



# MILTON ACROSS BORDERS *and* MEDIA

*edited by* Islam Issa *and* Angelica Duran

OXFORD

# Milton Across Borders and Media



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*Edited by*

ISLAM ISSA

and

ANGELICA DURAN

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



OXFORD  
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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,  
United Kingdom

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Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023937960

ISBN 9780192844743

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780192844743.001.0001

Printed and bound by  
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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*For Ewan Fernie*

*For Marjorie Perloff*



## Acknowledgements

The editors are grateful to many individuals across many borders who have contributed to this multifaceted enterprise. For reviewing individual chapters during the editorial process, particularly for accuracy of non-English originals and English translations, we thank this volume's contributors, as well as Ástráður Eysteinnsson, Olga Lyanda-Geller, Alexa Alice Joubin, Abhishek Sarkar, Lauren Shohet, and Helen Wilcox. For recommending contributors, we thank Hugh Adlington, Thomas N. Corns, David Currell, Ástráður Eysteinnsson, and Hiroko Sano. We are grateful to the institutions and individuals who have granted permissions for the images in this book, and the contributors who have funded these. We also express our thanks to Gwénaél Jouin of Purdue University for attending to referencing and bibliographic matters during the composition process. We acknowledge the research time granted to Islam Issa through the School of English Research Investment Scheme at Birmingham City University, with special thanks to Andrew Kehoe. This volume has benefitted from the vision and expertise at Oxford University Press, especially Eleanor Collins and Aimee Wright. All of these individuals and institutions sustained an artistic global network even as we lived through a pandemic.

Islam Issa dedicates this book to Ewan Fernie, whose words and actions always raise and support. Angelica Duran dedicates her co-editorial efforts to Marjorie Perloff, who encouraged her and others to ask questions and helped her to learn to find answers.





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understanding of colour; releasing creativity; developing the abstract; facilitating the practice of materials; and enabling fluency in the visual languages. For him, colour is a language that informs his book projects, *A Conversation with Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2023) and the forthcoming *The Practice of Colour*. His solo show as first prize winner of the international Sunny Art Prize was at the Sunny Art Centre in 2021. He is represented by Benjamin Rhodes Arts London, where he shows regularly.

PART I

READING ACROSS



# 1

## Introduction

### ‘The Meaning not the Name’

*Angelica Duran and Islam Issa*

*Milton Across Borders and Media* crosses artistic, generic, geographic, and linguistic borders to focus on multiple media that have made foundational yet undervalued contributions to the canonization, transformation, and endurance of the works of John Milton (1608–1674).<sup>1</sup> Given how thickly situated the network of sign systems is at this moment of continuing globalization, many types of media hold even more importance than might first appear. Critical writings on both linguistic translations and multimedia representations of world literature, including Milton’s, have remarked on the culturally embedded processes ingrained in both projects, but have most often done so separately. This unprecedented volume demonstrates how—over and over since Europe’s early modern print revolution from which Milton’s works emerged—both interlingual translation and multimedia representation have worked separately and in tandem as creative, mediative steps in representing and transferring central meanings of literature. *Milton Across Borders and Media* draws out the gamut of media crossings that explore, reform, and reformulate ‘The meaning, not the name’ of Milton’s literary artworks (*PL* 7.5).<sup>2</sup>

English literary artworks have enjoyed distinct afterlives in the world literature canon.<sup>3</sup> Milton’s in particular have experienced vibrant afterlives within literary and scholarly domains worldwide. This is also the case within globalized media, which has exposed diverse audiences to Milton’s works and animated them through the ‘direct and subtle’ strategies that John Shawcross characterizes as ‘lesser lights’ and ‘bright luminaries [. . .] Shedding sweet influence’ (*PL* 7.382, 3.385, 3.375).<sup>4</sup> What we find is not the sublime Milton of monumental epic but

The co-editors thank the volume’s contributors, especially Beverley Sherry and David Currell, and the Oxford University Press anonymous reviewer for suggestions on fine-tuning the arguments of this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> We capitalize the preposition *Across* in the title to signal the weight placed on the dynamic of crossing in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> This and all quotations of Milton’s poetry are from Milton, *Complete Poems*, ed. Leonard, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>3</sup> For an index of the diversity of literary afterlives, see Forni, *Beowulf’s Popular Afterlife in Literature, Comic Books, and Film*, and Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan*.

<sup>4</sup> Shawcross, ‘Shedding Sweet Influence’.

a subliminal Milton of supplemental fragments that can be just as rich in implication and just as central in fashioning contemporary culture as the former. This volume also complements the confirmation of *Milton in Translation* that *Paradise Lost* has the most ‘bright’ or visible global circulation. We have worked actively to involve Milton’s other works as warranted but without forcing the matter. Our hope is to provoke future interdisciplinary studies on those ‘lesser lights,’ that can uncover a complementary set of artistic itineraries.<sup>5</sup>

This volume advocates literary studies’ utilisation of digital research that recuperates, organizes, and values such itineraries that can be traced via book sales and allusions, and that can inform, but not determine, interpretation. Evidentiary breadth can inform scholarly depth. Among the ‘thousand thousand’ instances of Milton’s ‘bright’ presence in ‘lesser’ explored areas are those in the vastly multimedia form of popular music videos (*PL* 7.383). Perhaps the most striking example is the 2013 music video of Eminem’s *Rap God*. This MTV award-winning music video has recorded 1.3 billion views on YouTube as of 2022. Such an astoundingly high level of audience engagement with Milton—perhaps one of the most quantifiable to date—alone merits our attention. So does the video’s high level of textual and thematic engagement with Milton’s masterwork *Paradise Lost*.

Starting thirty seconds into the frenetic six-minute video, snippets from *Paradise Lost* flash full-screen: ‘God was bold: | ned a king;’ (*PL* 1.470–1); ‘rebel king’ (*PL* 1.484); ‘ean race | elves’ (*PL* 1.780–1); ‘Omnipotent’ (*PL* 1.49, 1.273, 2.198, 3.372, 4.86, 4.725, 5.616, 6.136, 6.227, 7.136, 7.516, 9.927); ‘lake of fire’ (*PL* 1.280); and ‘Satan spake’ with the top portions of the letters in ‘answered’ directly below it (*PL* 1.271–2).<sup>6</sup> These snippets operate like the best found poetry, which is always intertextual, ‘created by taking words, phrases, and, even more commonly, entire passages from other sources and reframing them as “poetry” by altering the context, frame, and format in which the source text appears.’<sup>7</sup> The numeric majority of the flashed snippets focuses on Satan, but the textual majority focuses on God, since the word ‘Omnipotent’ occurs twelve times in Milton’s epic.<sup>8</sup> The single flash of ‘Omnipotent’ in *Rap God*, thus, subtly corrects audiences—more playfully than does Milton’s epic narrator.<sup>9</sup> It also calls attention to Eminem’s potent position in the rap industry: the song certified platinum in countries including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Italy, and the UK, and a 5× platinum status in the US; and in his own attempt at ‘surpassing human measure’ it broke the Guinness World

<sup>5</sup> We here utilise David Wallace’s re-conceptualization of medieval literary history, especially geographical space as networked ‘itineraries’, in his *Europe: A Literary History, 1348–1418*.

<sup>6</sup> Eminem, *Rap God*, 0:31, 3:35, 3:40–41, 5:11, 5:16, 5:47–49.

<sup>7</sup> Perloff, ‘Found Poetry’. Duran expresses her gratitude to Marjorie Perloff for her insights on found poetry (Perloff, Emails to the co-author).

<sup>8</sup> Both ‘Omnipotent’ and ‘Satan’ occur once each in the lyrics (Eminem, *Rap God*, 5:11, 5:47–49).

<sup>9</sup> For Milton’s correcting epic narrator, see Fish, *Surprised by Sin*.



Record for the most words in a hit single (*PL* 7.640).<sup>10</sup> Part of Eminem's position is brought to the fore with the snippet 'ean race | elves'. Racial identity has rightly started to draw more substantial attention in Milton scholarship, including in this volume. Eminem couples the snippet with the song lyrics 'skin color of mine' that refer to Eminem's role as a white singer crossing and changing racial borders in the rap industry, founded in African American musical and word-art traditions.<sup>11</sup>

The second appearance of *Paradise Lost* in Eminem's music video is not a static snippet but rather a kinaesthetic image that takes advantage of the elements that music video and television provide. About a third of the way through *Rap God*, what appears to be a dictionary definition—'n. Pagan—not Ch'—appears on one of four television screens, before displaying in quick succession 'eir populous | hey amon' then scrolling to 'hiv | flow', just before the end of the lines from the first of the two opening, justly-called Hell books of *Paradise Lost* (*PL* 1.770–1).<sup>12</sup> The sense of both collaboration and incompleteness is palpable, as it is in found poetry and, as this volume shows, in myriad media.

And there is more. About halfway through *Rap God*, details of the highly circulating, mass-produced illustrations by France's Gustave Doré begin to appear. The first two greyscale Doré illustrations from 1861 that flash on screen are from Dante Alighieri's *The Inferno*.<sup>13</sup> Shortly after, we see parts of the book spines of the illustrated bicentenary edition of *Paradise Lost* (c. 1866) and *The Inferno* next to each other (see Figure 1.1). The music video's nested engagement with Milton is part of a tradition that closely associates the trio of artists and the globalization of world literature, as succinctly captured in one of the many obituaries shortly following the death of the beloved Doré in 1883, which contains a sonnet claiming that, in death, Doré joins with 'Dante and Milton, one in lasting fame.'<sup>14</sup> The only Doré illustration of *Paradise Lost* in the video, of Moses holding the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments above his head, flashes across the screen in the last minute.<sup>15</sup> These allusions are by no means simple fodder, but rather enhance the lyrics in *Rap God*, including the last, which articulates a version of the perennial questions of power and choice addressed over and over in Milton's works, 'Why be a king when you can be a God?'. The capital in 'God' is in the video's closed

<sup>10</sup> Eminem, *Rap God*, 4:23–42; Guinness World Records, 'Most Words in a Hit Single'. There are 1,560 words in the track. Eminem introduces what he calls a 'supersonic' verse and, beginning with 'you assumin' I'm a human', raps ninety-seven words in fifteen seconds, averaging six and a half words per second.

<sup>11</sup> Eminem, *Rap God*, 4:03. He was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2022. We condemn any denigrating language in this track.

<sup>12</sup> The text is not from the current *OED*, and repeated searches did not uncover the source text.

<sup>13</sup> Eminem, *Rap God*, 3:12–13, 3:28. Doré's illustrations of *The Inferno* also appear at Eminem, *Rap God*, 3:33, 5:14, 5:16.

<sup>14</sup> Weatherly, 'Gustave Doré. Obit'.

<sup>15</sup> Eminem, *Rap God*, 5:14–17. The illustration is known as 'Plate 49, XII.236–238'. For some of the global extensions of Doré's illustrations of *Paradise Lost*, see the three chapters in 'Part II: Cameos' in Duran and Murgia, *Global Milton and Visual Art*, 73–138.



Fig. 1.1.1. Fragmented appearance of the spines of editions containing illustrations by Gustave Doré of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (left) and Dante's *Inferno* (right), in Eminem's music video *Rap God* (2013), 3:23.

captioning, a medium that has become ubiquitous in digital videos propelled by calls for greater access for individuals with hearing and cognitive impairments, thus directly related to this volume's chapter on disability media.<sup>16</sup>

Two of Milton's own deft representations of multimedia experiences coordinate in ways that clarify the figurative and locational border and media crossings showcased in this volume. The first is from the proem of the opening poem of Milton's first full-scale verse publication, *Poems of Mr. John Milton* (1645). *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity. Composed 1629* grapples with the transferral of the divinity of variously signifying names: the Christ of the title, 'the Son of Heav'n's eternal King', 'the infant God', 'thy Lord', 'the Heav'n-born-child', 'Prince of Light', 'The babe', 'the dreaded [infant]', 'her [Mary's] babe', and 'her [Mary's] sleeping Lord' (*On the Morning*, title, 2, 16, 26, 30, 62, 151, 222, 238, 242). Within the contained poetic form of rhyme royal, the speaker puzzles about 'That glorious form, that light unsufferable, | And that far-beaming blaze of majesty' that is 'laid aside' for the momentous, agential shift across borders of place (or existence) and form (or media) into 'a darksome house of mortal clay' (*On the Morning*, 8–9). This can be interpreted as a form of translation: as the *Oxford English Dictionary* would have it, an 'expression or rendering of a thing in another medium or form' and 'from one place to another'.<sup>17</sup>

The second example is more complex in its arbitrations of borders and media, again aligning the figurative and locational. At the end of book 10 of *Paradise Lost*, fallen Adam suggests to fallen Eve that they 'to the place | Repairing where

<sup>16</sup> Eminem, *Rap God*, 5:58.

<sup>17</sup> OED, 'translation', n. 3, 9.

he [God] judged us, prostrate fall | Before him reverent' to repent for their disobedience with 'humiliation meek' (*PL* 10.1086–92). Immediately following the seven-line passage, the narrator describes the couple's action, again in seven lines, with only the necessary minor grammatical variations: they 'to the place | Repairing where he judged them prostrate fell | Before him reverent' with 'humiliation meek' (*PL* 10.1098–1104). Thus, words repeat and combine with free will to produce action.<sup>18</sup> We here detect traces of Milton's positional crossing from reader to author, echoing William Shakespeare's Hamlet, who urges the travelling players, who are crossing geographic and social borders, to 'suit the action to the word, the word to the action' in their upcoming play-within-a-play.<sup>19</sup> Like Hamlet's admonition, Milton's innovations emphasise the adaptive relationship between words and actions and the vital role of interpretive freedom in that process. This is especially telling since Milton himself grapples with generic borders, crossing from tragedy to epic through his original outline of a biblical drama focused on the Fall of humankind, with 'Adam unparadiz'd', the presumed title above the struck-through 'Adams Banishment', documented in Milton's working papers.<sup>20</sup>

And there is more. This tour de force mimesis transports careful readers back seven books to another near-exact repetition that bears crucially on this scene. In book 3, the Father prophesies the couple's conversion, since he will

soften stony hearts  
*To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.*  
*To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,*  
 Though but endeavoured with sincere intent,  
*Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.*  
 (*PL* 3.189–93, emphases ours)

Thus, God's prophecy delivered in Heaven—'what I will is Fate' (*PL* 7.173)—is transformed into Adam's voiced proposal, then into the couple's concerted action in Eden. Right after the couple's repentance, Milton signals the intratextual allusion to deepen the existential and spatial border crossing: 'Prevenient grace descending had removed | The *stony* from their *hearts*' (*PL* 11.3–4, emphases ours).

Again, there is more. Audiences cross the reading border between books 10 and 11—be it a material page, digital grey line, speaker's oral delivery, the summarizing 'Argument' for book 11, or, increasingly after the first illustrated edition in 1688, frontispiece or visual illustration. In book 10, God's prophecy in Heaven and the couple's verbal and enacted 'petition' in the Garden of Eden is metaphorized and

<sup>18</sup> This passage ending book 10 in the 12-book *Paradise Lost* (1674) holds a similarly emphatic position at the very end of book 9 in the original 10-book *Paradise Lost* (1667). For full discussions of the 10-book epic, see Lieb and Shawcross, *Paradise Lost: A Poem Written in Ten Books*.

<sup>19</sup> Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 3.2.12–13. For the research in the twenty-first century on Milton's copy of Shakespeare's plays, see Bourne and Scott-Warren, "'Thy Unvalued Booke'".

<sup>20</sup> Milton, Trinity Manuscript, [n.p.].

nearly anthropomorphized in a sphere of Earth until it reaches Heaven, where it is 'clad | With' olfactory 'incense' in order to once again re-form and serve as communicative exchange. The Son presents to the Father these 'first fruits', 'thy implanted grace', 'these sighs | And prayers' (*PL* 11.10–24). All forms available cooperate, intersect, and work to create a Miltonic sense of relations across multiple kinds of borders, ones that can be crossed and are crossed in a spirit of compassion. As a coda to this close reading: *Paradise Lost* has always been a multimedia work, in concept and composition. The original title of the epic says 'Written in TEN BOOKS By JOHN MILTON', and whether or not the work was originally intended as a tragedy, there is no doubt that as an epic it was 'dictated to the poet's amanuenses, who then transcribe[d] it', making it 'very much an "oral" performance'—related to this volume's chapter on marathon readings.<sup>21</sup>

### Multimedia as Intersemiotic Network

*Milton Across Borders and Media* aims to project an inclusive and accurate purview. At its heart, it argues for fluidity, reciprocity, and equity. It does so while maintaining the scholarly boundaries that enable incisive study of a 'Multimedia Milton', thus avoiding the impression of a wholesale 'All in All' (*PL* 3.341, 6.732). Miltonic performance, be it within Milton's works or in those of his active artist-interlocutors, like Eminem, can involve audiences in a method of reading that, far from oversimplifying, rewards them when they employ reading strategies, especially ones that encourage lateral thinking—a key argument in this volume's chapters focused on John Carey's abbreviated *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'* and Pablo Auladell's graphic novel *El Paraíso perdido* [*Paradise Lost*].<sup>22</sup> For example, poetry is primarily read or heard in sequence. Yet, our reading of Eminem's part in the Miltonic allusive network is but one example of reading poetry in fragmented, non-linear fashion for greater gains in understanding.<sup>23</sup> After all, media like pictorial illustrations, while they guide some sequences, enable a more fluid apprehension, as the chapters in Parts IV and V of this volume especially illuminate. Indeed, a capacious purview only strengthens the methodologies that discipline-bound scholars, as much as general audiences, can employ as they seek valid interpretations. As Terry Royce concludes, '[v]iewed from below, different

<sup>21</sup> Lieb, 'Back to the Future: *Paradise Lost* 1667', 12.

<sup>22</sup> While Edward de Bono does not mention Milton in his foundational *Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step* (1970), the back-cover of the 2015 paperback includes a quotation from David Cohen of the *Times Educational Supplement* that does: 'Dr. de Bono does not claim to be able to turn us all into Miltons, DaVincis, and Einsteins . . . but his techniques provide an alternative to just sitting around waiting for the Muse to appear'.

<sup>23</sup> On reading *Paradise Lost* line-by-line via Twitter and its effect on linear reading, including the fascinating visual reversal of the line order, see David Currell, 'Apt Numbers', in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 77–94. For the non-linear nature of allusion, see Machacek, 'Allusion'.

semiotic systems [. . .] operate in different realms—that is in different modalities. But viewed from above, they all operate in the same realm—the realm of meaning.<sup>24</sup> Different techniques applied to both modalities or even to the same one can certainly be complementary.

‘If the only tool you have is a hammer, it is tempting to treat everything as if it were a nail’—the law of the instrument alludes to cognitive biases towards familiarity that create overreliance and certainty, rather than diversity and complementarity.<sup>25</sup> In the case of canonical literature, is there an overreliance on specific reading practices and methods of interpretation? This volume shows that Milton’s works have in fact moved individual readers to their own subjective creativity.

This volume also grapples with another dynamic, the impression that the existence of multiple media might indicate universality, superiority, or provenance, either of the writing or the author. In shining a light on multiple and mixed media, we are reminded that ‘language had existed in parallel with pictorial semiotic systems for hundreds, even thousands, of generations before writing was developed out of drawing’. Writing gradually expanded ‘the inherent multimodal potential of language [. . .] as part of the evolution of city-based civilizations, first in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China and later in Meso-America.’<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, global borders do exist, even if we interpret their constructions variously as necessary, problematic, or simply inconsequential. As far as dissemination across such borders is concerned, we cannot ignore the vital role that oral history has long played. Indeed, ‘[m]odern information dissemination began when the oral storytelling tradition converted to the written word, which was, in fact, the original independent data-transfer medium.’<sup>27</sup> This volume also gives due attention to the fact that ‘[w]ords are not the only form of representation or expression’, but that we ‘establish and convey meaning through clothing, dance, music, and gesture, as well as through complex rituals which often defy verbal exegesis. And verbal texts are often inseparable from these other kinds of meaning-making.’<sup>28</sup> To appreciate the many ways that meanings can be made and communicated is to appreciate the plurality of literary works and their ability to transcend time, space, and form, to welcome seemingly ‘periphery readers’ to the reception conversation and invite them to its centre.<sup>29</sup> We perceive this as an important step forward from the materiality paradigm assimilated by early modern scholars in recent decades. A global

<sup>24</sup> Royce, *New Directions in the Analysis of Multimodal Discourse*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> The law of the instrument is attributed variously but this quote was popularized in Maslow, *The Psychology of Science*, 15–16.

<sup>26</sup> Matthiessen, ‘The Multimodal Page’, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ellen Liberti Blasiotti, John Westbrook, and Iwao Kobayashi, ‘Disability Studies and Electronic Networking’, in Albrecht, Seelman, and Bury, *Handbook of Disability*, 327–47, quoting P. Rojas, ‘A Brief History of the Development of Portable Information’, *Red Herring* 73 (2000), 272–7.

<sup>28</sup> Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts*, 3.

<sup>29</sup> On ‘periphery readers’ and ‘periphery neglect’ theory, see Issa, *Milton in the Arab Muslim World*, 16–18.

media studies lens elucidates how literary works have an existence beyond their words, and we would go as far as saying that the examples in this volume draw attention to the potential of what we term *remateriality*.<sup>30</sup>

Such arguments about the position of literary works as one part of a signifying, meaning-making network are supremely Miltonic. In *Areopagitica*, Milton characterizes his written text as a 'Speech', a multimodal expression per the definition by the *Oxford English Dictionary* that includes reference to *Areopagitica*: 'III. Senses relating to the result of speaking. 7. The result of speaking; that which is spoken or uttered'. In that written speech, Milton positions written publications along a spectrum of other communicative activities and media. Given that they include media covered in this volume—written adaptations, music, and 'Frontispieces'—the passage is worth citing at length:

If we think to regulat Printing, thereby to rectifie manners, we must regulat all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No musick must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and *Dorick*. There must be licencing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such *Plato* was provided of; It will ask more the work of twenty licensors to examin all the lutes, the violins, and the ghittarrs in every house; they must not be suffer'd to prattle as they doe, but must be licenc'd what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigalls, that whisper softnes in chambers? The Windows also, and the *Balcone's* must be thought on, there are shrewd books, with dangerous Frontispices set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensors? The villages also must have their visitors to enquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebbeck reads ev'n o the bal-latry, and the gammuth of every *municipal* fidler, for these are the Countrymans *Arcadia's* and his *Monte Mayors*.<sup>31</sup>

He goes on from these more artistic media to more mundane communicative activities and media: 'Our garments', 'mixt conversation of our youth, male and female together', 'idle resort, all evill company'.<sup>32</sup> These last are in the background and foreground of a number of chapters in this volume, especially those focused on education, youth genres, and genres often considered 'idle'.

To put to work the subtitle of this chapter once more, this entire volume investigates how Miltonic 'meaning' is translated when done by another 'name' and across media. Such translations are border crossings in the sense of the etymology of the term 'translate': 'to convert (a text) into another language [. . .], to transport (a person or thing) from one place to another [. . .], to transfer'.<sup>33</sup> Each chapter in

<sup>30</sup> On the differentiation between 'words' and 'works', see Issa, *Shakespeare and Terrorism*, 195–200.

<sup>31</sup> Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, 2.523–5.

<sup>32</sup> Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, 2.526.

<sup>33</sup> *OED*, 'translate', v.

*Milton Across Borders and Media* elucidates how its specific media have partnered with Milton's verbal artworks—whether in their original languages or in interlingual translation—to engage with and evidence diverse audiences. Each chapter answers, implicitly or explicitly, the governing questions of this volume. What, aside from a more or less rote wish to import what tradition assures everyone are very great works of literature, does the translation or adaptation reveal in the Miltonic work under study? More particularly, what does the new treatment reveal about Milton's poetry and poetry at large that may not previously have been as readily visible or legible? What is to be accomplished by bringing *this* author (Milton) into *this* language or *this* media at *this* time? How is Milton accommodated to the new environment and how is the new environment, prospectively or actually, different for having Milton in it? To provide some answers to these questions, *Milton Across Borders and Media* gathers new and original studies on Milton's works in various media, written by scholars, translators, and artists from many different countries.

This volume advances and merges a range of media studies, or intersemiotic fields; and it does so at an apt moment, although the polyglot Samuel Johnson might accuse it of being overdue given his claim that Milton 'wrote no language.'<sup>34</sup> Certainly, there have been some studies devoted to specific aspects of Milton's manifold geographical, linguistic, and media border crossings, which this volume acknowledges. Most obviously, *Milton in Translation* inevitably touches on aspects of the intersemiotic that could not be developed fully in the context of its focus on interlingual translations in twenty-three language traditions. Fittingly, in the very last words of that volume, Gordon Campbell notes that intersemiotic translations are an important cultural phenomenon that certainly require further attention and that bear differently for audiences that do or do not cross linguistic and geographic borders:

In my own experience, the most memorable instance of cultural translation involves an 'Oriental' language Milton had most likely never heard—Japanese—and a different form of translation, the intersemiotic (Jakobson's term) rather than the interlingual and, to a lesser degree, intralingual forms discussed in this volume. The occasion [. . .] was the performance of Milton's *Samson Agonistes* as a Noh play in Tokyo in 2012. For Japanese members of the audience, the performance afforded an insight into a seventeenth-century English play; for foreigners in the audience, the play offered a point of familiar access to the richness of Japanese culture. This two-way insight has an exact parallel in the study of Milton

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 442. Johnson is here applying 'what [Benjamin] Jonson says of [Edmund] Spenser', whom Milton calls a 'sage and serious Poet' in *Areopagitica*.

in translation embodied in this volume and indeed allows reflective readers to consider the intersemiotic translations that fall outside its confines.<sup>35</sup>

In 1959, Roman Jakobson defined in brief the triad of ways that verbal text can be interpreted: 'it may be translated into other signs of the same language, into another language, or into another, nonverbal system of symbols.'<sup>36</sup> Media studies emerged in the 1970s in large part as an exciting extension on Jakobson's and others' work, demonstrating the vast media operating across borders of geographies, time-periods, and elite and mass cultural productions, as already sampled in this introduction.<sup>37</sup> As the twenty-first century continues, this volume moves across, beyond, and with interlingual translation because 'to translate is not only to transit from one language to another'. Rather, '[t]ranslative processes may be internal to the same language; they may occur from verbal sign systems to non-verbal sign systems and vice versa; or among nonverbal sign systems, and again among the various nonverbal languages.'<sup>38</sup> Some of the chapters in this volume parse and illuminate the imbricated relationship across verbal and nonverbal sign systems, cumulatively elucidating the freighted nature of all translation and adaptation. The paradox becomes heightened: the original text both remains the same and becomes another.

These extensions across global and generic borders are evident in the works of scholars from a number of fields drawn to the meaning, if not the name, of media studies and to texts that may have enjoyed wide circulation but have found their way only recently into rigorous scholarship and higher education curriculums. In reference to one of the media discussed in this volume, children's literature, the self-described philologist Seth Lerer reminds us that '[t]ranslation is transmission. The etymology of the Latin word *translatio* is "carrying over" and that "[m]eaning embraces media."<sup>39</sup> Equally foundational in this inter- and trans-disciplinary volume is Emer O'Sullivan's discussion of 'Comparative Literature, as an interdiscipline' that 'was never exclusively concerned with the relationship between (national) literatures but focused also on that between literature and other aesthetic forms' including 'different cultural codes (in the visual arts, dance,

<sup>35</sup> Gordon Campbell, 'Epilogue: Multilingual and Multicultural Milton', 497, in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*, 493–7. Chapters in that volume that touch upon other intersemiotic translations of *Paradise Lost* include Miklós Péti's on an open-air staged production based on a Hungarian translation from the 1970s, David Robertson's on Gustave Doré's illustrations in relation to Finland, and Beverley Sherry's on Dryden's adaptation of *Paradise Lost* as a libretto for an opera.

<sup>36</sup> Jakobson, 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation', 233. For a trenchant twenty-first century iteration of intersemiotic translation, see Augusto Ponzio 'Preface', in Petrilli, *Translation Translation*, 13–16.

<sup>37</sup> For fulsome and convincing arguments about media studies, including its overlap with other methodologies, see Chandler and Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*.

<sup>38</sup> Susan Petrilli, 'Translation and Semiosis. Introduction', 18 in Petrilli, *Translation Translation* [17]–37).

<sup>39</sup> Lerer, *Children's Literature*, 47, 322.



music, cinema, the theatre).<sup>40</sup> Such varied ‘cultural codes’ are actively involved in *Milton Across Borders and Media*, and are further paired with integrative methods of enquiry, like critical race theory.

Signal works within Milton studies that have made inroads in some of this volume’s media are as follows: on visual arts, Roland M. Frye’s *Milton’s Imagery and the Visual Arts: Iconographic Tradition in the Epic Poems*, Diane McColley’s *A Gust for Paradise: Milton’s Eden and the Visual Arts*, *Paradise Lost: The Poem and its Illustrators* edited by Robert Woof, and *Global Milton and Visual Art* edited by Angelica Duran and Mario Murgia; on digital media, *Digital Milton* edited by David Currell and Islam Issa; on film, Eric Brown’s *Milton on Film*; and on education writing, *Approaches to Teaching Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’* and *Approaches to Teaching Milton’s Shorter Poetry and Prose*, both edited by Peter C. Herman. *Milton in Popular Culture* edited by Laura Lunger Knoppers and Gregory Colón Semenza covers online presence, fantasy fiction, and film, but appeared at an earlier stage of the digital turn, and there has been much development in the intersemiotic activity and global reach of Milton’s works in the last decade, in large part due to globalization and technological advances. No volume, then, combines such a range of intersemiotic responses as does *Milton Across Borders and Media*: in such varied media as children’s literature, graphic novels, opera, and stained glass, as well as such languages and cultural traditions as American Sign Language, Bengali, Latin, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish.

It is often the case that studies of Shakespeare precede studies of Milton. That is the case in this endeavour, with such volumes as *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation* (2004, rev. 2020) edited by Ton Hoenselaars, Ayanna Thompson’s *‘Passing Strange’: Shakespeare, Race and Contemporary America* (2011), and books from the first two decades of the twenty-first century about Shakespeare and film in particular. Shakespeare studies’ enthusiastic embrace of presentist motives is partly due to new performances of Shakespeare’s plays and, by extension, partly due to Shakespeare’s public profile and claimed universalism—both of which intertwine with the playwright’s prolific border crossing through his global reputation and his utilization in colonial projects. We appreciate Hoenselaars’s recognition, if ultimate relegation, of the ‘polysemantic’ qualities of Shakespeare’s works and of the fact that ‘the borderline’, or perhaps borderland, ‘between translation and adaptation is extremely difficult to draw, certainly since, in recent years, translation itself has come to be looked upon as a form of adapting or rewriting.’<sup>41</sup> Whereas the majority of Shakespeare’s texts were intended to be adapted through

<sup>40</sup> O’Sullivan, *Comparative Children’s Literature*, 36. O’Sullivan rightly draws out the connection of children’s literature to C. S. Pierce’s explanation of the apprehension of signs as *iconic or indexical* and Yuri Lotman’s semiosphere, which gave rise to the even more expansive fields of contact and transfer studies, involving ‘every form of cultural exchange—translation, reception, multilateral influences, etc.—between literatures from different countries, languages and cultures’ (21).

<sup>41</sup> Hoenselaars, *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, 10, 15. For a foundational exploration of borderlands, see Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*. This nexus of terms should also involve

performance, Milton's works foster less expected and differently layered types of adaptations given Milton's distinct artistry, as well as the breadth of forms, genres, and languages in which he published: epic, lyric, masque, pastoral elegy, prose, sonnet, and tragedy, in English, Greek, Italian, and Latin. By focusing on verbal artworks and how they relate to processes of reception, *Milton Across Borders and Media* establishes a coherent, if in no way comprehensive, artistic, historical, and theoretical framework for Milton media studies.

### **'Orderly Proceeding Will Divide Our Inquiry'**

In furthering the always ongoing reformation—to invoke Milton's prose work *Of Reformation*, used in this section's title—of literary 'inquiry', specifically the governing questions indicated earlier, we have sought to be as responsive to the texts and media under study as to this volume's contributors and audiences.<sup>42</sup> In planning the scope of this volume, we rallied behind Milton's choice of concision for his urgent prose pamphlet *Of Education*, extending the tract's national concerns to global concerns: 'Brief I shall endeavour to be; for that which I have to say, assuredly this Nation hath extream need should be done sooner then spoken.'<sup>43</sup> With breadth of coverage and brevity in mind, the chapters in *Milton Across Borders and Media* omit some interesting but secondary matters and emphasize key rather than multiple examples. Our hope is that contributors and readers will follow up with further discussions on the intellectual enquiries that this volume prompts.

While each chapter in *Milton Across Borders and Media* involves multiple media and types of crossings, chapters are organized into Parts by the topics that are most at the fore. Each Part begins with chapters that most squarely centralize the topics named in the respective Part's title, then expands and readies readers to cross into the main topic of the next part. 'Part I: Reading Across' is constituted of four chapters that elucidate the multimedia approaches operating in the ensuing chapters, addressing how and why personal agency, institutional missions, and cultural forces have prompted and intervened in the flow of Milton's artworks. This introductory chapter combines with three others in 'Part I: Reading Across' to forefront the ways that Milton's works have been able to cross so many borders and into so many media. This is especially important because, as J. Hillis Miller notes, 'changes in the media of art have also conspicuously changed the scholarship of

the phrase from digital studies 'phase transition', which Blaine Greteman has brought to bear fruitfully in his study of early modern English authors, including Milton (Greteman, *Networking Print in Shakespeare's England*, 3).

<sup>42</sup> Milton, *Complete Works*, 1.528.

<sup>43</sup> Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, 2.364.

criticism that account for art.<sup>44</sup> The ways we create and engage with artistic works have changed and developed over the centuries. Sharp and ongoing advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) suggest that this will continue to be the case. Publicly available chatbots, for instance, can be prompted to index webpages in order to formulate something akin to artistic expression and reception, like a poem emulating Milton's prosody, adaptations as specific as, say, a rap about Milton's God in Eminem's style, and literary criticism about Miltonic themes. The effects of AI are not directly covered in *Milton Across Borders and Media*, but their further study will have ample grounding in this volume, given its clear demonstration of the fact that advancements in technology and digital media reflect and change our reading processes. Milton's works have been studied for some time now using digital humanities tools, where distant reading can present the text in new ways but does not necessarily contradict close readings. In similar vein, when we look at a painting inspired by *Paradise Lost*, or its digital replica, where do our eyes take us and in what order? The impact of digital media on the expectations and practices of reading Milton is therefore the central concern of these opening chapters. They ask why and how we read Milton today, what happens to Milton's long epic in the Age of Twitter, and how the digital might inform teaching of Milton across borders and media.

