or "moving" passages in Paradise Regained: this thinness is as often remarked as is the richness of Paradise Lost. Paradise Regained is a more highly distilled substance than Paradise Lost: one must be made ready for it. Second, the relative quiet of the epic voice, and its refinement and almost neglect as an instrument of manipulation in Paradise Regained, requires the reader to assume a greater responsibility than he had in Paradise Lost, and to earn thereby a

greater measure of benefit. Whereas the reader of Paradise Lost is led to draw conclusions, the reader of Paradise Regained is let to draw them. Thus the reader's involvement is increased to a point that makes the didactic method possible--which is, as I have said before, to have the reader train himself to do as Christ does by asking him questions and requiring answers to them which then are verified as right or rejected as wrong by Christ who is asked the same questions.

This does not mean, of course, that the reader is not manipulated in Paradise Regained. He is, but subtly. Consider, for instance, the first scene involving Satan. An alert reader always regards carefully the first speech or at least the first few speeches (or action or actions) of a character, because they usually contain important clues about the character. The first appearance of Satan comes after Christ is described as among wild beasts:

> they at his sight grew mild,
> Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
> The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious Worm,
> The Lion and fierce Tiger glar'd aloof.
> But now an aged man in rural weeds,
> Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray Ewe,
> Or wither'd sticks to gather; which might serve
> Against a Winters day when winds blow keen,
> To warm him wet return'd from field at Eve,

He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Persu'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.
Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In Troop or Caravan, for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His Carcass, pin'd with hunger and with droughth?

(Paradise Regained I, 310-25)

This passage begins with the epic voice making the reader uneasy. The beasts are called "mild," but two lines later they seem threatening. Of course, Christ, like Abdiel in Book V of Paradise Lost, is not afraid, because of his trust in God's providence. But the reader is neither Christ nor Abdiel; he feels discomfort. His discomfort matches, in a way, the discomfort he is told Christ is in, but is subtly different. Satan's entry is preceded by "But," suggesting that what is to be described will contrast with what has been. And it does, in several ways. First, on the surface of things, Satan looks harmless enough: his age, his dress, the apparent accident of his meeting Christ are all disarming. But the reader recognizes at once who he is, perhaps because he sees at once that Satan is a parody of Christ: he is dressed like a shepherd, and his apparent mission, to find a stray Ewe, suggests the later parable of the good shepherd who, when "ninety and nine" sheep were safe, sought long for the hundredth. One next realizes

that all this is not just a parody of Christ, after all, but an accurate description of exactly what Satan is doing. The "stray Ewe" is the female counterpart of the Lamb (and the reader is likely justified in seeing in the word "Ewe," answered in the same line position soon with "Eve," a faint reference to Satan's first mission); moreover, Satan is in fact providing himself against "a Winters day when winds blow keen," for he himself has mentioned his coming defeat and dispossession of earth (I, 58 ff.).

What has happened, then, is that the apparent hostility of the beasts is, however uncomfortably, recognized to mask their actually "mild" behavior, and the apparent benignity of the aged man disguises the malignity of Satan. The reader, that is, may be afraid of lions and tigers, but he knows against his apprehension that they are docile (the epic voice has told him so, and the calm silence of Christ has verified it); he may trust the aged man, but he knows against his calm to fear him (Paradise Lost has made sure of that, and Satan's first words verify it). This is a new and unfamiliar Satan, no "Apostate Angel, though in pain, / Vaunting aloud" (Paradise Lost I, 125-26). Those first words begin the first temptation, as I will discuss later, but for the moment, they serve to take advantage of the reader's state. His reaction to this scene must be one of a combination of open-mindedness and wariness. In that state, Satan's first words, suggesting distrust, must

unsettle the reader and try his trust. That is, as I will show later, the purpose of the first temptation: to tempt Christ to distrust. By the subtle manipulation of the reader Milton tries his trust too. But it is a different kind of manipulation from that in Paradise Lost, where the reader is led into attitudes which reveal to him facts about himself. In Paradise Regained the effect of the manipulation is to make the reader receptive (as in this instance) to temptations which he may reject or accept. Paradise Lost, through its manipulations, instructs the reader; Paradise Regained, through its manipulations, prepares the reader to instruct himself. And, as is true of this passage, the role of the epic voice in the manipulation is very quiet, scarcely noticeable.

The diminution of the role of the epic voice removes one source of "drama" from Paradise Regained, simply because the reader has less of a task in assessing the reliability of his sources of information, and it is accompanied by other steps to remove, or at least play down, drama. Paradise Regained is in one sense the least dramatic of poems, and in another the most dramatic. It is least dramatic in that the normal devices for heightening interest, such as suspense and violent action, are largely dismissed. Again, comparison with Paradise Lost will be helpful. I need not waste time arguing that Paradise Lost has much more violent action than Paradise Regained. But

the matter of suspense is different, for in both cases Milton is following a Biblical source with which the reader must be familiar. Thus there can be little real suspense in either poem; the reader is not even allowed the luxury of hoping that "it will not turn out that way this time." Milton achieves a substitute for suspense in Paradise Lost: the reader is made to feel increasing dread as the Fall nears, a dread that becomes so nearly intolerable that it almost becomes a hope that the story will miraculously change. This dread is accomplished by several means. There is the ironic hero-ship of Satan, for instance: the reader is sometimes seduced into taking Satan for the moral hero as well as the ironic formal hero, and then must acquiesce with anguish in the certainty of an event he has found himself trying to forward. There is the allegory of Sin and Death. There is the restriction, at the first visit to Eden, to Satan's perspective. And finally in Books XI and XII there is the relentless iteration of the effect of that Fall on history and thus on the reader. In Paradise Regained, though, there is nothing like suspense attempted or even permitted; and the issue is calmly happy. Perhaps in an attempt to find suspense, some critics maintain that the poem represents Christ discovering his Messiahship,[7] or the like, but Milton is at pains to deny it all. Christ, for instance, knows perfectly well who he is. His mother has, in the reader's presence, told him of his miraculous birth

(I, 229-58), and Christ has then discerned by study his identity:

> This having heard, strait I again revolv'd
> The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ
> Concerning the Messiah, to our Scribes
> Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
> I am . . . (259-63),

and has even given such attention to his means as has let him think through several of the very subjects Satan is testing him on (215-26). Christ is, then, aware of his divine nature from Mary--

> know, thou art no Son of mortal man,
> Though men esteem thee low of Parentage,
> Thy Father is the Eternal King, who rules
> All Heaven and Earth, Angels and Sons of men--
> (234-37)

and by revelation:

> as I rose out of the laving stream,
> Heaven open'd her eternal doors, from whence
> The Spirit descended on me like a Dove,
> And last the sum of all, my Father's voice,
> Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounced me his,
> Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
> He was well pleas'd. (280-86)

His being son of Mary and his human experience have presumably obviated the need for Christ to concern himself with

a demonstration of his human nature. He knows by study his mission, the kind of career he is to have, and of his suffering:

> my way must lie
> Through many a hard assay even to the death,
> E're I the promis'd Kingdom can attain,
> Or work Redemption for mankind, whose sins
> Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.
> (262-67)

For his purposes, his awareness is complete; he is not concerned to know more. Christ learns throughout Paradise Regained, as anyone learns through an important experience, but his learning is not "discovery" in the sense that his new knowledge displaces any intellectual void, or rectifies any misconception. Christ is content with his knowledge, so that, even though he is somewhat puzzled at being led into the desert, he is not curious about it:

> now by some strong motion I am led
> Into this wilderness, to what intent
> I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
> For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.
> (290-93)

Nor is there any real discovery on Satan's part. Throughout Paradise Regained Satan refuses to believe what he knows. His speech to his consult is a beautiful example of the workings of a mind that, perhaps because of eons of

depravity and lying, will not believe what he knows to be true. He announces that the time of the Devils' banishment is come: "this ill news I bring, the Womans seed / Destin'd to this, is late of woman born" (I, 64-65). He identifies Christ as man (65-68), then as Son of God (79-90), says he knows who the "first-begot" Son of God is (89), and then somehow can say: "Who this is we must learn, for man he seems / In all his lineaments, though in his face / The glimpses of his Fathers glory shine" (91-93). Satan is too curious to find out more about Christ. He knows all he must know, all he can know, all anyone knows: his insatiable curiosity appears to be nothing other than plain unwillingness to believe the truth. The strategy of his temptation is an exercise in frustration, of proving over and over to himself his error: he is found out and rejected in Book I, but continues to make Christ repeat the rejection. He announces the price of his defaced wares after they have been spurned. He continues to disguise himself after Christ has embarrassingly made his first disguise look silly, so that his disguises become almost a childish playing at dress-up. When he can push it no further--when Christ by standing on the pinnacle symbolically (and literally) dislodges Satan from his earthly perch--Satan falls "stricken with amazement" at last to discover that the old lesson so painfully taught him "Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms" (Paradise Lost I, 49) is true as well for him "Who durst so

proudly tempt the Son of God" (Paradise Regained IV, 580). Satan, then, does not really discover anything in Paradise Regained; he simply is compelled to admit that what he knows and has known all along--that he is to be defeated--is true. When he refuses to admit it, he is simply "smitten." It is, after all, part of Christ's strategy "the stubborn only to subdue" (I, 226).

In another way, however, Paradise Regained is suspenseful: in much the way the first appearance of Satan is designed to unsettle the reader as it does Christ, everything which happens to Christ happens at the same time to the reader. I have said before that the preceding poems are full of temptations that do not tempt, threats that do not threaten, and that Paradise Lost is not painful because the statement is metaphoric. When a reader sees Satan and Death exchanging minatory gestures, he is interested, to be sure, but scarcely frightened by the coming battle. His horror when he realizes the significance of Sin and Death is another thing: it is part of the experience of the poem as a poem, a recognition of the meaning of the poem's statement; but it is not the same as experiencing an emotion as participant in the poem. The reader's fear of Death and Satan's fear of Death are very different. Similarly, in Book IX, the fruit of the tree is not described as especially appealing. If the reader is to share in the Fall, it would seem reasonable to make him succumb to the temptation as Eve

does; but the text reads simply "the Tree / Of prohibition, root of all our woe" (Paradise Lost IX, 644-45)--not very tempting. The meaning of the Fall is brought home to the reader with great effect, but in order for that to happen, the immediate sense of sin must be translated from the symbolic representation of Adam and Eve's particular act of disobedience. The reader, then, knows he is fallen; but he does not have to feel guilt for the Fall as his personal sin.

But in Paradise Regained the temptations are addressed directly to the reader. He does participate in action whose meaning is partially explained by Christ. I have already shown how the reader's apprehension is raised for the temptation to distrust. Similarly, when Satan spreads a banquet before Christ, it is described in such a way as to make the reader desire to try it: put simply, the banquet looks good. It does not excite the salivary glands as a feast of Thomas Wolfe's might, but its splendor and elegance are nonetheless inviting. The reader himself, then, may do as he never would have done in Paradise Lost Book IX: he may tentatively "accept" the offer. If he does, then Christ explains to him the grounds on which he should have rejected it; and the reader will know from the experience his liability to that temptation. Interestingly, some critics have become puzzled by Milton's use of the learning of Greece as one of Satan's offers: one wonders

whether that is because it is just such an offer as a scholar is most likely to be unable to resist for himself.[9]

Thus Paradise Regained is quite dramatic in its own way. Christ does refute Satan fairly easily. But he does so in the wilderness attended by only one person--the reader. And it does not matter greatly what the poem says about Christ and Satan if the reader does not believe it. In other words, Paradise Regained is valuable as an experience for the reader as much as it is valuable as a record of an event. Its moral value depends on what happens to the reader, not just upon what happens to Christ. Thus there is considerable drama--suspense even--with the reader as hero--or victim. For Milton it is drama of the highest importance, far beyond the artificial excitement of jousting knights: it is the drama of the repentant soul trying to liken itself to Christ. It would be invalid if the reader were forced through it. The starkness, the spareness, the thinness, the dryness of Paradise Regained, then, so often criticized, is what gives it its meaning. The reader may take it or leave it.

Samson Agonistes is for the reader who has achieved or is at the point of achieving the "paradise within."[10] That is not to say that only a reader who is morally perfect can make any sense of it, but that one's sensitivity to Samson's plight is deepened and one's ability to appreciate

and participate in the action of the poem is heightened as he has mastered the lessons of Paradise Regained. Just as the reader whose sense of the urgency of Paradise Regained has been quickened by Paradise Lost is likely to get more from the minor epic than he otherwise might, so the reader whose moral capacities are enlarged (that is, made more like Milton's) by such a didactic experience as Paradise Regained represents is likely to be able to appreciate Samson Agonistes better than he otherwise might.

Samson Agonistes begins with a plea for guidance through, if I interpret the third line correctly, a set of moral choices:

> Sams. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
> To these dark steps, a little further on;
> For yonder bank hath choice of Sun or shade. (1-3)

Douglas Bush observes that Samson would have to be led on-stage, being blind, and that to have a child lead him on would have precedent in Greek tragedy.[11] But, of course, Samson Agonistes was never intended for the stage, and, although the illusion of stage presentation is maintained throughout the poem, it is still likely that Milton did not begin with this plea for guidance only to conform to precedent. Samson's request for guidance, although he does not mean it so, points to his coming trials; in Milton's strategy it is addressed to the reader.

For the guides the reader has become familiar with are not present. The epic voice, his guide through Paradise Lost, cannot speak here, because of the dramatic mode of the poem. There is the Chorus, of course, but it is not an epic voice; it cannot speak for the author as an epic voice can.[12] It expresses the "public" view--the attitudes of concerned fallen men--of what happens, and it can have moments of insight, but it is not a completely authoritative guide, as the epic voice is in Paradise Lost. There the reader may disagree momentarily with the epic voice, but when he does, he is wrong; in Samson Agonistes the reader must rely on his own judgment to tell him whether the Chorus is, in strictest terms, right or wrong. Thus the Chorus speaks acutely when it says of Dalila: "She's gone, a manifest Serpent by her sting / Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd" (997-98), and its opinion was valuable earlier in the poem in its reminder to Samson: "Just are the ways of God, / And justifiable to Men" (293-94), but it can pretend to no more knowledge or insight than is available to men: while Samson is refusing to go with the Officer, the Chorus, with some trepidation, says: "How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach" (1380). The Chorus, then, sighted where Samson is blind, can provide limited guidance--sometimes ironically--and it can comment on moral issues or express friendly concern, but it cannot be an invariably reliable moral guide.

Nor, obviously, is Christ, the guide through Paradise Regained, to be found. It is clear that Samson is intended to suggest Christ at least to a certain extent. C. A. Patrides observes that Samson is traditionally a type of Christ,[13] and we catch hints of that in the poem: thus, for instance, we are reminded in both poems about the unusual circumstances of the births of Christ (Paradise Regained II, 66 ff.) and Samson (Samson Agonistes 361 ff.). Each has a mission to defeat an enemy of God and gain thereby release from that enemy for all mankind or for Israel. And, as we will see later, most important, each goes through the same kind of temptation experience. But we cannot rely on that identification too heavily as an index of how Samson is likely to react to temptation because, simply, Samson is fallen, and Christ emphatically is not. Samson has succumbed to temptation before, and, if the poem is to have its effect, has to be considered likely to succumb again. That likelihood is not great, of course, but it has to exist for him as it cannot for Christ. Samson needs a guide.

The reader of Samson Agonistes, who has had his moral capacity elevated by his reading of Paradise Regained, is thus qualified to be Samson's guide; and it is the reader that Samson is most clearly to be identified with. Samson has achieved wisdom through suffering, as the reader has achieved a measure of wisdom from Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. Samson's sin, moreover, is very much like

Adam's--each disobeyed God's command because of uxoriousness--and is thus allied with the sinfulness of the reader (since the particular circumstances Milton could project for his reader can go little farther than that he be a child of Adam and be aware of that fact). The parallelism of Samson's experiences in this poem with Christ's in Paradise Regained carries over to the reader, for the reader has just successfully come through the same temptations. The effort of Samson Agonistes, then, so far as the pattern of moral didacticism is concerned, is the dramatic illustration of the possibility of Christian heroism for one who, having earned moral wisdom, meets temptation and overcomes it.

Samson Agonistes can accomplish this task of involving the reader in Samson's temptations because it is a dramatic poem, not an epic like the other two poems. We have already remarked the absence of an epic voice in it, the result being that Samson Agonistes lacks reliable commentary on its action. The reader then must rely on his own ability to discern right and wrong to decide whether Samson of Manoa is right, or whether Samson should have received Dalilah more hospitably and the like. Ultimately, of course, one recognizes that Samson's choices are right, and that his death is heroic and meaningful because in the course of the poem he has moved from this point:

Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd
As a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits; if I must dye
Betray'd, Captiv'd, and both my Eyes put out,
Made of my Enemies the scorn and gaze? (30-34)

to this point:

Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonorable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our Law, my Nation, or my self,
The last of me or no I cannot warrant. (1423-26)

The reader's approval of the decisions Samson has made on the way to this recovery of his capacity to be God's champion should add up to a growing awareness, or an increasing verification of an awareness already in him, of the reader's own capacity for heroism of the kind Samson accomplishes, because there has been nothing between him and Samson, and he has run the same risks Samson has run.

The dramatic shape of the poem also contributes. Whereas in Paradise Regained Milton is attempting to lay bases for moral action, and thus needs clear exposition and firm moral authority, in Samson Agonistes the attempt is to make the experience of acting out moral recovery from the Fall as emotionally satisfying as possible: thus the brief essay before Samson Agonistes, "Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which is call'd Tragedy," begins by asserting the gravity, morality, and profitability of tragedy, and then

attributing its excellence to its capacity of arousing and discharging emotion; and, of course, Samson Agonistes concludes in "calm of mind all passion spent" (1758). There is a slight shift in the distribution of the parts of the otherwise parallel temptations between Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes to make possible this increased emotional effect. Manoa's temptation of Samson, which corresponds to the temptation of the stones in Paradise Regained, is split, so that Manoa's first offer (326-605) is made when Samson is most likely to accept it: he is tired, discouraged, near despair; and Manoa offers abdication of responsibility. But, even though Samson does reject the temptation at this point, he has rejected only the idea of ransom, and the scene concludes with Manoa leaving

> To prosecute the means of [Samson's] deliverance
> By ransom or how else. (603-04)

Manoa returns later, just after Samson has left in response to his "rouzing motions," with the ransom achieved. The delay of his return until near the catastrophe creates several ironies: Manoa is conscious of the irony of his having managed to effect a ransom which was at that very time being rejected in favor of a much dearer ransom for him; the reader is therefore conscious of the ironic reversal of the ideas of freedom and captivity; and both are struck with the ironies that gather around the manner of Samson's death, which is so much better than a life of

"ignoble ease." The mission of Manoa, in other words, is divided so as to make possible the heightened emotional effect of the poem.

To summarize: Samson Agonistes differs from Paradise Regained in that it is drama, not epic, and its point is dramatic, not epic. In Paradise Regained the reader is thoroughly instructed in the ways of virtue, and, with Christ as his guide, may repeat his lessons until he understands the precepts of the guide as well as his own understanding will allow him. In Samson Agonistes the reader goes through similar experiences again, but this time with and in the person of Samson. Here he is let to experience dramatically the life and death that is possible to him because of his efforts in Paradise Regained and Christ's willingness to intercede for him. When

> Samson hath quit himself
> Like Samson, and heroicly hath finish'd
> A life Heroic, (1709-11)

the reader has also. He has gone through a sequence of didactic poems which have taught him what he must know for a life of Christian heroism.

The first temptation in both poems is to distrust the fatherhood of God and the necessity of one's mission.[14] For Christ this is the temptation of the stones; for Samson it is the encounter with his father Manoa.