The four chapters of 'Part II: Interlingual Borders' key in on the cultural, technological, and temporal elements of interlingual translations of Milton's works that render them also intersemiotic translations. The case studies on Milton's presence and absence within Latin, Frisian, Faroese, and Turkish literary cultures are in the service of demonstrating the ways in which Milton's works are accommodated at different historical moments in different linguistic traditions.<sup>45</sup> The force of politics and religion—and their impact on both genre and interlingual choices—is strongly felt in each of these chapters.

'Part III: Verbal Borders' includes some interlingual translations but its three chapters feature written texts that draw out the themes, characters, and other elements in Milton's works, primarily through verbal expression, while also in coordination with other book media, such as book illustration. These chapters treat the conceptual, linguistic, and media crossings undertaken by translators and adaptors in three linguistic and cultural traditions. Michael Madhusudan Dutt's inscription of themes and characters from Milton's *Paradise Lost* into his Bengali

<sup>44</sup> Miller, *Illustration*, 32.

<sup>45</sup> For a complementary discussion of the implied audiences of the Latin translation of *Paradise Lost* featured in this volume, see Estelle Haan, "Latinizing" Milton: *Paradise Lost*, *Latinitas*, and the Long Eighteenth Century, 93–114; for translations of *Paradise Lost* in the language families and cultural neighbourhoods of Faroese and Frisian of Dutch, see Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, 'Paradise Lost and Dutch, 1728–2003', 167–84, and of German, see Curtis Whitaker, 'Domesticating and Foreignizing the Sublime: *Paradise Lost* in German', 115–37; and for Milton and the Abrahamic languages, see Islam Issa 'Paradise Lost in Arabic', 397–414, and Noam Reisner, 'Pre-eminent among Gentiles: Milton's Major Poetry in Hebrew Translation', 415–28, all in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*.

epic poem *Meghnādbadh kābya* [*The Poem of the Slaying of Meghnād*] (1861), a telling of the ancient Indian epic *Rāmāyaṇa*; R. Zamora Linmark's rewriting of key moments in *Paradise Lost* in *Leche* (2011), a novel about a queer Filipinx man's visit to the Philippines thirteen years after immigrating to the United States;<sup>46</sup> and the circulation of Hispanophone editions of *Paradise Lost* in Hispanoamerica, especially in the 1950s, variously illustrated, in prose, and imported.

The six chapters of 'Part IV: Visual Media' focus on forms of transference of Milton's verbal artwork into primarily visual artwork. These include Pablo Auladell's *El Paraíso perdido*, the first graphic-novel adaptation of the full storyline of *Paradise Lost*; the verbal-visual Russian genealogy of Milton's Satan especially from Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov to Mikhail Vrubel; the ways in which Milton's representation of a gendered instant of Creation is rendered by the major visual artists and book illustrators John Baptiste de Medina and John Martin and the twentieth-century women artists Carlotta Petrino and Mary Groom; Milton's ambivalent light and dark images in *Paradise Lost* synthesized into William Blake's illuminated book *Milton: A Poem in Two Books* and John Martin's mezzotint illustrations to the epic; three stained glass windows in Canada and the US that depict *Paradise Lost* in the Inter-War years 1927–31; and Richard Kenton Webb's *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2021), a body of 12 linocuts, 40 paintings, and 127 drawings, one of the largest engagements with Milton's epic by a single artist to date.<sup>47</sup>

The five chapters in 'Part V: Auditory Media' are the most multimedia. This Part focuses on artistic productions that include the aural and increasingly with each chapter, the visual, kinaesthetic, tactile, and communal.<sup>48</sup> The first two chapters focus on the obstacles and successes of the (infrequent) adaptations of Milton's works into music, with attention especially on Henry Lawes's settings of Milton's songs for *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* and Krzysztof Penderecki's opera *Paradise Lost* (1978), as well as the powerful appropriations from the early modern 'A Pastoral Elegie' (1648) by Henry Lawes, to George Frideric Handel's *The Occasional Oratorio* (1746), to Ralph Vaughan Williams's Christmas cantata *Hodie!* (1953–1954), to Jocelyn Pook's score for Michael Radford's film of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (2004), and the music video *Darkness Visible* (2018) by

<sup>46</sup> Other works that integrate Milton's work into multicultural settings and questions of racial and gender identity include Monica Youn's *Blackacre* (2016) and Sandra Fernandez Rhoads's fantasy fiction novels *Mortal Sight* (2020) and *Realms of Light* (2021).

<sup>47</sup> Pablo Auladell's *El Paraíso perdido* contains 1,057 illustrated cells.

<sup>48</sup> Other vibrant engagements with Milton's works by theatrical communities in the twenty-first century not addressed in this volume include Erin Sheilds's *Paradise Lost* (2018), premiered in Ontario, Canada; Tom Dulack's *Paradise Lost* (2020), premiered in New York, US; and Poetry in Action's *Sketches of Paradise Lost* (2022), premiered in New South Wales, Australia. For a 2-hour 23-minute reduced audio version of *Paradise Lost* with narrative additions linking Milton's poetic lines not covered in this volume, see Milton, McKellen, Barber, et al., *Paradise Lost*, a BBC Radio 4 dramatization.

Mumford and Sons.<sup>49</sup> The chapter on film conveys Milton's perennial concern with temptation as adapted subtly in Martin Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013). And intermedial translation, particularly accessible to disabled audiences, attends to the tension of embodiment and spirituality in so much of Milton's works.<sup>50</sup> Part V concludes considering the *in situ* translation of Milton's written texts into spoken words in Milton marathons, the communal reading-aloud 'from morn | To noon [. . .] to dewy eve' of *Paradise Lost* by scholars, students, and enthusiasts who distantly echo Homer and his rhapsodes (*PL* 1.742–3).

The Epilogue by Hugh Adlington provides the first overview of how the volume's twenty-two chapters of this collaborative study of intersemiotics are able to interanimate in relation to one canonical English author.

### 'I Mean That Too'

These summaries of the five Parts of *Milton Across Borders and Media* give a sense of just a small part of the media network centred on Milton. One major aim of this volume is to provoke inquiries into what Milton's works have meant to so many reader-artists and what they have meant and can 'mean [. . .] too' to a wide array of audiences (*A Masque* 418). Cultivating analytical studies across varied media will yield a more accurate picture of the reader reception of Milton's works and the operations of literary artistry. Doing so applies the still relevant recommendations Milton made in *Of Education*, that rigorous education be complemented by small communities, 'companies', 'learning and observing all places' and crossing geographic borders, in the form of international travel, 'not to learn principles but to enlarge experience, and make wise observation'.<sup>51</sup>

We return to the multimedia realm of popular music videos with which we started this chapter, since such examples cross geographic borders so seamlessly—in large part due to digital advances—while also urging audiences to cross generic, medial, and at times linguistic borders. Whether they do so with delight or discomfort, the crossings enable a fuller embrace of Miltonic presence today and a better recognition of that presence as an accretion of a vast heritage, to which two brief examples attest.

What can we learn from the varied engagements with Milton's compositions—about his works and themes, maybe even about ourselves and our societies—from

<sup>49</sup> Other musical works in direct connection with Milton's poetry not addressed in this volume include C. Hubert H. Parry's 'Blest Pair of Sirens' (1887) from Milton's 'At a Solemn Musick', John Blackwood McEwen's *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1905) from Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, and Grant Hart's *The Argument* (2013) from *Paradise Lost*.

<sup>50</sup> For an art book constituted of excerpts of *Paradise Lost* in English binary system code in gold ink on handmade paper, see Owen, *Milton Marginalia*.

<sup>51</sup> Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, 2.413–4.

observing and experiencing, alongside millions and millions of listeners and viewers, Lana Del Rey's short film *Tropico* (2013)? Presenting the singer as Eve, the cross-generic video navigates, in three songs—*Body Electric*, *Gods and Monsters*, *Bel Air*—the states of bliss, fall, and redemption that are awash with Miltonic allusions. The tale begins in Eden before a serpent tempts her to eat an apple and Adam (Shaun Ross) follows suit, causing a 'muttering thunder' (*PL* 9.1002). They awake in the present day: she works as a stripper and he as a convenience store clerk and gang member, their 'sorrow [. . .] greatly multipl[ied]' (*PL* 10.193–5). Finally, they drive in a convertible car through wheatfields, arrive at a single tree, and begin to undress themselves as images of baptism appear before, redeemed and 'hand in hand', they ascend into the sky in an embrace (*PL* 12.648). There is more than a hint here of the prayers of Milton's Adam and Eve nearly anthropomorphized through the simile of 'th' ancient pair [. . .] Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha' as they make their way from Earth to Heaven, described earlier in this chapter (*PL* 11.10–12). The thematic alignment of *Tropico* with *Paradise Lost* surfaces expressly between the second and third songs, in Del Rey's monologue: 'Some poets called it the entrance to the Underworld, but on some summer nights, it could feel like Paradise, *Paradise Lost* [. . .]'. Further, by linking the metropolitan 'city of Angels—Los Angeles' to the epic landscape and the challenges it presents to Adam and Eve, Del Rey presents the first humans' primeval struggle as every human's day-to-day struggle.<sup>52</sup>

Such Miltonic allusions extend across linguistic and cultural borders, as demonstrated by such an eclectic and wide-reaching genre as Korean popular music, or K-pop. The singer Gain's album *Hawwah [Eve]* (2015) draws a straightforward connection to Milton in naming the album's two linked tracks: *Apple* and *Paradise Lost*. Sung from the tempted woman's perspective, they explain how the apple, which by the end comes to symbolize sexual expression, is itself too tempting to be resisted. As the final, multilingual words of the second song note, the couple's sexual union is worth more than anything and serves as their redemption: '지금만 기억해 [Remember now alone] | you and I, another paradise.'<sup>53</sup> The videos for the two songs are sensually and sexually lively, conveying artistically what scholarship such as *Queer Milton* (2018) has queried.<sup>54</sup> The ways that borders and media shift over time are particularly intriguing when considering how Korean translations of *Paradise Lost* emerged in the 1960s as the first independent South Korean government worked its modernization and anti-communist agenda, and published translations using US funding.<sup>55</sup> By the turn of the millennium, South Korea was seen as a model of modernization and K-pop was extremely popular around the

<sup>52</sup> Del Rey, *Tropico*, 17:25–17:56.

<sup>53</sup> Gain, *Paradise Lost*, 3:40–3:44. Subtitles provided by the video's official YouTube page, 1theK.

<sup>54</sup> Orvis, *Queer Milton*.

<sup>55</sup> Yae Heon Kim with Angelica Duran, 'The 1960s and Korean Translations of *Paradise Lost*', in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*, 478–484.

world. The adaptation of the Western canon—which began as a way of moving towards US- and European-style modernized democracies—now takes place on South Korea’s own terms, before being reverted to the West in a new and perhaps enhanced form. Furthermore, K-pop not only became one of South Korea’s most important soft power assets, but the idea of using the medium to identify physical and symbolic borders has been demonstrated directly. For instance, in 2010, when North Korea allegedly sunk a South Korean navy ship, the latter government played a K-pop song on loudspeakers across the demilitarized border between the two countries, and an official revealed plans ‘to set up the big screens’ playing K-pop videos on the border, for ‘psychological warfare operations.’<sup>56</sup>

Overseeing *Milton Across Borders and Media* has seemed at times to be a process of ‘wand’ring steps and slow’ due to the internal complexity of the ‘Bold deed’ we set for ourselves as a collective and by the unexpected ‘wide-wasting pestilence’ of a pandemic (*PL* 12.648, 9.921, 11.487). The consequent lockdowns created external impediments yet added a renewed recognition of the inescapability of global networks and an appreciation of participating actively in a network of individuals who have heard Milton’s works speak to them in their historical moments and unique places. ‘[R]efreshed’ and, admittedly, with some ‘joy’, we are convinced that Milton’s artworks can be better understood and often enhanced within their multimedia and intermedial networks (*Paradise Regained* 4.637–8). We are also hopeful that this sustained, collaborative analysis of the power and responsibility of existing and emerging engagements will contribute to understanding the multimedia processes and border crossings through which artistic—and especially Miltonic—meanings are constructed, rematerialized, and disseminated.

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<sup>56</sup> Digital Chosun, ‘Girl Bands to Assist in “Psychological Warfare”’.

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## 2

# Motives, Methods, and Milton

## Presentism Reconciled to Historicism

Michael Ulliot

### The Question of Why

‘Why do we still read Milton today?’ The question posed in 2021 by the editor of *Milton Studies*, Stephen B. Dobranski, implies a need to reconcile John Milton’s seventeenth- to our twenty-first-century values. But its readiest answer is more historicist than presentist: ‘Because of his poetry’s soaring beauty and extraordinary subtlety. His poems both move and challenge, inform and inspire,’ Dobranski writes. This answer elevates Milton above his localized, contingent readers; he transcends time because his language and ideas resonate in minds far removed from his own. Or we can answer the question by appealing to precedents. Read Milton in the 2020s for the same reason that others read and valued his work in the 1920s, the 1820s, and the 1720s—for the reasons that Dobranski cites about Milton and his best-known poem: ‘Milton is without equal, and his epic *Paradise Lost* is arguably the greatest single poem written in English.’<sup>1</sup> Or as Paul Stevens puts it, ‘*Paradise Lost* is the single greatest poem in the English language. Its influence is pervasive.’<sup>2</sup>

Appealing to universal value is tempting whenever someone questions the canonicity of canonical authors, but it also begs the question. It presumes that readers are so bound to precedents that we can’t imagine a world beyond them—an assumption belied by formerly canonical authors whose popularity has waned, like Walter Scott or Anthony Trollope. Or it pretends that readers are outside of time, subsisting on what our books provide in the still and quiet air of delightful study. That is, it transcends the temporal, cultural, and other borders that so many readers must cross. Readers seek books that feed contemporary preoccupations, which are themselves fed by our circumstances. So sales of Albert Camus’s *The Plague* (1947) erupted in 2020, early in the coronavirus pandemic, for the same reason that Edith Wharton’s Gilded-Age New York novels were popular in the heady fin-de-siècle 1990s.

<sup>1</sup> Dobranski, ‘Preface,’ v.

<sup>2</sup> Stevens, ‘Freedom and the Fall,’ ix; cit. Cunningham, ‘Comparator,’ 45–80, 45–6.

Thus Milton must resonate in the 2020s for reasons that are at least partly circumstantial, or we would shelve him alongside other authors we feel we *ought* to read, but never quite do. To keep our attention, in other words, Milton has to earn it. ‘The world today still has need of Milton,’ Dobranski writes: ‘In this time of deep political divisions, of global crises, of ongoing social unrest, of racial conflict [. . .] Milton again and again shows readers how to remain constant in the face of uncertainty, temptation, and the inevitable mistakes that come with being human.’<sup>3</sup> For instance, Feisal G. Mohamed updates Milton’s secular liberalism for post-9/11 readers in *Milton and the Post-Secular Present: Ethics, Politics, Terrorism* (2011). So too, the contributors to *Queer Milton* (2018) reframe Milton’s resistance to narrow heteronormativity and his indeterminacy as a capacious definition of queerness, just as Joseph Wittreich once evinced his prelapsarian empowerment of Eve in *Feminist Milton* (1987). These are but three examples of the literary-critical motive to situate Milton in present moments of reception, to reveal how his preoccupations resonate with ours.<sup>4</sup>

The presentist impulse is even more prevalent in Shakespeare studies, with readers since 1623 enjoining others to ‘Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe.’<sup>5</sup> Since Terence Hawkes accelerated the presentist school of Shakespeare criticism with *Shakespeare in the Present* (2002), multiple articles, essay collections, series, and monographs have asserted that critics should foreground the present moments of our reading and playgoing to address Shakespeare’s take on contemporary culture and politics, and vice versa. Ewan Fernie and Linda Charnes were among the first to take up this challenge to ‘creatively confront, unsettle and transcend routine modes of thinking’ by addressing ‘Shakespeare’s inimitable and even alien presence in the present.’<sup>6</sup> Hawkes, Cary DiPietro, and Hugh Grady followed, adopting Gabriel Egan’s definition of presentism: ‘a way of doing literary criticism by explicitly evoking the present concerns that motivate a desire to reread old literature (especially Shakespeare) to discover resonances that it could not have had for its first audiences or readers, because these only became possible as a consequence of what happened between then and now.’<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, the habits of Donald Trump as President of the United States (2017–21) provoked Stephen Greenblatt to claim in *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Power* (2018) that his dissembling manipulations resembled those of Shakespeare’s Richard III; Kai

<sup>3</sup> Dobranski, ‘Preface,’ vi.

<sup>4</sup> A more overt extra-Miltonic example of the presentist move is the series explicitly titled *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts*, under which the Renaissance English Texts Society has published six essay collections thus far, covering three decades of scholarship (1985–2016) on early books and manuscripts. For a ‘new Milton criticism that places studies of race at the forefront of scholarly investigation,’ see Wilburn, ‘Getting “Uppity” with Milton,’ 275, and Stephen K. Kim’s chapter in the present volume, ‘Encountering Milton in Linmark’s *Leche*’.

<sup>5</sup> Shakespeare, *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, sig. A3r.

<sup>6</sup> Fernie, ‘Action! Henry V,’ 97. See also Charnes, *Hamlet’s Heirs*.

<sup>7</sup> Hawkes, ‘Macbeth in the Present’; DiPietro and Grady, ‘Presentism, Anachronism and *Titus Andronicus*’; Egan, ‘The Presentist Threat to Editions of Shakespeare’.

Wiegandt makes a more compelling case that the play's own adaptations of the historical past, namely Julius Caesar building the Tower of London, are themselves presentist.<sup>8</sup> So presentism has deep historical precedents. After New York's Public Theater produced *Julius Caesar* with a Trump figure as the tyrant in 2017, James Shapiro was moved to write *Shakespeare in a Divided America: What His Plays Tell Us about Our Past and Future* (2020), tracing this tendency from US Presidents John Adams and Abraham Lincoln to gender fluidity in the film *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). Shapiro argues that the company's leveraging of Shakespeare in US culture wars risks binding his value to the exclusive service of progressive political agendas: 'When one side no longer sees value in staging his plays, only a threat, things can unravel quickly.'<sup>9</sup>

These examples justify Egan's parenthetical '(especially Shakespeare)'. We're not debating Milton's place in a divided US or Trump's resemblance to Mammon when rage-tweeting atop his golden toilet. That's not because Shakespeare is better than Milton, with apologies to Nigel Smith, but because Shakespeare's cultural position is reinforced by popular culture and public performances.<sup>10</sup> Modern-dress productions of Shakespeare trade on juxtapositions and resonances between texts and settings, whether or not those settings overlap with the audience's circumstances. But those circumstances are often a relief map for assiduous yet glib efforts to find thematic congruencies, even the slightest echo, between the represented and the real. It's an act of will (forgive the pun) to start with Shakespeare and reverse-engineer his contemporary resonance, as John Dryden did with Geoffrey Chaucer in translating three of *The Canterbury Tales* into couplets for the Augustan age. Recall the last interview with a contemporary director of any classical drama that you heard or read in the programme notes. 'Ours is a world of oligarchs and autocrats', the director might say, 'where the fake news and foreign scapegoating that Shakespeare skewered are more resonant than ever'. We must recognize motivated reasoning when we see it. The company's artistic director made the choice to produce this play before these circumstances arrived to greet it; and the so-called universal genius of Shakespeare is an argument used to justify our preference for him over his contemporaries. Are we really to believe that the company chose Shakespeare over other playwrights because their plays offer us nothing on these questions?

The dangers of presentism are self-evident: the moment you publish an article or stage a production connecting Shakespeare's circumstances to the present's, emergent circumstances threaten to disrupt your assumptions. I think of Joe Dator's memorable *New Yorker* cartoon from 27 April 2020 to this effect: 'Good

<sup>8</sup> Wiegandt, 'Shakespeare and the Present'.

<sup>9</sup> Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, 220.

<sup>10</sup> Nigel Smith's *Is Milton Better than Shakespeare?* does in fact address Milton's resonance for historical and contemporary US political ideals.

news', a woman in Elizabethan dress says to a man in a Tudor interior, 'Shakespeare is using this time to write "King Lear", so we'll have more stuff to binge soon.'<sup>11</sup> Soon enough the coronavirus pandemic will be as distant a memory as the Cold War or 9/11, overshadowed, say, by future refugee crises precipitated by water shortages.

Milton is my focus here, so I will now build upon this outline of the often narrow presentism of Shakespeare studies and the gestures towards Milton's own presentism, addressing the wider question of why we read texts like *Paradise Lost* and *Areopagitica* in the 2020s.<sup>12</sup> First I address the academic environment in which literary critics read and write, what Stanley Fish calls our interpretive community.<sup>13</sup> Then to address what makes Milton tractable in our time, I turn to the platforms on which we read his texts and the methods we use to process them. Digital reading environments have more dynamic affordances than printed books for comparing editions, linking to source texts and glosses, searching words, and following non-linear reading paths. Computational text-analysis methods, meanwhile, enable critical methods that feel objective and comprehensive, but are less familiar and intuitive than subjective arguments from exemplary evidence. Both our reading environments and our critical machines promise to surpass the set of limits of printed books and linear readings. Both answer the question—why read Milton now?—with how we can and ought to read him now.

### The Matter of How

The most compelling reason to read Milton now is because your peers are doing it, too. If Milton's readers were sorted into categories from largest to smallest, the base of this pyramid would comprise university students around the world fulfilling historical course requirements. Painful as this is to admit, most of Milton's contemporary readers are initially compelled to read him. The same could be said of many other historical authors. Higher up the pyramid are the graduate students meeting their own programme requirements, or higher still those motivated to read him through a zeal for early period writers. At the top of the pyramid are the faculty members assigning Miltonic readings—motivated not only by paternalist dispensation but also the pleasure of reading them, a pleasure that my own undergraduate Milton professor Maggie Kilgour argues is endemic in *Paradise Lost*.<sup>14</sup> Yet Milton scholars are also subject to a Miltonic inertia ingrained by our scholarly

<sup>11</sup> Dator, 'Cartoon.'

<sup>12</sup> As of this writing, Smith, *Is Milton Better than Shakespeare?*, alone explores the question of presentism directly; Stevens, 'The New Presentism and Its Discontents', problematizes tensions intrinsic to presentism with readings of *Eastward Ho* and *The Tempest*.

<sup>13</sup> Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?*

<sup>14</sup> Kilgour, 'The Pleasure of Milton.'

training. Many of us initially came to Milton because of assigned readings, and although we value his intrinsic aesthetic value we also know that it is reinforced extrinsically by our interpretive community's systems of publications, grants, and conference panels. It strikes me as discordant that a profession—including Miltonists but extending to historically oriented critics at large—so dedicated to liberal anti-authoritarianism can be so conservative about our reading lists, among other things. But it's not easy to create a new system when you are enslaved by another person's, *pace* William Blake.

Critics read and write in the present, informed by both geopolitics and more immediately habits of training and influence, not to mention style. If everyone in your graduate programme is a new historicist, it's difficult to be the lone textual editor. Whether your supervisor is a Spenserian or a Lacanian, they exert a compelling influence on your research. And if a call for papers asks for topics related to gender and sexuality, your paper won't be accepted if it focuses on race or class alone. To state the obvious: critics tend to read texts selected by the circumstances of our training, our exposure, our interests, and any number of other influences; and we write criticism for the circumstances of our reception. That's how literary scholarship operates, and it's why certain schools and habits seem immutable—even natural, as if they were always there. The present volume of essays on Milton's translations and representations does the simultaneous work of reinscribing an author's canonical authority and perceptibly expanding the linguistic and media channels through which it flows.

When I was in graduate school, my mentors' advice for writing grant proposals was to address three intersecting questions: why *this*, why *you*, and why *now*? In other words: why is your topic worth exploring, why are you poised to make novel arguments about it, and why is it timely and resonant? The last question is not about its applicability to presentist socio-political concerns but to recent and forthcoming scholarship on adjacent topics, ideally but not necessarily on the same author. There's an ennobling conceit that humanities scholars make collective, cumulative progress towards greater and greater knowledge of past subjects. We make claims like, 'while recent scholars have unveiled facets of this topic within the works of Author A, its resonance in the works of Author B has been relatively neglected'. This imparts a sense of urgency to the study of this topic in Author B's works, resisting the memorable warning by the US comedian Jerry Seinfeld that 'sometimes the road less travelled is less travelled for a reason.'<sup>15</sup> Naturally it's preferable that critics should read one another's criticism rather than ignore it, but some of our earnest claims of intellectual dependence pretend that we could only make this argument at this urgent moment, or that our peers ought to recognize our contributions as part of a shared enterprise. So every critic is susceptible to the pressures of the moment, to respond to recent interventions by other critics, to read

<sup>15</sup> Seinfeld, *I'm Telling You for the Last Time*.

adjacent or comparable authors. These are the preconditions of our interpretive community, which measures truth and validates ideas.

The dictates of circumstances need not be tyrannical. Consider the circumstances of students in the 2020s reading Milton for the first time. They might buy the assigned edition of *Paradise Lost*, but in my experience they are more likely to download a pirated e-book from a file-sharing website like Library Genesis.<sup>16</sup> This isn't how I was trained to read literature. 'How will you annotate it?' I ask them, betraying my obsolescence. 'At least pirate the scanned PDF of a well-glossed edition,' I implore—revealing my particular methods and values, hand-annotating and trusting editors, particularly those reinforced by my trusted brands of print publication: Norton, Oxford, Penguin. And some of my assumptions remain valid despite searchable texts and databases: a curated set of editorial footnotes are better—faster, even—than a dozen Wikipedia entries, and a hand-curated set of quotations are vastly better raw material for developing arguments than any keyword search. But then, I of course would say that, coming of age in the last generation before technologies of access challenged most forms of intellectual authority, before information subsumed knowledge.

Lest I indulge in more hand-wringing, let me praise the dynamic redistribution of both information and knowledge that our fledgling Miltonists of the 2020s can enjoy thanks to digital reading platforms like *The John Milton Reading Room*. Cordelia Zukerman describes how its hyperlinked editions empower readers to move dynamically through readings of Milton, not just sequentially or episodically (that is, reading texts start to finish, or reading excerpts surrounding keywords), but also more tangentially (reading sources and glosses) and more directly (reading early print editions and manuscripts) than past generations have been able to do.<sup>17</sup> Revealing to readers how and where editions have made editorial choices opens access to 'the evidence that modernising editors often silently consult', Dobranski writes, affirming Leah S. Marcus's aims in her pathbreaking 1996 study *Unediting the Renaissance*.<sup>18</sup> Even if readers are indifferent to that evidence, this transparency of digital critical editions induces 'a new kind of literacy'; their ethos is a 'transfer of power from the producer to the user or reader'.<sup>19</sup> We've come a long way from my battered Merritt Y. Hughes omnibus and once ubiquitous edition of Milton's *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, for better and for worse.

<sup>16</sup> This example is, like my experience at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, thoroughly Western. Islam Issa has written about Milton's primarily electronic forms among readers in the Middle East and North Africa: 'The Online Revolution: Milton and the Internet in the Middle East', in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 181–205.

<sup>17</sup> Cordelia Zukerman, 'The John Milton Reading Room and the Future of Digital Pedagogy', in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 27–45.

<sup>18</sup> Dobranski, 'Editing Milton', 399; cit. Zukerman, 'John Milton Reading Room', 30.

<sup>19</sup> Haugen and Apollon, 'The Digital Turn in Textual Scholarship', 55; cit. Zukerman, 'John Milton Reading Room', 28; Dobranski, 'Editing Milton', 399, cit. Zukerman, 'John Milton Reading Room', 32.



Consider two recent arguments for reading Milton's texts using computational methods, of the kind that have become possible in the first two decades of the twenty-first century—before the upsurge in Artificial Intelligence (AI) potentially transforms these methods further. Elsewhere, I've called the use of machines to augment human readers' capabilities a deliberate effort to de-anthropomorphize literary criticism—by expanding our searches for textual evidence beyond a narrow range of canonical writers.<sup>20</sup> Introducing their 2009 special issue of *Representations* on 'surface reading', Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus advocate methods that obviate 'the selectivity and evaluative energy that have been considered the hallmarks of good criticism', namely the schools of Marxist, psychoanalytic, feminist, and other readings that bypass the surface of texts for their 'symptomatic' features. Best and Marcus speak for the critic who aims 'to correct for her critical subjectivity, by using machines [...] to attain what has almost been taboo in literary studies: objectivity, validity, truth.'<sup>21</sup> Literary criticism addresses the nuances and contexts of words, qualities that are difficult to reduce to the quantifiable data that machines require to process texts.

Both Harvey Quamen and Anupam Basu offer Miltonists a way forward, describing and using computational methods that yield new insights into Milton's textual surfaces. Theirs is not the sort of criticism that generates a word-frequency list of Satan's speeches; like Daniel Shore, Randa El Khatib, and David Currell, they address qualitative features like style and form.<sup>22</sup> 'Can literary style be appreciated computationally?'—Quamen asks this question before addressing three facets of Milton's style: periodic sentences (whose verbal subjects appear at their ends), ablative absolutes (wherein nouns are verbs), and the grammatical sentence diagrams of Thomas N. Corns.<sup>23</sup> Quamen is forthright about the limited abilities of standard computational-linguistic tools to handle Milton's poetic and historical language use: parts-of-speech taggers—which are typically trained on more prosaic, modern language—are 'brittle and naïve', and sentence-diagram tree parsers are far less capable than Corns's manual diagrams.<sup>24</sup> For machines to generate insights that inform our critical work, they must better recognize the contexts and nuances of textual data—and move beyond normative frequencies to exceptions, departures, and adaptations.

Basu similarly addresses the flattening of nuances that machines require to process texts as data. By that he means 'the nuances of textual form and layout', the 'seemingly ephemeral details' that human readers notice: 'Is [the text] black letter or italic? Does it have a lot of marginal commentary? Are its lines in prose or verse?

<sup>20</sup> Ullyot, 'Fieldwork in the Sonnet'; on 'augmented criticism' see Ullyot, 'The Way We Read Now'.

<sup>21</sup> Best and Marcus, 'Surface Reading', 17.

<sup>22</sup> Shore, *Cyberformalism*, esp. chapter 6 (154–89); Randa El Khatib and David Currell, 'Mapping the Moralized Geography of *Paradise Lost*', in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 129–52.

<sup>23</sup> Quamen, 'Stylometry without Words', 113; Corns's diagrams appear in *Milton's Language*.

<sup>24</sup> Quamen, 'Stylometry without Words', 148.

Does it have woodcuts?’ Basu’s range exceeds Quamen’s; he addresses some 70,000 texts in the Early English Books Online—Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP) corpus. Although text encodings can be inconsistent in this corpus, for the most part its texts’ formal features like ‘woodcuts, or marginal notes, or scene markings’ are tagged consistently. So Basu compares set texts to every other text in the corpus purely on formal grounds, ‘throwing away all of the text and retaining only information about format.’<sup>25</sup> His results are compelling. Texts that we would generically associate together share formal tags so that, for instance, Thomas Middleton’s *Michaelmas Term* resembles roughly contemporaneous comedies: Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, George Chapman’s *Humorous Day’s Mirth*, and John Day’s *Isle of Gulls*. Basu’s two Miltonic set texts reveal the verifiable, objective truth—to renew Best and Marcus’s terms—that the textual formats of early printed books correspond to their generic classifications. *Areopagitica* (1644) formally resembles other pamphlets of polemical prose; whereas the 1671 volume conjoining the poetic form of *Paradise Regained* to the dramatic form of *Samson Agonistes* yields more confused results, ‘pointing to the expansiveness (or non-conformity) of Milton’s form.’<sup>26</sup> By engaging with textual form at scale, Basu’s work moves critics from intuitive approximations and heuristics to more objective claims.

The literary critic’s task is Wordsworthian, half seeing and half creating knowledge. Seeing features in a text, or in a cluster of texts, is first a matter of recognition: of noticing what is there, what lacks and needs interpretive synthesis and description. Creating knowledge about the text(s) is then a matter of rhetoric: of making a logical argument from the trustworthy marshalling of resourceful evidence. We read Milton in the 2020s for both timeless and localized reasons: because his texts continually encourage our interpretive work, and because the work of Milton criticism breaches new borders and broaches new media as it shifts with new methodologies.<sup>27</sup> Criticism about historical texts is inevitably both historicist and presentist. Its arguments concern past word choices and usage, steeped in their contemporaneity whether or not they recognize it. This is how future digital editions, their words crosslinked not only to resources like the *Oxford English Dictionary* or the *Oxford Historical Thesaurus* but also to contemporaneous usage in EEBO-TCP texts, will finally outshine anything in print. Yet even the most assiduously archival criticism—a diplomatic transcription of a manuscript, say, with a high-resolution image of the same—is steeped in presentist interests, agendas, forms, and media. There is ‘no historicism,’ writes Hugh Grady in a critical survey of Shakespeare scholarship, ‘without a latent presentism.’<sup>28</sup> Criticism gets

<sup>25</sup> Anupam Basu, ‘Form and Computation: A Case Study’, 120, 121, in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 111–28.

<sup>26</sup> Basu, ‘Form and Computation’, 124.

<sup>27</sup> Cunningham and Quamen argue that ‘Milton studies [...] traces the history of literary criticism’ (‘Introduction’, 13).

<sup>28</sup> Grady, ‘Shakespeare Studies, 2005’, 115.

published and read because present critics and archivists produce it for present audiences. Its very existence evinces that arguments for its worth and favourable reception have prevailed.

My initial question of why Milton holds critics' attention in the 2020s implicates the question of how we read him, because of our rhetorical motivations. We read him to write our own arguments about him. Criticism's presentist quality, its implication in the interpretive community of its moment, militates against the objectivity that Best and Marcus attribute to computation. Machines are nimble recognizers, particularly of features that human critics fail to notice; they are exquisite confirmers and deniers, particularly of our vague intuitions and hypotheses. But for now at least, they are hapless rhetoricians. The best answer to why we still read Milton today is that we long to make new interventions in longstanding arguments.