Christ's first temptation is preceded by material introductory to the entire poem and to that temptation in particular. Thus the invocation to the muse is addressed to the Spirit who led Christ to be tried and show himself "By proof the undoubted Son of God" (I, 11). The first suggestion of Christ's sonship is raised in the scene where John the Baptist baptizes Christ, who had gone "as then obscure" (I, 24), and as "Son of Joseph deem'd" (23). The question is soon settled, however:

> on him baptiz'd
> Heav'n open'd, and in likeness of a Dove
> The Spirit descended, while the Fathers voice
> From Heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son. (29-32)

Satan hears this pronouncement (33), and later repeats it, but without entire comprehension:

> I saw
> . . . on him rising
> Out of the water, Heav'n above the Clouds
> Unfold her Crystal Dores, thence on his head
> A perfect Dove descend, what e're it meant,
> And out of Heav'n the Sov'reign voice I heard,
> This is my Son Belov'd, in him am pleas'd. (78-85)

Satan knows besides that "that fatal wound / Shall be inflicted by the Seed of Eve / Upon [his] head" (53-55), and that it is that man whom he has heard acknowledged the son of God. Thus

to the Coast of Jordan he directs
His easie steps; girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try. (119-123)

As I have said, Satan, then, actually realizes Christ's nature, but cannot believe it. He knows Christ is both son of Mary and Son of God, and his job will be, in part, to determine how that can be.

In heaven as well, Christ's sonship is discussed. God reminds Gabriel of his mission to Mary to disclose to her her conception of a son to be called the Son of God (130-36), and closes his speech by saying that Christ's defeat of Satan shall be accomplished

That all the Angels and AEtherial Powers,
They now, and men hereafter may discern,
From what consummate vertue I have chose
This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn Salvation for the Sons of men. (163-67)

In the celestial hymn that follows God's speech, an important point is made:

The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
Ventures his filial Vertue, though untri'd.
(176-77)

The Father knows the Son and is confident; Satan refuses to believe what he knows, but will try to find out more. But

the coalescence of God and man in the person of Christ is mysterious; if it were to be understood outside Heaven it would be. Thus in Christian Doctrine I, xiv, after saying, with great effort, that "There is then in Christ a mutual hypostatic union of two natures, that is to say, of two essences, of two substances, and consequently of two persons; nor does this union prevent the respective properties of each from remaining individually distinct," Milton decides that "the mode of union is unknown to us; and it is best to be ignorant of what God wills should remain unknown." His conclusion, then, is this:

> How much better is it for us to know merely that the Son of God, our Mediator, was made flesh, that he is called both God and Man, and is such in reality, which is expressed in Greek by the single and appropriate term Θεάνθρωπος. Since however God has not revealed the mode in which this union is effected, it behooves us to cease from devising subtle explanations, and to be contented with remaining wisely ignorant. (Christian Doctrine I, xiv)

The alternative to "remaining wisely ignorant" is "overstepping the bounds of propriety in investigation."

Christ, in his soliloquy, elects to remain "wisely ignorant." As I have said earlier, he knows all that one can know from his mother's words and from scripture about his own nature, but, although he is a little puzzled, he

pursues the matter no further: "For what concerns my knowledge God reveals" (293).[15] This statement of faith follows immediately Christ's account of the descent of the Dove and the proclamation of his sonship, and, by the rhetorical force of that placement, is related to the knowledge of that sonship. Christ, then, in electing to remain humanly humble about his own nature reveals trust in the Fatherhood of God, and in the rightness of his assumption of human nature for his mission to man.

Satan's first temptation calls on Christ to experiment with his possibilities in order to find a "better" way to minister to man. He begins, as we have seen, by suggesting distrust to Christ. He repeats that he has heard Christ called Son of God (I, 329-30), and implies that it is unmeet for such a one to wander "So far from path or road of men" (322). Christ sees the coming temptation to distrust and immediately rejects it before it is really offered:

> To whom the Son of God. Who brought me hither
> Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek.
>
> (335-36)

The temptation is now prepared. By a combination of Satan's suggestion and Christ's uncomfortable position, the reader has been made slightly uneasy. Satan has likely chosen this particular type of test for this particular moment, owing to that same discomfort.[16] And Christ has already affirmed the principle on which he will reject the temptation.

The temptation itself, then, turns on Christ's identity and power, and on the best way to help men:

> By Miracle he may, reply'd the Swain,
> What other way I see not, for we here
> Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
> More then the Camel, and to drink go far,
> Men to much misery and hardship born;
> But if thou be the Son of God, Command
> That out of these hard stones be made thee bread:
> So shalt thou save thy self and us relieve
> With Food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.
>
> (337-45)

I have quoted Satan's words entirely so that I might pause over them. Throughout the speech Satan stresses his own humanity: he is a "Swain," he becomes eloquent about the hardship of his life, and he pleads for food as a rarity. And he stresses Christ's divinity, or at least his powers that go beyond human: he refers to a miracle, requests a miracle predicating the request on Christ's being the Son of God, and at the end alludes to Christ's mission among men by telling Christ that this is a way to relieve suffering man. What Satan is doing, then, is trying to get Christ to deny his humanity and affirm Satan's pretence of humanity. But for Christ to do so would destroy his entire mission: it would be for him to save himself, as Satan suggests, and, as Satan also suggests, it would be to relieve his enemy.

The temptation, then, is to distrust the Fatherhood of God and Christ's sonship because to succumb to it Christ would have to deny his humanity--his being son of Mary and descendant of Adam--and his proper role in divinity, because he would both fail to trust God the Father in his need by usurping God's power to sustain him, and extend his ministry not to mankind but to Satan in the form of one man.

Christ's answer, then, affirms, by reference to Moses and "Eliah," that God provides to man what he needs, that ministry to temporal needs such as Satan has suggested is not so important as ministry to spiritual needs, and then, with well placed sarcasm, reveals Satan's disguise. The answer reveals several things. First, it is a refusal to retreat from humanity by performing a gratuitous miracle. Second, it confirms Christ's real humanity by showing that his understanding of man's needs goes beyond Satan's. And then, as if to sum up the drift of the event, it reveals Satan's assumed identity. That is important, because Satan's humanity has been for him nothing but a disguise with its purpose being to divert Christ's beneficial ministry to man: he has entered man's shape as an enemy. But what Christ shows in this encounter is that his humanity is genuine, not a disguise, and that he, by affirming that humanity (in refusing to perform the miracle), is demonstrating his love for mankind, his good intentions.

The effect of this on the reader is easy to see. He was alone in the desert with Christ, and had his trust challenged. Through this encounter he learns Christ's confidence in God the Father, his dedication to humanity, and the character of appeals to only the temporal good of men. When Christ asks Satan, "Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust?" (355), I believe Milton's point is also that Satan has suggested to the reader distrust in Christ (as well as in God the Father). The reader, then, gains from this encounter deepened trust in Christ the Son of God and son of Mary, and in God the Father, and in the constancy of Christ's mission of ministry to man.

This reader, moreover, is one, we recall, who is presumably in possession of the lessons of Paradise Lost and thus is aware of his need for the intervention of Christ on his behalf. Thus as Christ and Satan continue their conversation, and that conversation turns on the malice of Satan, his baseness and the ill he always intends to man, the reader is faced with the result of confidence in Christ: a banishment of deceiving oracles, a clear indication of Satan's lying control over men, and the like. The reader, like Samson, acutely aware of his sinfulness from his experience with Paradise Lost as Samson is aware of his sinfulness, has not only his trust in Christ restored but his knowledge of the limitation of Satan's power. The reader is thus prevented from despair and given in its place faith.

Samson Agonistes has a similar first temptation, and it is preceded by a similar introduction. Samson opens the poem with a soliloquy in which he questions his birth:

> O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
> Twice by an Angel, who at last in sight
> Of both my Parents all in flames ascended
> From off the Altar, where an Off'ring burn'd,
> As in a fiery column charioting
> His Godlike presence, and from some great act
> Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race? (23-29)

and his fitness for his mission:

> Promise was that I
> Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
> Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him
> Eyeless in Gaza at the Mill with slaves,
> Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke. (38-42)

Samson, unlike Christ, is only human, and is thus sinful. He needs no Satan to suggest distrust to him; in fact his consciousness of his sinfulness has him near despair:

> Whom have I to complain of but my self?
> Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
> In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
> Under the Seal of silence could not keep,
> But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
> O'recome with importunity and tears.
> O impotence of mind, in body strong! (46-52)

But he steadfastly refuses to "call in doubt / Divine Prediction" (43-44), and, like Christ, reminds himself:

> But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
> Of highest dispensation, which herein
> Happ'ly had ends above my reach to know. (60-62)

Samson and the Chorus converse on Samson's fallen state and on the mysterious ways of God, concluding, in the words of the Chorus, "Down Reason then, at least vain reasonings down" (322). As Christ confronted his mysterious nature "contented with remaining wisely ignorant," so Samson refrains from questioning. He continues to have faith in God and in himself to accomplish his mission. But his faith is low, and he is, it seems, susceptible to distrust, much as Christ was puzzled and uncomfortable before Satan's first entrance.

At that point, then, Manoa, Samson's father, enters. He begins at once to "call in doubt divine prediction":[17]

> Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
> That invincible Samson, far renown'd,
> . . . . . .
> now unequal match
> To save himself against a coward arm'd
> At one spears length. O ever failing trust
> In mortal strength! and oh what not in man
> Deceivable and vain! . . .
> . . . . . .

I pray'd for Children . . . .

. . . . . .

O wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest Prayers, then giv'n with solemn hand
As graces, draw a Scorpions tail behind?
(340-60)

Manoa is rather more garrulous than Satan, and is thus more difficult to quote, but the same elemqnts as were in Satan's speech begin to appear in this one. Manoa is suggesting distrust, and doing so by implying that God's gifts are not good, as Satan implied that God had led his Son into the wilderness to let him starve. Samson repeats for him the conclusion he and the Chorus had arrived at in their first conversation:

Sam. Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father,
Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
But justly. (373-75)

In so accepting blame Samson does more than simply prevent blasphemy. He acknowledges his human responsibility for his fallen condition in a way Christ could not, because Christ was not fallen. But the effect of both Samson's acceptance of blame and of Christ's affirmation of himself in human nature is roughly the same: it amounts to an assertion of the potential of man for the achievement of a moral

restitution. Such an assertion would, of course, be denied had Christ performed the miracle or Samson agreed to blame God. And since Samson's sin is so near Adam's, thus so near the form of the original sin that infects the reader too, then the acknowledgement can be considered made, as was Christ's assumption of human nature, on behalf of all mankind.

The temptation to doubt his ability to perform his mission over, Samson faces next from his father a temptation (much like Satan's to Christ), to doubt the Fatherhood of God. Samson's mission, of course, is to be God's champion and deliver Israel from captivity. In order to do that he must trust God, for he is "Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves." To trust God, though, requires that he maintain his independence of Manoa's protectiveness, which would lead to passivity. In other words, Samson must choose between the improper, if apparently natural, fatherhood of Manoa, and the proper, but more rigorous, Fatherhood of God. This choice, of course, reflects that part of Christ's temptation where Satan wants Christ to alter his proper relation to mankind by ministering to temporal needs, and in the process to save himself.

The form of this temptation is Manoa's suggestion of a ransom. The reader should recognize immediately that the offer is to be rejected, because it is Samson's job to ransom, or at least rescue, Manoa, not the other way around,

just as it is Christ's mission to show man the way to salvation, not to learn from man how to save himself. Manoa makes his suggestion:

> But for thee what shall be done?
> Thou must not in the mean while here forgot
> Lie in this miserable loathsom plight
> Neglected. I already have made way
> To some Philistian Lords, with whom to treat
> About thy ransom: well they may by this
> Have satisfied thir utmost of revenge
> By pains and slaveries, worse then death inflicted
> On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.
> (478-86)

And Samson refuses, accepting, like Christ, the full measure of his human suffering:

> Sam. Spare that proposal, Father, spare the trouble
> Of that sollicitation; let me here,
> As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
> And expiate, if possible, my crime,
> Shameful garrulity. (487-91)

It is interesting that, as Manoa continues to press his point, his speech begins to sound more like Satan ("save thyself") and like Belial in Paradise Lost, Book II ("Thus Belial with words cloath'd in reasons garb / Counsel'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth" [226-27]):

Man. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,
But act not in thy own affliction, Son,
Repent the sin, but if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;
. . . . . .
perhaps
God will relent . . . . (502-09)

The real character of what Manoa is proposing is shown when he returns with the ransom scheme complete. He tells the Chorus:

Man. It should be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in the house, enobl'd
With all those high exploits by him atchiev'd.
(1490-92)

This speech, as the Chorus has observed it would, inverts the ordinary relationship of father and son: the picture of Samson Manoa conceives is of one who has not recovered his strength, but who is simply waiting for his death, his active life behind him. It is this picture, I think, which completes the encounter with Manoa. The reader, having seen Samson go off, but trusting him to acquit himself like Samson, now realizes the real nature of the offer, and its relationship with the doubt cast on the relationship between Father and Son in Paradise Regained is now made clear. For Samson to have saved himself as Manoa suggested would be like Christ's saving himself as Satan suggested. Each

would have usurped the Father's position: Christ would have become "like" his Father by the miraculous provision of bread; Samson would have become like his father by the acceptance of decrepit honor. Each would have deprived his father of his destined son: Christ would have violated God the Father's confidence in him as savior of mankind, and Samson would have failed to justify his prophesied birth to Manoa as savior of Israel.

The encounter with Manoa leaves Samson at his lowest point. He feels a "sense of Heav'ns desertion" (632), and expresses a feeling of hopelessness:

> Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
> Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;
> This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
> No long petition, speedy death,
> The close of all my miseries, and the balm.
>
> (647-51)

But Samson's attitude here is not culpable despair. His condition is somewhat like Job's, and he demonstrates his constancy in his refusal earlier to curse God and die. Samson, that is, is miserable and weary--ready for death--but his desire for death is equivalent to a wish for rest, not annihilation, such as would characterize one who rejects utterly faith in God. Samson has met the first test, and has refused, as Christ did, to allow himself to be

shaken from his reliance on God and his recognition of his responsibility as man.

The most complicated temptation in Paradise Regained is the second. It has two phases, developing respectively "The first Class of special Virtues connected with the Duty of Man towards himself" (Christian Doctrine II, ix) and "The Second Class of Virtues connected with the Duty of Man towards himself" (Christian Doctrine II, x).[18] This temptation occupies the largest part of Paradise Regained, extending from early in Book II through Book IV, 498; and of the poem's time span it takes all the second day, the night following, and part of the next day.[19] It includes all the scenes from the banquet through the storm and its immediate aftermath.

The first phase of the temptation--it might as easily be called a set of temptations, of course--is Satan's endeavor to cause Christ to abandon his kingship over self in such a way as to become vicious. Christ's rejections of the offers establish in him--and, if the poem is successful, in the reader--roughly the virtues referred to earlier, by which one maintains rule over himself. This first class of special virtues divides into two categories: temperance, "which prescribes bounds to the desire of bodily gratification," and moderation, which regulates the enjoyment of possessions. Temperance includes sobriety, chastity,

modesty, and decency. Moderation includes contentment, frugality, industry, and "liberal spirit."

I have said that these virtues are "roughly" included in the set of temptations about to be discussed. There are, tantalizingly, just the same number of individual temptations as of virtues, but it does not appear that the virtues are systematically defined by them. Instead the tendencies included by the terms "temperance" and "moderation," that is, attention to the management of one's person and to the management of one's effects, are fairly clearly specified in the temptations, but usually more than one virtue goes into the rejection of a temptation. It is in this part of the poem, of course, that Christ is "through all temptation tried" as God has said he would be, and the inclusiveness of that plan need not result in the temptations following systematically the plan of Christian Doctrine. One's experience is seldom systematic, as a theology can be; and thus Christ's experiences here require that he have at his command all the virtues which allow kingship over self.

The first of those temptations, or "snares," to use Howard Schultz's better word,[20] is the banquet. This is often grouped with the temptation of the stones, but it appears that the idea of Allen H. Gilbert, that it is related to that temptation in one sense but separate in another is correct.[21] But, of course, the banquet is not

just a "transitional" temptation. The fact that it involves eating is perhaps transitional, and links it with the temptation of the stones, but there is much more to the temptation than a transition. It is preceded by two curious "inductions" and an aborted temptation idea which we must look at first in order to see the full effect of the banquet.

The two inductions are spoken by Andrew and Simon, the "new-baptiz'd," and by Mary. The speech by Andrew and Simon turns on Christ's identification as Messiah and as one to restore Kingdom to Israel:

> our eyes beheld
> Messiah certainly now come, so long
> Expected of our Fathers; we have heard
> His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth,
> Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
> The Kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd:
> Thus we rejoyc'd. (II, 31-37)

They lament that Christ is missing, but what is important here is their concentration on his Kingship and his Messiahship. Mary's speech reveals the same concerns. She asks again

> O what avails me now that honour high
> To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute
> Hale highly favour'd, among women blest;
> While I to sorrows am no less advanc't,

And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore . . . .
(II, 66-71)

But her object in this question is not to speak of the mysterious birth of her Son, as would have been the case earlier in the poem, but instead to remark his curious means of maturing to his promised Kingship:

in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any King; but now
Full grown to Man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in publick shown,
Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice;
I look't for some great change; to Honour? no,
But trouble . . . .
. . . . . .
But where delays he now? some great intent
Conceals him . . . . (79-97)

The concern in both these inductions is with Christ's disappearance, when he was expected to assume his kingdom in glory, and effect his messiahship at once. That is the question that Christ, too, is occupied with--

The while her Son tracing the Desert wild,
Sole but with holiest Meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once

All his great work to come before him set;
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on Earth, and mission high . . . .
(109-114)

--and which will largely be answered by him by this next set of temptations, by their revealing the means to kingship over self, without which kingship over man would be impossible.

The aborted lure then follows. It is, of course, Belial's proposal that the best way to divert Christ is to "Set women in his eye and in his walk" (153). That temptation, if it were ever to occur, would, of course, test Christ in such a way as to reveal virtues such as chastity ("temperance as regards the unlawful lusts of the flesh") and modesty ("refraining from all obscenity of language or action, in short from whatever is inconsistent with the strictest decency of behavior in reference to sex or person"). Such a temptation to sexual looseness must somehow be represented in the poem if Christ is to be "through all temptation tried" "to the utmost of meer man." But the temptation is cut short as soon as conceived, by Satan, who remarks its hopelessness and thus saves Milton from a severe problem of decorum.[22] He proposes then to try Christ with "manlier objects":

such as have more shew
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;

Rocks whereon greatest men have oftest wreck'd;
Or that which only seems to satisfie
Lawful desires of Nature, not beyond. (226-230)

It is probably unnecessary to call attention to "shew" and "seems" here. Satan's objective, as we will see, is to get Christ to accept a false but attractive kingship over the world; Christ's response will be always to reject the show of kingship in favor of the genuine sovereignty allowed by the virtues.

Christ rejects the offer of the banquet even before Satan returns to him, and re-affirms his rejection several times. Before Satan enters Christ soliloquizes:

But now I feel I hunger, which declares,
Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
Can satisfie that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain: so it remain
Without this bodies wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of Famine fear no harm.
(252-57)

This rejection is made on similar grounds to those on which Christ rejected the temptation of the stones, but it goes by easy transition into the banquet. The offer is rejected in advance when it is hypothetically mentioned by Satan:

Satan reply'd,
Tell me if Food were now before thee set,

Would'st thou not eat? Thereafter as I like
The giver, answer'd Jesus. (319-22)

When the banquet is produced, it is opulent, perhaps, as I have suggested, so as to attract the reader. Christ's rejection of it, then, sets the tone for the entire sequence of snares and refusals of them. After Satan's speech of offer, which follows the pattern described with reference to Comus's offer to the Lady (p. 58), Christ replies "temperately" (378), but his grounds for refusal include all the virtues of moderation as well as the principal virtue for this temptation, sobriety, which is in the category of temperance. Christ's answer asserts too his kingship over all things:

Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
(381-82)

The banquet temptation, then, leads to the first step in the refusal of Satan's offers of spurious kingship and the confirmation of the personal virtues.