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## Milton in the Age of Twitter

### Carey's *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*

Peter C. Herman

How do you make John Milton's *Paradise Lost* accessible to a generation of students for whom a tweet is too long? How do you get students accustomed to reading 280 characters—and we are talking only about students, not the mythical general reader—to read a very long, dense poem filled with allusions and references that may have been legible in the seventeenth century but are now opaque?<sup>1</sup> That previous sentence stands at 275 characters, by the way. Very few today grow up reading such influential works as Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Many have only the slightest acquaintance with either the Hebrew Bible or the Gospels. In my twenty-six years of teaching at a selective, large US public university, I have regularly encountered US students who have never heard of the story of the Fall; I do not mean they haven't read the biblical Book of Genesis, I mean they have *never heard* of it. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton integrated and revitalized these and many other ancient texts for English-reading audiences. But Milton relied on his readers' previous knowledge of these texts. That's now gone, and *Paradise Lost* seems on the way out as well. Even though Milton's epic is a masterpiece on the order of Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and the Sistine Chapel, [n]ow almost no one reads it, as John Carey says in his introduction to *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'* (2017).<sup>2</sup>

Carey blames the poem's length for its neglect. *Paradise Lost* is too long for contemporary readers: 'Its twelve books total over 11,500 lines. Embarking on that seems a formidable undertaking, particularly at a time when narrative poems are not part of our habitual reading'.<sup>3</sup> This might also explain why there are twelve Twitter accounts that post *Paradise Lost* one line at a time, 'in perpetuity', as the

<sup>1</sup> For a revised version of *Paradise Lost* also intended to invite general audiences, see Milton and Danielson, '*Paradise Lost*, *Parallel Prose Version*'. For a discussion of that version, see Sherry, 'Lost and Regained in Translation'.

<sup>2</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 1. The 12-book *Paradise Lost* (1674) has 10,565 verse-lines, so Carey is likely counting the Arguments, or summaries, that precede each chapter and rounding up. The Arguments too have been dropped from *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*.

account bios put it.<sup>4</sup> But it's not just narrative poems that have fallen out of favour. So has habitual reading. A 2020 study from the Pew Research Center has shown that fewer and fewer children pick up a book for fun, and the 2018 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement reveals that it is harder and harder to get students to finish the required reading.<sup>5</sup> As an article in *Inside Higher Ed* puts it, 'the kind of sustained engagement with lengthy and demanding texts that was identified with reading from the late 18th century onward has declined.'<sup>6</sup> The suggested reasons are legion, ranging from poor elementary education to demands for relevance to the shrinking attention span caused by our addiction to mobile devices and the web.

The National Council for Teachers of English has responded by issuing a position paper proclaiming '[t]he time has come to decenter book reading and essay writing as the pinnacles of English language arts education' because reading text of any sort has been replaced by selfies, memes, and GIFs.<sup>7</sup> Carey has responded by producing a shortened version of *Paradise Lost*, about one-third of the epic's original length. He assures critical readers who presumably have read the entirety of *Paradise Lost* that he has been at pains 'to preserve those passages that seem to me pre-eminent, not only for their poetic power, but also for their contribution to the poem's intellectual structure.'<sup>8</sup> To paraphrase Milton's contemporary Andrew Marvell, Carey is suggesting that he has 'not missed one thought that could be fit', while omitting all that was too long, too tedious, or just plain boring.<sup>9</sup> Carey, however, in no way intends *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'* to replace the original. His hope 'is that the obvious greatness of what I have selected will lure readers back to encounter the poem in its full epic stature.'<sup>10</sup>

Carey's shortened version of *Paradise Lost* straddles the line between adaptation and translation. While Carey does not recast the verse-lines of *Paradise Lost* into an entirely new medium (for example, stained glass), or a different language (say, Faroese), or a new form (like a graphic novel), he aims to translate Milton's epic to make the poem accessible to today's students, and not only those Carey has had the privilege of teaching at Oxford for 'several decades'. Carey wants to 'arouse the eager interest of students' everywhere.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, Carey modernizes the

<sup>4</sup> For the consequences of *Paradise Lost* being tweeted line-by-line, see Currell, 'Apt Numbers', 88–94.

<sup>5</sup> Schaeffer, 'Among Many U.S. Children, Reading for Fun'; Johnson, 'The Fall, and Rise, of Reading'.

<sup>6</sup> Mintz, 'Is Literacy Declining?'.

<sup>7</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, 'Media Education in English Language Arts'.

<sup>8</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Marvell, l. 27, 'On Mr. Milton's *Paradise Lost*', in Milton, *Complete Poetry*, eds. Kerrigan, Rumrich, and Fallon, 288.

<sup>10</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 2. For examples and discussions of adaptations and translations, see especially Kilpatrick and Mattson-Bozé, *Henry Lee Willet and McCartney Library's 'Paradise Lost' Windows*; Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*; Auladell, *John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'*. See also the following chapters in the present volume: Turið Sigurðardóttir's 'On the Faroese Reworking of *Paradise Lost*', Beverley Sherry's '*Paradise Lost* in Stained Glass', and

spelling, and most importantly, drastically edits Milton's epic. He moves the poem from exciting bit to exciting bit, leaving out the lengthy passages that, in his view, do not contribute to the plot. Carey also adds short explanatory passages summarizing what he has left out and, often, directing readers' interpretations.

### Adapting Shakespeare for Younger Audiences

Carey's assumptions parallel those in the much more numerous adaptations of William Shakespeare for youth. One assumption is that younger readers are incapable of understanding the complexities of Shakespeare's language, plot, and themes; yet, if we give them a taste, if we give them the stories, they will want to read the original later in life, when, presumably, they are mature enough to understand the full richness of Shakespeare's plays. Editing decisions, however, are neither random nor neutral. As Laura Tosi puts it, adapting Shakespeare for children usually involves 'ideological reorientations of the plays', and in the case of *King Lear*, that means removing 'the play's ambiguities regarding attitudes to paternal authority and filial duty, constructions of femininity, and political rule'.<sup>12</sup> Often, what gets elided are the parts that trouble conservative interpretations.

Take for example these three children's versions of *Romeo and Juliet* from roughly the past two centuries, as they put into stark relief some of the same dynamics at work in Carey's *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*: the siblings Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* (first published 1807; rpt. 1918); Leon Garfield's *Shakespeare Stories* (1985), and the British Council's animated, 207-second web video (2021).<sup>13</sup> While each makes very different assumptions about the relative sophistication of their readers, or viewers in the video's case, all three eliminate the most troubling parts of Shakespeare's play. These redound on cultural practices of gender and class.

First, Juliet's age. In the original, Shakespeare has Old Capulet, the Nurse, and Lady Capulet allude to Juliet's precise age—not quite fourteen—no fewer than five times, and, in one passage, four times within the space of five lines, so it's fair to say it is a notable detail. Child marriage, despite what my students are continuously told, was nearly unheard of in Shakespeare's time: the average age for marriage in the period 1550–99 was for women twenty-five years old, increasing to twenty-six 'in the following half-century', and the aristocracy married in their late teens or early twenties.<sup>14</sup> Shakespeare's sources also peg Juliet's age as either eighteen or

Jan F. van Dijkhuizen and Lucy McGourty's 'Narrative Structure, Intervisuality, and Theology in Auladell's *El Paraíso perdido*'.

<sup>12</sup> Tosi, 'King Lear for Children', 247, 249.

<sup>13</sup> Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*; Garfield, *Shakespeare Stories*; British Council, 'Romeo and Juliet'. The British Council is a public corporation sponsored by the UK's Foreign Office, equivalent to the United States Department of State.

<sup>14</sup> Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth*, 40–1.

sixteen, the latter being the earliest age at which marriage could be discussed.<sup>15</sup> The reason for lowering Juliet's age, as I have argued elsewhere, is to depict Verona as a world out of joint, a world where everything is rushed, a world where parental, religious, and secular authority fail the young, and the result, as Father Capulet says, is disaster.<sup>16</sup> Old Capulet similarly opines 'Too soon marred are those so early made.'<sup>17</sup> Both Chris Fitter and I have connected this theme to the Crisis of the 1590s, but however one chooses to interpret this matter, Juliet's age is crucial to understanding this play.<sup>18</sup>

And yet, all three children's versions edit out Juliet's age. The Lambs refer to Juliet as merely 'young', and both Garfield and the British Council video do not specify Juliet's age.<sup>19</sup> All three also leave out as pointedly inessential Old Capulet's telling Paris that Juliet is far too young for marriage: 'She hath not seen the change of fourteen years. | Let two more summers wither in their pride | Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride', Paris's shocking response of 'Younger than she are happy mothers made', and Lady Capulet's confirmation of Paris's shocking response, 'Younger than you [Juliet] | Here in Verona, ladies of esteem, | Are made already mothers.'<sup>20</sup> Substituting Shakespeare's specificity with the vague 'young' or not mentioning Juliet's age at all avoids the discussions that the original raises surrounding the normalcy of child marriage in Verona.

Another example: Romeo's buying poison from an impoverished apothecary. The Lambs exhibit a certain class bias in their relatively detailed version of this scene:

he [Romeo] called to mind a poor apothecary, whose shop in Mantua he had lately passed, and from the beggarly appearance of the man, who seemed famished, and the wretched show in his show of empty boxes ranged on dirty shelves, and other tokens of extreme wretchedness, he had said at the time (perhaps having some misgivings that his own disastrous life might haply meet with a conclusion so desperate):

'If a man were to need poison, which by the law of Mantua it is death to sell, here lives a poor wretch who would sell it to him.'

These words of his now came into his mind, and he sought out the apothecary, who after some pretended scruples, Romeo offering him gold, which his poverty could not resist, sold him a poison.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Shakespeare, *Norton Shakespeare*, 958; Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth*, 41.

<sup>16</sup> Herman, 'Tragedy and the Crisis', 99–100.

<sup>17</sup> Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 1.2.13.

<sup>18</sup> Fitter, *Radical Shakespeare*, 144–73; Herman, 'Tragedy and Crisis', 99–100.

<sup>19</sup> Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, 283.

<sup>20</sup> Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 1.3.9–11, 1.3.12, 1.3.71–3.

<sup>21</sup> Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, 299.



Garfield reduces this scene to one sentence: '[h]e went to buy strong poison from an apothecary, and set off for Verona and Juliet's tomb.'<sup>22</sup> The British Council video reduces the scene even further: 'Romeo is so upset he buys some poison and goes to see Juliet.'<sup>23</sup>

For both Garfield and the British Council, what's crucial is that Romeo buys poison; *how* and *from whom* Romeo buys the poison is far less important. The Lambs give more detail. Their version draws attention away from Romeo and puts all the blame on the seedy apothecary. All three leave out Romeo's using his wealth and his privilege to entice the Apothecary into doing something he knows is a capital crime:<sup>24</sup>

- ROMEO     Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.  
               Hold, there is forty ducats. Let me have  
               A dram of poison [ . . . ]
- APOTHECARY    Such mortal drugs I have, but Mantua's law  
                      Is Death to any he that utters them.
- ROMEO     Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,  
               And fearest to die? Famine is in thy cheeks;  
               Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes;  
               Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back.  
               The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law;  
               The world affords no law to make thee rich;  
               Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.
- APOTHECARY    My poverty but not my will consents.
- ROMEO     I pay thy poverty but not thy will.<sup>25</sup>

There is a lot to unpack in this passage, and Romeo does not come off very well. The passage reveals the deep class inequities in Verona and Romeo's willingness to make use of them so he can get what he wants, which troubles any simple understanding of him as a tragic hero. But for all these reasons, the Lambs's, Garfield's, and the Council's versions of *Romeo and Juliet* judge all these complications as inessential.

Finally, the ending. This proves that the adaptations are based not only on what might be deemed essential, but on the provision of a clear moral. Garfield reduces it to 'The fathers—old Capulet and Montague—were grief-stricken by the tragic deaths of their children, and ashamed that their old hate had brought it about. They vowed eternal friendship to one another. . . .'<sup>26</sup> The Council's version is even

<sup>22</sup> Garfield, *Shakespeare's Stories*, 220.

<sup>23</sup> British Council, 'Romeo and Juliet', 2:43.

<sup>24</sup> Fitter, *Radical Shakespeare*, 163–4.

<sup>25</sup> Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 5.1.59–76.

<sup>26</sup> Garfield, *Shakespeare's Stories*, 222.

simpler: 'Romeo and Juliet are both dead. Friar Lawrence tells the Capulets and Montagues what happened. They are so sad they agree not to fight any more'. The moral of the story is that fighting is bad, and at least one child who posted a response understood that message: 'Very, very, very sad story [. . .] but it's good that the two families agree not to fight any more.'<sup>27</sup> The ending of Shakespeare's original, though, is much more troubling. The Capulets and the Montagues do not so much 'agree not to fight any more' as to continue the feud by other means, each trying to outdo the other with the opulence of their statues.

Some might argue that these details are inappropriate for young minds who need simple lessons, not irresolvable complexities and historical analogies. My point with this case study of sorts is that when you start deciding between essential and inessential, there usually are underlying assumptions governing your choices. The primary goal of the Lambs, Garfield, and British Council versions of *Romeo and Juliet*, different as each adaptation may be, is to present the play's conflicts as simply as possible and to eliminate anything that might cause young audiences to look a little sceptically at the authority figures in their lives.

### Carey's Adaptation of *Paradise Lost* and the New Milton Criticism

Although not aimed specifically at children, Carey's mission is the same as Shakespeare's adaptors for children: he wants to create a scaled down version of Milton's poem suitable for readers not (yet) capable of reading the original. Not surprisingly, we find the same kinds of thematic and ideological undertows governing what gets included or excluded, and that is where the New Milton Criticism helps.

For centuries, most of Milton's readers assumed that Milton is a poet of certainty, and that the critic's task is to impose certainty on Milton's poetry.<sup>28</sup> If that means changing the text, then so be it. This has happened since the days of 'Richard Bentley, an irascible classical scholar': in his edition of *Paradise Lost* (1732), he 'invented a wicked publisher/editor/compositor who [. . .] got the text all wrong'. As Roy Flannagan notes: 'It was Bentley's self-appointed mission to get rid of lines or even lengthy passages that he did not like, and change others according to the neoclassical standards of his own era.'<sup>29</sup> The practice persists, often in subtler ways. Regarding some of the last lines spoken by the titular character of Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, 'This day will be remarkable in my life | By some great act, or of my days

<sup>27</sup> British Council, 'Romeo and Juliet'.

<sup>28</sup> For a summary of New Milton Criticism, see Herman, *Destabilizing Milton*, 1–24; and Herman and Sauer, 'Introduction'. For the dominant mode in Milton criticism that ensures the orthodoxy and certainty of *Paradise Lost*, see Clement, 'The Excess of Glory Obscured', 194; and Held, 'Constructing Miltonic Interiority', 96.

<sup>29</sup> Flannagan, 'More than Three Hundred Years of Criticism', 46. See also Herman, *Destabilizing Milton*, 12–14.

the last' (SA 1388–9), one critic writes—with the tacit agreement of the university press's editors and peer reviewers—that '[t]he reader knows to convert the "or" to "and" in this famous passage'.<sup>30</sup>

The New Milton Criticism, conversely, accepts that incertitude is a constituent element of Milton's work, and that it needs to be explained, not explained away. With this approach in mind, it becomes clear that many of the passages Carey drops counter the notion of Milton as a poet of certainty. Carey also voices his belief that *Paradise Lost* is a poem divided against itself. On the one hand, 'there is an official poem, articulating ideas that are endorsed by Milton's conscious intention'; on the other hand, 'there is an unofficial poem, releasing disruptive meanings that Milton would not have consciously endorsed'.<sup>31</sup> Carey eliminates many passages so that today's readers receive only the 'official poem'. Consequently, Carey's project runs parallel to C. S. Lewis's stated purpose for *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'*: '[i]t is my hope that this short analysis will prevent the reader from ever raising certain questions which have, in my opinion, led critics into blind alleys'.<sup>32</sup> Carey similarly prevents readers from raising questions by trimming away troublesome passages in the name of brevity. Carey also employs another strategy used in children's versions of Shakespeare: the assertive summary. As Tosi points out, children's versions of Shakespeare usually introduce '[a]n omniscient narrator [...] who generally simplifies complex issues and intrudes with comments and interpretations'.<sup>33</sup> Carey does the same, and these summary passages also steer readers towards the official poem rather than acknowledging the unofficial meanings.

First, Milton's epic similes regularly go in unexpected directions, or, as Zachary Pearce put it in 1732, they wander into 'unresembling circumstances'.<sup>34</sup> For example, the comparison of Satan to two titans, Briareos and Typhon, then to a sea-beast that a sailor mistakes for an island (*PL* 1.195–208).<sup>35</sup> Following that, Milton compares Satan's rousing the fallen angels to Moses calling up a horde of locusts (*PL* 1.337–46). Milton concludes book 4 by comparing Satan surrounded by the angel Gabriel's 'angelic squadron' to a field of wheat 'ripe for harvest' (*PL* 4.977–85). Carey does not erase all of Milton's similes (he keeps the reference to Vallombrosa [*PL* 1.299–304]), but he skips these three, and it is not hard to see why, since each leads readers into the unofficial realms of the poem.

<sup>30</sup> DuRocher and Thickstun, *Milton's Rival Hermeneutics*, 14. On the Miltonic 'Or', see also Herman, *Destabilizing Milton*, 43–60. This and all quotations of *Samson Agonistes* are from Milton, *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, eds. Kerrigan, Rumrich, and Fallon, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>31</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'*, 70.

<sup>33</sup> Tosi, 'King Lear for Children', 246.

<sup>34</sup> Pearce, *Review*, sig. F2r-v.

<sup>35</sup> This and all quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Fowler, and cited parenthetically in the text.

The reference to Typhon is clear in that all commentators, ancient and early modern, agree that he is evil.<sup>36</sup> That of Briareos, however, splits into two competing traditions. The one originating in Virgil depicts Briareos as evil. As such, the comparison seems to be apt, or, in Carey's terms, 'official'. But the counter-tradition, originating in Homer and repeated by the enormously influential mythographer, Natalis Conti, depicts Briareos as Zeus's ally against the rebelling titans. So one tradition has Briareos as a good guy, the other, a bad guy. As George Butler puts it, the Janus-faced heritage of Briareos 'less clearly supports Satan's perfidious nature.'<sup>37</sup> One might think that Milton would be relying on the Briareos as evil tradition, except that Milton used Conti extensively in his work.<sup>38</sup> Milton thus creates a puzzle and withholds the answer. Carey's deletion results in certainty, and more to the point, implies that incertitude would only confuse readers, just as including Romeo's abysmal treatment of the Apothecary would only confuse children.

Carey also eliminates the Norwegian Pilot simile, which Milton's epic narrator offers as an alternative immediately following the Briareos-Typhon simile:

or that sea-beast  
 Leviathan, which God of all his works  
 Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:  
 Him haply slumbering on the Norway foam  
 The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,  
 Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,  
 With fixed anchor in his scaly rind  
 Moors by his side under the lea, while night  
 Invests the sea, and wished morn delays [...]  
(PL 1.200–8)

Many critics interpret this simile as an illustration of Satan's deceptiveness, assuming that the leviathan dives, taking the sailor with it.<sup>39</sup> Bryan Hampton, for instance, reads this passage as an exemplum of misreading: 'just as the undisciplined sailor of the skiff incorrectly "reads" the "text" of the physical landscape before him, Milton's undisciplined man who has not properly cultivated virtue will be unable to read correctly the ecclesial and political "texts" before him.'<sup>40</sup> This simile, however, does not provide an unequivocal reading that tells readers what to think. The leviathan, we need to remember, is 'slumbering', so there is no question of the beast actively trying to deceive the sailor. Plus, Milton deliberately leaves

<sup>36</sup> Herman, *Destabilizing*, 27–31.

<sup>37</sup> Butler, 'Milton's Briareos', 330.

<sup>38</sup> Herman, *Destabilizing*, 29–31; Butler, 'Milton's Briareos', 331.

<sup>39</sup> Herman, *Destabilizing*, 49–50.

<sup>40</sup> Hampton, 'Milton's Parable', 86. See Fowler's note on this passage in Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Fowler, 1.200n.

the ending suspended. We do not know whether it dives, drowning the sailor, or the sailor sails off, back to Norway and none the wiser. The simile, in sum, generates exactly the incertitude that Carey places in the 'unofficial' category: it releases a disruptive meaning that Carey assumes 'Milton would not have consciously endorsed'.<sup>41</sup> Yet given the care Milton lavished on this poem, how he went over and over each line, each phrase, paying close attention to spelling and punctuation despite his blindness, it is simply implausible that Milton would not have noticed that he somehow skipped the ending of this simile—or that the suspension isn't entirely deliberate on his part, especially after he revised the 10-book epic of 1667 into the 12-book version of 1674.<sup>42</sup>

One more key example. Towards the ending of book 4, Satan finds himself surrounded in the Garden of Eden:<sup>43</sup>

the angelic squadron bright  
 Turned fiery red, sharpening in mooned horns  
 Their phalanx, and began to hem him round  
 With ported spears, as thick as when a field  
 Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends  
 Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind  
 Sways them; the careful ploughman doubting stands  
 Lest on the threshing floor his hopeful sheaves  
 Prove chaff.

(PL 4.977–85)

This simile provides a textbook example of wandering into 'unresembling circumstances'. First, comparing the angelic spears to wheat swaying in the wind may sound lovely, but the image implies that it is *the angels*, not Satan, who are about to be sliced and harvested. The image thus implies angelic defeat and Satan's victory. Next, Milton compounds the incertitude by once more refusing the expected closure. The 'ploughman doubting stands' in a state of incertitude about the extent and utility of the growth. As with the Pilot simile, Milton leaves readers hanging. Carey excises the simile for inexperienced readers, leaving it on the threshing room floor.

Carey, however, does more than simply erase lines that trouble the 'official' reading. Again, following the procedures adopted by adaptors of Shakespeare for children, he replaces the 'unofficial' passages with prose summaries that simplify

<sup>41</sup> Alistair Fowler's gloss on the simile reflects its complexity.

<sup>42</sup> For Milton's scrupulousness in creating the epic, see the reports of Milton's nephew Edward Phillips and Jonathan Richardson in Darbishire, *Early Lives*, 73, 291. For Milton's close attention to spelling, see McNabb and McQuade, 'A Reexamination of the Spelling Revisions in the *Paradise Lost* Book I Manuscript'.

<sup>43</sup> Herman, *Destabilizing*, 50.

the meaning, erase the ambiguities, and direct readers towards the 'official' interpretation; or, as Lewis might put it, prevent readers from asking 'certain' questions. For example, Carey summarizes the 'ported spears' simile thus: '*It looks as if there will be a fight*'.<sup>44</sup> This is very reminiscent of the British Council children's version of *Romeo and Juliet* replacing Romeo's encounter with the Apothecary with 'Romeo is so upset he buys some poison' or Garfield's slightly fuller version, '[h]e went to buy strong poison from an apothecary'.<sup>45</sup>

Carey follows the same pattern in his treatment of an extraordinarily important passage in *Paradise Lost*: Satan's meeting Sin and Death at the Gates of Hell. Carey excises an unusually large number of lines, jumping from 2.643, when Satan glimpses the Gates, to 2.910, when Satan has exited Hell and is passing through Chaos. He leaves out Satan's meeting Sin, her intervening in the potential battle between Satan and her son Death, and Sin's narrative of her origins, incest with Satan then with Death, including her discussion of the key that will open the Gates of Hell.

Carey's summary flattens the complexities this passage generates. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes the Gates in terms that make it seem as if absolutely nothing could slip by them:

at last appear  
Hell bounds high reaching to the horrid roof,  
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,  
Three iron, three of adamant rock,  
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,  
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat  
On either side a formidable shape [Sin and Death . . .].  
(PL 2.643–9)

Carey reduces this terrifying description to the phrase '*At the gates out of hell, Satan meets two allegorical beings, Sin and Death*'.<sup>46</sup> He omits the detailed description of the Gates emphasizing their impenetrability. But Milton's elaborate and careful list of all the precautions taken to keep Satan in Hell is essential for grasping one of the most crucial moments in *Paradise Lost*. It seems that God has done everything possible to imprison Satan. But then, we find out something that has no biblical warrant or analogue: God created a key and gave the key to Sin, who tells Satan she has zero intention of following God's commands:

The key of this infernal pit by due,  
And by command of heaven's all-powerful king

<sup>44</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 92.

<sup>45</sup> Garfield, *Shakespeare's Stories*, 220.

<sup>46</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 55.

I keep, by him forbidden to unlock  
 These adamantine gates; against all force  
 Death ready stands to interpose his dart,  
 Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.  
 But what owe I to his commands above  
 Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down  
 Into this gloom of Tartarus profound [?]  
 (PL2.850–8)

For twelve more lines, Sin provides more details; then for nineteen more lines the narrator describes the unlocking and opening of the Gates. Carey's reduction: '*Satan explains that his mission, if successful, will benefit them [Sin and Death] because they will be able to leave hell and find prey in the new world God has created. They are both gleeful at the prospect, and Sin, who has been entrusted by God with the key to hell, unlocks the gate.*'<sup>47</sup> Two key factors that Carey's summary leaves out and which complicate, to put it mildly, any simple understanding of *Paradise Lost* deserve attention. First, by leaving out the initial description of the Gates, Carey leaves it to readers to figure out what they look like, what they are made of, how they work. Maybe they are stupendous, maybe a white picket fence. Further, Carey forestalls readers from asking this question: what is the point of all these barriers if God created a key and then gave the key to a being who hates him and has every reason to disobey his command? Milton's text renders this disruptive question unavoidable. By dropping these lines, Carey impoverishes Milton's epic.

Carey also deliberately simplifies Milton's description of Sin and her progeny. After Sin pops out of Satan's head, they have sex, as she explains: 'such joy thou took'st | With me in secret, that my womb conceived | A growing burden' (PL 2.765–7). After God hurls Sin along with the other rebel angels into Hell, her troubles increase, as she describes in a passage that deserves long quotation:

Pensive here I sat  
 Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb  
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown  
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.  
 At last this odious offspring whom thou seest  
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way  
 Tore through my entrails, that with fear and pain  
 Distorted, all my neither shape thus grew  
 Transformed [. . .]  
 (PL 2.777–85)

<sup>47</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 56.

Sin names her progeny 'Death' and tries to flee,

but he pursued (though more, it seems,  
Inflamed with lust than rage) and swifter far,  
Me overtook his mother all dismayed,  
And in embraces forcible and foul  
Ingendering with me, of that rape begot  
These yelling monsters that with ceaseless cry  
Surround me, as thou sawst, hourly conceived  
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite  
To me, for when they list into the womb  
That bred them they return, and howl and gnaw  
My bowels, their repast; then bursting forth  
Afresh with conscious terrors vex me round,  
That rest or intermission none I find.

(PL 2.790–802)

Milton's descriptions of childbirth, as Louis Schwartz has pointed out, are not fictive or the product of a lurid imagination. Instead, Milton 'drew on contemporary obstetric experience and practice'.<sup>48</sup> Sin's description of 'Death's tearing through his mother's entrails, effecting his own birth and leaving her terribly disfigured, strikingly parallels descriptions of birth typically found in seventeenth-century medical literature'.<sup>49</sup> For example, the infant, writes Ambroise Paré, needing more food, 'with great labour and striving endeavoreth to get forth: therefore then hee is moved with a stronger violence, and doth breake the membranes wherein he is contained [. . .] and so commeth into the world, with great pain doth unto it selfe and also unto the mother'.<sup>50</sup> In a reversal of expectations reminiscent of Shakespeare's shading audiences' responses to Romeo through his treatment of the Apothecary, Milton invites readers—especially women readers—to identify and sympathize with Sin by having her endure a difficult childbirth.

Then there's the gruesome matter of Sin's rape by her son Death. Alexander Myers accurately describes this passage as 'arguably one of the most memorable scenes of sexual violence in all of English literature, due primarily to the intensely emotional rendering of the female character, whose agony Milton by no means downplays'.<sup>51</sup> It is hardly possible, I think, to read this passage and not empathize with her. Sin is not just an abstract, allegorical figure, she is a woman character subject to horrific sexual violence, and even worse, sexual violence committed by her progeny. Milton, in other words, takes a figure his readers are primed to reject and

<sup>48</sup> Schwartz, *Milton and Maternal Mortality*, 212.

<sup>49</sup> Schwartz, *Milton and Maternal Mortality*, 214.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Schwartz, *Milton and Maternal Mortality*, 215.

<sup>51</sup> Myers, 'Viewing Milton's Sin', 11.



transforms her into a victim whose pain readers can neither ignore nor dismiss. This destabilizing of expectations is of a piece with Milton turning Satan into a republican and God into a tyrant.<sup>52</sup>

And that is exactly what *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'* prevents from surfacing. Further, Carey not only eliminates this passage but also warns readers against even thinking that Milton might have written something even slightly unorthodox: 'There has been a lot of critical dispute about why Milton included this gruesome parody of motherhood and childbirth in his poem. None of the suggestions seems convincing'.<sup>53</sup> Except, as Schwartz has shown, the description of childbirth is not so much a 'parody' as frighteningly familiar, and Carey refuses to even acknowledge how Milton goes out of his way to enlist readers' sympathies for Sin as a raped woman.<sup>54</sup>

In the preface to *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, Carey indicates that he has retained 'those passages that seem to me pre-eminent, not only for their poetic power, but also for their contributions to the poem's intellectual structure'. My aim has been to demonstrate that Carey's decisions on what to keep and what to jettison are not guided by exclusively aesthetic directives: he also 'excises the passages betraying the "unofficial poem", the ones "releasing disruptive meanings"'. In short, Carey replaces incertitude with certitude.

I confess that I was surprised by Carey's decision to jettison so many disruptive portions of *Paradise Lost*. In his memoir, *The Unexpected Professor*, Carey says that reading scads of Milton criticism for his edition of Milton's shorter poems in the Longman Annotated English Poets series left him in near despair: 'Reading academic Milton criticism en masse over the course of several months gave me a vivid idea of how awful most it was—ill-written, obscure, trivial, full of misplaced erudition and calculated to repel any sensible ordinary reader'.<sup>55</sup> Carey also expresses his admiration for Milton's depiction of Satan: 'the grandeur of his hatred made him talk like the hero of a tragedy Shakespeare never got round to writing'.<sup>56</sup> And Carey showed that he was perfectly willing to entertain disruptive views of Milton when, in a review of Stanley Fish's *How Milton Works*, he noted the parallels between Milton's Samson and the 9/11 hijackers.<sup>57</sup> But Carey bars the disruptive Milton from *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*. While he may not like the style of academic Milton criticism, he is as much an adherent of the dominant paradigm of Miltonic certainty as those he has critiqued. For example, in the 'Afterword', Carey

<sup>52</sup> On Satan's politics and his treatment of God; see Herman, *Destabilizing*, 83–126; Bryson, *Tyranny*; Empson, *Milton's God*; and Worden, 'Milton's Republicanism'.

<sup>53</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 56. Carey does not specify the critics he has in mind.

<sup>54</sup> On rape and Milton's *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, see Marcus, 'The Milieu of Milton's *Comus*'.

<sup>55</sup> Carey, *Unexpected*, 205.

<sup>56</sup> Carey, *Unexpected*, 111.

<sup>57</sup> Carey, 'A Work in Praise of Terrorism', 15.

writes: 'What is required of a Christian, Milton believed, is unquestioning trust in God.'<sup>58</sup> This is exactly what Fish argues in *How Milton Works*: 'In Milton's world, however, there are no moral ambiguities, because there are no equally compelling values. There is only one value—the value of obedience—and not only is it a mistake to grant independence to values other than the value of obedience, it is a temptation.'<sup>59</sup>

What ultimately are we to do with *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'* and other reduced versions of major works? Clearly, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'* has found supporters. The online reviews by non-specialist readers on both Amazon and Goodreads are highly enthusiastic. Even a more specialist journal review notes that the jump in book 1 from line 350 to 550 provides '[a]n almost cinematic transition which smash-cuts from the hero shot to a long shot of serried ranks advancing'.<sup>60</sup> So it would be foolish to dismiss out of hand Carey's edition, especially since some teachers use anthologies, such as the *Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, that cover only select books of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>61</sup> A much reduced *Paradise Lost* might well entice the uninitiated into embarking on the entirety of Milton's epic. But it is just as likely that they will not reader further, and so, they will have a mistaken idea as to what's in *Paradise Lost*.

The answer, which I recognize some might find unconvincing or a stubborn refusal to admit the world has changed, is to lead students through the poem slowly, carefully, and patiently.<sup>62</sup> When I teach *Paradise Lost*, we read two books a week, sometimes, one book a week, especially books 5 and 9. I remember once hearing about a distinguished Miltonist whose syllabus consisted of one sentence: 'We will read *Paradise Lost*, spending as long as necessary with each book.' Despite the emphasis on shorter and faster, on moving at the speed of business, some things simply cannot be rushed. They take time, and they require significant effort. There are no shortcuts to mastering a musical instrument. There are no shortcuts to properly cooking a brisket or molé. And to appreciate the full depth and range of *Paradise Lost*, in the Age of Twitter as in every age, you need to read the whole poem. Carey's edition reminds us of the costs of adapting Milton or Shakespeare to an audience deemed incapable of receiving the original. Just as the young readers who think that Romeo is an untarnished hero and it was normal in the Renaissance to get married before the age of fourteen are always shocked when they confront the play Shakespeare actually wrote, readers who base their assumptions about *Paradise Lost* on Carey's edition will be in for quite a surprise when (or if) they look at the original poem.

<sup>58</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, 228.

<sup>59</sup> Fish, *How Milton Works*, 53.

<sup>60</sup> Fuhrman, 'Paradise Redux'.

<sup>61</sup> See Black et al. 'Table of Contents', *The Broadview Anthology*.

<sup>62</sup> For pedagogical suggestions, see Herman, *Approaches to Teaching Milton's 'Paradise Lost'*.

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## 4

# Milton for Students

## Towards a Teaching and Learning Archive

David Currell

The study of John Milton and his works has benefitted from a groundswell of twenty-first century research oriented towards their reception.<sup>1</sup> Reception studies ask questions about how audiences encounter Milton's writings across time and space and what those audiences make and remake of them in different periods and places, and in various forms and languages. This chapter focuses on early receptions of Milton. I don't mean the historically earliest receptions, the reactions of Milton's contemporaries to his publications as they appeared. Rather, I mean what is typically one of the first and fullest encounters that countless readers have had with Milton in their reading lives: as school- and university-aged students. Like the book it appears in, this chapter is especially concerned with transnational, intermedial, and intersemiotic kinds of reception, focusing on how those kinds of reception happen in and around pedagogical environments. It brings forward a handful of brief case studies, but it also proposes a governing concept, the teaching and learning archive, with the aim of establishing and extending the teaching and learning of Milton as a field of research as well as a field of practice.

Milton himself turned some great phrases regarding teaching and learning: 'strong and sinewy force of teaching' (*Of Reformation*); 'not so much a teaching, as an intangling' (*Tetrachordon*); 'where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions' (*Areopagitica*).<sup>2</sup> But his relationship to institutions of education was not always easy. Milton attended St Paul's School while also being privately tutored; attended Cambridge, where he had a falling out with his first tutor and chafed at the curriculum; composed, at the prompting of the educational reformer Samuel Hartlib, a brief tract, *Of Education* (1644), that offers a thoroughly reformed—and utterly unrealistic—system of schooling; and acted himself as a private tutor, notably to his own nephews,

<sup>1</sup> To list edited collections on Miltonic reception alone: Knoppers and Semenza, *Milton in Popular Culture*; Hoxby and Coiro, *Milton in the Long Restoration*; Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*; Sauer and Duran, *Milton in the Americas*; Duran and Murgia, *Global Milton and Visual Art*; and Green and Al-Akhras, *Women (Re)Writing Milton*.

<sup>2</sup> Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, 1.664, 2.642, 2.554.

Edward and John Phillips. So David Hopkins is sounding an authentically Miltonic note of discontent when he writes that, '[r]ecently, discussion of *Paradise Lost* [. . .] has retreated within the walls of the academy, and has been primarily addressed to those studying the poem formally at school, undergraduate, or postgraduate level' and deplores the 'current academic fashions' to which the poem is supposedly subjected there.<sup>3</sup> Both propositions are contestable. The vibrancy of latter-day manifestations of Milton's reception explodes the notion that he is a prisoner of the schoolroom or the ivory tower. But what I particularly hope to show is that the study of Milton 'at school, undergraduate, or postgraduate level' is in fact an extraordinarily rich and variegated space of reception.

That richness becomes more visible if we rethink the relationship of teaching and scholarship in a way that doesn't assume that the former devolves linearly from 'current academic fashions'. In *The Teaching Archive*, Rachel Sagner Buurma and Laura Heffernan point out that the reflex of scholars has been to treat the scholarly archive—conference papers, articles in learned journals, monographs, and chapters in books like this one—as a full and adequate representation of the history of literary critical reading, despite the fact that an overwhelming majority of textual engagement takes place in classrooms. What happens in that setting is also consequential for the work that teachers perform as scholars, and, in turn, consequential for literary history, the smoothed narratives of which, built upon a fraction of published scholarly output, may be confirmed, complemented, or contradicted by documentary study of teaching materials and practices. Disciplinary conventional wisdom, like the frequently presumed eclipse of historical interest and approaches during the period labelled New Critical, may not survive careful inspection of the seedbeds—to use an image etymologically connected to 'seminar'—from which a handful of the tallest poppy-blossoms are plucked and turned into the still life pictures some critics point at as convenient representations of what our predecessors and selves did or do.<sup>4</sup>

'Teaching archive' has a specific kind of referent for Buurma and Heffernan: the lectures, assignments, annotations, and other traces left throughout the teaching lives of individual scholars. One could study Milton's teaching archive in these terms, although direct records of his teaching career are vanishingly slight. But not quite invisible: Thomas Festa has interpreted the rhetoric of Milton's marginalia in his copies of Euripides and Aratus as directed towards 'a de facto edition, illustrating the principles of exegesis by applying them for students'.<sup>5</sup> Adjustments of printed Latin translations into a more literal register, the insertion of cross-references, provision of comparanda, and evaluative commentary on proposed emendations suggest 'that Milton's books became communal property

<sup>3</sup> Hopkins, *Reading*, ix.

<sup>4</sup> Buurma and Heffernan, *Teaching Archive*, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Festa, *End of Learning*, 30.



while he tutored his pupils' and that he annotated them for the schoolroom.<sup>6</sup> Gregory Machacek has offered the provocative thesis that *Paradise Lost* itself was written with the deliberate aspiration that the text become a fixture of the English school curriculum.<sup>7</sup> At least one classical epic, Statius's *Thebaid*, explicitly announces such an aspiration.<sup>8</sup> In the absence of similar internal evidence, however, Machacek's appeal to intention is hard to justify. The extensive documentary evidence of anthologies and textbooks in which eighteenth-century writers adapted *Paradise Lost* for student audiences, however, can credibly be read as a bridge between the publication of *Paradise Lost* and its role in modern systems of education.<sup>9</sup>

Towards a fuller understanding of that role, I venture an adaptation of Buurma and Heffernan's concept. Rather than think restrictively of Milton's teaching archive as the archive of Milton the teacher, let us imagine a different, ideal kind of Milton teaching archive, comprising all available evidence for how Milton's texts have been taught. Thanks to the efforts of Miltonists worldwide to excavate and record the practices of past educators, to research Milton's place in anthologies, to write and edit textbooks and handbooks, and to share teaching techniques and syllabuses in dedicated collections and online, it is at once obvious that this will be a forbiddingly expansive assemblage. But having proposed so inflationary a concept, let us go one step further and embrace also the evidence for students' responses to such teaching. Let us imagine a Milton teaching and learning archive.

There would be any number of ways to build and investigate such an archive. A digital repository of syllabuses, a quantitative study of Milton's representations in curricula, close readings of textbooks from different eras, a survey of exam papers—all could have their place. My aim in the present chapter is simply to offer some initial imaginings, foreground some stimulating objects and lines of inquiry, and highlight existing work that can help make the concept of the Milton teaching and learning archive more concrete, vivid, and inviting. By its very nature, such an exercise militates against conclusiveness, although one conclusion emerges emphatically even from such preliminary steps. The Milton teaching and learning archive exists across borders and between media. My examples emphasize histories of pedagogy outside the UK and North America, specifically in the Middle East and North Africa, and modes of student engagement beyond reading print, specifically reading aloud and reading online. As befits a figure at the centre of English and world literary history, Milton's curricular reach is global and the modes in which his works are encountered are continually evolving.

<sup>6</sup> Festa, *End of Learning*, 26.

<sup>7</sup> Machacek, *Milton and Homer*, 12, 153.

<sup>8</sup> See Statius, *Thebaid*, 12.810–15.

<sup>9</sup> See Hopkins, 'Review of Gregory Machacek', 236.

## Learning Across Borders

As a rapid demonstration of the range of Miltonic scenes of instruction, I will make the phrase ‘initial imaginings’ literal by juxtaposing two fictions, one set in Dublin and one in Cairo. The first.

—Where do you begin in this? Stephen asked, opening another book.

—*Weep no more*, Comyn said.

—Go on then, Talbot.

—And the story, sir?

—After, Stephen said. Go on, Talbot.

A swarthy boy opened a book and propped it nimbly under the breastwork of his satchel. He recited jerks of verse with odd glances at the text.

—*Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more*

*For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,*

*Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor [...]*<sup>10</sup>

In James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), Milton’s pastoral elegy *Lycidas* serves as an occasion for imperfect memorization and insecure oral delivery. The book at which Stephen Dedalus’s student Talbot peeks is not one in which his teacher is encouraging him to inscribe editorial or interpretative judgements of the kind Edward Phillips might have taken down from his uncle’s exposition. Rather, the student’s goal is to get its words by heart. I return to orality as a context for the study of Milton in the next section.

The second. Asya, the protagonist of Adhaf Soueif’s *In the Eye of the Sun* (1992), moves from Egypt to England for a doctorate in linguistics in order to get away from the well-worn literary topics inculcated during her undergraduate years at Cairo University. As she says to a friend: ‘It’s why I didn’t go to another university and do yet another literary thesis on Milton’s Lucifer or something. I wanted to do something radically new.’<sup>11</sup> Yet when, with a traumatic marriage, affair, and separation behind her, Asya returns as a teacher to her alma mater, resistance to Milton has been transferred and transposed. In the account of Asya’s first day of lecturing, it emerges that she has selected Milton’s sonnet 19, ‘When I Consider How My Light is Spent’, to open her class. Before she begins, however, a first-day activity threatens her lesson plan. Asya asks her students to write down their reasons for taking English. One student writes, ‘I want to learn the language of my enemy’. Unlike the scene in Joyce, this scene turns on a disquieting silence.

<sup>10</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Soueif, *In the Eye of the Sun*, 421.

'Why is English the language of your enemy?' Asya had asked. She knew the answer, but she wanted to hear her speak, to engage her in dialogue, to ask whether she did not think there was a commonality of human experience beyond politics, beyond forms.

The veiled head shook once silently and was still.

'I'm sorry?' said Asya, and nothing happened.

'Are you all right?' she had asked, and another—an unveiled—girl had spoken up.

'She cannot speak,' she had said, 'because the voice of a woman is a *'awra*'.

'How is she going to participate in seminars then?' Asya had asked. The class was silent.

'Why did she not go to al-Azhar? Or the Girls' College? Then at least she would have been able to answer her teachers.' Still silence. And the eyes watch her from the slits in the veil.

'Very well, then.' Asya had turned away. 'We might as well begin. I think, rather than start with a long introduction about the age, we'll start with the poetry itself. Then, later, we'll try to find out *from* the poems about the age. Would you open your books, please, at page sixty-nine: 'When I consider how my light is spent—'<sup>12</sup>

Consideration of fictional scenes of instruction may seem a rather oblique way into thinking about an archive, but these literary passages valuably condense important themes prevalent in the discourse of teaching and learning Milton, especially around linguistic difficulty and cultural politics.

Both these themes featured in a real-world conflict in contemporary Egypt between an academic, Mona Prince, and her employer, Suez University. A 2017 lecture with the unassuming title 'The Age of Milton' became the basis for a disciplinary action against Prince for 'calling for the glorification of Satan.'<sup>13</sup> Milton's prominence in the episode may reflect the different ways in which he could be appropriated for both parties to rally around. The administration could use the religious content of *Paradise Lost* as a convenient pretext for the sensational charge, which was in fact one among many. Prince, by contrast, articulated a view of Milton as a champion of expressive freedom and an intellectual ally against an educational system organized around internet plagiarism. Prince's Milton stands, as she put it in an interview with Sharihan Al-Akhras, for 'the discussion of all ideas, including "bad" ones.'<sup>14</sup> The administration pushed *Paradise Lost* outside the

<sup>12</sup> Soueif, *In the Eye of the Sun*, 753–4. *Awra* is glossed in the novel as 'parts of the body which should never be shown in public' (Soueif, *In the Eye of the Sun*, 787).

<sup>13</sup> Al-Akhras, *Tales from the Levant*, 264–70; see also Sharihan Al-Akhras, 'Milton and Arab Female Authorship in the Age of Social Media', 153–4, in Green and Al-Akhras, *Women Re(Writing) Milton*, 153–67.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Akhras, *Tales from the Levant*, 267.

legitimate curriculum, whereas ‘Prince attempted to bridge the cultural and historical gap between Milton and her Arab students.’<sup>15</sup> For Prince, the hardest bridge to gap was linguistic, so she used an Arabic poem that refers to Satan, Amal Dunqul’s *Spartacus* (1983), and recommended Naguib Mahfouz’s *Children of Gebelawi* (1981)—the work of an author vastly more recognized and significantly more controversial in Egypt than the relatively little-read Milton—as evocative of the kind of revolutionary context in which *Paradise Lost* was written.<sup>16</sup> In this lesson, ‘the language of my enemy’ is less likely to arise as a point of resistance, but the effort to bridge a cultural and historical gap itself became the basis for conflict.

The Arab and Islamic reception of Milton’s writings, however, goes much deeper than campus culture wars, whether fictional or real. Islam Issa’s twenty-first century study of that reception includes interviews with students from several countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.<sup>17</sup> Issa diagnoses a ‘periphery neglect’ in early modern literary studies: an assumption that the generic historical subject and the generic modern reader share a European or North American geography and a white, male, (post-)Christian identity.<sup>18</sup> One consequence of periphery neglect is exclusion, a condition addressed by contemporary scholars attending to more diverse subjectivities and audiences. A related but less obvious consequence is an incomplete grasp of the centre itself: peripheries are a crucial source of evidence for culture’s global dimensions. The single most fascinating and moving trace of Miltonic teaching that I have found in a physical archive is not only precious in itself but also indicative of some global dimensions of teaching and learning Milton. In 1903–4, students at the Syrian Protestant College (SPC) in Beirut, which in 1920 became the American University of Beirut (AUB), handwrote the few dozen extant pages of the intriguingly named student magazine, *The Miltonian* (see Figure 4.1). Its issues tell stories of student identity-formation, college excursions, and all the perennial frustrations of running a campus club. In a way, they also tell the story of modern world literary history.

Language was a charged topic for the founders of SPC. Before the opening of the college in 1866, they grappled with the questions of ‘which language(s) should be taught and why, the effect of language(s) on students’ identities, and the power and cultural value attached to language and education’, resolving on Arabic as the principal language of instruction.<sup>19</sup> This would be the language in which graduates would proselytize their communities. Yet, in 1879, the majority of a divided

<sup>15</sup> Al-Akhras, *Tales from the Levant*, 268–9.

<sup>16</sup> On Mahfouz and Milton, see Issa, ‘Researching’, 117.

<sup>17</sup> See Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*, 117–18, 153–5, 183; and Islam Issa, ‘The Online Revolution’, 183–4, in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 181–205. Interviews with Muslim students are also central to the methodology of Eva Momtaz’s doctoral research; selections are shared in Momtaz, ‘Milton and the Modern Muslimah’.

<sup>18</sup> Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*, 16–18, 241.

<sup>19</sup> Arnold, ‘The Worst Part of the Dead Past’, 277.

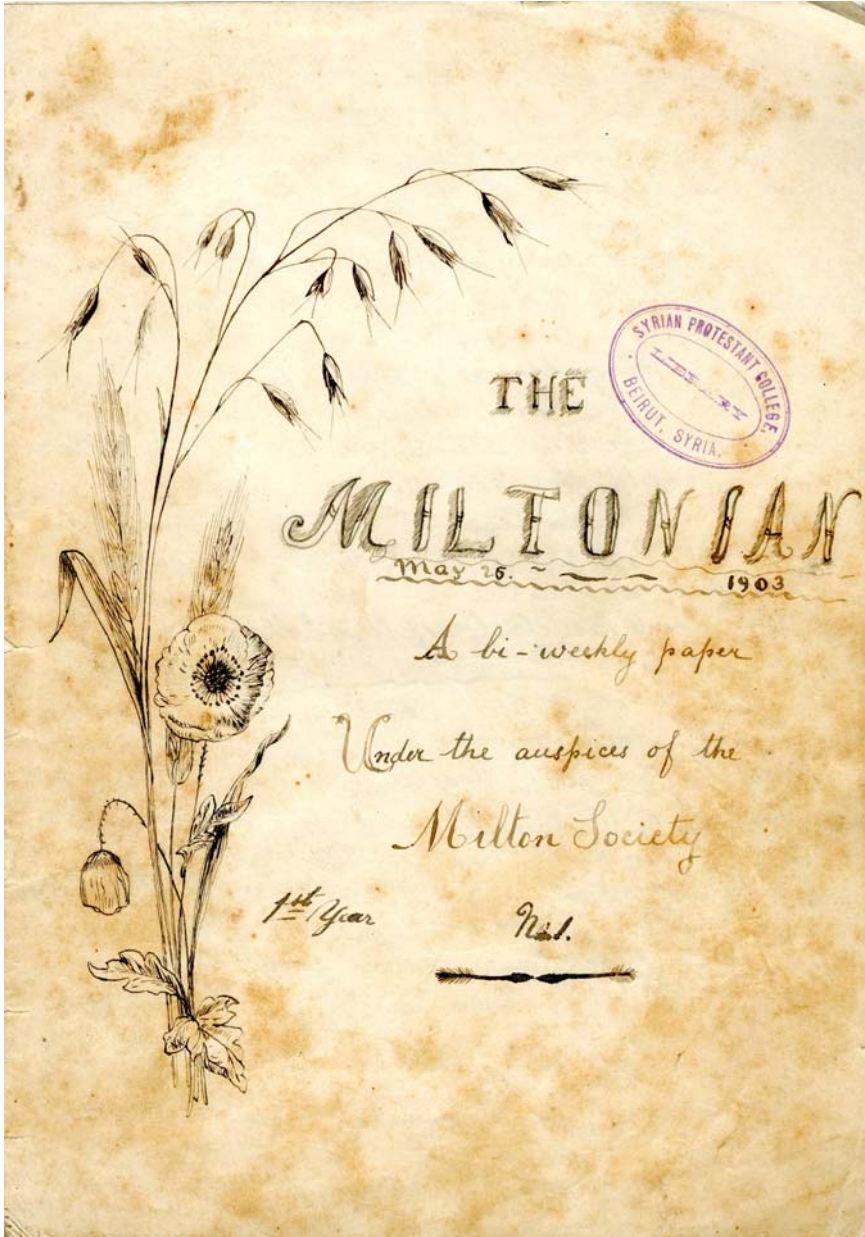


Fig. 4.1. Issue cover, from *The Miltonian* (26 May 1903). Courtesy of American University of Beirut Library Archives.

faculty body voted to switch to English, a move implemented in the college and preparatory school the following year and at the medical school in 1887.<sup>20</sup> It was the humanistic faculty who drove the decision, one implicitly endorsed by the students who swelled enrolment over subsequent years in part because of the perceived advantages of learning English.<sup>21</sup> Economic motives for learning English are registered in Soueif's postcolonial Egypt as well as in late-Ottoman Mount Lebanon—other students respond to Asya's prompt by saying they want to learn English 'to get a job in a bank'.<sup>22</sup> The SPC archives suggest that cultural and aesthetic responses to the reorientation of the curriculum towards English were at least as powerful.

In 1902, a group of SPC students founded the Milton Society. Its beautiful eponymous organ, *The Miltonian*, was a manuscript magazine of which four issues of around thirty pages each are extant in the Archives and Special Collections of AUB's Jafet Library, dated May, June, and December 1903, and April 1904.<sup>23</sup> Three students are named as officers of the Milton Society and dominate the bylines of *The Miltonian* throughout the short run: Morris Franklin, Mitri Najjar, and Aran Zavzavatjian. The surnames suggest US, Arab, and Armenian heritages; insofar as this further implies religious diversity, the Society officers were typical of SPC at the time.<sup>24</sup> But what about the name on the cover? Why did a group of students adopt Milton as their mascot?

Milton was the final destination of the English curriculum after what Betty Anderson calls a 'Western turn' that followed the change in instructional language.<sup>25</sup> The 'Synopsis of the Course of Study' accompanying catalogues for 1887–1906 specify books 1 and 2 of *Paradise Lost* along with one or two plays by William Shakespeare for the final year of the college programme. A discursive paragraph stipulates that 'a large portion of the year is taken up with the critical study of English classics, including Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice and Hamlet, Milton's Paradise Lost, and others'.<sup>26</sup> This curriculum, centred on Shakespeare and Milton, is reflected in the contents of *The Miltonian*. The final issue includes a combative paragraph condemning a faculty order to postpone an intended staging of *Merchant* by the Milton Society. An earlier issue presents a hundred-line poem by Najjar, 'The Atheist's Repentance', which is a didactic pastiche of speeches by Satan in book 4 and Adam in book 8 of *Paradise Lost*. Seeing the sun, poeticized as the 'mighty orb of day', later punningly presented as 'the glorious son [. . .] In

<sup>20</sup> Arnold, 'The Worst Part of the Dead Past', 282.

<sup>21</sup> Arnold, 'The Worst Part of the Dead Past', 284–5.

<sup>22</sup> Soueif, *In the Eye of the Sun*, 753.

<sup>23</sup> Selected page images are available online at *The Miltonian* (1903–1904), the permanent web presence of a gallery exhibition held at the American University of Beirut in 2014.

<sup>24</sup> For this information, see Anderson, *American University of Beirut*, 85; and Arnold, 'An Imagined America', 585.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson, *American University of Beirut*, 46–7.

<sup>26</sup> Syrian Protestant College, *Catalogue of the Syrian Protestant College*, 34.

all his majesty', the atheist rises, like Milton's Adam, and like Adam deduces his Creator. This could indicate comprehensive engagement with the epic's themes and situations, but Satan's speech in particular was very frequently anthologized. If the Society had a favourite poem, it was evidently *L'Allegro*, copied calligraphically in the June 1903 issue, with pen and ink marginal drawings and a sylvan watercolour by Nasri Kawar. Several descriptive pieces further echo *L'Allegro*, and a triplet of prose characters that include a mirthful and a melancholic type draws on the companion poems directly.

Other Miltonic set pieces in *The Miltonian* include a collection of 'What some great writers say of Milton' and a biographical sketch by Zavzavatjian. This last threatens to flatten Milton's identity into precisely the generic historical subject which I have suggested a teaching and learning archive might update: 'John Milton was a blue-eyed, yellow-haired Saxon boy, the type of the English race.'<sup>27</sup> The remainder of the text, which mentions Milton's studies, blindness, and transformation into 'a republican in the midst of kings and princes', only partly recovers the sense of an individual life from this blunt assimilation to a racialized stereotype. Forcing Milton into the mould of representative man—even to the point of misrepresenting his physical features, such as his auburn hair—may reflect an aspect of contemporary instruction. Anderson speaks of student pursuit of a 'flight to the West' and 'a world of modernity laid out in the English-language curriculum' evident in the flourishing manuscript magazine culture of this period.<sup>28</sup> The SPC curriculum circa 1900 suggests one concrete vector whereby books 1 and 2 came to dominate the Arabic reception of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>29</sup> But *The Miltonian* reveals a desire for Milton as a vector for an Anglophilia in the student body of a US-founded campus in the Levant that at this historical remove remains somewhat opaque.

This formula invites global comparativism. SPC was ahead of historical trends in US humanities education in its foundational emphasis on modern languages and literatures (principally Arabic and English). Dayton Haskin has published richly informative studies of Milton's place in the curriculum at US universities and colleges during the crucial late-nineteenth-century transition from the classical curriculum to one making room for English literature. Their archives suggest that Milton had a similar presence, that is, one arranged around books 1 and 2 of *Paradise Lost*, if an 1886 exam paper from the Massachusetts Institution of Technology (MIT) and the first dedicated Milton courses, at Harvard in the mid-1880s, are representative. In 1904, just as *The Miltonian* ended its run, Princeton's English Department implemented 'a course on seventeenth century poetry in

<sup>27</sup> *The Miltonian* (1903–1904), 26 May 1903.

<sup>28</sup> Anderson, *American University of Beirut*, 48.

<sup>29</sup> For the dominance of books 1 and 2, see Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*.

which students were required to read almost all Milton's English verse, *Areopagitica*, and biographical materials by Anthony à Wood, John Aubrey, and [David] Masson.<sup>30</sup>

Comparison of the Levantine periphery to the Anglophone centre can be complemented by comparison to other geographies in which the history of Milton studies is being investigated. The earliest identified references suggest that nineteenth-century missionaries played a key role in introducing Milton to China.<sup>31</sup> The decisive influence of books 1 and 2 of *Paradise Lost* upon the intellectual reception of the poet emerges again as a common theme.<sup>32</sup> At St John's College, a US Episcopalian institution founded in Shanghai in 1879, students formed a Shakespeare club in 1905.<sup>33</sup> The coincidence of dates with the SPC Milton Society is striking. This archival trail validates Thomas Corns's suggestion that, as in the Levant and China, so in Japan and Korea 'the principal vehicle for Milton's impact appears to be the educational initiatives launched by Christian missionaries that led to the establishment of Christian universities that have remained centres for the study of his writings'.<sup>34</sup> Their archives may yield further grounds for comparison and further fascinating evidence for the student reception of Milton across the globe.

### Teaching Across Media

Soueif's novel dramatizes a pedagogical situation in postcolonial Egypt in which a teacher's right to speak is challenged by a student's pointed silence. The silence is answered, in effect, by the quotation of Milton that moves the session into a formal instructional mode. In early twentieth-century Mount Lebanon, in complex geopolitical circumstances that do not easily conform to a paradigm of 'cultural imperialism', a multi-faith student body experienced an Anglophilic desire for Milton, partly as author and partly as symbol.<sup>35</sup> In Hugh Richmond's University of California at Berkeley classroom at the turn of the twenty-first century, students from the Philippines evoked pedagogical authority, the politics of language, evangelical missions, and colonialism in fulfilling an optional performance assignment by reimagining *Paradise Lost* as a colonial allegory. Richmond recalls how 'students acted out their own Tagalog translation of Milton's text for the idyllic

<sup>30</sup> Haskin, 'Shakespeare, Milton, and the Humanities', 22; Dayton Haskin, 'How John Milton was Lodged in the Curriculum', 234, 228, in Sauer and Duran, *Milton in the Americas*, 223–44.

<sup>31</sup> Hong, 'A Century of Milton Studies in China', 96–97; Hao, 'Milton in Late-Qing China', 86–8, 98; Hao, 'Why Did Milton Land in China Earlier than Shakespeare?'

<sup>32</sup> Hao, 'Milton's Satan in China', 282–3.

<sup>33</sup> Hao, 'Why Did Milton Land in China Earlier than Shakespeare?', 504.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas N. Corns, 'Milton's Global Reach', 30, in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*, 23–31.

<sup>35</sup> For a critique of the discourse of 'cultural imperialism' in the context of Syrian Protestant College, see Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 216–17.



prelapsarian Adam and Eve' before 'an English-speaking Satan arrived disguised as a Calvinist missionary'.<sup>36</sup> Richmond, who has produced audio and video versions of various works by Milton, regrets that none was made of this unique student performance. As Angelica Duran remarks concerning untraceable amateur recordings of Milton readings, there are categories of evidence, especially those not in print media, that by their very nature tend to elude archival preservation.<sup>37</sup> This final section of this chapter briefly addresses themes of orality and non-print media more broadly in relation to the idea of a Milton teaching and learning archive.

Duran's observation is part of a study of 'marathon' group readings of *Paradise Lost*, a performance genre often integrated with formal study but also practised beyond academia, and across town-gown borders.<sup>38</sup> Complete readings 'render null instructors' rationale to eliminate long readings from their syllabus': a group 'marathon' of *Paradise Lost* takes about a dozen hours, and may yield collateral benefits including 'an immediate and deep sense of esprit de corps among class members and between otherwise unaffiliated communities that come together for such events'.<sup>39</sup> Joyce's Comyn and Talbot might have derived more from their reading experience if it had been organized around a larger book, outside of a period segmented by the school bell, and with snacks. Jameela Lares and Kayla Schreiber invited participants in a complete reading conducted at the University of Southern Mississippi in April 2019 to complete a subsequent digital questionnaire.<sup>40</sup> They used the occasion of oral performance to investigate the relationships speakers have to the poem and its interpretation, particularly in relation to gender. This recent work reflects a significant history of oral-aural approaches to teaching Milton.<sup>41</sup> The radical John Thelwall, who in 1801 founded an elocution school serving students with speech impediments, included selections from *Paradise Lost* in the textbook; Caitlyn Girardi's analysis of the selection and ordering suggests that this activist of the Romantic era 'makes Satan the perfect figure to teach political activism to Thelwall's audience [. . .] who faced both physiological

<sup>36</sup> See Hugh Richmond, 'Paradise Lost as an Oral Epic', 193, in Herman, *Approaches to Teaching 'Paradise Lost'*, 192–6; and Richmond, 'Milton for Millennials', 228, in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 225–43.

<sup>37</sup> Duran, 'Join Thy Voice', 262.

<sup>38</sup> See Sherry, 'Paradise Lost "Made Vocal"'; Campbell, 'Reflections'; Jameela Lares and Kayla M. Schreiber, 'Gendered Reflections on an All-Day Reading of *Paradise Lost*', in Green and Al-Akhras, *Women (Re)Writing Milton*, 213–29; and John Hale's chapter in the present volume, 'Milton Marathons'.

<sup>39</sup> Angelica Duran, 'Premeditated Verse: Marathon Readings of Milton's Epics', 198, in Herman, *Approaches to Teaching 'Paradise Lost'*, 197–202.

<sup>40</sup> Jameela Lares and Kayla M. Schreiber, 'Gendered Reflections on an All-Day Reading of *Paradise Lost*', 214, 22, in Green and Al-Akhras, *Women (Re)Writing Milton*, 213–29.

<sup>41</sup> For the orality of *Paradise Lost* and a recent effort to integrate audio in an electronic edition for students, see Olin Bjork and John Rumrich, "Is There a Class in this Audiotext?" *Paradise Lost* and the Multimedia Social Edition', in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 47–76.

and social silencing'.<sup>42</sup> These political priorities, and the struggle against silencing, are reflected in Prince's account of her Milton pedagogy in Egypt two centuries later.

Intermedial pedagogy has many rationales but a primary rationale is to overcome the difficulty of *Paradise Lost*. This theme emerges continually in materials designed to serve students, including companions, editions, handbooks, textbooks, and translations. Intralingual translation of *Paradise Lost* into contemporary registers of English has often had an educational motive.<sup>43</sup> The Scottish editor James Buchanan thought that reading Milton could prepare young students to construe Latin: in 1773, he printed the first six books of *Paradise Lost* with a prose translation composed with special attention to word order, so that students might become accustomed to Latinate syntax via Milton's verse without leaving the vernacular.<sup>44</sup> Going beyond intralingual translation are abridgement and paraphrase. William Angus claimed in 1841 that *Paradise Lost* is 'apt to fatigue the mind of the young' in its length, while its allusive compass demands 'more extensive information than young persons in general can be supposed to possess'.<sup>45</sup> His response, like John Carey's in 2017, was to print extensive selections with bridging prose.<sup>46</sup> Angus added a metrical apparatus as a further aid to students and indication that he expected them to read the epic aloud. This is a particularly clear example of an expectation of oral performance affecting the printed presentation of the poem for students.

My students in Lebanon increasingly report the practice of supplementing their own reading of Milton's poetry with listening to digital recordings or audiobooks found online. They find them online amidst an increasingly expansive volume of material pitched to students of Milton that it is second nature for students with web access to explore. What they find varies immensely in value, and current browser design and user habits mean that an instructor's guidance and Google's top hits may be in close competition for attention.

To illustrate a part of this spectrum, I will briefly compare the SparkNotes pages dedicated to *Paradise Lost* and the online scholarly edition of the poem at *The John Milton Reading Room (JMRR)*. SparkNotes had its origins in 1999 as a series of online study guides that received a consistent format, parallel print publication, and a special focus on frequently assigned literary texts after it was bought

<sup>42</sup> Thelwall, *Selections for the Illustration of a Course*; Girardi, *John Thelwall's Use of Milton's Satan*, i.

<sup>43</sup> For early English translations, see Aaron Shapiro, "Levelling the Sublime": Translating *Paradise Lost* into English in the Eighteenth Century', in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*, 53–73.

<sup>44</sup> Buchanan, *First Six Books*. See also Michael, *The Teaching of English*, 283–4; Leonard, *Faithful Labourers*, 1.62–4; Taylor, *Politics of Parody*, 142–3.

<sup>45</sup> Angus, *Beauties of 'Paradise Lost'*.

<sup>46</sup> Carey and Milton, *Essential 'Paradise Lost'*. For a discussion of *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*, see Peter C. Herman's chapter in the present volume, 'Milton in the Age of Twitter'.

by the bookstore giant Barnes and Noble in 2001. The rhetoric and marketing of the series highlight its contemporaneity, relatability, relevance, and utility. Writing in 2010, Denise Albanese credited SparkNotes with a ‘mastery of postmodern self-consciousness’ and an ‘opportunistic blending of old and new modes of textual approach.’<sup>47</sup> The site as it stands today, however, is smaller and staler than the one Albanese analysed: the community forums, perhaps the single feature that made SparkNotes most representative of ‘an era of student-centered collaborative learning,’ were discontinued and deleted in 2019.<sup>48</sup> Most notably, the publisher’s content on the site has been static since 2008, unlike the up-to-date advertisements that accompany the unchanging text. Yet the site is a magnet for my students: brand recognition and search optimization go an extraordinarily long way. This practice may soon be obsolete, as chatbots like OpenAI’s ChatGPT become a primary interface through which students engage the web. These paraphrasing tools are trained on a dataset that presumably includes SparkNotes and are perhaps best thought of as reconfiguring rather than replacing static content. In an effort to avoid passively receiving pabulum derived from SparkNotes, I once tried setting my undergraduate students an assignment to critique and rewrite one section from the *Paradise Lost* site. But I decided that this gave the site too much credit and in the event generated unimaginative writing anchored in SparkNotes’s own rhetoric and format. Instead, I aim to set assignments like ‘storyboard Eve’s dream,’ for which a lowest common denominator guide won’t offer a template response. I also tell students that this outfit ascribed the quote ‘Luck is the residue of design’ to Milton.<sup>49</sup>

Some websites are absolutely dead things, but the *JMRR* continues to grow and, across years of pandemic-induced remote teaching, its already significant traffic expanded considerably, as its pedagogical use surely did as well.<sup>50</sup> SparkNotes’s ethos is summed up in the jacket copy, ‘you don’t have to go anywhere else!’, whereas the hyperlinked annotations on the *JMRR* send users to other online texts and reference resources.<sup>51</sup> Another way to measure the difference between the sites is through their use of questions. SparkNotes offers study questions of the calibre ‘Which of the following poets does Milton emulate?’, with the multiple-choice options ‘Virgil’, ‘Homer’, ‘Both Virgil and Homer’, and ‘Neither Virgil or [sic] Homer’. Users of the *JMRR* also encounter questions, but of a remarkably specific and local kind within the hyperlinked textual annotations. Some examples from book 9 of *Paradise Lost*: ‘Why now does [Eve] want to avoid such conversation

<sup>47</sup> Albanese, *Extramural Shakespeare*, 59.

<sup>48</sup> Albanese, *Extramural Shakespeare*, 116.

<sup>49</sup> SparkNotes, [Twitter post].

<sup>50</sup> The site’s daily visitor count increased from 400–700 to 800–1400 during the pandemic years, and has remained at that level (Luxon, email to Angelica Duran). For accounts of teaching and learning with the *John Milton Reading Room*, see Thomas Luxon, ‘John Milton Reading Room: Teaching *Paradise Lost* with an Online Edition’, in Herman, *Approaches to Teaching*, 189–91; and Cordelia Zukerman, ‘John Milton Reading Room and the Future of Digital Pedagogy’, in Currell and Issa, *Digital Milton*, 27–45.

<sup>51</sup> SparkNotes Editors, *SparkNotes: Paradise Lost*, cover.

with Adam?'; 'Perhaps something she heard motivates her desire to prove herself apart from Adam?'; 'We may take this as evidence that the serpent is lying (he never did eat the fruit of that tree) and Eve should (shouldn't she?) notice the deceit'; 'Is Eve being coyly modest here?' (*PL* 9.233, 9.276, 9.593, 9.615). This kind of question differs significantly from the customary editorial use of questions to indicate a degree of hesitancy or uncertainty that may concern major narrative themes but is more likely to relate to minutiae of historical fact or linguistic usage. Interrogative notes like these, however, designed to jog active, interpretative reading, imply a student audience. Their frequency surely reflects a pedagogical imperative on the part of the site's editor, Thomas Luxon, but perhaps the questions are also, or even primarily, an effect of medium. Most basically, different economies of space govern print and electronic media and so afford different styles and extents of editorial address. That said, there is a notable precedent in Frank Allen Patterson's *The Student's Milton*, first published in 1930, the concise endnotes of which are peppered with interrogatives posed in a comparable pedagogical spirit. Sampling book 9 again: 'Who is the hero of *Paradise Lost*?'; 'Why did the garland drop and the roses fade?'; 'What was the sin of which Adam and Eve were guilty?'<sup>52</sup> Questions on the *JMRR* are generally more open in conception and style, but Patterson set a fine example of encouraging critical thinking.