Satan is aware that the principal meaning of the refusal of the banquet is a demonstration of temperance, for in a speech prefatory to the next temptation he speaks of having tried Christ's "temperance invincible" (408). The next offer, wealth, is a test of Christ's honor, friends, and the like (422 ff.), and Christ's reply, in turning down wealth as a means to achieve his kingdom is related in

spirit to his "Thereafter as I like the giver": he never rejects money itself as an evil, but the misuse of it and improper valuation of it. In other words, Christ affirms the virtues of moderation in turning down the wealth. He recognizes contentment ("that virtue whereby a man is inwardly satisfied with the lot assigned him by divine providence") in his mention of the poor men "Quintus, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus" (446) who were nonetheless powerful.[23] He recognizes frugality in the mention of the tendency of empires to dissolve "In highth of all thir flowing wealth" (436), and industry by saying that wealth is "more apt / To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge, / Then prompt her to do aught may merit praise" (454-56). And finally, a liberal spirit is commended by the general tenor of the speech, which stresses that wealth is not essential, but, as I have said, does not condemn it as evil.

The second half of the speech is devoted to a discussion of kingship, wherein Christ stresses not the glory, but the responsibility of kingship:

> therein stands the office of a King,
> His honour, Vertue, Merit and chief Praise,
> That for the Publick all this weight he bears.
> (463-65)

and the necessity for kingship over self:

> Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
> Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King;

Which every wise and vertuous man attains:

(466-68)

and then:

But to guide Nations in the way of truth
By saving Doctrine, and from errour lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more Kingly, this attracts the Soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part,
That other o're the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight.

(473-80)

Book II ends thus, with the two categories of virtues defined by the first steps in the second temptation, and the theme of kingship, which dominates this section of the poem, receiving direct treatment.

Although the class of special virtues with which I am dealing is described as including just those which "have reference either to bodily gratifications, or to the possessions which enrich and adorn life," Milton adds at the conclusion of that chapter one other category, "virtues more peculiarly appropriate to a high station," which includes lowliness of mind and magnanimity. These are the virtues required to meet the temptation which begins Book III of Paradise Regained, the offer of glory. That offer has already been foiled, as the pattern appears to require, by

Christ's denial of glory in his speech on kingship. Satan's offer brings up points raised in Lycidas, that "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise / . . . / To scorn delights, and live laborious days" (70-72): glory is

the reward

That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected Spirits, most temper'd pure
AEtherial, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers all but the highest.

(III, 25-30)

Christ's reply repeats the reply in Lycidas, but with a clear addition of the virtues of lowliness of mind and magnanimity. There is lowliness of mind ("thinking humbly of ourselves, and . . . abstaining from self-commendation, except where occasion requires it") in this discussion of the true nature of glory, which parallels the Lycidas statement:

what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The peoples praise, if always praise unmixt?
. . . . . .
This is true glory and renown, when God
Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his angels, who with true applause

Recount his praises; thus he did to Job;

. . . . . .

Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth less known.

(47-68)

Magnanimity ("when in seeking or avoiding, the acceptance or refusal of riches, advantages, or honors, we are actuated by a regard to our own dignity, rightly understood") is also implied in that passage, as well as later when he speaks of those acknowledged glorious

Till Conquerour Death discover them scarce men,
Rowling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death thir due reward.
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance . . . . (85-92)

Of course, the virtues of contentment and perhaps modesty can also be seen in Christ's refusal of glory from Satan.

The idea of kingship has run through this set of temptations, coming to a preliminary climax in Christ's discussion of it at the end of Book II. The next snare that Satan sets before Christ is precisely a kingdom. He points out that David's throne is Christ's patrimony, because David is Christ's father: "By Mother's side thy Father" (154). Satan is correct in saying that the throne is

Christ's patrimony, but he traces the lineage inaccurately. It is through his heavenly Father that Christ has claim to kingship not over just Israel, but all the world. Satan is trying to make Christ seize an earthly kingdom, and reveals his intent when he enjoins Christ to imitate Maccabeus, whom Satan describes as a usurper (169). Obviously, for Christ to accept Satan's offer of help in immediately seizing an earthly throne would be a usurpation, and thus a denial of his legitimate right to his proper throne, because an earthly throne is not his. It is not exactly a kingdom that is being suggested, then, but a usurpation, an impatient seizure of an illegal throne.

I will return to this temptation later, to assess the role of patience in its refusal. At this point I should note that the refusal of bogus kingship involves magnanimity and contentment. It provides, moreover, a positive statement of Christ's intentions regarding kingship, and does Satan the worst damage of any refusal so far: when he speaks again he is "inly rackt" (203). The paragraph which is governed by Satan's speech when thus inly rackt contains the removal of Christ to the mountain and the sight of all the kingdoms of the world, with the offer of league with Parthia so as to enable Christ to strengthen his position with military power (368 ff.). Christ has already foiled this attempt as well as the previous offer of kingship with

his speech on true glory, and his refusal not contains, as well as patience, the elements of modesty and contentment.

Book III thus ends with the description of Christ as "Israel's true King" (441). He has considered kingship throughout the Book, and demonstrated those personal virtues which make true kingship possible to him.

Book IV begins with a sequence of similes which show that Satan is defeated and knows it. He is likened to a swarm of flies and a surge of waves against a rock (15-17; 18-20). Nonetheless he tries again, this time offering Christ a view of Rome in all her splendor and then offering help to overthrow the emperor. Once again his emphasis is on usurpation, this time not only of a throne, but of a sonship as well:

> This Emperour hath no Son, and now is old,
> Old, and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
> To Capreae in Island small but strong
> On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
> His horrid lusts in private to enjoy. (IV, 90-94)

But this throne (rather alarmingly identified with that of God the Father), is thoroughly corrupt, and the usurpation of it would be even more obviously a debasement of Christ's purpose than acceptance of the previous offer of kingdom. The offer has been refused already, in the rejection of Parthian armed might ("When that [due time] comes think thou not to find me slack / On my part aught endeavoring, or to

need / Thy politic maxims . . . ." [III, 398-400]), and the immediate rejection which follows the formal offer contains sobriety, frugality, and industry, as well as fortitude, which will be discussed later.

The final snare is the celebrated offer of the learning of Athens. In that scene Christ does not, of course, declare the invalidity of learning.[24] He points out instead the superiority of wisdom;[25] the effect of the scene is like that of the scene in Paradise Lost Book VIII where Raphael does not condemn as sinful Adam's curiosity about celestial motions, but directs him instead to concern himself with more important things. Here in Paradise Regained the objective is moral wisdom: how to avoid evil and do good. For that wisdom classical learning is unnecessary:

> To whom our Savior sagely thus repli'd.
> Think not but that I know these things, or think
> I know them not; not therefore am I short
> Of knowing what I aught: he who receives
> Light from above, from the fountain of light,
> No other doctrine needs, though granted true.
>
> (285-90)

The answer contains, besides its obvious preference of pious wisdom to worldly sophistication--a point also raised in the temptation of the stones and now vindicated by showing its basis in virtue--the virtue of lowliness of mind as well as magnanimity.

I might pause to notice here that as the temptations progress, Christ occasionally allows himself the liberty of wry humor at Satan's expense. His unveiling of Satan's disguise at the first temptation makes Satan's trick slightly ludicrous and is devastating in its being delayed, and then delivered offhand as if to imply that Satan is the only one who has been fooled: "Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art" (I, 356). Later, when Satan has sent the storm and then comes expecting Christ to be miserable and afraid (but probably knowing better), Christ's greeting, combining grotesquely convoluted syntax with laconic, non-commital simplicity, gives Satan's efforts a humorous devaluation: "Mee worse then wet thou find'st not" (IV, 486). Perhaps Christ's first words in this speech rejecting the subtle, worldly learning of Athens is of the same order. In the strange construction of multiple negatives and cancelled multiple negatives Christ is perhaps mocking extreme verbal subtlety; if so, his speech is a wry refutation of Satan on at least two levels. This is not to say, incidentally, that anything like mocking laughter pursues Satan through Paradise Regained,[26] but simply that Christ, who is, after all, having much the easier time of it, is humanly alive to the incongruity of being offered his own kingdom by someone who doesn't own it, and is able, as his Father was in Paradise Lost, to master Satan with humor as well as with plain truth.

As the presentation of these snares has progressed, there has been a tendency in Christ to rely less and less obviously on overcoming them by the first class of personal virtues. From the banquet, which obviously required temperance to refuse, and the offer of wealth, which obviously required moderation to refuse, those virtues have declined slightly in importance and finally have been all but replaced in the offers of kingdoms. The first class of personal virtues has laid the basis from which the decisions of Christ arise, but the rejections of the snares is scarcely a systematic listing of them. Their development I have called the first phase of the second temptation because it seems clear to me that Milton's first effort in those scenes has been to show those virtues.

In the second phase Milton has Christ demonstrate "the Second Class of Virtues connected with the Duty of Man towards himself" (Christian Doctrine II, x). Those are fortitude ("chiefly conspicuous in repelling evil or regarding its approach with equanimity") and patience ("the endurance of misfortunes and injuries").

Christ's rejection of kingdoms, as I have indicated, shows clearly the virtue of patience, both in its common sense and in the sense Milton gives it in Christian Doctrine. Christ shows ordinary patience in his refusal to worry about when his kingship will come: "All things are best fulfil'd in their due time, / And time there is for

all things, Truth hath said" (III, 182-83). And he similarly shows patience as a capacity to endure hardship:

> What if he hath decreed that I shall first
> Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
> By tribulations, injuries, insults,
> Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
> Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
> Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
> What I can suffer, how obey? who best
> Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
> Hath well obey'd; just tryal e're I merit
> My exaltation without change or end. (188-97)

And Christ's reaction to the offer of help to usurp the empire of Rome demonstrates the virtue of fortitude. Christ makes his reply "unmov'd" (IV, 109), that is, with equanimity, and continues then not only to reject the offered depravity of Rome, but to point out other depravities as well: their "sumptuous gluttonies" (114), in spite of Christ's continuing hunger, the Devil who made the emperor a "brutish monster" (128), the misgovernment of conquered nations, with "lust and rapine" (137), and so on.

But I believe that the two greatest tests of Patience and fortitude are in the puzzling scene where Satan suddenly and unstrategically announces that the price of all his rejected offers is worship, and the storm scene. The first test comes immediately after the offer of Rome and

Christ's speech just discussed. I have said it is unstrategic, because it seems to be motivated by nothing but pique: the epic voice calls Satan "impudent" (154) in the speech. Mrs. Lewalski tries to defend Satan's technique by suggesting that Satan has shrewdly withheld this revelation in order to make his wares seem more valuable than before.[27] I think this is uncharacteristic of her usual insight, however, for the ploy is preposterous as an effort to impress Christ. It is perhaps better to recognize that Satan is, after all, doing all this by God's "permission," which includes the sense that he is on God's mission, that Satan is simply irked here, as he has been increasingly irked by his accumulating frustration all day, and that he blurts this out not for his reasons, but in spite of himself for God's reasons, for it gives Christ the perfect opportunity to display his fortitude better than almost anything else could have.

The outstanding fact about the suggestion that Christ worship Satan is that it is insulting. It implies that Christ might be a fool. Accordingly, Christ is angered, and replies "with disdain," but not in rage or with loss of self-possession. His reply is more nearly "personal" than usual; it is a repudiation of Satan himself, rather than of a suggestion Satan has made--as is reasonable, since it is in fact himself Satan has offered as valuable. The reply demonstrates fortitude, in that it regards and repels the

approach of evil with equanimity, and avoids the moral defects of timidity and rashness:

> Whom thus our Savior answer'd with disdain.
> I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,
> Now abhor both, since thou hast dar'd to utter
> The abominable terms, impious condition;
> . . . . . .
> Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
> As offer them to me the Son of God,
> To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
> That I fall down and worship thee as God?
> Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'st
> That Evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.[28]
> (170-94)

The trial of patience is the storm.[29] It occurs after the long day of temptation, and may be seen as another indication of Satan's rage. But it is not only the storm itself that Christ must survive, but the use Satan makes of it. He has tried to frighten Christ, and explains why early the next day:

> be sure to find,
> What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
> Of dangers, and adversities and pains,
> E're thou of <u>Israel's</u> Scepter get fast hold;
> Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,

So many terrours, voices, prodigies
May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.
(477-483)

Satan's attempt, then, is simply to frighten Christ into giving over his mission, and this is an "or else" speech. Christ's speech in reply shows him to be unafraid. I have already quoted his sardonic first sentence; he concludes the brief speech:

Ambitious spirit, and wouldst be thought my God,
And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrifie
Mee to thy will; desist, thou are discern'd
And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest.
(495-98)

In this long middle section of Paradise Regained Christ is "through all temptation tried," and found, as Satan admits, "Proof against all temptation as a rock / Of Adamant" (IV, 533-34). But Satan goes on to say that Christ's virtue measures "To the utmost of meer man both wise and good, / Not more" (535-36). To see the point of this, though, one must reject Satan's judgment and the word "meer" which carries it. Satan's effort has largely been directed toward making Christ abandon human possibilities and perform miracles: he cannot believe that man is to be redeemed as man by "one greater man," rather than by one who, as Satan does, disdains man. Similarly, Milton's objective is not only to extol Christ's virtue, but to show how man

can, following the example of Christ, also make himself "proof against all temptation." Milton's reader is expected to be able to do as Christ has done--or, at least, to approach Christ's example. He can also resist Satan with the virtues taught him by Christ, and thus end Satan's dominance over him, establish kingdom over himself and banish Satan and all his wiles.

The second temptation in Samson Agonistes is less elaborate than in Paradise Regained. Christ has been through all temptation, that is, through the entire range of virtues Milton connects with the duty of man toward himself, and has demonstrated carefully the virtues one must cultivate in order to overthrow Satan. Samson does not need to do exactly that. He is one man, albeit a man who, by the peculiar character of his personal sin, may stand for Everyman even if he is not himself Everyman, and he must show himself virtuous in his own terms. Samson, that is, will be doing as Milton suggests, showing virtues connected with duty toward himself, not all virtue for all mankind. Samson's sin, of course, was to reveal his secret to Dalila; his mission in life is to be God's champion, or warrior. Thus his responsibility to himself is to repudiate his particular sin and affirm his particular mission.

Accordingly, Samson's second temptation has only two scenes, the one with Dalila, where Samson demonstrates patience and repudiates his own sin, and the one with

Harapha, where Samson shows fortitude and affirms his status as God's champion.

Samson has already demonstrated patience in the encounter with Manoa. When Dalila enters, the painfulness of the encounter is shown by Samson's line, which incidentally, does not show the equanimity of fortitude yet: "My Wife, my Traytress, let her not come near me" (725). Later, in their first exchange Samson reveals his understanding of why Dalila has come:

> Not truly penitent, but chief to try
> Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
> His vertue or weakness which way to assail.
>
> (754-56)

That Dalila's mission is to cause Samson to continue in his sin, or, to accept the metaphor of the poem, his blindness, is clear from the drift of her arguments. For instance, her second speech, wherein she makes her first bid for Samson's sympathy, argues this way: she admits that she has done wrong. But, after all, she was only a frail woman. Moreover, Samson also did wrong; therefore "Let weakness then with weakness come to parl" (785). If they unite in an alliance of weakness, then they can comfort and sustain one another. Dalila's plan sounds convincing at first, but it is actually foolish and pernicious. Of course weakness should not with weakness "come to parl": the result would be compounded weakness, not strength. The expression about

the blind leading the blind is appropriate in more ways than one to her speech. Samson certainly does not need to seek comfort in the woman who harmed him; he needs to seek strength instead. Actually, to choose weakness rather than strength was Samson's sin to begin with; thus to accept Dalila's proposal would be to re-affirm the sin. The proposal finally boils down to this projected result by Dalila:

> Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
> Mine and Loves prisoner, not the Philistines,
> Whole to myself . . . . . (807-09)

But Samson can retain his freedom unless he chooses to surrender it voluntarily to Dalila.

It is unnecessary here to go through all of Dalila's arguments. Samson answers them well and in so doing shows the flaws in them. My point is simply to note that in his systematic and unequivocal rejection of Dalila Samson disavows his own sin and demonstrates patience. When Dalila leaves, Samson comments on her visit, indicating his awareness that its objective was to pull him back into his sin:

> Sam. So let her go, God sent her to debase me,
> And aggravate my folly who committed
> To such a viper his most sacred trust
> Of secresie, my safety, and my life. (999-1002)

But in refusing the temptation to re-embrace his sin, Samson demonstrates not weakness but strength.[30]

Harapha's visit has little scriptural justification. Manoa and Dalila are expected in a tragedy about Samson, but Milton seems to have conceived the presense of Harapha himself. Daniel C. Boughner argues that a tradition of braggart but cowardly warriors is behind Harapha,[31] but such an assertion should not obscure the fact that Harapha's scene is no comedy but an entirely serious matter: Harapha has not come just to make a leg. He does turn out to be cowardly, and Samson does become sardonic in his responses to him, but these show not Harapha's lack of consequence but Samson's complete self-possession and courage. Harapha is well enough known that the Chorus recognizes him by his walk (1067); that would not be true of a warrior with no prowess. The point is, of course, that, as with Satan in Paradise Lost, Harapha is perhaps ridiculous from Samson's perspective, but only because of Samson's fortitude; for a reader lacking that much fortitude Harapha seems to be legitimately fearsome. The purpose of inventing Harapha, then, seems to me to be to show by a dramatic encounter Samson's fortitude and to allow the reader to participate in the act of fortitude with him by discovering that one need not be afraid even of a Harapha.

Samson displays fortitude as soon as Harapha is announced; his single line--"Or peace or not, alike to me he comes" (1074)--shows the equanimity with which he regards the approach of evil. Throughout the scene he never loses

his equanimity; as Harapha insults and brags Samson confines himself largely (except for a few speeches) to remarks of only a few lines which are potent, almost threatening, and always calmly self-assured, concluding with this excellent dismissal:

> Sam. Go baffl'd coward, lest I run upon thee,
> Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
> And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
> Or swing thee in the Air, then dash thee down
> To the hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.
> (1237-1241)

As Christ demonstrates his qualifications for legitimate kingship in Paradise Regained, so Samson shows himself still God's champion in the scene with Harapha. When Harapha accuses Samson of using spells and enchantments to gain unfair advantage over his adversaries, Samson replies warmly that he does not:

> Sam. I know no Spells, use no forbidden Arts;
> My trust is in the living God who gave me
> At my Nativity this strength. (1139-1141)

He goes on then to challenge Harapha to a battle, but not so much for personal reasons as to strike at Dagon through Harapha:

> if Dagon be thy god,
> To to his Temple, invocate his aid
> With solemnest devotion, spread before him

How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these Magic spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Offering to combat thee his Champion bold,
With th' utmost of his Godhead seconded:
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.
(1145-55)

When Harapha suggests that God is responsible for Samson's predicament, Samson once again affirms his guilt, and now expresses an increased faith as well:

Sam. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon
Whose ear is ever open; and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant. (1168-73)

And he again challenges Harapha.