The economy of space governing book chapters is severe; I plead that excuse for having begun by delineating a very broad concept—the Milton teaching and learning archive—then following through by sketching a mere handful of examples. But while the relationship of concept to illustration might resemble the relationship between Milton's *Lycidas* and Talbot's recitation, *Lycidas* itself illustrates that attention to pedagogy as critical work is a thoroughly Miltonic endeavour. The poem was first published in the Cambridge volume *Iusta Edouardo King naufrago* [*Obsequies to Edward King, Drowned by Shipwreck*] (1638), memorializing Milton's classmate Edward King, 'a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637', as the headnote added to the version in Milton's 1645 *Poems* states (*Lycidas* headnote).<sup>53</sup> That headnote retrospectively conjures a national context of religious dissent, but Michael Gadaleta has recently argued that in its first, academic context Milton used *Lycidas* to express satirical dissent from the form of his classmates' collegiate project.<sup>54</sup> Milton's pedagogical dissent is sharpest in his prose tract from the same period, *Of Education* (1644); the brisk dismissal of 'the Scholastick grosnesse of barbarous ages' does not evince an archivist ethos.<sup>55</sup> But that text's own border-crossing reception—from inclusion in the educationally oriented *Harvard Classics* series of 1909 to its status as the

<sup>52</sup> Milton, *The Student's Milton*, 88–9, second pagination.

<sup>53</sup> This and all quotations of Milton's poetry are from Milton, *Complete Poetry and Essential Prose*, eds. Kerrigan, Rumrich, and Fallon.

<sup>54</sup> Gadaleta, 'Milton's Satirical Reform'.

<sup>55</sup> Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, 2.374.

only text by Milton assigned at the French-language high school (in translation) attended by one of my Lebanese students—is a testament to Milton’s imprint on the art by which he often made his livelihood.<sup>56</sup> Nor was the archival impulse really foreign to him: perhaps the final texts Milton sent to a publisher were the *Prolusions*, printed in 1674 but delivered as a student on academic occasions. I hope the concept of the teaching and learning archive proves generative to those whose livelihoods involve teaching Milton and learning from the experience, and that my examples, though few, confirm the fitness of global and multimedia perspectives for the study of Milton—and for the study of the study of Milton.

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<sup>56</sup> For Milton’s home school in the 1640s, see Lewalski, esp. 125, 211–12.

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PART II

INTERLINGUAL BORDERS



## Latinizing Milton in the English West Indies

Katie Mennis

At sunrise on 8 August 1693, around two hundred years after Christopher Columbus's first sighting of the Americas, a ship bearing Thomas Power reached the English settlement at Bermuda. Commissioned to preach in the West Indies as part of the colonial project by the Bishop of London in March, Power had been sailing for at least a month since leaving Virginia, a pit-stop on his voyage from England.<sup>1</sup> On 24 August, he wrote to James Blair, another clergyman who was then founding The College of William & Mary in Virginia, to inform him of his safe arrival. Back in England, Power had been a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, contributed one satire to John Dryden's 1693 translation of *Juvenal*, and published a Latin translation of book 1 of *Paradise Lost* in 1691. A copy of *Paradise Lost* likely made the voyage across the Atlantic with Power in 1693, since he completed his Latin translation of the eleven remaining books in manuscript while sailing and subsequently preaching in Bermuda, Antigua, and Nevis before his death in 1698, aged only thirty-eight.<sup>2</sup>

Power's account of the slow, rocky approach into the harbour in his letter to Blair is reminiscent of Satan's approach to Eve in book 9:

we were kept a good while by Southerly winds from making our latitude, and when we had gained it the wind blowing from the west we were at least a month frequently lacking sometimes north sometimes south to keep our latitude [. . .] we were conducted into the town Harbour by Captain Tucker the most skilfull pilot in the Island [. . . The ship] required a very able person to work and manage her in so narrow a channel for as she past she was sometimes within two foot of the shoals and rocks [. . .]<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the term 'English West Indies' to include the period that predates the Act of Union and the agents who asserted their Englishness, see Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies*, and Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands*.

<sup>2</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James R.2.38 contains books 2–7, Power's letter to Blair (inserted), and miscellaneous notes; James R.2.37 is a 1692 printed copy of *Paradise Lost* with an interlinear manuscript translation of books 8–12; University of Illinois Post-1650 MS 0708 is a non-autograph fair copy of the translation and preface. See Shawcross, 'Note on T.P.'

<sup>3</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, fol. 2r.

With tract oblique  
 [. . .] sidelong he works his way.  
 As when a ship by skilful steersman wrought  
 Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind  
 Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail [. . .]  
 (PL 9.510–5)<sup>4</sup>

Power's translation of 'Nigh [. . .] foreland' as '*ad flexum projectae rupis in aequor*' ['at a turn of a jutting rock in the sea'] heightens the resemblance.<sup>5</sup> Power's 'skilful steersman', Captain Tucker, could boast Satanic stock: his forebear William Tucker, an earlier member of the prominent Bermuda family, concluded peace negotiations with a Powhatan village in 1623 by proposing a toast with a drink laced with poison, instantly killing 200 Powhatans and leading to the slaughter of fifty more.<sup>6</sup> The word that Power uses for 'steersman', '*rector*', affiliates his new role as rector of various parishes in the colonies with Satan's advances. Although Bermuda was for some planters 'the nearest they had come to the paradise promised in early descriptions of the New World', at the time of Power's arrival there were signs to suggest the alternative view of the West Indian islands as 'tropical hells'.<sup>7</sup> Power arrived with the new Governor, John Goddard, who immediately drew up articles of complaint against his predecessor. This 'bid for popularity among the colonists' was conventional for Bermuda's Governors and served as 'a poisonous political recipe guaranteed to keep the place in turmoil'.<sup>8</sup> Power's first impressions are wary: 'There is no orthodox [deleted] regular minister upon the place but my self', he writes; although 'the people seem outwardly fair and civil', 'to know their temper will be a work of time'.<sup>9</sup>

Discussions of Thomas Power to date have not connected the Cambridge fellow who showed some literary potential to the colonial minister who died in Antigua, often implicitly assuming that Power completed his translation before going abroad. John Hale, Estelle Haan, and Stephen Hinds have discussed extracts from Power's published translation of book 1: Hale finds some Latinate 'felicities' in Power's lines but little 'to commend them as an act of interpretation', while Haan and Hinds locate several Virgilian intertexts.<sup>10</sup> The letter to Blair has been

<sup>4</sup> All quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Fowler, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>5</sup> When quoting Power, I give line numbers for books 2–7, but not for books 8–12, where the translation is interlinear. All Latin to English translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>6</sup> Powell, 'Aftermath of the Massacre', 61–2.

<sup>7</sup> Bernhard, 'Bermuda and Virginia in the Seventeenth Century', 58; Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Dunn, 'The Downfall of the Bermuda Company', 510.

<sup>9</sup> Power crosses out 'orthodox' and immediately replaces it with 'regular'.

<sup>10</sup> Hale, *Milton as Multilingual*, 178; Haan, "'Latinizing" Milton', 107; Hinds, 'In and Out of Latin', 81–2.

described as 'unrelated' to the translation.<sup>11</sup> However, rough material in the back of the volume containing Power's translation of books 2–7 disproves this view. Dispersed among translation drafts are fragments of verse, letters and sermons, and notes showing that Power was translating during and probably after his voyage. Illness is a regular theme. The letter to Blair ends with a request for a 'a small draught', and a note in the manuscript vividly describes the ineffectiveness of such draughts against seasickness: '*salsedine non ponitus deterás ventrem movet ciet quod iterata bis terve potione aliquantulum sensi*' [the deep inward salt taste does not go away; it makes my stomach turn and churn, because, having taken the draught again six times, I hardly felt anything].<sup>12</sup> In another letter, Power asks a friend for help with stomach problems, insomnia, chills, sweats, and spinal degradation, which he blames on the climate.<sup>13</sup> Some fragments describe the plants of the colony: '*Rapum Indicum cibus vilis et operarius*' [The Indian turnip is cheap food for working men]; '*Chrysanthemum Bermudense* [is the] Marygold flower of the sea'.<sup>14</sup> There are also two discourses on religious topics: an argument against 'Play' (gambling) as 'an ungovernable sort of appetite of *venturing*' and 'an *imperious* and cruel mistress [. . .] *domineering over her slaves*' (emphases mine), and a refutation of the claim that Christ did not rise from the dead on the third day exploring the theological doctrine of accommodation. The language and themes of these arguments are at points reminiscent of the colonial language and themes of *Paradise Lost* itself.<sup>15</sup>

*Paradise Lost* is certainly 'an epic of empire', and arguably an epic 'against empire'.<sup>16</sup> It was not always recognized as such: Samuel Johnson, for example, asserts that 'Milton[']s subject] is not [. . .] the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His subject is the fate of worlds'.<sup>17</sup> The colonial theme was not lost on Power, however; from book 2 onwards, it becomes central to Power's reading of *Paradise Lost* and, as the translation develops these themes, the significance of Latin as its medium is transformed. Françoise Waquet has familiarized the idea that men of Power's time 'did not regard Latin solely as a language to write and speak, but as an instrument meant for other uses, as a sign invested with other meanings'.<sup>18</sup> Both the sign of Latin and *Paradise Lost* become invested with further meanings in Power's new context. Haan has explored the implications of Power's decision to Latinize Dryden's encomium of Milton at the end of his preface to book 1 for the benefit of potential foreign readers, since English readers are aware of Milton's fame. In this poem, 'an original Latin encomium ([by Matteo]

<sup>11</sup> Shawcross, 'Note on T. P.', 67.

<sup>12</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, fol. 127r.

<sup>13</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, fol. 130v–1r.

<sup>14</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, fol. 127r.

<sup>15</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, fols. 131v–3r and 120v–5r. See Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic*.

<sup>16</sup> Armitage, 'John Milton: Poet against Empire', 215.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Armitage, 'John Milton: Poet against Empire', 215.

<sup>18</sup> Waquet, *Latin, or, The Empire of a Sign*, 3.

Selvaggi), translated into English and expanded (Dryden), has been translated back into Latin (Power), a universal language that can guarantee a shared speech community on an international front.<sup>19</sup> The intensely classicizing translation style of the earlier Power in book 1 is increasingly hard to recognize in books 2–12. But Power's outlook is not so radically altered by his voyage that he gives up his project. The universalizing ethos identified by Haan remains, although its meaning changes, becoming an imperial venture. Indeed, Power's epitaph in Antigua describes him as a '*Vir universalis*' [universal man].

Power continues to translate Milton's purportedly 'universal' epic into Latin, the language that came nearest to achieving universal reach since the 'one speech' that existed before Babel.<sup>20</sup> St Augustine, Power's most important intermediary when translating Milton's colonial discourse, interprets Babel as an appropriate punishment for Nimrod's imperialism because '*dominatio imperantis in lingua est*' [imperial power lies in language].<sup>21</sup> This sentiment was echoed in 1492 when the Spanish humanist Antonio de Nebrija noted that '[l]anguage was always the companion [*compañera*] of empire' in the prologue to the *Gramática castellana* [*Spanish Grammar*], the first printed grammar of a European vernacular. The Latin language and the Roman empire '[t]ogether began,' Nebrija continued, and 'together they fell.'<sup>22</sup> Having previously written a Latin grammar, Nebrija thinks that the vernacular will be the 'companion' of the next empire. The story of Latin in the Americas is not so simple, however: 'in the first decades of colonisation and evangelisation' in Latin America, 'first in the Caribbean during the 1490s,' Latin assumed 'similar roles and functions to those it possessed in early modern Europe' among colonizing and colonized populations.<sup>23</sup> Two hundred years later, however, in islands such as Bermuda, Antigua, and Nevis that had been exclusively English colonies for decades, Latin's practical function as an instrument of the colonial enterprise was limited, although its imaginative empire still held significant sway, and it could act as a vehicle for the empire of the new vernacular sign. Power was one of three ministers in Antigua who received a donation of books from Thomas Bray, who founded several libraries in the colonies with the intention of allegedly 'civiliz[ing] and convert[ing]' natives, straightening out delinquent settlers, and supporting ministers.<sup>24</sup> Bray's recommended books for these libraries include ten neo-Latin works and three classical—Virgil, Horace, Juvenal—out of sixty-three: a small but significant number.<sup>25</sup> Bray's and Power's literary endeavours share a universalizing and civilizing outlook, even though

<sup>19</sup> Haan, "Latinizing" Milton, 94–5.

<sup>20</sup> Genesis 11:1.

<sup>21</sup> Augustine, *City of God, Volume V*, 28. Translations are based on the Loeb with alterations.

<sup>22</sup> Armillas-Tiseyra, 'On Language and Empire', 197.

<sup>23</sup> Laird, 'Latin in Latin America'.

<sup>24</sup> Bray, *Apostolick Charity*, sigs. A1v, A2v.

<sup>25</sup> Bray, *Essay*, 17–22.

Power cannot have intended his translation to perform the tripartite function of Bray's books in the plantations, where Milton's original would be at least as easily understood by all Anglophone populations, including ministers. More likely Power imagined himself as mediator of the message of *Paradise Lost* in his ministrations in the colonies, like Milton's archangel Raphael in Paradise, while he translated it for a different, distant audience, like the angels who report back to Heaven after the human Fall.

The imperial venture of Power's translation is twofold. Imaginatively, Power embeds *Paradise Lost* in his own colonial context and accommodates it to a Latinized way of seeing, thus extending the literary empire of Latin into the 'New World' territories covered by Milton's epic.<sup>26</sup> Practically, his translation extends the literary empire of *Paradise Lost* wherever Latin's linguistic empire still holds sway. In Power's translation, to borrow Haan's formula, a Latin tradition (Virgil, Ovid, Augustine), transformed by Milton and extended across space and time as far as the 'New World' (*Paradise Lost*), is translated in the 'New World' (Power), to be sent back to a Latin readership in England and Europe. As such, Power's translation completes the return voyage of *Paradise Lost*'s journey to the 'New World', imaginatively and, eventually, literally.<sup>27</sup> Power's Latin and Milton's epic act as *compañeras* [companions], each extending the other's imperial reach.

### 'There Plant Eyes': Vision

Power published only three passages from his translation of books 2–12 of *Paradise Lost*. Translations by 'Mr. Power' appeared in successive editions of *The Gentleman's Journal*—a miscellaneous, monthly magazine edited by Peter Motteux, which was a significant precursor to *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*—from May through July 1694.<sup>28</sup> The passages are taken from books 3–5, making it likely that Power reached that point in the translation in early 1694 and sent extracts back to England: 'Authoris caecitas ab ipso deplorata' [The author laments his blindness], the second invocation (*PL* 3.1–55); 'Evae responsum' [Eve's reply], Eve's account of her creation (*PL* 4.440–91); and 'Hymnus Matutinus' [the morning hymn] (*PL* 5.153–208). These passages contain some of the effects identified in book 1 by Hale, Haan, and Hinds. There are Latinate felicities, such as 'Vos reliquae errantes Graiorum nomine dictae' [You other wandering stars called by the Greeks' names] for 'ye five other wandering fires that move' (*PL* 5.177), playing on the Latinity of the English—*stellae errantes* meaning planets—to add a new Miltonic nod

<sup>26</sup> Milton uses the phrase 'new world' several times in the epic (*PL* 1.Argument, 2.Argument, 2.403, 2.867, 4.34, 4.113, 4.391, 10.Argument, 10.257, 10.377, cf. 9.1115–8, 11.406–11).

<sup>27</sup> The James MSS were back in Trinity College, Cambridge by the 1730s, apparently sent to Richard Bentley for publication 'to discharge Mr. Power's debts' (Shawcross, 'Note on T. P.', 67).

<sup>28</sup> Motteux, *Gentleman's Journal*, May 1694, 129–31; June 1694, 172–4; July 1694, 201–2.

to pagan errancy. Milton's allusions to Ovid's Narcissus in Eve's account of her creation offer the Latin translator plenty of opportunities for self-conscious imitation, but Power is relatively sparing. Only the addition of 're-' in his paraphrase of Ovid's '*tecum venitque manetque*' [with you he comes and stays] as '*Tecum remanetque, fugitque*' [with you he remains and flees] suggests a self-conscious pleasure in his re-wording of Ovid.<sup>29</sup>

The key contribution that Power's translation makes to Milton's original in these passages is not stylistic or imitative but thematic. Read as a sequence, Power's carefully selected set-pieces form a sustained meditation on the centrality of vision and eyesight to *Paradise Lost*. Power's characteristic word, which recurs in every extract and frequently in the rest of the translation, is *species* [appearance, vision].<sup>30</sup> Power translates Milton's 'Bright effluence of bright essence increate' (PL 3.6, emphasis mine) as '*simplex species*' [pure vision] (emphasis mine); 'Seasons return' (PL 3.41) as '*per certas species variabilis anni*' [through the determined appearances of the changeable year], and 'To us invisible' (PL 5.157) as '*tua si species oculis minus obvia nostris*' [if your appearance is less accessible to our eyes] (emphases mine). When Eve looks at her reflection in the lake (PL 4.461), she sees '*Alter a* [. . .] *vultu species* [. . .] *eodem*' [another figure with the same face] (emphasis mine), and Power later links Eve's Satanic dream to her reflection by adding '*per speciem*' [through a dream] (emphasis mine) to Adam's reassurance 'if the night | Have gathered aught of evil' (PL 5.206–7). Power's translation also 'plant[s] eyes' in moments when the theme of vision is less prominent (PL 3.53). His elaboration of 'with clouds [. . .] Or [. . .] falling showers' in the morning hymn's address to 'mists and exhalations' (PL 5.185–90) as '*Canicie quales glauca, aut caligine fusca*' [such as have grey hoariness or dark fog] echoes his use of *caligo* [fog] to describe the epic narrator's blindness: he translates 'drop' in 'So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs' (PL 3.25) as '*caligine*', and 'cloud in stead [. . .] Surrounds me' (PL 3.45–6) as '*Nox aeterna oculos operit caligine spissa*' [Eternal night covers my eyes with thick fog] (emphasis mine). Thus, the morning hymn reminds readers of what the epic narrator cannot see, and the word *glauca* [hoariness] becomes suggestive of glaucoma. At the opening of Eve's speech, she calls Adam '*Plus oculis dilecte mihi*' [More dear to me than my eyes] in Power's translation. This addition immediately likens Eve to the poet, suggesting that Adam is to Eve what divine illumination is to the blind narrator—dearer than eyesight, appropriate because Eve receives divine light second-hand through Adam. At the end of her account, Eve's new knowledge is emphatically visual: she says, '*adeo manifestum lumine multo | Per-spicitur*' [it is so manifestly perceived with great light] for 'I [. . .] from that time see' (PL 4.489).

<sup>29</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3.435.

<sup>30</sup> T. P., *Johannis Miltoni Paradisi Amissi Liber Primus*, sig. A4r.



### ‘Divine Interpreter’: Accommodation

Another theme that preoccupies Power in the first half of *Paradise Lost* is divine accommodation. A draft letter in the manuscript provides an insight into his thinking on this issue. The letter continues a dispute about the timeframe of Christ’s resurrection; Power argues against *The Parents Primer* (1681) by Joseph Waite, refuting its claim that Christ did not rise on the third day. Power admits ‘a controversy betwixt scripture and scripture’. Since Christ himself ‘spoke the words on both sides [. . .] both are certainly true, but one must necessarily be taken in a qualified figurative sense.’<sup>31</sup> The arguments that Power employs to resolve this issue touch on divine accommodation. That Milton’s own doctrine of accommodation was ‘unusually daring and thoroughgoing’ becomes apparent when it is ‘compared with other contemporary versions’, most of which are ‘what might be called theories of social accommodation.’<sup>32</sup> Power advances a variation of this social theory, arguing that one must take ‘consideration of the persons to whom the words were spoke’ to resolve scriptural contradictions. When Christ contradicted himself, he was speaking to the Pharisees, ‘malicious sanguinary hypocrites’, so his meaning ‘was to be unlockt by [. . .] other sort of persons than they were’. Likewise, when Christ ‘spake to the multitude’, he spoke ‘in parables’. Furthermore, the timeframe that Christ gives to the Pharisees is determined by ‘a type or a sign of somewhat to come’, the sign of Jonah, whose ‘three days and three nights in the whale’s belly’ anticipate Christ’s period buried in the earth.<sup>33</sup> Power sees types and parables as analogous forms of accommodation that operate through a ‘relation of likeness’ or ‘similitude.’<sup>34</sup>

Milton’s theory of accommodation, on the other hand, is not social but ‘epistemological.’<sup>35</sup> Power’s discussion of similitude sounds more like the rhetoric of the missionary John Eliot (1604–1690), who accommodated his explanations of Christian doctrine to Native Americans ‘by some familiar similitude’. J. Martin Evans describes the archangel Raphael’s accommodation of the narrative in books 5–7 of *Paradise Lost* as an ‘extended example’ of this colonial ‘evangelical technique.’<sup>36</sup> Raphael introduces his act of accommodation in five and a half lines,

what surmounts the reach  
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,  
By likening spiritual to corporeal forms,  
As may express them best, though what if earth

<sup>31</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, fol. 123r.

<sup>32</sup> MacCallum, ‘Milton and Figurative Interpretation’, 402.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew 12:40.

<sup>34</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, fols. 120v–21r.

<sup>35</sup> MacCallum, ‘Milton and Figurative Interpretation’, 403.

<sup>36</sup> Evans, *Milton’s Imperial Epic*, 76.

Be but the shadow of heav'n, and things therein  
 Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?  
 (PL 5.571–6)

Power's translation expands this to seven longer hexameter lines:

*Ipse adeo humanos fugiunt quae altissima sensus  
 Aethereasque animas tenues e lumine formas  
 Tam simili vobis viva sub imagine pingam  
 Ista oculis ut sueta legas quanquam aetheris alti  
 Quid si terra tenens speciem solertius umbra  
 Exprimit exemplo accedens propiusque figurat  
 Res sibi transcriptas superum quam credere promptum est.*<sup>37</sup>

[Highest things that flee human senses and aethereal souls, gentle things formed of light, I myself will depict under a living image so similar to you that you can read them with your eyes as familiar, although they are of high heaven. What if earth holding an image expresses it more skilfully than a shadow, drawing near to its example, and figures things belonging to those above copied for itself more nearly and manifestly than it is easy to believe?]

Power turns Raphael's abstractions into visual images: 'what surmounts the reach | Of human sense' becomes three increasingly concrete images for angelic forms, and he adds his characteristic lexis of sight: '*oculis*', '*speciem*', '*lumine*'. This return to eyesight is apt since Raphael's accommodation is analogous to that of scripture, and 'Milton held that Scripture[']s . . .] revelation is adapted to the mind as physical light to the eye'.<sup>38</sup> But towards the final lines, the language of accommodation becomes more textual: '*legas*', '*transcriptas*', '*Exprimit*', the latter meaning 'expresses', 'imitates', 'copies', or 'translates'. This meaning becomes more significant when Adam calls Raphael 'Divine interpreter':

Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,  
 Far differing from this world, thou hast revealed  
 Divine interpreter, by favour sent  
 Down from the empyrean to forewarn  
 Us [ . . . ]  
 (PL 7.70–4)

<sup>37</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, 5.549–55.

<sup>38</sup> MacCallum, 'Milton and Figurative Interpretation', 413.

*Ardua conceptu nec nostro cognita mundo*  
*Divine interpres nobis patefacta dedisti*  
*Misse Dei imperio humanae dare lumina menti [. . .]*<sup>39</sup>

[Divine interpreter, you have opened up to us things that are hard to conceive of and unknown to our world, you who are sent by the power of God to give light to the human mind (. . .)]

The phrase ‘*Divine interpres*’ recalls Power’s preface to book 1: ‘I have translated it not as an *interpres*, word for word: although, when it worked well with the poetic spirit intact, I did; but, more attentive to the author’s sense [*ad sensum*], I stuck fast to his sentiments and their forms, tempering the words to Latin habits [*ad Latinam consuetudinem*].’<sup>40</sup> This moment in the translation, then, differentiates Raphael’s accommodation from Power’s own Ciceronian translation practice. Yet what Power describes as his method is precisely translation ‘By likening spiritual to corporeal forms’. He expresses the sense, the spirit, and their forms tempered ‘*ad Latinam consuetudinem*’ just as Raphael expresses them ‘*ut sueta*’. Because it is not word for word, Power conceives of his accommodation as intersemi-otic (sense/spirit to Latin verbal forms), like Raphael’s (spiritual to corporeal), and Milton’s in composing *Paradise Lost* itself (‘things invisible’ to epic poetry [*PL* 3.55]).

The language of the preface also recurs in Power’s letter, when he describes his own biblical examples as ‘express words of scripture in opposition to [Waite’s] *sense*’. Power’s translation of Milton’s sense is analogous to the correct interpretation of literal and figurative scripture. Power also accuses Waite of relying on ‘false and wrested translation[s]’ of ‘dark text[s]’, demonstrating the centrality of translation to scriptural interpretation; like these difficult scriptures, the essential characteristic of a parable for Power is that it is ‘a dark saying’. This nexus suggests that Power’s act of translation accommodates Milton’s sense to his readers’ understanding like physical light to the eye, Raphael’s words to Adam, and parables to the multitude. Power translates ‘by favour sent | Down from the empyrean’ with one phrase, ‘*Misse Dei imperio*’, conflating ‘favour’ and ‘empyrean’ via a bilingual pun into *imperium*, a word that accentuates the colonial implications of ‘*nec nostro cognita mundo*’. Power’s translation of the lines surrounding ‘Divine interpreter’ suggests that, for him, accommodation is not merely social—it may be colonial.

<sup>39</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, 7.63–5.

<sup>40</sup> T. P., *Johannis Miltoni Paradisi Amissi Liber Primus*, sig. A4r.

### *Rector, Colonus, Incola: Colonialism*

Colonial discourse is pervasive in Power's translation, as in *Paradise Lost*, rendering many different figures and domains as colonizer and colonized. Evans notes that Raphael and Satan embody two sides of the colonial quest and that the similes describing their visitations to the 'New World' overlap significantly.<sup>41</sup> Power emphasizes this when translating the double simile for Raphael's sighting of the world. The first part compares Raphael to Galileo; in the second comparison, to a 'pilot from amidst the Cyclades' (PL 5.264), Power uses the word that he uses frequently of Satan, 'rector', which also describes the translator's own role in the colonies.<sup>42</sup> Power's translations of Satan's mercantile voyages often extend Satan's colonial ambitions into further territory. In book 9, for example, Power makes a minor adjustment to the route of Satan's worldwide search for a creature to inhabit (see Figure 5.1):

From Eden over Pontus, and the pool  
Maeotis, up beyond the river Ob;  
Downward as far antarctic; and in length  
West from Orontes to the ocean barred  
At Darien, thence to the land where flows  
Ganges and Indus: thus the orb he roamed  
With narrow search [. . .]

(PL 9.77–83)

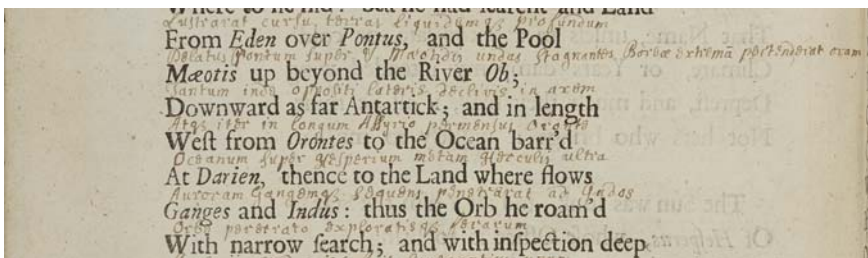


Fig. 5.1. 'From Eden over Pontus', Trinity College, Cambridge James R.2.37 [John Milton, *Paradise Lost* with an interlinear translation into Latin hexameters by Thomas Power of books 8–12], p. 218. Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

<sup>41</sup> Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic*, 71–7.

<sup>42</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge James MS R.2.38, 5.264.

In Power's translation, Satan conducts his journey westward from the Orontes to the Indus via the Strait of Gibraltar, rather than the Isthmus of Darien or Panama, as in Milton's epic:

*Oceanum super Hesperium metam Herculis ultra  
Auroram Gangemque sequens penetrarat ad Indos[.]*

[over the Hesperian Ocean, beyond the limit of Hercules, seeking the dawn and the Ganges, he had reached the Indians(.)]

The phrase '*metam Herculis*' suggests the Pillars of Hercules, the promontories that flank the Strait of Gibraltar (also called the 'gates of Gades,' ancient Cadiz on the Iberian peninsula), erected or pushed apart by Hercules, according to myth, on his way to complete his tenth labour: stealing the cattle of Geryon from the island Erytheia, at the absolute edge of the ancient known world.<sup>43</sup> Power's classicizing alteration facilitates a quotation of the opening of Juvenal's tenth satire, '*Omnibus in terris, quae sunt a Gadibus usque | Auroram et Gangen*' [In all the lands from Cadiz as far as Ganges and the dawn]; the original eastward direction of Juvenal's line is reversed and its point of origin, Cadiz, alluded to indirectly.<sup>44</sup> Cadiz is, of course, the point of departure for Columbus's voyages as well as Juvenal's poem; Power's Ulyssean Satan thus outdoes Columbus as well as Hercules and Juvenal, starting further east and passing through the Atlantic to the actual (East) Indies. The translation extends the imaginative empire of Latin beyond classical bounds, by expressing a full circumnavigation of the globe in the terms of Juvenal's description of ancient *terra cognita*. Not only this, but the coincidence of the adjective '*Hesperium*' with Hercules's name nods to the garden of the Hesperides, also in the far west, from which Hercules stole apples for his eleventh labour, and especially to Milton's assertive comparison of Edenic and Hesperian fruit: 'Hesperian fables true, | If true, here only' (*PL* 4.250–1). As Milton and other writers 'impl[y] that [the Hesperides] are on an island in the Atlantic' rather than in their traditional location in North Africa, there is a hint of a playful suggestion in Power's lines that the 'Hesperian fables true' are truly to be found not in Eden nor in Africa but on an Atlantic island, such as his own location, Bermuda.<sup>45</sup>

Three central themes of Power's translation—vision, accommodation, and colonialism—come together clearly at the moment when Milton mentions Columbus by name, as the fallen Adam and Eve clothe themselves with fig leaves:

<sup>43</sup> Delahunty and Dignen, 'Pillars of Hercules.'

<sup>44</sup> Juvenal, *Satires*, 10.1–2.

<sup>45</sup> See Starnes, 'The Hesperian Gardens in Milton.'

Such of late  
Columbus found the American so girt  
With feathered cincture, naked else and wild  
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.  
(PL 9.1115–8)

Power's translation of the passage from Adam's speech to the Columbus simile forms a climactic set-piece (PL 9.1080–118). Adam asks,

How shall I behold the face  
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy  
And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes  
Will dazzle now this earthly [. . .]  
(PL 9.1080–3)

Power translates 'face' as '*species*': Adam fears that there will be no possibility of accommodating spiritual forms to a *species* that his eyes can bear after the Fall; he feels himself beyond the reach of accommodation. Power's translation intensifies Adam's self-loathing: he calls himself '*nullus*' [nothing] and '*faecem*' [dregs]; later in this speech, Adam declares that his genitals 'reproach us as unclean' (PL 9.1098), which Power expands as '*immundosque et turpes arguat index*' [a sign that declares us dirty and foul]. The word '*index*' recalls his earlier description of the unfallen Adam's hair in book 4 as an '*Index imperii*' [a sign of *imperium*] over Eve, whose 'wanton ringlets' (PL 4.306) are an '*Index obsequii*' [a sign of subjugation]. We begin to see Adam's fall as a fall from *imperium*.

Adam wishes that he might 'In solitude live savage' (PL 9.1085). Power translates this as '*versarer agrestis* [. . .] *Incola*' [would that I could be turned into a rustic native]. The Latin '*agrestis* [. . .] *Incola*' does not convey ferocity, but it points to a native person more specifically than Milton's adverbial 'savage'; the verb '*versarer*', indicating a metamorphosis, implies that the condition that Adam desires is innate, as if native, rather than one that he can assume voluntarily by beginning to 'live savage'. Adam and Eve then choose the fig tree to cover their nudity. Power's description of the fig tree used for shelter by the 'Indian herdsman', as '*Agresti specie nativis scena columnis*' [a scene with a rustic appearance and natural columns] echoes Adam's depiction of the *agrestis incola*, grouping Adam's 'savage', the 'Indian herdsman', and 'the American' (PL 9.1108, 9.1116) together under one imperial *species* as romanticized, unsavage *incolae* or 'Indians'. Power omits Milton's description of 'the American' as 'wild' (PL 9.1117). Yet when Milton describes the fig tree as 'to Indians known', adding 'In Malabar or Decan' after the line break (PL 9.1102–3), Power's clearer demarcation of East from West Indies—'*celebratum Orientibus Indis*' [celebrated in the *East* Indies] (emphasis mine)—can be read as a personally motivated correction.

From book 2 onwards, Power's translation is not densely intertextual, relative to other Latin translations, and he quotes most frequently from Juvenal, reflecting

his recent involvement in Dryden's translation. Instead of strewing his translation pervasively with 'intertextual leaves', Power includes one direct citation at the moment when Adam and Eve stitch together fig leaves to cover themselves.<sup>46</sup> The openness of this intertextual fig leaf shows readers how translation can *cover* scriptural and Miltonic language—'vain covering if to hide' (*PL* 9.1113). Alongside his translation of 'together sewed [. . .] leaves' (*PL* 9.1112, 1110) as '*fecere manu campestria*' [made *campestria* by hand], Power writes '*Campestre vid. Aug*' (see Figure 5.2). Augustine discusses the word *campestria* in *The City of God*:

[Adam and Eve] sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons [*campestria*], that is, loincloths [*succinctoria*], a term employed by certain translators. (Moreover, though *campestria* is a Latin word, it derives its origin from the practice of young men who used to cover up their pudenda while they exercised in the nude on the *campus* or field. Hence, those who are so girt are commonly called [*vulgus appellat*] *campestrati*.)<sup>47</sup>

Both Augustine and Power temper scripture '*ad Latinam consuetudinem*' [to Latin habits] by using a word derived from a Roman practice to describe the first loincloths. As there is no term for 'loincloths' in Milton's English, Power's insertion of this translational crux is a pointed gesture to the necessity of lesser forms of accommodation after the Fall for the *vulgus* [multitude]—in Power's case, a literate Latin readership familiar with Augustine and Roman exercise practices.