Through this encounter Samson shows first his fortitude and then his legitimacy as God's champion, the office to which he was born. In this second, two-part temptation, then, involving the encounter with Dalila and that with Harapha, Samson demonstrates those qualities in particular which for him amount to recovered mastery over himself and recovered ability to serve in his appointed mission. The

temptation is not so complicated or so long as the corresponding one in Paradise Regained simply because there is less to be done, in terms of instruction, even though it is obviously emotionally more complicated. In Paradise Regained the effort has been to master all temptation so as to regain Paradise for all mankind; in Samson Agonistes the effort is to arrive at moral renewal through mastery of temptation in one typical man; and in both poems, the result is to make possible the final action which actualizes these new moral potentials.

I refer to the final encounters of the two poems as final action for a reason. Arnold Stein is not along in holding that Paradise Regained involves passive virtue, doing no evil (but no discernible good either), "a special kind of not-acting," to use Stein's words. In fact Christ is acting, not just reacting throughout Paradise Regained, but it is true that he does little of what Satan suggests, and what Satan suggests appears to be so exciting that Christ's alternatives seem like little. Christ has come to the wilderness to contemplate, to define means to himself, to exercise himself in virtue, and affirm his faith, and so on. He does all these while he refuses to do what Satan suggests; he is not just passive, not just "not-acting."[32]

The action which one desires to see Christ undertake, however, is, I suspect, the dramatic banishment of Satan, and it is that action which Christ does defer at

least as long as he is in Satan's "permission." It is that action which Mary has questioned whether he is pursuing with proper vigor, and which Andrew and Simon feel curious about. A reader of Paradise Regained too is likely to become restless: after all, Paradise Regained is not in any ordinary sense an exciting poem. The loss of Paradise is easily more gripping as poetic material (for fallen men) than its recovery. But that is as it should be: Paradise was lost partially as a result of impatience for exaltation; patience is to be expected as a requisite for its recovery. Christ as man, and the reader, must patiently develop virtue by trial before Satan can be finally overthrown. Only when trial and instruction is complete can the final confrontation succeed.

All these observations hold true for Samson Agonistes as well. For Samson to accept the commandment of the Philistines at any other point in that poem would be very suspect. Had he done so after Manoa's visit, when he has barely affirmed his faith, which is hanging by a thread, and when he has not yet shown his will to continue as God's chosen warrior and a Nazarite, his death would appear to be plain self-violence. Had he died after the encounter with Dalila, his courage would be undemonstrated. Samson, then, has to defer his "real" action until he has completed his preparations; only then can his action be significant.

One main point, then, of the final encounters in these two poems, I believe, is that they confirm the virtue of action. Milton asserts in Christian Doctrine that "every act is in itself good; it is only irregularity, or deviation from the line of right, which properly speaking is evil" (I, xi). The final vanquishment of Satan in Paradise Regained is accordingly accomplished by clear action; and the final victory of Samson over the Philistines similarly is brought about not by "not-acting" but by action.

The final encounter in Paradise Regained has been said not to be a temptation at all,[33] but insofar as it is a trial of Christ designed to provoke him to go astray, it should be considered a temptation just as much as the other encounters. Satan is still trying to find out just who or what Christ is, even though, of course, he knows already. (Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Satan is trying to discover what Christ is not, trying to get him to be something other than what Satan knows him to be.) At this point, then, he intends to dare Christ to do something so that he can see clearly how Christ will defeat him. What Satan discovers is that Christ does not engage in gestures: when he shows Satan how the overthrow will be accomplished, he accomplishes it. The scene itself is brief:

> There on the highest Pinacle he set
> The Son of God; and added thus in scorn:

There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill; I to thy Fathers house
Have brought thee, and highest plac't, highest is best,
Now shew thy Progeny; if not to stand,
Cast thy self down; safely if Son of God:
For it is written, He will give command
Concerning thee to his Angels, in thir hands
They shall up lift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.
To whom thus Jesus: also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God, he said and stood.
But Satan smitten with amazement fell . . . .

(549-62)

The scene is too rich to allow discussion of everything in it,[34] but there are points of relation to Samson Agonistes and the pattern of moral didacticism that should be considered.

First there is the set of ironies revolving about the place. Satan has set Christ on a pinnacle, the highest pinnacle, and he says with some emphasis that he has brought Christ to his "Father's house" and insists that the height be noticed, with all the symbolic qualities of it. His dare is that Christ then violently lower himself from this point to show his "progeny." This is, of course, not a new tactic: false exaltation, illegitimate elevation, has been tried throughout Paradise Regained and certainly with

success in Paradise Lost. Satan's understanding of the ruse is that if he raises one up, then the only thing one can do is cower or choose to be lowered. But Christ can always rise higher than Satan can raise him. The possibility of Christ's standing upright is scarcely paused over by Satan ("to stand upright / Will ask thee skill" is, I think, grim irony), so that his real dare is for Christ to throw himself down. But Christ stands and thus demonstrates rather dramatically Satan's limitations in the matter of exalted positions. Moreover, Christ's "Father's house" is not the pinnacle of the tabernacle, but in Heaven; those false gods who were angels and fell with Satan dwell on earth (temporarily), but not the true God. Christ's act in standing, then, corrects Satan's annoying insistence that he has raised Christ to his ultimate degree of exaltation. Christ does gain his Father's house, and Satan does have something to do with it, but he does not "bring" Christ there: it is Christ who transforms limited half-action into genuine action--Christ transforms a trip to a pinnacle into a genuine exaltation. And Satan falls.

And this scene is the genuine climax to the poem because it involves the most dramatic action, but because it sums up the whole tendency of the poem. I have said that this last temptation follows the tendency of all Satan's other acts in the poem; it also sums up the tendency of Christ's acts. He has been preparing for the moment when he

could act against Satan, and in this scene finally takes his action. It involves, in common with much of Christ's action preceding it, a refutation of Satan with the counter-quotation, refutation by taking an action better than Satan thought possible, refutation by not only elevating himself but frustrating and lowering Satan. This act, then, sums up Christ's actions throughout Paradise Regained.

Moreover, it is an auspicious beginning of his ministry. Satan is not finally defeated yet: he has been finally disposed of for this poem, but not yet for all time. It is only sure that he will be. But this act, in suggesting what must eventually come to Satan as well as beginning the process of bringing it about, both sums up and begins Christ's ministry. Accordingly the hymn that concludes the poem can say both

> now thou hast aveng'd
> Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
> Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
> And frustrated the conquest fraudulent . . .
> (606-09)

and

> Hail Son of the most High, heir of both worlds,
> Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
> Now enter, and begin to save mankind. (633-35)

Samson's last temptation is intended as a further indignity, to which he may passively submit or which he may

actively resist. Samson first refuses to go with the Officer rather than defile himself by performing in honor of Dagon; his refusal is consistent with his development throughout the poem. The Officer has announced that, as in Christ's last encounter in Paradise Regained, the design is to ex-*periment with Samson's strength in* Dagon's honor--

> Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
> And now some public proof thereof require
> To honour this great Feast, and great Assembly.
>
> (1313-1315)

Samson's refusal, then, is natural for one who has just developed and demonstrated such virtues as patience and fortitude.

His refusal is based on the idea that "Commands are no constraints" (1372), but when he has felt "Some rouzing motions" (1382) he dissembles and declares to the Officer that "Masters commands come with a power resistless / To such as owe them absolute subjection" (1404-05). The point here, of course, is that Samson puts himself voluntarily in the "permission" of the Philistines, specifically the Officer, to be taken, as Christ was by Satan, wherever the will of the Philistines led.

Also as in Paradise Regained there is irony about that place. Samson is given the mock-honor of public scrutiny--

Immediately

Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In thir state Livery clad; before him Pipes
And Timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot before him and behind
Archer, and Slingers, Cataphracts and Spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Rifted the Air clamouring thir god with praise,
Who had made thir dreadful enemy thir thrall.

(1614-22)

As the passage from the Messenger's account shows, Samson not only is mocked, but is also held as a prisoner in thrall. All of this misuse is directed towards the object of making Samson's strength a plaything for Dagon; it appears that Samson must either serve Dagon or die fleeing.

Samson endures all this "patient and undaunted" (1623), however, until his moment comes, and then he, like Christ, turns all the ironies on his tormentors. He ruins "Thir choice nobility and flower, not only / Of this but of each Philistian City round / Met from all parts to solemnize this Feast" (1654-56), turning his mocking procession around. He overcomes all his armed guard, as Christ overcame Satan, by taking an action they had not foreseen as possible. And, most important, he sums up in the moment of his death the point of his life as reflected in the action of the poem--his regained strength suggesting his having overcome his

sinfulness as his rejection of Dalila showed, and his willingness to follow his "rouzing motions" and live his life against Dagon showing his championship for God--and sums up as well the way in which typical man may expect to achieve his glory. Thus the Chorus hymns:

> Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
> The work for which thou wast foretold
> To Israel, and now ly'st victorious . . . .
>
> (1661-63)

And that his mission is in a sense only beginning and will continue is suggested by the Phoenix image (1699-1707), and by elements in Manoa's last speech:

> To Israel
>
> Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
> Find courage to lay hold on this occasion,
> To himself and Fathers house eternal fame.
>
> (1714-17)

Later, when Manoa has described Samson's monument:

> Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
> And from his memory inflame thir breasts
> To matchless valour, and adventures high . . . .
>
> (1738-40)

Samson, then, like Christ, has turned his tormentors' irony back on them, has affirmed the value of action, and has taken the action that not only accomplishes the defeat of his enemies in the poem, but at the same time lays the

foundation for the defeat of the enemies of the Christian warrior in all time. The reader of Samson Agonistes may see in the victory of Samson the victory of God's champion, and may see in his death the rigorous but ennobling pattern of Christian heroism.

Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes operate by a roughly parallel arrangement of parts and a basically sequential arrangement of lessons to complete the didactic pattern begun in Paradise Lost. The reader of Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes has been shown his need for renewal, the means of his renewal and redemption, and a drama in which one achieves that renewal and redemption, one with whom the reader can identify. Milton has given him in these three poems, I believe, a complete moral education, if he is willing to continue to try to master the moral lessons in them. Milton has thus fulfilled his own requirements for education: "to repair the ruins of our first parents . . . . "

NOTES

[1]"The Date of Samson Agonistes," PQ, XXVIII (1949), 145-66.