The relevance of Augustine's discourse 'On the Nakedness of the First Human Beings' to Power's translation goes beyond this word. Immediately before

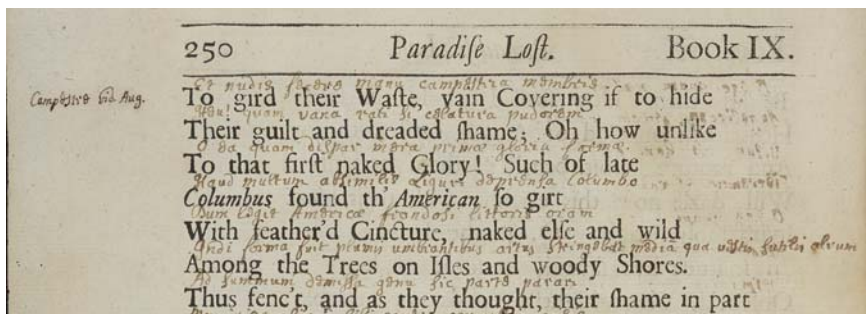


Fig. 5.2. '*Campestre vid Aug*', Trinity College, Cambridge James R.2.37 [John Milton, *Paradise Lost* with an interlinear translation into Latin hexameters by Thomas Power of books 8–12], p. 250. Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

<sup>46</sup> Haan, "Latinizing" Milton, 101.

<sup>47</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Volume IV, 359.

discussing *campestria*, Augustine addresses Adam and Eve's eyesight: 'the first human beings had not been created blind, as the ignorant multitude [*vulgus*] think, since Adam saw the animals upon which he bestowed names [. . .] their eyes were not closed, but they were not open [. . .] When this grace was lost [. . .] nudity was indecent. [. . . Therefore] Scripture says of them, 'And the eyes of both were opened [. . .]'.<sup>48</sup> Fallenness is a way of seeing that renders nudity indecent and contrasts the unmediated vision that allowed prelapsarian naming. Augustine then engages in some comparative anthropology:

Ever since that time, this habit of concealing the pudenda has been deeply ingrained in all peoples, descended, as they are, from the original stock. In fact, certain barbarians [*barbari*] do not expose those parts of the body even in the bath but wash with their coverings on [*tegmentis*]. In the dark retreats [*solitudines*] of India too certain men who practice philosophy in the nude nevertheless use coverings [*tegmina*] for their genitals, though they have none for the other parts of the body.<sup>49</sup>

Milton's clothing of 'the American' with a 'feathered cincture, naked else', extends Augustine's conclusions into the Americas. Milton implies that 'the "naked Glorie" (*PL* 9.1115) of prelapsarian humanity [. . . was] lost on both sides of the Atlantic', since, as Augustine states, all people are descended from the same fallen stock.<sup>50</sup> Milton's 'Indian herdsman' sheltering in 'thickest shade' (*PL* 9.1110) and Adam's desire for savage solitude likely led Power to recall Augustine's naked philosophers in the 'the dark retreats [*solitudines*] of India'. The Augustinian intertext furthers Power's merging of Adam's 'savage', the 'Indian herdsman', and 'the American' under one fallen, colonial gaze and indiscriminating names into a contemplative pastoral native who conceals his own genitals from himself in the bath.

Although all peoples use such coverings, only Adam and Eve wear *campestria* in Power's translation, becoming *campestrati*, implicitly affiliated with Roman *iuvenes* and elevated above the natives to whom they are compared. Just as Augustine resists calling the barbarians' loincloths *campestria*, referring to their *tegmina/tegmenta*, Power's Native American is girt instead with '*plumis umbrantibus*':

*Haud multum absimilis Liguri deprensa Columbo*  
*Dum legit Americae frondosi littoris oram*  
*Indi forma fuit plumis umbrantibus artus*  
*Stringebat mediam qua vestis sutilis alvum.*

<sup>48</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Volume IV, 357–9.

<sup>49</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Volume IV, 361.

<sup>50</sup> Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic*, 101.



[Not much different was the form of the Indian, detected by Ligurian Columbus when he coasted along the shore of leafy America, with feathers shading his limbs where his sewn garment restrained the stomach in the middle.]

Power's addition of the epithet 'Ligurian' displays his knowledge of Columbus's Italian origins, also emphasized by Milton's nephew Edward Phillips in his definition of America in *The New World of Words* (1658, revised several times including 1678 and 1696): 'the Fourth part of the World discovered [. . .] by Americus Vesputius a Florentine, and Christophorus Columbus a Genoese'.<sup>51</sup> Power's epithet affiliates Columbus with 'the Tuscan artist' (*PL* 1.288), Galileo, whose 'glass' Power also labells 'Hetrusc[us]' [Etruscan/Tuscan] in the double simile describing Raphael's approach to the Earth (*PL* 5.261). Power gives Columbus and Galileo a Roman heritage, as he does Adam and Eve, which differentiates them from the indigenous peoples. In that simile, the 'Imagined lands' (*PL* 5.263) that Galileo observes in the moon have '*specie nemoralis agresti*' [the appearance of a rustic wood] like the '*Agresti specie*' of the American under the fig tree. Power's translation demonstrates the power of the colonial gaze and its centrality to the imperial enterprise, how it telescopically scales and accommodates things to its own way of seeing, and how it follows from the opening of Adam and Eve's eyes after the Fall.

### Beyond Babel: Latin Translation

Augustine mediates Power's translation of Milton's colonial discourse again in book 12, when the archangel Michael tells Adam the story of Nimrod and Babel. Nimrod's 'empire tyrannous' culminates in the construction of the tower of Babel, punished by the confusion of tongues (*PL* 12.32). Michael styles Nimrod as 'A mighty hunter [. . .] Before the Lord', translating another scriptural crux in *The City of God* (*PL* 12.33–4). Augustine argues that the Greek ἐναντίον can mean both 'against' and 'before', and therefore that Nimrod is a mighty 'venator' [hunter] 'against [*contra*] the Lord', not 'before [*ante*] the Lord'.<sup>52</sup> Just as *campestria* exemplified the indirectness of language after the Fall, ἐναντίον exemplifies the utter incompatibility of languages after Babel. Diplomatically, or simply for metrical reasons, Power avoids using either '*ante*' or '*contra*', writing simply '*Domino*' [to the Lord]. Power's handling of the colonial theme of the Babel passage shares this avoidance of the implications of both Milton's and Augustine's conclusions for his own practices.

In *Paradise Lost*, the story of Babel recalls 'the betrayal of the English republic' by Oliver Cromwell, who, like Nimrod, 'claim[ed] second sovereignty' (*PL* 12.35),

<sup>51</sup> Phillips, *New World of Words*, sig. C2r.

<sup>52</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Volume V, 28–9.

and specifically ‘the failure of Cromwell’s Western Design’ against the Spanish West Indies ‘which had [...] brought the justness of his cause into question among many of his former supporters’.<sup>53</sup>

He with a crew, whom like ambition joins  
With him or under him to tyrannize,  
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find  
[...] the mouth of hell

(PL 12.38–42)

Augustine’s interpretation of Babel stresses the importance of language as the instrument of imperialism more emphatically than does Milton’s, which places its emphasis on tyranny: ‘Since a ruler’s power resides in his tongue [*dominatio imperantis in lingua est*], it was in that member that he suffered the penalty for his pride, so that he would not be understood when commanding men.’<sup>54</sup> Power amplifies Milton’s and Augustine’s common point that Babel is a punishment for imperialism: the people whom Nimrod enslaves under his ‘*imperium*’ are not just ‘men’ (PL 12.30) but ‘*agrest[es]*’, like Adam’s savage. Power’s first use of the word ‘barbarous’ occurs after the punishment of Babel:

[God] sets  
Upon their tongues a various spirit to raze  
Quite out their native language [...]   
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud [...]   
[...] thus was the building left  
Ridiculous, and the work Confusion named.

(PL 12.52–62)

*Vim variam immittit linguis confundere vocum*  
*Nativas species consuetaque signa loquentum*  
[...] *barbaries linguae et farrago loquela* [...]   
*Hinc confusum operi posuit discordia nomen.*

[He sends upon their tongues a various power of voices to confound their native appearance and the accustomed signs of speakers [...] barbarousness of language and a farrago of speech [...]. The disharmony gave the name ‘confusion’ to the work.]

The punishment for violent colonialism is for the imperialist to be rendered a barbarian, a term more derogatory than *agrestis*. Augustine’s interpretation of Babel

<sup>53</sup> Armitage, 220.

<sup>54</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Volume V, 29.

has particular consequences for the meaning of Latin translation that become evident, but are not fully acknowledged, in Power's translation. Although Latin is a post-Babel language, we can see through Power's translation how its relative universalism can reverse Babel's effects. Words like 'various', 'native', 'language', 'Confusion', and 'name' hardly change in translation due to their Latin etymologies; Latin was, by definition, not a 'barbarian' tongue;<sup>55</sup> Power has already stated that his translation accords with '*consueta* [. . .] *signa loquentum*' by accommodating Milton's sense '*ad Latinam consuetudinem*'; Latin is understood by people 'divided by their languages and scattered through all lands' after Babel.<sup>56</sup> If imperial power lies in language, Latin offers a solution to the dissolution of Babel that likens the Latin translator to the imperialist Nimrod—a likeness that is only enhanced by the pertinence of Milton's Cromwellian reading of Babel to Power's position in the West Indies.

How are we then to read Adam's horrified reaction to Michael's story—'man over men | He made not lord [. . .] human left from human free' (*PL* 12.69–71)—closely and unselfconsciously translated by Power, a settler in a colonial plantocracy founded on slavery, whose stipend as a minister likely consisted of sugar and tobacco? *Paradise Lost* itself apparently presents a 'radical bifurcation' between two colonial narratives: one modelled on an idea of the corrupt and enslaving Spanish conquest, and one on the benign English settlement.<sup>57</sup> In Power's translation and colonial setting, this bifurcation, already complicated by the Cromwellian Western Design, is defunct. The West Indian islands that Power inhabited had been English for at least sixty years. The settlers not only enslaved the islands' native inhabitants, the Caribs, and violated their own treaties allocating them reserves, but also imported slaves from Africa. In Power's translation, only Nimrod's violent, Old Testament imperialism is implicitly condemned, as opposed to the more benign colonists who cross the Atlantic and communicate with Adam and Eve as elevated versions of loinclothed 'Indians'. In the latter group, even Satan's colonialism is not strongly differentiated from Columbus's, Raphael's, God's, and Power's own as colonial rector. The doubleness of Milton's colonial narrative means that someone like Power could doubtless find much in *Paradise Lost* to justify the ways of man to man in the colonies, identifying with a narrative of colonial exploration and communication befitting a rector, rather than one of violent enslavement closer to the reality of the West Indies in the 1690s.

In his colonial role, Power mediates between God and the planters, perhaps also native people and slaves, through the Bible and Christian exegesis; in his act of translation, Power mediates temporally and geographically between the 'New' and 'Old' Worlds through Milton's poem, accommodating the 'New' to the signs

<sup>55</sup> *OED*, 'barbarian', n 1b.: 'A person living outside the pale of the Roman empire and its civilization.'

<sup>56</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Volume V, 31.

<sup>57</sup> Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic*, 141.

of the 'Old', thus reversing John Eliot's technique. The translation renders *Paradise Lost*'s older, more benign narratives of the 'New World' as Roman myths or Hesperian fables to be sent across Europe, and avoids the more recent, troubling narratives of the Western Design and Power's own settlements. It shows how Latin as a medium goes beyond Babel: after the fall of its actual empire, it retains a near-universal communicative power across the colonizing half of the world, making it the *compañera* of all empires. Power thus elides differences between colonial enterprises through his medium as well as his message. The translation is nonetheless successful. Its prioritization of Miltonic themes differentiates it from Power's own rendering of book 1 and the other complete Latin translations of William Hog, Joseph Trapp, and William Dobson. This difference was a consequence of Power's voyage across the Atlantic.

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## *Paradise Lost* in Frisian Translations

Geart van der Meer

It is a truism that translating any literary work is challenging. Translating John Milton's *Paradise Lost* presents particular challenges, at its original time because of the author's innovative poetics and, increasingly, because of what individual words and epic as a whole have come to mean.<sup>1</sup> One more layer of challenges presents itself in the case of a language like contemporary Frisian. It is a mainly spoken language used by speakers who traditionally use Dutch for formal purposes and which, due to its history, makes Milton's Latinized vocabulary and syntax almost impossible to emulate.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Frisian is spoken by some 400,000 people in the province of Friesland, in the north of the Netherlands. Friesland lost its independence in 1498 and has ever since been dominated linguistically by Dutch as it developed under the influence of the most populous and powerful province, Holland, especially after the rise of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces in the course of the sixteenth century. In the Republic, a kind of federal state, Friesland was in many ways a tiny independent country with its own *stadtholder* [chief magistrate], but Frisian was never accorded official status as the language of administration, law, education, and the Church, though it remained the spoken medium of the large majority of the population.<sup>2</sup> It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that Frisian was granted some legal status: as an officially recognized second language of the kingdom within the borders of the province, some formal teaching of Frisian would be allowed at primary school level and Frisian would also be allowed in the court room. This came after a long struggle by language activists who found their main inspiration in the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century and in particular the Renaissance Frisian poet Gysbert Japicx (1603–1666).<sup>3</sup> The importance of that struggle can be well-appreciated by recognizing the vanguard position of Dutch translations of Milton's works during that period. Milton's prose work *Defensio pro*

<sup>1</sup> For translations of Milton's works from the seventeenth to twenty-first century, see Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*.

<sup>2</sup> After abjuring the Spanish king, the *stadtholder*, theoretically a non-hereditary elected official, is supposed to stand in place of the abjured king as head of state. In practice it became a hereditary office. For a long time Friesland had its own *stadtholder*.

<sup>3</sup> Japix, *Friesche rymlerye*.

*populo Anglicano* [Defense of the English People] (1650) was published in Dutch translation immediately, in 1650, and *Paradise Lost* (1667) in 1728.<sup>4</sup>

Today the majority of Frisian speakers do not write Frisian, though they are able to read it with varying degrees of proficiency. The inevitable effect of more than five hundred years of domination by Dutch is large-scale interference, especially in areas of the vocabulary normally reserved for the official language. Today *all* Frisian speakers are bilingual and are more proficient in Dutch than in Frisian, at least when all linguistic levels, from informal to formal and from general to specialized, are taken into consideration. It is from this perspective perhaps surprising that Frisian still exists.

Written Frisian more or less disappeared after the beginning of the sixteenth century. The main exceptions are, first, the hefty volume of poems, songs, dialogues, fifty rhyming translations of the biblical Psalms, and some translations from French by Japicx, published posthumously in 1668 and, secondly, the rest of the 150 Psalms by Jan Althuysen in 1755.<sup>5</sup> Written Frisian for the rest remained a trickle with no further books of any real size, but a more or less continuous trickle nevertheless. This lasted into the nineteenth century, when gradually the trickle became a modest brook. It was not until the twentieth century that a full translation of the Bible was published and, for instance, a complete translation of William Shakespeare's plays and poetical works. The situation of Frisian as mainly a spoken language, only very modestly recognized as an official language, led to a paucity of words for the more formal levels of the vocabulary. Whenever more formal words and expressions are required, Frisian tends to lean on Dutch to fill in the gaps by means of loan-translations.

Frisian is a West-Germanic language and is grouped with English as opposed to Dutch and German as a subdivision. The oldest strata of the language still reflect this close relation between Frisian and English, as for example in words like *skiep* for English *sheep*, where Dutch has *schaap* and German *Schaf*. But like Dutch, Frisian has not undergone the huge post-Norman Conquest (1066 CE) Romanization of vocabulary or the resultant simplification of grammar, as in the case of hybridized English. In other words, like Dutch, it has retained many adjectival inflections and verb endings that English has seen fit to drop, which means not only that English has (fortunately) rid itself of a lot of superfluous grammatical ballast, but also that Frisian and Dutch words often tend to be longer by at least one syllable than their English etymological equivalents. This fact often causes problems within the confines of the ten-syllable iambic pentameter, when, in addition to mere translation, equivalents of two or more endings will have to be accommodated.

<sup>4</sup> For a study of Dutch translations, see Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, 'Paradise Lost in Dutch', 67–84, in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*.

<sup>5</sup> Althuysen, *Friesche rymery*.



Another problem often encountered when translating from English is the very Romanization or Latinization of the English vocabulary previously noted, which not only provides English with numerous grand and sonorous-sounding high-register words, but in addition gives authors an opportunity to vary their vocabulary by means of using a Romanized word after or before having used the Anglo-Saxon equivalent, as in the pair 'heavenly' and 'celestial' or 'green' and 'verdant', where languages like Frisian and Dutch do not have this opportunity for variation. The result is not only less variation in such translations, but also a less grandiloquent vocabulary. Milton used his extensive knowledge of Latin to great effect and he especially indulged when beginning and ending each of his twelve books, all but impossible to imitate in Frisian.

### The First of the Three Frisian Translations of *Paradise Lost*

There are three translations of *Paradise Lost* into Frisian, each illustrating to varying extents the major differences in the character of the vocabulary of the source and target languages, as explained. The first, *It Paradys Forlern* (1918), is comprised of the first 241 lines of book 1, in blank verse.<sup>6</sup> I do not know how familiar this verse form was in Frisian at the time, but it was certainly not unknown. In fact, Frisian can boast being the first language in the Netherlands with a number of genuine translations—not adaptations—of Shakespeare's plays, well before Dutch. The clergyman Rinse Posthumus (1790–1859) published Frisian translations of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar* in 1829 and *As You Like It* in Frisian blank verse in 1842. His translation of *The Tempest* remained a manuscript. The first translations of Shakespeare's plays in Dutch did not appear until 1886, by Leendert Alexander Johannes Burgersdijk (1828–1900).

The Frisian translator Douwe Kalma (1896–1953) was a precocious young man who even before he turned twenty had made quite a name for himself by rejecting the old guard in Frisian letters, who with some exceptions were accused of pandering to popular taste and writing humorous folkloristic texts without aiming at higher literature. His slogan was '*Fryslân en de wrâld*' [Friesland and the world], by which he meant that Frisian culture, including literature, should emulate world culture and look beyond the narrow confines of the province. Kalma, a teacher of English at secondary-school level, suited his actions to his words by translating from world literature, in this case English, including a translation of the medieval poem *The Pearl*, parts of the Old English epic poem *Beowulf*, Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Adonais*, and his magnum opus, a translation of all Shakespeare's works. He also wrote Shakespearian-style plays in blank verse about the early medieval Frisian kings. Kalma was a very able versifier from a technical point of

<sup>6</sup> Milton, *It Paradys Forlern*, trans. Kalma.

view but his tendency towards a certain pompousness, coupled with a rigorous linguistic purism and his esoteric idealism, do not always make his poems a joy to read.

Yet it has to be admitted that Frisian owes him a debt, for around 1915 the social status of Frisian was simply that of a dialect, not suited to high culture, even though linguists considered it a separate language and not simply a (Dutch) dialect. In a weekly Frisian-language paper, a popular journalist pointed out what was probably a generally held view, that a then well-known book by the famous Dutch author Louis Couperus, *Majesteit* [*Majesty*] (1893), about a royal family, could not have been written in Frisian: the language simply did not have the right vocabulary with the proper connotations. He was correct, of course, but overlooked the possibility of making a language suited to higher purposes and then for its speakers to become accustomed to and reconciled with such previously unheard-of uses. In this way, both Kalma and his critics were wrong and right at the same time: Frisian could not possibly be made the language of high culture overnight, but it could very well be started on its way towards this goal. Today, a century after Kalma, Frisian has still not managed to become suited to all that a modern language like Dutch is routinely used for, and it never will; but fewer eyebrows, or none, will be raised than in 1918 when *Paradise Lost* was translated.

In this first attempt at Milton's work in Frisan, the famous beginning is an apt illustration of all vocabulary and related problems touched on above:

<i>Fen minsk'ne foarste ûnhearsumheit, de</i>	[OF Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
<i>frucht</i>	
<i>Fen dy forbearne beam, hwaens deadlik</i>	Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
<i>oeft</i>	
<i>De dea brocht yn ús wrâld, en al ús wea,</i>	Brought Death into the World, and all our
	woe,
<i>'t Forlies fan Eden, oant ien greater minsk'</i>	With loss of <i>Eden</i> , till one greater Man
<i>Us ynlaet yn it wer-woun seine-gea,</i>	Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
<i>Sjong dêrfen, Himel-sjongster, dû dy't ek</i>	Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
<i>Op Sinai's ef Oreb's heimnis-kling</i>	Of <i>Oreb</i> , or of <i>Sinai</i> , didst inspire
<i>De Skepers-man biselest, dy't it earst</i>	That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen
	Seed,
<i>'t Forkeazen folts learde oer it oanbegjin,</i>	In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
<i>Ho't Ierde en Himel riisde út Chaos. Ef</i>	Rose out of <i>Chaos</i> : Or if <i>Sion</i> Hill
<i>As Sion's berch, Siloa's wjitt'ring, deun</i>	Delight thee more, and <i>Siloa's</i> Brook that
	flow'd
<i>By 't Godshûs geand, dy mear fornoeget, sa</i>	Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
<i>Rop ik dy dêrwei nei myn dryste sang,</i>	Invoke thy aid to my adventurous Song,
<i>Dy't ik mei nin wenstge flecht yet wjukje</i>	That with no middle flight intends to soar
<i>wol</i>	
<i>Boppe 't Aonysk berchtme, stribjend nei</i>	Above th' <i>Aonian</i> Mount, while it pursues
<i>Hwet yet nin ien yn proaza ef rym bistie.<sup>7</sup></i>	Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.]
	(PL 1.1–16)

<sup>7</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Milton Reading Room*, ed. Luxon, and cited parenthetically in the text. Milton, *It Paradys Forlern*, trans. Kalma. Kalma's translation adheres to Milton's book and line numbers.

The first enjambment on 'Fruit' is nicely retained, but then the next problem will be 'mortal tast' with its possibly two-layered meaning of 'lethal taste' and 'tasted by mortal humans'. Kalma comes up with '*deadlik oeft*', which means 'lethal fruit', thus missing the death-causing *activity* of tasting. After that, the rendering is rather straightforward and literal, until lines 4–5, which are in back-translation 'till one greater human being | again leads us into the regained blessing-land'. That 'blessing-land', for 'blissful Seat', is a curious and uncalled-for compound, quite in line with Kalma's (notorious) penchant for coining neologisms—as had Milton. In line 6, '*Sjong dêrfen*' [sing thereof] does not really manage to copy the solution of the wonderful tension in Milton's syntax, where the very first word of the epic is at long last, after five lines, connected with its collocating verb: 'sing of', here in reversed order 'of – sing'. Here '*dêrfen*' [thereof] functions as a restart of the syntax, with '*dêr(fen)*' referring to the preceding five lines as its antecedent, and '*(dêr)fēn*' repeating and resuming the '*Fēn*' [of] of the first line. The 'Heavenly Muse' is here curiously rendered as '*Himel-sjongster*' [Heaven-singer (female)], another example of Kalma's neologizing tendency. Another example, in line 7, is '*heimnis-kling*' [secrecy-hillock] for 'secret top'. The demands of the metre must be held accountable for the curious '*Skepers-man*' [shepherd man] in line 8, where '*man*' fills the requisite stressed syllable in the second foot. For 'chosen Seed' Kalma has '*Forkeazen folts*' [chosen people] and if the word 'Seed' for 'people' is in English as unusual as I think it is, the Frisian word '*sie*' might have been used as well, though I quite understand Kalma's choice here for the more prosaic '*folts*'. But then, typically, Kalma did not use the much more common form *folk*, by which means—using less common or obsolescent words or forms—he seemingly tries to suggest a more formal style.

The relatively uncommon word '*wjitt'ring*' in line 11 for Milton's simple 'Brook' is also noteworthy. It is one of the words of which Kalma was so enamoured. He must have thought it to be a quite poetic word and overuses it in his poetry as a register-raising word, whereas it simply means any canal or stream or brook. Here simple Frisian '*beek*' [brook] would have sufficed. Strange then that, in the very next line, the rather colourless and unpoetic '*geand*' [going] is used for 'flow'd'—or must we simply assume that the present participle '*streamend*' [flowing] was rejected for having one syllable too many?

'Oracle' in line 12 became '*Godshûs*' [God's house] and, though because of the possibly heathen connotations of oracle the Frisian '*orakel*' may have been rightly rejected, the rendering *Godshûs* is not quite felicitous, since it normally stands for 'church', never 'temple'. Lines 12–13, with its 'Invoke', is unfortunately an example of misunderstanding the English source text, where we read that the epic narrator invokes his heavenly muse's assistance for his 'adventrous' song from wherever her abode may be. Here, 'aid to' must be read as help or assistance *for*, but Kalma curiously enough understood the preposition 'to' in its directional local sense: aid directionally from, for example, Sion's hill *towards* his poetic attempt, literally:

'thus | I call you from there towards my adventurous song', which makes little sense. Weak is also Kalma's rendering of 'no middle flight' as '*nin wenstige flecht*' [no usual flight], while '*wjukje*' [fly on wings] for 'soar' is too static, 'soar' more suggesting moving *upwards* than just flying permanently at the same height.

Given that Kalma was an able versifier, line 16 is a little disappointing, with its eleven syllables. It seems that he intended to run together the two words, '*proaza ef*' [prose or], by means of elision—in '*proaza*', the final *-a* is fused with the *e-* of the following '*ef*' by very quickly pronouncing them as one syllable. The former would be unusual in Frisian prosody, so the latter seems more likely, if somewhat artificial.

In principle, Kalma's version manages to bring across—*translate* in its etymological sense—everything in the source text and does so in the same number of lines and the same number of syllables, which is no mean feat. But this comes at a cost, for by somewhat indulging his characteristic tendency for using what I term *Kalma-speak*—strange compounds, rare, obsolescent, or antiquated words or forms to move the language away from ordinary spoken Frisian—he makes his Frisian version much stranger than Milton's verse really was. Conversely, and in Kalma's defence, in 1918 Frisian needed to be kneaded into a genuinely literary medium with 'high' words. As such, the 16 lines discussed here are only a modest example of this heightening operation.

### John Milton *syn Paradise Lost*, *ferfryske troch Sjoerd van Tuinen*

Sjoerd van Tuinen's complete translation of *Paradise Lost*, *John Milton syn Paradise Lost*, [John Milton's '*Paradise Lost*'] (2005) predates my own version, though I did not discover its existence until I was somewhere in Milton's book 10.<sup>8</sup> The reason for my ignorance was that this text had been published privately and had been awarded no attention in either newspapers or journals. When I managed to acquire my own copy, it turned out to be a prose translation, as opposed to my own verse rendering, which put my mind quite at ease, since it was therefore no real competitor; my translation was still to be the first full verse translation.

But who was this translator? Sjoerd van Tuinen (1918–2011), I was able to discover, was the first child of Frisian parents who after the First World War moved to Heemskerk in the province of North Holland. The language of the home was Dutch. In those days, primary school teachers were strictly enjoined never to speak Frisian to their pupils, not even outside the school building. Living outside Friesland, Sjoerd's parents obviously also applied this rule to their own children. But during holidays and stays with his grandparents, Sjoerd became interested in the

<sup>8</sup> Indicative of the low circulation of this translation is that WorldCat lists only one available edition, at the Frisian Historical and Literary Centre in the Netherlands (WorldCat).

language of his (grand)parents and was hooked. Sjoerd van Tuinen ultimately became a secondary-school teacher of English in Alkmaar. After his retirement, he started on a prose translation of *Paradise Lost*. After a failed attempt to get it published officially by a Frisian Christian book club, he decided to publish privately, with a simple binding. This he gave away to interested acquaintances. Thus he stayed under the radar and for that reason his work remains largely unknown.

The obvious advantage of a prose translation is the absence of the strict necessity of sticking to the number of syllables in a line and of the requirement of metre, in this case iambic pentameter. This leaves quite a lot of leeway to pursue a full and literal translation of every word in the source text, and hence allows a more word-perfect version of the story. However, the way the story is told, that is, its form, is not an adventitious detail. When handled well, as in Milton's use of blank verse, it adds splendour, sonority, and grace to the story. In a prose translation, the beautiful words and images of the source text will possibly be retained, but gone will be the cadence of the source text and its music; its purposely deviant word-order may also disappear. Frequently the focus on literalness will lead to what, compared with the source text, must be called long-windedness. The pitfalls of such prose translations may be to explain too much and not to excite readers' poetic imagination.

One way out of the dilemma of lack of space in the case of adopting the blank verse form might have been to expand the number of verse lines. The disadvantage of this solution is that this too tends to diffuse the compactness of Milton's lines and hence concomitantly to weaken the translator's own focus on poetic compactness and concentration. Whatever Sjoerd van Tuinen's reasons may have been for selecting prose, this is what I will have to discuss and assess. I will again look at the beginning of the epic, quoted earlier:

*Fan minskne earste oerhearrichheid en de frucht fan 'e ferbeane beam dy't, ienkear preaun, de dea brocht yn 'e wrâld mei al 't fertriet en Eden ferlern, oant ien grutter minske ús rêdt en werbringt nei 't loksilich lân, sjong himelske Muze, dy't op 'e tsjustere berchtop fan 'e Hoareb of de Sinai de hoeder fan 'e skiep besiele om 't folk foar 't earst te learen hoe't yn 't oanbegjin de himel en de ierde opriisden út 'e gaos; of as jo de berch fan Sion leaver hawwe en de stream fan Siloam, dy't ticht by it orakel fan God lâns rûn, dan rop ik jo help dêrwei foar myn heldedicht, dat net midsmjittich fleane wol, heech boppe de Aoanyske berch, wylst it sjongt fan wat noch nea yn dizze of oare foarm besongen waard.<sup>9</sup>*

This opening has a modest tendency towards an iambic meter, which makes the inevitable lapses into humble prose all the more painful because of thwarted expectations. It is as if the translator was of two minds about which form to choose, rhythmic prose or ordinary prose. More in detail: '*de frucht fan 'e ferbeane beam*'

<sup>9</sup> Milton, *John Milton syn Paradise Lost*, trans. van Tuinen, i.

with '*fan 'e*' [of the] instead of the much more clearly deictic English 'that' in 'that Forbidden Tree', which refers to presupposed general knowledge, is unnecessarily vague. The words 'mortal tast' in line 2 become '*ienkear preaun*' [once tasted], which I consider rather weak as well. Likewise with the next line's '*al 't fertriet*' [all sadness], which misses the reference to the plural 'our' woe. In line 5 the grammatical subject of 'regain' must be the previous 'greater Man' and it seems most likely that the subjunctive 'regain' tacitly means 'regain for us'. Here Frisian has '*werbringt nei*' [takes back to], which focuses not on the Son's regaining Eden for us again, but on leading us back—a slightly different interpretation.

In line 6 '*sjong*' [sing] connects nicely with the '*Fan*' [of] line 1, without the syntactic restart as in Kalma's text. Line 6 'secret top' ends up as '*tsjustere berchtop*' [dark summit], an acceptable explanatory translation. An unnecessary weakening is 'chosen Seed' in line 8 as '*folk*' [people], leaving out 'chosen' altogether. For 'Oracle of God', van Tuinen bravely chose '*orakel fan God*', not caring about the possible pagan connotations. Slightly awkward in line 13 is the admittedly literal '*dan rop ik jo help dêrwei*' [then I call your aid from there]. The idea is that the muse is asked to give help from there, not that the aid itself must be sent for—but perhaps readers will now think that I am being finicky here.

Line 14, 'no middle flight' is here '*net midsmjittich fleane*' [not fly averagely], which is a little too prosaic and unimaginative, consistent with van Tuinen's style, rather than a problem related to a paucity of words or expressions in Frisian. The well-known words in line 16 'unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime' are also disappointingly generalized to '*noch nea yn dizze of oare foarm besongen waard*' [never yet in this form or other form treated in song]. In view of Milton's own rejection of end rhyme as the invention of a 'barbarous age' (*PL* 'The Verse'), it must be admitted that 'Rhyme' need not literally mean end-rhymed poetry, but rather 'poetic form', but even so Van Tuinen's translation is too general.

So far, the conclusion seems justified that what might be expected of a prose translation theoretically—no information 'lost in translation' and room for a meticulously word-perfect rendering—is not quite borne out by the facts here. However, Van Tuinen is not always too wordy. In book 10, the fallen Eve, 'abasht', replies to the Son's question 'what is this which thou hast done?' with the movingly simple ten syllables: 'The Serpent me beguil'd and I did eate' (*PL* 10.158–62). In Frisian this became '*De slange hat my bedragen en ik iet*' [the serpent has deceived me and I ate]. The force of this line in Milton's English resides in large part to the regular metre, whose monotonousness, as it were, acts out Eve's guilty sense of shame. In Frisian it is only eleven syllables, so no real wordiness. However, here the metre is not only destroyed in the prose, but the language is decidedly awkward, with a perfect tense followed by a past tense, where another perfect tense would have sounded more natural. Van Tuinen was here prepared for once to sacrifice grammatical naturalness to brevity. Another famous decasyllabic line occurs as Adam and Eve are being driven out of Eden. Adam and Eve, 'Som natural tears

they drop'd, but wip'd them soon' (PL 12.645). The Frisian text has, very prosaically, 'Hja litte inkele begryplike triennen, mar feie se gau wer ôf' [They let (drop) some understandable tears, but wipe them away quickly]. Van Tuinen uses nineteen syllables in a quite literal, so quite correct translation, but it remains long-winded prose. Such examples illustrate why a prose translation of impressive poetry falters.

### *It Paradys Ferlern*, by Geart fan der Mear<sup>10</sup>

My own Frisian translation, *It Paradys Ferlern* (2009), is a complete rendering in blank verse. In the volume *Milton in Translation*, only eight of the twenty-seven contributions are by published translators of Milton's works. Translators may be less objective but may possess greater insights into, understanding of, and sympathy with other translators' (and their own) decisions on the word level, where in practice all real translation takes place, never mind translatology and its theories. That said, I of course aim at the greatest possible objectivity while emphasizing that my status as translator enables me to give readers a look into the kitchen, so to speak: in many cases, where my memory serves me well, I am able to give inside information about my decisions and in general my translation strategy with the particular language of Frisian.

My first exposure to Milton was in 1963, when I, as well as my fellow students of English at the University of Groningen, was made to read selected passages from *Paradise Lost* in English. I recall being greatly impressed. The effect was enhanced a couple of years later when I listened to a BBC reading of *Paradise Lost* in English on long-wave radio. What struck me then was the impressive and majestic flow of the text in these big arcs of spoken language.<sup>11</sup> I read with great pleasure the complete text in the 1980s. Little did I know then that in 2005 I would embark on my own verse translation, which I started as a hobby to pass the time. I did some seventy-five lines and woke up to the fact that what I once considered to be almost impossible proved to be quite possible. During a fortnight's stay in hospital I decided to become serious and do the whole thing. I finished my project in 2007 and the book was published in 2009, with an introduction by my former colleague Helen Wilcox, together with the Milton scholar Thomas N. Corns, both professors at Bangor University in Wales.

My background and professional life had prepared me relatively well for my task: I had a good knowledge of literary Frisian and of course English, and I was well aware of the formal constraints and demands of such an undertaking. I decided to adopt the blank verse form, and I also decided not to expand the

<sup>10</sup> This is the Frisian form of my name.

<sup>11</sup> For oral readings of Milton's works, see Angelica Duran's 'Seeing, Hearing, and Feeling Milton's Works with and as Prosthetic Sign Systems' and John Hale's 'Milton Marathons' in the present volume.

number of lines, for reasons given in the introduction to Sjoerd van Tuinen's translation. The courses I taught at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, on literary translation and translatology had further taught me quite a lot about ways to escape from seemingly impossible corners. I was, from the start, well aware of the meaning of the phrase 'lost in translation,' which I knew to be inevitable given the requirements of the verse form and in addition the more limited vocabulary of Frisian. I also knew that, as I have suggested, a language like Frisian with its numerous syllable-adding inflections would consume more space than English. My guess is that on average this adds at least one extra syllable to each line, and often more. Thus, with this knowledge in mind, I began.

*De minsk syn earste oerhearrigens, de frucht  
Fan dy ferbeane beam, waans swiete kwea  
De dea op ierde brocht en al ús leed,*

*Ferlies fan Eden, oant ien grutter Minsk  
Dat hearlik stee ús wer jout, dêrfan sjong,  
Himelske Muze, Jo dy't ynwijd ha  
Op de ferhoalen Sinai of Horeb  
Dy skeper fan it útkard folk oer 't rizen*

*Ut oertiids gaos fan de ierde én  
De himel, of—as Jo de berch fan Sion  
Better haget, en Siloams stream, deun*

*Foarbij Gods timpel sljurdjend—stypje dêr  
Myn liet dat yn gjin middelhege flecht  
Heech oer de Helikon dryst kliuwe wol,  
Besykje wol wat nimmen noch yn rym  
Of proaza ûndernaam hat te beskriuwen.<sup>12</sup>*

OF Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit  
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast  
Brought Death into the World, and all our  
woe,

With loss of *Eden*, till one greater Man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,  
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top  
Of *Oreb*, or of *Sinai*, didst inspire  
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen  
Seed,

In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth  
Rose out of *Chaos*: Or if *Sion* Hill  
Delight thee more, and *Siloa's* Brook that  
flow'd

Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence  
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous Song,  
That with no middle flight intends to soar  
Above th' *Aonian* Mount, while it pursues  
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.

(PL 1.1–16)

The opening line would run to eleven syllables, if it were not for the happy circumstance that a weak ending in the so-called unstressed *schwa* may be elided when the following word also opens with a vowel. Thus, 'earste' [first] can in pronunciation become monosyllabic.<sup>13</sup> The words 'mortal tast' are here represented by 'swiete kwea' [sweet evil], which needs some clarification. My reasoning was that the double entendre of 'mortal tast' was untranslatable, so I decided to let 'swiet' suggest the element of tasting and 'kwea' the element of 'mortal', mortality being the penalty of the evil of tasting. The four times repeated 'ea' [iə] in lines 2 and 3 then additionally draws attention to this crucial event in the story. The subsequent lines more or less literally follow the source text, as far as 'dêrfan sjong' [thereof sing] in line 5, which renders 'Sing' in line 6, from which it can be concluded that I too was tempted to restart the syntax.

<sup>12</sup> Milton, *It Paradys Ferlern*, trans. van der Meer. My translation adheres to Milton's book and verse numbers.

<sup>13</sup> In my verse translations of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (2011) into both Frisian and Dutch, I have, for the sake of easier reading, used an apostrophe, as in 'earste', indicating that the *schwa* here should be elided.



For the sake of the metre ‘*Sinai of Horeb*’ turns around Milton’s order, and to save syllables only ‘secret’ has been kept as ‘*ferhoalen*’ [hidden], with ‘top’ being sacrificed, but still represented by the preposition ‘*op*’ [on]. Lines 7 and following have been reworked as ‘heavenly muse, you have instructed | on the hidden summit of Sinai or Horeb | that shepherd of the chosen people about the rise | from primeval chaos of the earth and | heaven.’ Something is lost here, but nothing essential.

Line 8 runs to eleven syllables because of bisyllabic ‘*risen*’ [rise]. This is a so-called feminine line ending, which is very frequent in languages like Frisian and Dutch, where a final unstressed syllable, usually an infinitival ending or an adjectival inflection, is allowed in poetry. This occurs only very rarely in *Paradise Lost*.

The ‘Oracle of God’ has become ‘*Gods timpel*’ [God’s temple], again due to the possible pagan connotations of ‘oracle’. Lines 12–14 read as ‘support there | my song that in no middle flight | wants to soar high over the Helicon’—put differently with no real loss of meaning but with the correct iambic pentameter. Line 15 then continues, ‘wants to attempt what nobody yet in rhyme | or prose has undertaken to describe’.

Thus, while sticking closely to the poetic form, and being forced to formulate the poem’s content occasionally differently, I have managed without too much loss in translation to also stick to the meaning. In cases when it is imperative to translate not only the verbal content but also the form, so to speak, a more drastic rewording is often called for. To return to the beautiful line 645 of book 12, also dealt with earlier, ‘Som natural tears they drop’d, but wip’d them soon,’ I managed to keep the required ten syllables by means of the following translation ‘*Fansels, sij skriemden even, mar net lang*’ which retranslated means ‘Of course, they wept briefly, but not very long.’ This illustrates how I was often forced to work.

As a final example of the need to reshuffle words and meanings and sometimes drop something when attempting a verse translation I here quote the famous beginning of book 3:

<i>Heil, Hillich Ljocht, earstberne himelbern,</i>	Hail holy light, ofspring of Heav’n first-born,
<i>Of mei ik ivich mei de Ivige</i>	Or of th’ Eternal Coeternal beam
<i>Jo neame sûnder blaam? Want God is ljocht,</i>	May I express thee unblam’d? since God is light,
<i>En wennet al yn strieljende iensumheid</i>	And never but in unapproached light
<i>Sûnt it begjin der tiid, dus ek yn Jo:</i>	Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,
<i>Útstrieling fan Gods ivich strieljend ljocht.</i>	Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
	(PL 3.1–6)

The second half of the first line means something like ‘first-borne heavenchild’. The second and third lines with that Latinate ‘Coeternal’ are like ‘or may I call thee eternal with the Eternal One without blame?’ Here I was unable to get in the word ‘*striel*’ [beam], but the literal translation of ‘since God is light’ provides this idea of

God being Himself light, so that this idea is not really lost. In line 4, ‘unapproached light’ became ‘*strieljende iensumheid*’ [radiant solitude], where ‘*iensumheid*’ [solitude] manages to capture most of the meaning of ‘unapproached’. Line 5 ‘from Eternitie’ is here ‘since the beginning of time’, which is a near equivalent. The heavily Latinate sixth line presented difficulties, and I ultimately had to be satisfied with ‘radiance of God’s eternal radiant light’. I hoped that the concept of the twice-mentioned radiance would cover the word ‘bright’, that ‘*útstrieling*’ would effectively translate ‘effluence’, since this Frisian compound literally—like ‘effluence’ itself—means ‘out-radiance’—so ‘radiance from’—and that ‘bright essence increate’ would be more or less the same as ‘God’s eternal radiant light’ in Frisian. Milton’s passage caused me no end of trouble because of its compactness and Latinate vocabulary, but I think my translation will do.

### Some Concluding Remarks

Though Milton’s explicit aim was to ‘justifie the wayes of God to men’, he must also have aimed at literary fame, to be achieved by writing this imposing epic (*PL* 1.26). My aim was to render the beauty of the text into a language I value. Being an atheist, I was not at all interested in Milton’s first aim. In fact, in the course of my work I came to loathe Milton’s God, much as William Empson did in his well-known book *Milton’s God* (1961). Kalma’s motivation must have been a desire to prove the suitability of Frisian for high literature. His religious views were rather vague and undefined. Van Tuinen, I know, was a practising Christian, which is all I venture to say about him. I think that to ‘justifie’ our three translations it would be fair to say that we were all driven by devotion to the Frisian language and admiration for this uniquely beautiful epic.

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# On the Faroese Reworking of *Paradise Lost*

*Turið Sigurðardóttir*

## Milton Across Heroic Ballad and Satire

Sometime in the 1820s, a little-noticed new departure took place in Faroese literature when Jens Christian Djurhuus (1773–1853) composed a religious song, *Púkaljómur* [Devil's Tones], in Faroese using as his source the English 'adventurous song' by John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (PL 1.13).<sup>1</sup> By applying the Faroese language to a religious song, the poet broke the monopoly of Danish as the sole language of religion in the Faroe Islands that had been established with the Reformation. As the most successful native poet during the era of Romantic revival of the Faroese-language heroic ballad, as well as a renowned composer of satirical ballads, Djurhuus had the stature and experience to launch religious poetry in Faroese. However, it took a long period of adjustment before the Faroese language was fully accepted as the language of the Church—a process only fully completed in the era after the Second World War. At the time of the reworking of Milton's epic, no standard Faroese orthography existed nor had many Faroese-language texts appeared in print. While Djurhuus's ballads and satires in Faroese were readily received, there was no space for a religious poem in Faroese. Instead of leaving *Púkaljómur* in a vacuum the poet transferred it into the popular genre of the satirical ballad: in his *Símunartáttur* [Satire of Símun] he repurposed the elevated expressions from *Púkaljómur* for ridicule. *Símunartáttur* was soon integrated into the still vibrant Faroese oral tradition and remained popular in the Faroese chain dance for years to come. Thus the first religious poem in Faroese, a reworking of *Paradise Lost*, lived on under the camouflage of satire.

Djurhuus's boldly experimental endeavour must be seen in connection with the inception of a Faroese print-literature in the 1820s and 1830s, which was propelled by national Romanticism and specifically by cultural Scandinavianism. The Reformation affected the different West Nordic parts of the Kingdom of Denmark in

<sup>1</sup> This and all quotations of Milton's *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Le Comte, unless otherwise noted, and cited parenthetically in the text.

different ways. Iceland preserved its script culture which dates from the introduction of Christianity around 1000. In Norway, Danish became the official language, as also happened in the Faroe Islands with its tiny population of 3,000–4,000 in 1600, growing slowly to 5,255 in 1800.<sup>2</sup> As the common people did not have much contact with the government, the Faroese language lived on as the spoken language, supported by a voluminous oral tradition, though the compulsory education in Christianity to a great extent consisted of learning by heart texts in Danish. Scholarly research into the common Old Norse literary tradition resulted in the promotion of Faroese language and literature, by Danish scholars in particular. The first Faroese-language publication, a collection of the medieval cycle of ballads about Sigurd the Dragonslayer, appeared in Denmark in 1822. It was followed by a translation of the Gospel of Matthew in 1823, and the medieval Icelandic Saga of the Faroe Islanders in 1832. The ballads and the saga were instant successes and a great source of inspiration for the developing Faroese literature. However, that was not the case with the Gospel of Matthew. This first publication of a biblical text in the Faroese language capsized on the tradition of Danish as the language of the sacred, a fate shared by *Púkaljómur*, which remained unpublished until 1905. Danish, which along with Swedish, is grouped as an East Nordic language, was well understood in its written form by educated Faroese people, while Danish spoken by Danes would cause some difficulty.

It was a turning point for the development of Faroese language and literature when the uniting figure, folklorist, and later Dean of the Faroe Islands, Venceslaus Ulricus Hammershaimb (1819–1909), undertook his publication of Faroese texts and grammar beginning in 1846. Even more consequential than his collection of oral literature was the orthographic standard Hammershaimb introduced in order to have the Faroese-language material cohere with the scholarly standard of the time. In accordance with the celebration of the Old Norse heritage emblematic of Scandinavian Romantic scholarship, this standard—which remains in use—was etymological in order to emphasize the status of Faroese as an authentic language of Norse origin, rather than a Norwegian or Danish dialect. Further in accordance with national-Romantic ideology, Hammershaimb took a strict purist line with regard to both language and literature which was embraced by the broad Faroese cultural-national movement that followed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For *Púkaljómur*, this linguistic purism, which was unable to accept the experimental translation of Danish religious language, became a new obstacle on the road to acceptance long after the prohibition of Faroese in religious matters had been lifted. Indeed, Hammershaimb's puzzled reaction to *Púkaljómur* in the 1840s exemplifies this work's scholarly reception.

<sup>2</sup> Hagstova Føroya, *Fólkatal*.

## Bridging the Void

Farmer and poet Jens Christian Djurhuus composed *Púkaljómur* between 1820 and 1842, arguably his most original work despite being one of the numerous links in the chain of translations, rewritings, and adaptations of Milton's epic. *Púkaljómur* reshapes and shortens its English source. As a rhymed song poem, while *Paradise Lost* is an unrhymed reading poem, *Púkaljómur* links up with the dominant Faroese-language genre, the ballad. However, *Púkaljómur*'s metric form is not the ballad's but rather is borrowed from medieval Icelandic Catholic poetry preserved in oral Faroese tradition, quite contrary to the Anglo-Protestant elements of *Paradise Lost*. By using the native ballad and Catholic hymn heritage in his ground-breaking launch of Faroese-language religious poetry, the poet combines the unheard-of with the well-known.

Milton, who wrote Latin poetry in his youth, set an ambitious goal when writing *Paradise Lost* in his vernacular. In his time, Latin maintained its position as the main language of writing and reading. English, like other vernaculars, was still unstable as a script language and had comparatively few readers.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, one of the earliest translations of book 1 of *Paradise Lost* was the Latin translation of 1691 by Thomas Power, intended to show the world Milton's greatness.<sup>4</sup> By comparison, two centuries later, the chances of success for a religious poem in Faroese were not favourable to say the least: the Faroese language, descending from Old Norse, was the spoken language of the Faroe Islands, but Danish was the exclusive language of the Church and a language of government. Although a vast collection of Faroese ballads had been collected in the late eighteenth century, no standard orthography existed and only a few books had been printed in Faroese.

Djurhuus is a towering figure within the Faroese ballad tradition, highly estimated for his poetry in the two ballad genres: heroic ballads with classical literary roots and satirical ballads on contemporary matters. Djurhuus is frequently referred to as *Sjóvarbóndin* [the Farmer by the Sea] or *Yrkjarin við Sjógv* [the Poet by the Sea], informal names reflecting his status in the folkish oral tradition. The well-read farmer-poet took the subjects for his heroic ballads from Norwegian and Danish translations of Norse sagas, as well as from Danish sagas. Although composed in writing, his poetry was transferred to orality when his audience memorized it and then disseminated it through the traditional Faroese chain dance, always hungry for new songs. It was Djurhuus's custom to present his new works in the chain dance during the Christmas celebration of his big household. On these occasions, he would perform his newest ballad, and the participants in the dance, thoroughly familiar with all the genre conventions, would memorize

<sup>3</sup> Corns, 'Milton and the Limitations of Englishness', 213.

<sup>4</sup> Lonsdale, 'Direction of Translation (Directionality)', 65. See also Shawcross, 'A Note on T. P.'s Translation of *Paradise Lost*'; Haan, "'Latinizing" Milton'; and Katie Mennis's chapter in the present volume, 'Latinizing Milton in the English West Indies'.

the new material. Soon a singer among the household would draw attention to himself—leaders of the singing of Faroese chain dance are predominantly male—on some other dancing occasion by presenting the new ballad. This immediate dissemination was a reward for the poet, who did not see any of his poems printed in his lifetime. Djurhuus's ballads and satires continue to be performed in the chain dance to this day.

In 1790, when Djurhuus was seventeen years old, *Paradise Lost* appeared in Danish. The title page states that the translation by Joh. Henr. Schønheyder has been made from English, which was exceptional because most translation of English literature into Danish at the time and well into the nineteenth century were made via German.<sup>5</sup> Using the same metre as Milton in *Paradise Lost*, Schønheyder was the first to produce blank verse in Danish. It is assumed that Djurhuus used the Danish translation as source, although no thorough comparison has been made between the Danish translation and *Púkaljómur*.<sup>6</sup> The presumption rests on the general cultural circumstances in the Faroe Islands such as Danish having been the formal language of the country in sacred as well as secular matters since the Lutheran Reformation.

Two manuscripts of *Púkaljómur* are preserved in the poet's own hand. The older one, from 1824, encompasses Part One of the poem's two parts. The younger manuscript dates from 1842 and contains both parts of the poem.<sup>7</sup> The poet's phonetic spelling is shown here with its first stanza as example:

*Fraa Bretland hojrdist Songur,  
Slujgt hojrist ikkje longur,  
Um Aandirs Sindafadl.  
Michael stou uj Strujun  
Vi Ajnglun sujnun blujun,  
Ujmout tan Himmal Tradl.  
Almagt han uj svæelande Dujpe rende  
Vi sujnun Ajnglun han tiil Pølin sende  
Evig Vraje ettur tajmun brænde  
Slijin laa uj Helvit qvør ajn Fjende.<sup>8</sup>*

The poem has been printed a handful of times in the standard Faroese orthography, shown here in the first stanza:

<sup>5</sup> Pedersen and Quale, 'Danish and Norwegian traditions', 385; Milton, *Det tabte Paradiis*, trans. Schønheyder, title page.

<sup>6</sup> Matras, *Føroysk bókmentasøga*, 40; Helgason, 'Ljómurnar', 27; Marnersdóttir, 'Romantisk herming', 221; and Weyhe, 'John Milton på færøsk dialekt', 420.

<sup>7</sup> Weyhe, 'John Milton på færøsk dialekt', 421.

<sup>8</sup> Weyhe, 'John Milton på færøsk dialekt', 423.



<p><i>Frá Bretland hoyrdist songur, slíkt hoyrist ikki longur, um ondírs syndafall, Mikael stóð í stríðum við sínum einglum blíðum ímót tann himmaltræll. Almakt hann í svalandi dýpið rendi, við sínum einglum hann í þolin sendi, evig vreiddi eftir teimum brendi, sligin lá í helviti hvør ein fjendi.<sup>9</sup></i></p>	<p>[From Britain a song was to be heard as is no longer heard, about the fall of spirits, Michael stood in battle with his gentle angels against that scoundrel of Heaven. The Almighty pushed him into the cool abyss, sent him into the ditch with his angels, eternal wrath burned after them, every foe lay slain in Hell.]</p>
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*Púkaljómur*'s 56 stanzas, 560 verses in all, are divided into two parts. The first part contains seventeen stanzas, the latter thirty-nine stanzas. The poem encompasses Milton's main motifs: the fall of Lucifer and its consequences, as well as the Fall of humankind and its consequences. In *Paradise Lost*, the main events are woven into side events, reflections, parallels, digressions, and allusions from especially the Bible, Homer, and Virgil. *Púkaljómur* concentrates on action. Part One of the poem tells the whole story from Satan's voyage from Hell until he succeeds in tempting Eve. Part Two, titled '*Evu fall*' [Eve's Fall], dwells on Eve's temptation and fall.

The first printing of the poem, in 1905, was in *Várskot* [Spring Shot], the journal of *Føroyingafelag* [the Faroese Society] in Copenhagen. In 1911, seven stanzas were printed in *Lesibók* [Textbook], a Faroese reader for teachers' education. In this chronologically organized reader, *Púkaljómur* represents a stage in Faroese language history. Although the poem is radically different from traditional Faroese poetry, Svend Grundtvig and Jørgen Bloch included *Púkaljómur* in their comprehensive collection of oral Faroese poetry, which they copied during 1871–6 and 1889–1905. The collection was printed 1951–72 as *Føroya kvæði, Corpus Carminum Færoensium* [Ballads of the Faroes, Corpus Carminum Færoensium]. The last time *Púkaljómur* appeared in print was in 1988, when it was included in Hervør Jørgensen's textbook as materials around Djurhuus's popular satirical ballad *Símunartáttur* [Satire of Símun]. Last but not least, Eivind Weyhe includes some stanzas of *Púkaljómur* in the poet's original orthography in his article about the dialectal language form of the poem.<sup>10</sup>

A decision that Djurhuus had to make when undertaking *Púkaljómur* was to choose a metre. Not unlike his Icelandic colleague Jón Þorláksson who translated Milton (printed in 1828) in an Old Norse Edda metre, Djurhuus turned to the Faroese literary heritage for his choice.<sup>11</sup> He did not, however, use the most common metre of Faroese poetry, the ballad stanza, which he used for his ballad poetry. Instead, in order to add weight and dignity to a sacred subject, he chose the metre of the Catholic hymn *Ljómurnar* [The Tones], the only pre-Lutheran hymn

<sup>9</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 442, 1.1.

<sup>10</sup> Weyhe, 'John Milton på færøsk dialekt', 423, 425.

<sup>11</sup> For Milton in Icelandic, see Eysteinnsson, 'Iceland's Milton'.

preserved in Faroese. Through the echo in the title of his poem, *Púkaljómur*, of the Catholic *Ljómurnar*, the poet made Satan the explicit protagonist of his poem. The text of *Ljómurnar* originates in Iceland between 1500 and 1540.<sup>12</sup> Its melody was preserved only in the Faroe Islands. The metric form of *Ljómurnar* is the Italian canzone, far more elaborate than the ballad stanza. It has stanzas of ten iambic verses in mainly seven (1–6) and eleven (7–10) syllables. The rhyme pattern—*aabccb dd ee*—did not cause Djurhuus problems although it is much richer than in the ballad stanza. The Faroese had cherished *Ljómurnar* for centuries, but it is in *Púkaljómur* that its metre is used for the first time by a Faroese poet.<sup>13</sup> It would seem that Djurhuus consciously connected his reworking of Milton tightly to the old Catholic hymn by his choice of metre as well as title, thus bridging the void of the many centuries without a Faroese religious language.

In a society where God had spoken Danish for three centuries, writing a religious poem in Faroese was unheard of. Under the auspices of the orthodox Lutheran Danish state church of the Faroe Islands, it was also controversial to connect the Faroese reworking of Milton to the Catholic poem *Ljómurnar*. Singing *Ljómurnar* in its full length was forbidden, since folk wisdom taught that anyone who didn't leave out the last stanza when teaching the hymn to his son was bound to die at sea. In spite of these obstacles, the poet chose the old hymn as his model. Another possibility would have been the form and melody of one of the Danish hymns used in the Faroe Islands, but this was not a smooth path either, because to rework Milton in Faroese to a holy Danish church hymn melody would appear close to sacrilege. In addition, *Paradise Lost* is not a hymn but an epic poem. One might think that it would have been simpler to use blank verse as Schønheyder did. Probably the tradition of composing in rhymes and stanzas for singing was too strong for Djurhuus to contemplate writing his poem in blank verse.

Djurhuus's approach when creating *Púkaljómur* shows him as a transitional figure in Faroese literature. While reaching back into Faroese heritage using the banned *Ljómurnar* as model, he opened new space in Faroese poetry in two respects. Applying Faroese in a religious poem, he broke the strict pattern of Danish-language religious poetry versus Faroese-language secular poetry. Working with a metre far more complex than the existing Faroese poetry, he crossed the border between Faroese-language ballad poetry and a more sophisticated, literary Danish-language poetry.

In addition to cultural considerations, the formal difficulty that the poet faced in choosing the metre of *Ljómurnar* was that this is a metre with a fixed number of syllables in each verse. The ballad genre is characterized not by counting syllables but rather by requiring a fixed number of stresses in each verse. Adapting the Faroese language to a metre with a fixed number of stresses was a challenge, which

<sup>12</sup> Helgason, *Ljómurnar*, 22.

<sup>13</sup> Helgason, *Ljómurnar*, 27.

leaves its clear footprints in *Púkaljómur*, such as the numerous missing word endings. For example, the poem begins, ‘*Frá Bretland*’, when the grammatical dative ought to be ‘*Frá Bretlandi*’; and the final verse of stanza 1 has ‘*Slijin lá í helvit hvør ein fjendi*’ instead of ‘*í helviti*’. Here we witness the poet’s strivings at uniting his Faroese-language poetry and the sophisticated canzone, and how the demands of the grammar are giving in to the demands of the metre.

The first known Faroese poem with a regular fixed number of syllables, the Danish-language poem ‘*En Enkemands Nattetanker*’ [A Widower’s Night Time Thoughts] (1769) by Hanus Jákupsson Debes, fulfils the demands of the alexandrine metre seamlessly, because the Danish language had a firm convention for poetry with fixed numbers of syllables.<sup>14</sup> Not so the two first Faroese-language poems following a metre of such formal kind, *Púkaljómur* and *Førjaríman* [Song of the Faroe Islands] from 1850 by Alexandur Weihe.<sup>15</sup> Neither fully manages to adjust the Faroese language to the strict rules of the metre, and the result is a significant number of ungrammatical cut-off word endings. Faroese literary language had not been cultivated to fill forms with obligatory number of syllables.

### Forging a Religious Language

When assessing the vocabulary and linguistic style of *Púkaljómur* in other respects than the awkwardness caused by the clash between metre and language, it is important to note that the concept of linguistic purism was unknown in the Faroe Islands at the time of the poem’s creating. Danish had been the language of religion for centuries, and consequently Djurhuus turned to vocabulary of Danish origin when handling religious concepts such as ‘*sjeel*’ [soul], ‘*saalijhoit*’ [salvation], ‘*frojtstíle*’ [temptation], ‘*ræasaruj*’ [fury], ‘*mirkhojt*’ [darkness], and ‘*dræaka*’ [dragon], words not accepted in Hammershaimb’s puristic Faroese. But these and other Dano-Faroese words are documented in the Faroese-Danish-Latin dictionary of the Faroese Enlightenment scholar J. C. Svabo (1746–1824) from 1773 to 1824 (printed in 1966–70). In other words, the mixed Dano-Faroese language of *Púkaljómur* coheres with Svabo’s documentation. Therefore, there is no need to see the language of *Púkaljómur* as a result of influence from the Danish translation of *Paradise Lost*, as one might otherwise assume.

The linguistic material of Danish origin in *Púkaljómur* is adapted to Faroese language rules. The nouns of Danish origin, as well as the—much fewer—adjectives of Danish origin in *Púkaljómur* are assigned one of the three genders—feminine, masculine, neuter—of Faroese nouns and adjectives as a necessary step in their incorporation into the language. In addition, the poet’s phonetical spelling

<sup>14</sup> Sigurðardóttir, ‘*Náttartankar av Oyri: Hanus Jákupsson Debes*’, 127–9.

<sup>15</sup> Sigurðardóttir, ‘*Yrking á føroyskum: Førjaríman*’, 302–6.

shows that the Danish words have been equipped with a pronunciation that follows Faroese phonology. The reason for this is that the Faroese learned Danish by reading, as opposed to hearing it spoken by Danes. This strategy of adaption of language material of foreign origin is not based on the poet's individual choices but are structural traits of the Faroese language's handling of foreign material.

A comparison with the first Lutheran hymns in Icelandic helps illustrate *Púkaljómur*'s linguistic characteristics in a broader perspective.<sup>16</sup> Unlike the Faroe Islands, Iceland has a literary tradition dating back to the twelfth century, and the Icelandic Bible translation published in 1585 is still considered exemplary. But when the first Lutheran hymns were translated in sixteenth-century Iceland, the language of religion was not applicable for the introduction of the new legally prescribed faith. Like *Púkaljómur* almost three centuries later, these hymn translations were highly influenced by Danish and soon fell out of use. The Icelandic parallel leads us to conclude that it was not just the lacking Faroese literary tradition that caused the hybrid language of *Púkaljómur*.

Another important factor was the concept of the sacredness of the Word as manifest in the authorized Danish texts. We can assume that neither the Icelandic translators nor Djurhuus ventured to stray from the sacredness of the halfway incomprehensible Danish of the state ordained religion, but that both confined themselves to strictly necessary adaptations to their native languages.

Along with the Danish-leaning language, Faroese ballad style is found in the vocabulary and mode of narration of *Púkaljómur*. The meeting held by Satan with his generals and army is named 'einglating' [angels' assembly], a compound which echoes 'hildarting' [battle] from the refrain of Djurhuus's most famous poem, *Ormurin langi* or *Ólavur Tryggvason* [The Long Serpent or The Ballad of Ólavur Tryggvason].<sup>17</sup> In addition, the name of poet's farm is *Tinggarðurin* [The Assembly Stead], and thus densely woven allusions connect the imported subject with the poet's other works as well as with the farming side of his life.

Unlike *Paradise Lost*, with its long introductory words, including the invocation of the muse, *Púkaljómur* begins by briefly stating that its subject matter has roots in an old song from Britain. In similar fashion, Djurhuus's ballad, *Grettirs kvæði* [Ballad of Grettir], about the outlaw Grettir, explains in its opening that the story about to be told hails from Iceland and originates in a voluminous book. Beginning by stating the origin, age, or subject is common in Faroese ballads and typical of Djurhuus. Later in the poem, the poet refers to his source as a ballad: 'so hefur tað kvæði sagt' [thus did that ballad tell] and 'sum kvæðið forðum segði' [as the ballad told long ago].<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Pálsson and Bráinsson, *Um þýðingar*, 68.

<sup>17</sup> Djurhuus, *Ormurin langi*, 99.

<sup>18</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 442, 1.2 and 443, 1.8.

After mentioning his source in two opening verses, the poet soon arrives at the point where Satan prepares for his journey to the newly created world in search of God's new creatures, whom he yearns to corrupt. The narration is rapid, as opposed to Milton's elaborate and digressive account in book 2. But even so, Djurhuus follows Milton closely in certain parts, such as the description of Satan's wild journey from Hell towards Heaven:

<i>hann spennir gyltar veingir</i>	[He straps on golden wings
<i>við sterkar devlastreingir</i>	with strong devil's strings
<i>at fremja sína ferð,</i>	to carry out his journey,
<i>stundum mundi hann miðjan luftin fúka,</i>	now in the middle of the air,
<i>stundum undir lofti mundi dúka,</i>	now up in the high,
<i>stundum fram við avgrund mundi strúka,</i>	now rushing along the abyss,
<i>so var skund á hesum ónda púka.<sup>19</sup></i>	such was the hurry of this wicked devil.]

In Milton's words:

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,  
 Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,  
 Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell  
 Explores his solitary flight: sometimes  
 He scours the right-hand coast, sometimes the left:  
 Now shares with level wing the deep, then soars  
 Up to the fiery concave towering high [...]  
 (PL 2.629–35)

Part Two begins by predicting the crime of Satan who

<i>í ørnalíki sat í Harrans haga,</i>	[in the shape of an eagle he sat in the Lord's garden,
<i>menniskjuni hann vera vil at skaða.<sup>20</sup></i>	wishing to harm the humans.]

By comparison, in *Paradise Lost*, Satan sits 'like a cormorant' on the 'highest' tree in Eden and in the Danish translation, like a hawk (PL 4.196, 4.195).<sup>21</sup> Djurhuus chooses the most majestic and highest-flying bird for Satan.

Shortly following this opening, the first humans are described as '*tað yndiliga par*' [the loveable couple] and '*Ádóm*' is called '*prúðastur av monnum*' [the biggest and strongest of men], thus fulfilling the Faroese ideal of male physical strength. Eve's main characteristic on the other hand is her beauty: '*himmalsk deiligheit av Evu skygdi, | Gud av Ádóm sjálvur hana bygdi*' [heavenly beauty shone from Eve, | God himself built her from Adam]. The description of the genders is confined to strength versus beauty, ignoring Milton's long contemplation and description of

<sup>19</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 443, 1.9.

<sup>20</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 445, 2.1.

<sup>21</sup> Milton, *Det tabte Paradiis*, 159, 4.210.

the new creatures and their God-given relations in which we find for instance the following characterization of Adam and Eve: 'For contemplation he and valour formed, | For softness she and sweet attractive grace; | He for God only, she for God in him' (PL 4.297–99).

Djurhuus follows Milton in Satan's two-step temptation of Eve. First, Satan takes on the shape of '*lítið djór*' [a small animal] and speaks evil in her ear while she is sleeping. Here Milton has a 'toad', and the Danish translation has the corresponding Danish word (PL 4.800).<sup>22</sup> Toads are not found in the Faroe Islands, so instead, Djurhuus uses the hypernym '*djór*' [animal] with the adjective '*líti*' [small] in order to reach the appropriate associations. In his second and successful temptation, Satan takes on the shape of the 'serpent', another animal not found in the Faroe Islands (PL 9.86). *Púkaljómur* here uses both the Danish loanword '*slanga*' [snake] and the Faroese '*ormur*' [worm], also known from the ballads with the meaning dragon.

*So bilsin Eva standsar:  
'Hoyr, at tú, slanga, sansar,  
eg fyrr tað havi trúð,  
sum menniskja kann tala,  
men hevur ormahala,  
tað hoyri eg fyrst nú.'*

*Fagri ormur so til orða tekur:  
'Ei eg undrist, at teg undur vekur,  
eg fyrr var stumm, sum djór um vørild  
rekur,  
men nú við vit at snakka er ei trekur'.*<sup>23</sup>

[Quite astonished Eve halts:  
'Listen, snake, that you have sense  
I did believe before,  
that you can speak like humans  
while having a snake's tail,  
this I have not heard until now'.  
The beautiful snake speaks thus:  
'I am not surprised that this awakes wonder,  
I earlier was mute like an animal drifting  
about the world, but now I readily speak  
with sense'.]

The snake continues his endeavours to break down Eve's resistance and, with the ballad word '*vørild*' [world], he calls her '*vørilds drotning*' [queen of the world].<sup>24</sup> To conquer her remaining resistance the Devil makes a promise:

*Klárari tú eygun fær enn dúva,  
ilt og gott skal kenna verðins frúa'.*<sup>25</sup>

[Your eyes will be clearer than the dove's,  
the lady of the world will know evil and good.]

Comparing a woman's eyes to those of a dove is a standard ballad epithet, and by choosing it the poet establishes a connection to the Faroese tradition. But Djurhuus loses the nuances of Milton's Satan, who calls Eve's eyes 'but dim' and promises that if she eats from the fruit her eyes 'shall perfectly be then | Opened and cleared' (PL 9.706–7). The scene ends with the emphasizing words '*Eva át, og át so dóm og deyða*' [Eve ate, and thus ate doom and death], applying both repetition and ballad style alliteration.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Milton, *Det tabte Paradiis*, 188, 4.817.

<sup>23</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 448, 2.29.

<sup>24</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 448, 2.31.

<sup>25</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 448, 2.33.

<sup>26</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 449, 2.34.

The last stanza of the poem repeats the last stanza of Part One where the poet thanks God for letting the Son crush Satan and Death for the salvation of humankind.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the poet of ballads thought the repetition of thanks was needed considering the poem's intense focus on Satan and his magnificent qualities. Djurhuus, more than Milton and his Danish translator, magnifies Satan by letting him take on the shape of the king of birds.