[2]Blank Verse and Chronology in Milton (Gainesville, Florida, 1966), 38-41.

[3]It has been hinted by, for instance, James Holly Hanford in "The Temptation Motive in Milton," and in "Samson Agonistes and Milton in Old Age," both in John Milton, Poet and Humanist: Essays by James Holly Hanford, ed. John S. Diekhoff (Cleveland, 1966), 244-286. For an opposing opinion see E. M. W. Tillyard, Milton, where it is maintained that Paradise Regained is more closely connected with the last two books of Paradise Lost than with Samson Agonistes "with which from the accident of joint publication it is usually associated" (p. 301). And apparently directly answering that, Don Cameron Allen, in The Harmonious Vision, says "Paradise Regained is not Books XIII to XVI of Paradise Lost; it is not a true sequel of Book XII, nor is it a commentary on the high acts in Heaven of Book III and the sorrowful episode on earth of Book XI" (p. 110). But this is going a bit far. Once it is admitted that Paradise Regained is a

minor epic of very limited scenic range, then all included in Allen's isolation of it from Paradise Lost is obviated. It seems soundest to view Paradise Regained as logically sequent to Paradise Lost and parallel with Samson Agonistes, but not exclusively concerned with either or far separate from either.

[4]See Arnold Stein, Heroic Knowledge, for an explication of both poems in terms of the idea of a knowledge that enables one to transcend his Adamic nature: what Stein calls "heroic knowledge" and what is sometimes called simply "wisdom."

[5]E. L. Marilla, in "Samson Agonistes: An Interpretation," (Studia Neophilologica, XXIX [1957], 67-76), says "the temptations to which Samson is exposed are essentially the same as those that confront Christ in the wilderness," but does not go any further than to say that they involve putting immediate personal interests before "concern for ultimate and universal good."

[6]I count only ten in Book I of Paradise Regained (502 lines), as compared with at least eighty-seven in Book I of Paradise Lost (798 lines). This count is not entirely reliable, of course, because of the difficulty in separating simple statements of narrative fact from judgments in such lines as "Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel proud" (Paradise Lost I, 43). In that line "impious"

is both a judgment on the revolting angels and a simple fact, as is my use of "revolting." But the count nonetheless indicates the waning of the epic voice.

[7]Such as Barbara Kiefer Lewalski in Milton's Brief Epic, p. 159 ff., and Don Cameron Allen in The Harmonious Vision, p. 110 ff.

[8]Satan's failure to understand what he has heard is developed by Arnold Stein in Heroic Knowledge into a principal motif in the poem, but on the other hand, Don Cameron Allen, in The Harmonious Vision, says "It is fear, cold fear, rather than uncertainty that is the major quality of the evil mind in Paradise Regained" (p. 112). His emphasis on Satan's fear is good, but his banishment of uncertainty from Satan is unnecessary and probably wrong. Satan's uncertainty is perverse and stupid, but it is, at least for him, real.

[9]Tillyard, for instance, wishing it were not so, says Christ's speech reflects in Milton a "mood of mortification or [non-sexual] masochism" (Milton, p. 309). He feels that at this point in his career Milton has come to doubt the wisdom of his great learning.

[10]But when Tillyard says (Milton, p. 337) that Samson is already saved and must only persevere to succeed, I believe he may be over-simplifying. To reject Dalila requires

more of Samson, I suspect, than perseverance; otherwise one wonders why Milton bothered with her.

[11]The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton (Boston, 1965), p. 519.

[12]I cannot agree with Denis Saurat's opinion in Milton: Man and Thinker (New York, 1925), that Milton decided to make Samson Agonistes a drama so that he could represent himself in the Chorus (p. 221).

[13]Milton and the Christian Tradition (Oxford, 1966), p. 150. Milton's use of typology is denied by several critics, such as Douglas Bush: "Theological and literary tradition--however much or little he knew of it--contained elements of Milton's Samson, though his realistic conception was hardly compatible with one traditional idea, that of Samson as a 'type' of Christ. Paradise Regained has a minimum of Christian theology, but Samson, while a Christian play, has none" (Complete Poetical Works, p. 514). But Samson Agonistes does not need Christian doctrine to have Christian typology. William G. Madsen discusses Samson as a type of Christ in "From Shadowy Types to Truth," (Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Samson Agonistes' [Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968], pp. 84-95). While it is not essential to my view that Samson be precisely a type of Christ in the formal sense, it seems reasonably clear that Samson's clear

relationship to Christ in the poems implies such a typical relationship as Madsen suggests.

[14]The emphasis on distrust in the first temptation is noted by practically every critic of Paradise Regained since Allen H. Gilbert's "The Temptation in Paradise Regained," JEGP, XV (1916), 599-611.

[15]Again Allen (The Harmonious Vision, p. 115): "If there is uncertainty in the characters of Paradise Regained, it is to be found not in Satan but in Christ, in the proto-disciples, and in the Virgin. It is not the uncertainty of ignorance, such as that which has been attributed to Satan, but rather a sacred unknowingness, an eager expectancy made staunch by the surety of promise." There is obviously a great difference between a "sacred unknowingness" and "remaining wisely ignorant" (and between Christ and the proto-disciples): a "sacred unknowingness," such as might characterize the proto-disciples, is a matter of being concerned not to find out too early; "remaining wisely ignorant," as Christ does, is a matter of not being concerned to find out. It appears that the greater faith is in "remaining wisely ignorant," and that that more accurately describes Christ.

[16]Stein (Heroic Knowledge, p. 42) suggests interestingly that this first temptation is designed by Satan as "a bold, ambitious, deadly thrust, a measured knockout

punch" in order to win the entire contest "as preamble." It is also worth noticing that once that gamble is lost, Satan's position is permanently desperate: everything becomes easy for Christ after the first temptation.

[17]Tillyard (Milton, p. 338) observes that the conversations between Samson and the Chorus may serve as a temptation to "mistrust the earlier promptings of God." He does not pursue the point, but the suggestion may be the result of an anticipatory reflection of the discussion between Manoa and Samson.

[18]A similar range for the second temptation is suggested by Hanford in "Samson Agonistes and Milton in Old Age" (Poet and Humanist, p. 267) and developed more fully in "The Temptation Motive in Milton." Stein, in "The Virtues" (Heroic Knowledge, pp. 17-35), derives the virtues from Plato. Neither goes to Christian Doctrine and thus neither recognizes that the temptation has two phases.

[19]The temptations in Paradise Regained are frequently recounted. Allen H. Gilbert was early in aligning the banquet with those offers which follow it rather than with the stones (in "The Temptation in Paradise Regained"), although he felt that its relation with the stones temptation made it partly trasitional. Mason Tung goes rather far in "The Patterns of Temptation in Paradise Regained," (SCN, XXIV [Winter 1966], p. 58) in arguing that there are five

"modes" of temptation--and thus, presumably, five distinct temptations--in the poem.

[20]Milton and Forbidden Knowledge (New York, 1955), p. 255.

[21]"The Temptation in Paradise Regained."

[22]Satan's immediate recognition of the futility of Belial's idea also places Christ in (but at the same time above) a tradition of chaste kings, and, of course, emphasizes the difference between him and Adam. The speech, with its long--but always decorous--description of female charms may be meant to provide for the reader the temptation Satan rejects for use on Christ.

[23]Mrs. Lewalski (Milton's Brief Epic, p. 234 ff.) discusses these four as types or "quasi-types" of Christ, as well.

[24]But see note 9.

[25]Howard Schultz points out that Christ's answer turns on "the difference between must and may" (Forbidden Knowledge, p. 227).

[26]Such, of course, as C. S. Lewis says pursues Satan through Paradise Lost.

[27]Milton's Brief Epic, p. 260.

[28]This is not a repetition of "Knowing who I am as I know who thou art." In this speech Christ implies that Satan has put off all pretense of gentility, such as he had disguised himself in heretofore, and is insulting in his own person. In the earlier speech Christ simply indicated that the disguise did not work.

[29]Dick Taylor, Jr. discusses the storm scene in "The Storm Scene in Paradise Regained: A Re-interpretation," UTQ, XXIV (1955), 359-76.

[30]Mary Ann Nevins Radzinowicz, in "Eve & Dalila: Renovation and the Hardening of the Heart," (Reason and the Imagination, ed. J. A. Mazzeo [New York, 1962], 155-81), discusses the relationship between Eve and Dalila, showing how Eve moves toward regeneration and Dalila toward hardening of the heart; and perhaps indirectly suggests support for the relationship between Adam and Samson, with, of course, the exception that in the later story Samson's heart is not hardened.

[31]"Milton's Harapha and Renaissance Comedy," ELH, XI (1944), 297-306.

[32]Heroic Knowledge, p. 4. Later Stein modifies this and says that Christ's disposition of the offers is "quiet actio, not reactio" (p. 12). Tillyard puts it this way: "Paradise Regained has the narrowest scope of Milton's three

long poems: it concerns itself with a single idea, namely that action is to be distrusted and that what matters almost exclusively is that inner paradise which it is in the power of every individual to attain" (Milton, p. 328). But this is almost certainly wrong: it imagines Milton a meditating mystic absorbed in an idea of quietude and denial of the world. It does not take into account exactly what Christ says in the poem when he rejects not the things of the world but Satan's offers of them ("Thereafter as I like the giver.")

[33]Allen calls it "poorly concealed murder" (The Harmonious Vision, p. 115), but it could scarcely be that; Satan knows Christ will not die of a fall. Thomas Langford, in "The Temptations in Paradise Regained" (TSLL, IX [Spring, 1967], 37-46), argues vigorously that the encounter should be called a temptation.

[34]Elizabeth Marie Pope has a very good chapter on it in Paradise Regained: The Tradition and the Poem (New York, 1962).

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