In spite of difficulties with harmonizing the language with the metre, the poem also contains stanzas where Djurhuus excels in linguistic and metric command with a result that levels with the best of his ballads. While the poet is dependent on the Danish influenced Faroese religious language of his time, the craft of the ballad poet shines through, for example in this description of Satan's striving from Hell towards Heaven:

*Í niðu Sátan baldrar,  
hann upp og niður spjaldrar  
í myrku gomlu nátt,  
nú mððast gyltir veingir,  
nú linkast sterkir streingir,  
men hann fekk hjálp so brátt.  
Sterka elðskýggj hann mót himli slongdi,*

*Guds fjnda ígjøgnum myrkur strongdi,  
hann kom har upp, sum gamla nátt  
úthongdi  
sítt fyrsta tjúkn, tí ljósið móti sprongdi.*<sup>28</sup>

[In pitch dark Satan blusters,  
he smashes up and down  
in dark old night,  
now his golden wings get tired,  
now his strong strings slacken,  
but he received help swiftly.  
The strong fire cloud flung him towards  
Heaven,  
compelled God's enemy through the dark,  
he emerged up where old night hung up  
its first darkening, light blasting against it.]

### Valuation and Afterlife

The only mention of *Púkaljómur* in print before the twentieth century are a few words in Hammershaimb's report, '*Meddelelser fra en Rejse på Færøerne i 1847–48*' [Report from a Journey in the Faroe Islands during 1847–48], from his travels around the islands to collect folklore. Hammershaimb had visited Djurhuus in 1841, and the following year, the poet sent Hammershaimb one of his ballads and *Púkaljómur*. In his report, Hammershaimb mentions Djurhuus's heroic ballads approvingly but omits his satirical ballads, of which he did not think as highly as of the heroic ballads with their classical literary roots. Hammershaimb finishes his comments on the works of Djurhuus by mentioning his reworking of *Paradise Lost*, done in a rare metre.<sup>29</sup> That is all he has to say about *Púkaljómur*. The brevity of his comment is noteworthy and reveals uncertainty about how to evaluate the work.

<sup>27</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 449, 2.39.

<sup>28</sup> Djurhuus, *Púkaljómur*, 444, 1.13.

<sup>29</sup> Hammershaimb, '*Meddelelser fra en Rejse på Færøerne i 1847–48*', 265.

Since Hammershaimb, the poem has been partly dismissed and partly accepted by scholars. In his history of Faroese literature from 1935, *Føroysk bókmentasøga* [Faroese Literary History], Christian Matras writes that *Púkaljómur* is in a different style from other works by Djurhuus, it is lacking as a work of poetry, and its language is poor.<sup>30</sup> These harsh statements are not supported by arguments but rest on Matras's own linguistic purism. Ten years later, the eminent Icelandic scholar Jón Helgason writes that the language of the poem has to be seen in the perspective of the time of composition, namely the time before Hammershaimb's Faroese orthography and standard for written Faroese. Helgason adds that the language in the poem probably is of the kind that came naturally to a Faroese who had learned his Christianity from Danish books and continues:

*Púkaljómur eru ein nýggj og merkilig roynd. Føroyskt mál hevði annars bert verið nýtt til sovordnar yrkingar ið skuldu fyrast fram í dansistovum, til kvæði og tættir. Tá ið Føroyingar yrktu ella skrivaðu nakað um religiøs evni plagdu teir at gera tað á donskum. Tað er tí ein stór hending at Sjóvarbóndin [Jens Christian Djurhuus] nýtir føroyskt í einari religiøsari yrking.<sup>31</sup>*

[*The Devil's Tones* is a new and remarkable endeavour. The Faroese language had only been used in the kind of poems which were intended for performance in dancing, that is ballads and satires. When the Faroese composed or wrote about religious subjects they used to do so in Danish. It is therefore a major event that Jens Christian Djurhuus uses Faroese in a religious poem.]

The period from the second half of the twentieth century and on is mostly silent about *Púkaljómur*. Árni Dahl does not mention the poem in his *Bókmentasøga I—Frá landnámi til Hammershaimb* [Literary History I—From Settlement to Hammershaimb] (1980). Hervør Jørgensen's reason to include the poem in her volume is that it is a collection of teaching material on the satire *Símunartáttur* [Satire of Símun] (c. 1825), which uses *Púkaljómur* as the basis for its parody. She thinks little of the poem because of its mixed Faro-Dano language and because it is flooded with swearwords, as she says, thereby referring to the use of the words Devil and Hell and their synonyms that the poem's subject requires. Eivind Weyhe analyses the regional dialect of Djurhuus as it is revealed in the phonetic writing of *Púkaljómur*; that is, his focus is linguistic rather than literary. Weyhe also touches upon the historical circumstances of the poem's creation, stating that it is a brave endeavour to compose in the Faroese language in a genre with no living tradition and long before the linguistic movement had created a norm for written Faroese.<sup>32</sup> Malan Marnersdóttir refers to Harold Bloom's statement that Milton is a poet whom every poet of importance has to battle and argues that even if Djurhuus

<sup>30</sup> Matras, *Føroysk bókmentasøga*, 40.

<sup>31</sup> Helgason, 'Ljómurnar', 27.

<sup>32</sup> Weyhe, 'John Milton på færøsk dialekt' (2012), 431.



had composed only *Púkaljómur*, it would place him among the most highly estimated poets in Faroese literature.<sup>33</sup> Marnersdóttir also points out that great works are exposed to ridicule and that leads us to the afterlife of *Púkaljómur*.

The reception of *Púkaljómur* has been ambiguous to say the least. Nevertheless, indirectly and in a different context, certain aspects of the poem have been embraced by the public via its satirical reusing. Satires dealing with trivial matter are part of the song repertoire of the Faroese chain dance. They ridicule living persons and rebuke their behaviour with the purpose of enforcing social control. One such satire is *Símunartáttur* (c. 1825), composed in the same metre as *Púkaljómur* although it is sung in a faster melody.<sup>34</sup> With a quarrel about the keeping of dogs in a village as its main event, it uses a significant number of phrases from *Púkaljómur* as the basis of its ridicule. It was long believed *Símunartáttur*, which earned a durable popularity, was composed by Jens Christian Jacobsen (1803–1878). However, in the late twentieth century, a manuscript in the hand of Djurhuus emerged at the National Library of the Faroe Islands, where the poet mentions *Símunartáttur* among his works and claims co-ownership of it.<sup>35</sup> Jørgensen states that *Símunartáttur* parodies only Part One of *Púkaljómur*, a fact which supports the probability that Part Two had not yet been composed around 1824. A comparison shows the close connection between *Púkaljómur* and *Símunartáttur*. The first verses of *Púkaljómur* are as follows (see English translation earlier in this chapter):

*Frá Bretland hoyrdist songur,  
slíkt hoyrist ikki longur,  
um ondurs syndafall,  
Mikael stóð í stríðum  
við sínum einglum bliðum  
ímót tann himmaltræll.*

The first verses of *Símunartáttur* are as follows:

<i>Fra Kvívík hoyrdist sjongur</i>	[From the village Kvívík you could hear yelling,
<i>slíkt hoyrist ikki longer,</i>	as is no longer heard
<i>um stóra hundafall,</i>	about the great fall of dogs,
<i>tá Símun stóð í stríði</i>	when Símun was at war
<i>mót kertustubbum bliðum</i>	against the gentle Candle stumps <sup>36</sup>
<i>alt um sín gamla hjall.</i> <sup>37</sup>	about his old shed.]

In contrast to the Faroese-language publications contemporary to the poem, *Púkaljómur* was not created in agreement with or by request of learned Danes but rather on the poet's own initiative. It did not awaken interest with publishers

<sup>33</sup> Marnersdóttir, 'Romantisk herming', 221.

<sup>34</sup> Weyhe, 'Tættir og yngri kvæðir', 649.

<sup>35</sup> Djurhuus, *Føroya Landsbókasavn*, E83.

<sup>36</sup> Nickname for people of the village Kvívík.

<sup>37</sup> Djurhuus and Jacobsen, *Símunartáttur*, 480–1.

and was not printed until much later. In spite of this, the farmer-poet most likely undertook his ambitious task inspired by the lively literary activity in the 1820s and 1830s. The fact that he sent *Púkaljómur* to his learned friend and compatriot Hammershaimb clearly implies how much the poem meant to him.

In *Púkaljómur*, the metre of *Ljómurnar* was used for the first time by a Faroese poet. But later Faroese hymnodists followed Djurhuus's example and used *Púkaljómur* and *Ljómurnar* as templates, and today the hymn book of the Faroese church contains several hymns in this metre. Likewise, *Símunartáttur* was the first satire in the metre of *Ljómurnar* but since then the satire has served as model for numerous popular satires. *Púkaljómur* did not fit into the available media of its time, the chain dance and the singing of hymns. Consequently, the poet did not receive the reward of a public embrace of the poem. Rather than leaving the matter there, the poet reused *Púkaljómur* in *Símunartáttur*. Via the satire the road to success lay open, and the poet was rewarded for his labour by hearing the most vigorous phrases from his reworking of *Paradise Lost* repeated when the satire *Símunartáttur* was performed in the chain dance. In Faroese literary history, we find such traces of Djurhuus's wrestling with *Paradise Lost*.

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## Milton Lost and Regained in Turkey

*Mustafa Kirca, Hasan Baktır, and Murat Ögütçü,  
with Islam Issa and Angelica Duran*

### **An Introduction, by Islam Issa and Angelica Duran**

The presence and reception of John Milton's writings in Turkey are as rich as they are delayed. The first translation into Turkish of Milton's poetry and prose—in the mid-twentieth century—coincided with a time of major political transition and tension, in which there were conflicting views and ideologies on what it meant to create a nation, state, or identity. Milton was lost and then gained traction in the resultant sites of cultural, linguistic, religious, and social contest, which also added weight to personal reflections and agendas.

In the first half of this chapter, Mustafa Kirca and Hasan Baktır attend to the many contexts and complexities that contributed to Milton remaining lost in Turkish translation, so to speak, through the time of the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. In contrast to the long-standing canonization of Milton's epic poems as world literature, the first full Turkish translation of *Paradise Lost* was not published until the twenty-first century. During the early decades of the Turkish Republic, importing source texts from a humanist and secular literary system was the primary focus of state-sponsored translation activity. Yet, *Paradise Lost* was not accommodated to the newly formed repertoire due to the lack of a market seeking to relate itself to the Miltonic religious discourse deemed not to fit with the humanist and secular projection of Turkey's translation movement in the 1940s. This section therefore queries the extent to which the dominant culture's discourse determines texts to be transferred to the home literary system.

In the second half, Murat Ögütçü focuses on a set of partial Turkish translations of Milton's late-coming masterpieces for a limited but important audience in the Turkish Republic. Halide Edip Adıvar's translations and comparative analyses of Milton's works are conscious of the shared culture of Abrahamic religions, a key theme that sheds light on how Milton was received in Turkish higher education from the publication in 1949 of Adıvar's text—the first thorough analysis, commentary, and partial translation of Milton's works into Turkish—until at least the 1970s. Having been used in an educational reference book for decades, Adıvar's pedagogical intersemiotic translations consciously bear in mind the Islamic and

Turkish backgrounds of their target readerships. Adding another layer to the discussion, Adıvar is also among the comparatively few of Milton's women translators. Indeed, '[t]ranslations by women constitute a small percentage of Milton translations' and adaptations, though women have also translated Milton into Finnish, Hungarian, and Portuguese, as well as penned 'imitations' in French and Japanese, and 'responses' in Persian.<sup>1</sup>

Given the complexities and polarizations of twentieth-century Turkey, coupled with the various levels of literary 'domestication' at play, this chapter's transition from panoramic to close-up provides ample theoretical and historical context in order to build a balanced view of Milton's Turkish presence. In doing so, it demonstrates the undeniable impact of such contexts, as well as the retrospective potential for ironies: Milton, a firm republican, was deemed too religiously inclined to be utilized during the building of a republic.

### **Milton Lost in Turkish Republicanism, by Mustafa Kirca and Hasan Baktır**

The period following the transition from the Ottoman dynasty (c. 1299–1922) to the establishment of the Turkish nation-state underwent a series of turning points. The early years of Republican Turkey between the late 1920s and 1940s were marked by the state's decided movement of Westernization and modernization. The idea of Turkish Westernization was begotten as early as the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup> Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic, it turned into a fundamental movement for securing national identity. Correlatively, a systematic translation of Western classics into Turkish came to be an official, integral part of the cultural planning the state pursued for this ideal.<sup>3</sup> For the Republic, translation of Western literature was expected to pave the way for Westernization and hence secularization of Turkish society and functioned as a suitable apparatus of the cultural planning to shape the young Republic and create a new national identity inspired by the idea of Turkish humanism.<sup>4</sup> This remained the case until the late 1960s, with the works of classical Greek and Roman philosophers, as well as canonical European literary figures, translated into Turkish. As Berrin Aksoy argues, 'translation became a great tool under the manipulation of the state in the

<sup>1</sup> Duran and Issa, 'Introduction: From "Cámbalu" to "El Dorado"', 6 n10.

<sup>2</sup> Ágoston and Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, 254.

<sup>3</sup> Paker, 'The Turkish Tradition', 579.

<sup>4</sup> Sauer, '*Türkiye'de ilk Çeviri Dergisi: Tercüme*'. For the official declaration of the humanist movement in translation and its features, see Türk Neşriyat Kongresi, *Birinci Türk Neşriyat Kongresi*, especially the report of the Translation Committee submitted to the Congress in 1939 and the preface written by Hasan Ali Yücel, Minister of Education between 1938 and 1946.

early years of the Turkish Republic to attain its goal of modernization, which is closely connected with the emergence of a national literature in all its forms.<sup>5</sup>

The translation of Western classics was performed directly under the control of the state and in a systematic way by means of a translation office, *Tercüme Bürosu* [Translation Bureau], founded by the Ministry of Education in 1940. The Translation Bureau was highly productive until it was closed in 1966, after having translated almost one thousand individual works of many European languages into Turkish.<sup>6</sup> Transferring the West's literary systems into Turkish was carried out mainly through translations of classics, for it was believed that the idea of humanism could be centralized and a Turkish renaissance of sorts could be accelerated and realized in that way.<sup>7</sup> The list of philosophers and writers whose works were translated and published by the Ministry of Education includes Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Honoré de Balzac, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Charles Dickens, Desiderius Erasmus, Euripides, Johann Wolfgang van Goethe, Nikolai Gogol, Niccolò Machiavelli, Christopher Marlowe, Molière, Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Friedrich Schiller, William Shakespeare, Sophocles, Jonathan Swift, Leo Tolstoy, and Voltaire. Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar parses the translated works as follows:

Between 1940–1966, the series of French classics included 308 translated French works. French was followed by German (113 translations), Greek (94 translations), Russian (88 translations) and English classics (80 translations). Oriental-Islamic classics ranked sixth with 66 translated titles. During the period under study, some of the most popular source authors for the Bureau were Plato (30 works) Molière (27 works), Balzac (22 works), Shakespeare (22 works), Dostoevsky (14 works), Goethe (10 works), Tolstoy (9 works), and Chekhov (8 works).<sup>8</sup>

As the list shows, the fame of these writers in Turkey and the circulation of their works very much depended on the Westernization movement and the official translation projects of the Republic.

Milton's works, however, were not translated in full as a part of the official translation projects during this period of Westernization and translation activity, despite the news about the forthcoming translation of *Paradise Lost* in the journal

<sup>5</sup> Aksoy, 'The Relation Between Translation and Ideology', 453.

<sup>6</sup> Gürçağlar, 'The Translation Bureau Revisited: Translation as Symbol', 163. When reprints are included, the exact number is 1,247 (Gürçağlar, 'The Translation Bureau Revisited', 117). Over 400 of these, including different editions of the same work, are still published and on sale by Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları. For the list of the translated works, see Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, *Hasan Ali Yücel Klasikleri*.

<sup>7</sup> Gürçağlar, *The Politics and Poetics of Translation in Turkey*, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Gürçağlar, 'The Translation Bureau Revisited', 166.

*Tercüme* [Translation], sponsored by the Ministry of Education.<sup>9</sup> The Translation Bureau did not explain the delay or absence of the translation of such a popular European text. Milton's Puritan past is the most likely reason, considering the Republican reformation policy's radical rejection of fundamentalism. As a result, Milton's name remained peripheral in the ideological and national repertoire of the young Turkish Republic.<sup>10</sup>

The present study examines the Turkish polysystem of translated literature through the Westernization movement in the early period of Republican Turkey, covering the quarter century from the declaration of the Republic in 1923 and into the early 1950s. It seeks to offer possible reasons for the lack of complete translations of Milton's poems, particularly his epics, and of widespread readership for them in Turkey. We argue that Milton's renowned epic poems could not find a central place in the Turkish polysystem of translated literature valorizing humanism and secularization because it was at odds with Milton's biblical subject matter, his religious politics, and the politico-religious dimension of his poetry. Through concentrating on a formative period in the early history of Republican Turkey and analysing the translation movement within this historical moment, we can query the extent to which the dominant ideology influences and determines the choice of texts to be translated and attempt to provide the cultural and linguistic context for Milton's muted circulation.<sup>11</sup>

The Turkish context we are indicating here comes with a specific set of factors that must be taken into account. During the period under scrutiny, translation was an essential activity because of the state-sponsored translation projects carried out by the Translation Bureau of the Ministry of Education, and it can be seen that the primary aim of this activity was to import source texts from a humanist and secular literary system, namely the Western canon mostly, to the target polysystem. It would be misleading to think that Milton's peripheral position can easily be elucidated through the fact of his negative references to Turks along with his depictions of Satan as a heroic figure, and Adam and Eve as rebellious characters, making *Paradise Lost* untranslatable into a culture whose views about the same religious topics have been moulded by Islamic doctrine. Indeed, there were other imported texts which can be seen as a direct challenge to Islamic doctrine but were translated into

<sup>9</sup> Köktemir, 'Halide Edib'in Unutulmuş "Paradise Lost" Çevirisi'. Köktemir carefully contextualizes Edip's translation of book 1 of *Paradise Lost* as part of the coursebook policy rather than an academic project and states that issues 41, 42, and 59 of *Tercüme* included *Paradise Lost* in the list of works to be translated, with no mention of a translator's name.

<sup>10</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar maintains that making a literary 'repertoire' through translation is necessary 'for augmenting the level of belonging and affinity of the population to the made entity' (Even-Zohar, *Papers in Culture Research*, 100).

<sup>11</sup> To dichotomize the possible reasons for the absence of Milton's legend and work in the Turkish context, this section adopts Itamar Even-Zohar's concept of cultural planning and his polysystem theory which emerged in the 1970s. In his 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', he shows 'the principles of selection never being uncorrelatable with the home co-systems of the target literature' (46).



Turkish nonetheless. A useful point of contrast is the popularity of Shakespeare, whose works have been translated and re-translated into Turkish multiple times and adapted into different media, even though his plays contain a number of negative references to Turks.<sup>12</sup> Unlike Shakespeare's plays, Milton's epics especially are humanistic products of 'mediaeval Christianity' that valorize human reason.<sup>13</sup> Rather ironically, it is fair to speculate that rather than their challenge to Islamic doctrine, Milton's epics, with their Bible-centric worlds and biblical figures, were deemed not to fit with the humanist and secular projection of Turkey's translation movement in the 1940s. As a result, even his major works were unknown, invisible, or else kept in a peripheral position in Republican Turkey.

When the source and receiving cultures are remote from one another and there are no clear proximities with regard to religion, it makes sense for some works, like *Paradise Lost*, to be left out of the translation activity. As Nabil Matar points out in his study of the Arabic translation of *Paradise Lost*, 'to situate the poem within his [Milton's] reader's religious and linguistic tradition', it is necessary 'to strike a balance between Milton's Christianity and the Arab-Muslim response/reaction to that theology'.<sup>14</sup> In the same vein, the untranslatability of Milton's epic vision due to the abundance of seemingly alien biblical allusions makes the meaningful cultural transfer of Milton's poems unachievable for the Turkish polysystem of translated literature. Translation of such cultural and biblical allusions into Turkish can be problematic in itself and hinders the comprehensibility and the appreciation of the *translatum*, which leaves no space for intersemiotic adaptations of Milton's epic poems. Therefore, we regard Milton's politico-religious attitude the main reason for the relative failure of his work's appropriation into Turkish culture.

The Anglo-American tendency to re-fashion Milton's epic works across borders cannot be observed in the Turkish context. In particular, the religious politics of *Paradise Lost*, particularly the characterization of Satan, does not address the target socio-cultural context and therefore cannot cross over its borders that easily. In contrast to the canonization of Milton's epic poem in world literature, a full translation of *Paradise Lost* was not published in Turkish until 2007, under the title *Kayıp Cennet: Adem ile Havva'nın Cennetten Kovuluş Hikayesi* [*Paradise Lost: The Story of the Fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden*].<sup>15</sup> This was followed by three translations under different titles.<sup>16</sup> *Paradise Regained* has not been published in Turkish so far, and no intersemiotic adaptations of Milton's works have appeared in Turkish.

<sup>12</sup> Draper, 'Shakespeare and the Turk', 523.

<sup>13</sup> Hanford, 'Milton and the Return to Humanism', 143. Hanford claims that 'the Reformation and the Renaissance are in Milton contradictory and irreconcilable motives' (45).

<sup>14</sup> Matar, '*Paradise Lost* as an Islamic Epic', 6.

<sup>15</sup> Milton, *Kayıp Cennet*, trans. Günsel.

<sup>16</sup> Milton, *Kayıp Cennet*, trans. Polat; Milton, *Kaybedilen Cennet*, trans. Kurtulmuş; Milton, *Yitirilen Cennet*, trans. Yavuz. The increasing number of the recent publications can be misleading, since different publishers issued editions of the same work that was not under copyright.

The Turkish literary context helps to account for these delays and absences. The biblical subject matter of the source text combines with Milton's classical mythological allusions to render Milton's works all but untranslatable for Turkish translators and a general Turkish reading public. As a few key examples demonstrate, there is a remarkable gap between Christian-Miltonic and Turco-Islamic interpretations pertaining to the conflict between God and Satan. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton draws a colourful and powerful picture of Satan, with an elaborate diction and description:

so much the stronger prov'd  
 He with his Thunder: and till then who knew  
 The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those,  
 Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage  
 Can else inflict, do I repent or change,  
 Though chang'd in outward lustre; that fixt mind  
 And high disdain, from sence of injur'd merit,  
 That with the mightiest rais'd me to contend,  
 And to the fierce contention brought along  
 Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd  
 That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring [. . .]  
(PL 1.92–102)<sup>17</sup>

In Milton's poem, the power of God, like that of Zeus in Greek mythology and Allah in the Qur'an, is related to 'Thunder'.<sup>18</sup> Mocking instrumental arms, Satan disdains God's victory and re-motivates his army in Hell to stand against the absolute power of Heaven. Such an illustration of genuine rivalry between God and Satan is potentially blasphemous in Islamic belief.

The Turco-Islamic images of God and Satan, and the idea of the Satanic fall, are aligned with the Qur'anic imagination. The related Qur'anic verses begin with God's punishment of certain societies for committing sins and, following this, there is a reference to the creation of Adam and Eve, but the verses do not prioritize the exile of Satan from Heaven or the conflict between God and Satan per se. While Satan's motives do include pride and revenge, Islamic traditions also emphasize the devil's error and his delayed revenge, in line with the Qur'anic verses: Satan said, 'Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them [that is, humankind] on Your straight path. I will approach them from their front, their back, their right, their left, and then You will find most of them ungrateful'.<sup>19</sup> Satan is not provided with the power and freedom to question and challenge

<sup>17</sup> This and all quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Milton Reading Room*, ed. Luxon, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>18</sup> For Qur'anic thunder in relation to *Paradise Lost*, see Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*, 96.

<sup>19</sup> *The Holy Qur'an* 7.12–6.

God. Therefore, in Turco-Islamic texts, the Miltonic description of the conflict between God and Satan, and the depiction of Satan's challenge, would be regarded as disrespectful.<sup>20</sup>

Milton faithfully follows the Greco-Roman and Euro-Christian tradition when, like Homer, he begins *Paradise Lost* with an invocation. Then, in book 7, the Creation starts with the depiction of Chaos, as is the convention in Greek myth. In Milton's epic, the Creation alludes first to Genesis and then to Greek mythological stories, specifically the mother-goddess, Gaia, in classical Greek mythology: 'In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth | Rose out of *Chaos*' (PL 1.9–10). The ancient Greeks believed that Gaia, or Mother Earth, came from light out of Chaos. Afterwards, Uranus, the sky, and Pontus, the primordial god of the sea, came from Gaia.

The juxtaposition of biblical and mythological stories about the Creation was instrumental for Milton to create and justify his own story of creation. Like Homer of the *Iliad* and Virgil of the *Aeneid*, Milton asks the divine:

Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first  
Wast present [ . . . ]  
[ . . . ] What in me is dark  
Illumin, what is low raise and support;  
That to the highth of this great Argument  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justifie the wayes of God to men.  
(PL 1.19–26)

The blind narrator adopts such allusions to admit and justify his prophetic or divine mission, to 'justifie the wayes of God to men.' Poets in the Euro-Christian literary polysystem have been traditionally centralized as pseudo-prophets, sometimes blind bards, like Homer. Such a view is adopted and circulated by European writers of diverse nations and cultures. Thus, refashioning such a view would be welcomed by Milton's readers, who would be familiar with the context of epic's argument. Like Homer and Virgil, Milton assumes the role of the blind prophet to circulate the divine poetic message among a public familiar with very common Euro-Christian cultural codes.

Milton's mission to justify the 'ways of God' to readers as a poet-prophet and via divine invocation does not address either the Turkish religious or the secular contexts, both of which have been central tenets of Turkish literature over the centuries. Islamic tradition prefers the poet to be the servant to the prophetic message rather than transmitter or missionary of the divine message. For instance, the thirteenth-century poet Jalāl ad-Dīn Rumi, known in Turkey as Mevlana

<sup>20</sup> Çobanoğlu, 'Türk Halk Kültüründe Şeytan'.

Celaleddin, introduces himself as ‘*ku*’ [servant] of Muhammad in *Mesnevi* [*Masnavi* or *Mathnawi*]. He first creates a fictitious pretext for *Mesnevi* to justify his mission. He writes that the Prophet Muhammad once shared a secret with his revered cousin and son-in-law Ali. Though Ali suffered for a long period of time, he did not tell the secret to anyone. However, when he could no longer keep it, he cut a piece of reed and shared his secret with it. Afterwards, he threw away the reed into an underground well. Having invented the relevant story for the origin of *Mesnevi*, Mevlana writes that he discovered the underground well and learned the secret from the reed.<sup>21</sup> Mevlana is welcomed by Turkish poets who have also assumed the same traditional role and identified themselves as faithful servants. Turkish poets from the twelfth through eighteenth centuries, like Ahmet Yesevi, Yunus Emre, and Seyh Galip, followed Mevlana in this. Even contemporary conservative writers follow a similar route, re-adopting and refashioning the same conventional model. However, imitating European writers, secular literary circles in Turkey have adopted innovative forms and discourses to transform traditional cultural and literary codes. Nonetheless, Turkish writers, traditional and secular, both from the Ottoman and the Republican periods, have frequently chosen to assume an instrumental role to enlighten the public rather than a divine mission for providing justification for the ways of God. Milton does not fit into the Turkish literary system in this respect, although Turkish writers sometimes allude to his blindness to denote wisdom.<sup>22</sup>

Considering the discursive function of translation for the young Republic of Turkey and its role in establishing a new literary and cultural repertoire, we argue that the emerging literary polysystem satisfied the need for the establishment and renovation of the discourse of Westernization, Western-oriented literary styles and genres, innovative expressions, and new metaphors that provided untraditional ways of seeing as proper and convenient models for younger generations of writers and new reading publics of the time. European philosophical and literary writings offered proper models for the Turkish intelligentsia. Translation of European writers into Turkish at this turning point was an attempt to create and modify a new cultural and literary repertoire based on secular ideals.<sup>23</sup> The new repertoire established by the Republican translators addressed the zeitgeist of a period of nation building and the expectations of readers who benefited from the heritage of European literary texts translated into their language.

<sup>21</sup> Rumi, *Mevlana'nın Rubailer*, 216.

<sup>22</sup> Çıkrıkçı, ‘*Işığın Söndüğü Yerde İki Işık*’. See, for instance, Meriç’s *Bu Ülke*. Cemil Meriç is a contemporary Turkish writer who became blind and continued writing great works. He is sometimes compared to Milton in terms of coupling blindness and genius. Such an alignment seems to emphasize the illuminating power of wisdom. See Angelica Duran’s chapter in the present volume, ‘Seeing, Hearing, and Feeling Milton’s Works with and as Prosthetic Sign Systems’.

<sup>23</sup> Gürçağlar maintains that the aim was to ‘establish a common cultural basis upon which the new Turkish cultural and literary repertoire would rise’ (Gürçağlar, ‘The Translation Bureau Revisited: Translation as Symbol’, 114).

The Miltonic religious discourse, however, was not accommodated to this newly formed repertoire. The biblical subject matter of Milton's poetry was interpreted to be at odds with the Westernization and secularization endeavour of the Turkish intelligentsia during the years following the declaration of the Turkish Republic. Milton's Puritan Christianity, expressed by his reliance on the Bible for his subject matter, reinterpretation of scriptural stories, and dominant religious discourse must have overshadowed the legibility of his republican stance. Ironically, then, Milton's republicanism was largely ignored in the Turkish context for some time. As such, his works have not been accommodated into the Turkish literary system, in contrast to those of other great English poets. The adaptations of Milton's works, particularly *Paradise Lost*, and their importation from the English literary system to the Turkish polysystem of translated literature, from poetic verse into any other semiotic form, have not been valued enough in the Turkish context mainly due to the opposing poetic cultures and traditions related to how religious doctrines are treated in imaginative texts. The underlying reason for the absence of complete translations of Milton's epic poems in the earlier years of the Turkish Republic, as well as their adaptations in the contemporary Turkish literary system, is the very lack of a general market seeking to relate itself to the Miltonic religious discourse. However, Even-Zohar argues that 'phenomena are driven from the center to the periphery while, conversely, phenomena may push their way into the center and occupy it'.<sup>24</sup> So, what will the next set of dominant Turkish discourses select, prioritize, and strategize for translation? Maybe Milton can still push his way to the centre of the Turkish polysystem. The next section provides one significant endeavour to do so.

### **Milton Regained in Turkish Higher Education, by Murat Ögütçü**

The first thorough analysis, commentary, and partial translation of Milton's works in Turkish was published not through the Translation Bureau discussed in the previous section, but rather in the third volume of Halide Edip Adivar's survey of English literature. Her volume was published in 1949, at the tail end of the period of national construction of the Turkish Republic and was, until the 1970s, used widely as a reference book in Turkish higher education to supplement relevant English sources like the Norton anthologies. Adivar's translations of Milton—both pedagogical and intersemiotic in nature—consciously considered the Islamic and Turkish backgrounds of their target audiences, namely students and the set of general readers interested in English literature. The domestication of Milton through her partial translations of *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* and comparative

<sup>24</sup> Even-Zohar, 'Polysystem Theory', 14.

commentaries are reflective of Adivar's Western education and her relatively conservative point of view. This section scrutinizes how Adivar's translations and comparative analyses of Milton's works are conscious of the shared culture of Abrahamic religions: a key theme that sheds light on how Milton was received in Turkish higher education from 1949 until at least the 1970s.<sup>25</sup>

Adivar's success in finding intersemiotic equivalences in her partial translations of *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* is primarily the result of her literary, educational, and political background which is felt throughout her translations and commentaries.<sup>26</sup> Adivar (1882–1964) was an important figure in both political and literary arenas. Educated at the American College in Üsküdar, Adivar had an affinity with the English language, its culture, and its literature, which continued with her educational career as a lecturer in the late Ottoman period and later as a Professor of English at Istanbul University through the 1940s.<sup>27</sup> Her Western education combined with a nationalistic fervour prompted by the War of Turkish Independence (1918–23), in which the remnant territories of the then colonized and war-stricken Ottoman Empire (c. 1299–1922) in Anatolia fought for independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk) against countries including the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Greece. Adivar was an important literary figure who wrote many significant novels in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods in Turkey that dealt with gender and political issues.<sup>28</sup>

Adivar was a highly complex person. On the one hand, she was one of the founders of nationalistic literature that supported the cultural and political independence of Turkey; on the other, she was the loyal wife of Adnan Adivar, who supported a US mandate that included cultural and political neo-imperialistic policies. Adivar herself had a Western education and was an ardent supporter of Turkish suffrage in the first three decades of the 1900s. But she remained, relatively speaking, a conservative person who, despite supporting women in public life, believed, like most of the people in her time and place, that the main objective of a woman was to become a good wife and mother.<sup>29</sup> She was both venerated as an influential national literary and political figure and persecuted for her critical

<sup>25</sup> For Milton and the Abrahamic languages, see Islam Issa 'Paradise Lost in Arabic', and Noam Reisner, 'Pre-Eminent among Gentiles', in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*, 397–414, 415–28.

<sup>26</sup> For particularly useful discussions of the most relevant cluster of non-linguistic elements that inform translation, see Dusi, 'Intersemiotic Translation', 182–5; Eco, *Experiences*, 100–18; Pârlog, *Intersemiotic*, 12–17; Genette, *Paratexts*, 80–5; Riffatterre, 'Intertextuality', 786; Ping, 'Translatability', 289–300; Tomozeiu and Kumpulainen, 'Operationalising Intercultural Competence for Translation Pedagogy', 270–9; Hansen, 'Die Rolle der Kompetenz', 341; Holmes, 'Describing', 84–5; Reiß and Vermeer, *Grundlegung*, 58; Reiß, *Möglichkeiten*, 12–13, 54–5, 78; Witte, 'Die Rolle der Kompetenz', 347.

<sup>27</sup> Çalışlar, *Halide Edip*, 28–30.

<sup>28</sup> Kanpolat, *Halide*, 18–43; Enginün, *Halide Edip Adivar'ın Eserlerinde*, 373; Çalışlar, *Halide Edip*, 303. For information on the War of Independence, see Özoğlu, *Caliphate*, 2–6.

<sup>29</sup> Enginün, *Halide Edip Adivar'ın Eserlerinde*, 370–2; Çalışlar, *Halide Edip*, 56.

views of the Republic, the formation of which led to many (self) exiles after the rise of secularism in Turkey.<sup>30</sup>

As a conservative person amid the early phases of this transitional period, Adıvar was critical of what she envisioned as the prohibitive state secularism that forced her and her husband to leave the country, only returning to Turkey in 1939.<sup>31</sup> To compensate for the loss of being forced out of her country, she wrote works that promoted Turkish literature and culture and gave lectures at several universities like Cambridge, Columbia, and Yale.<sup>32</sup> During these exiles, her direct experience with European totalitarian regimes and the Second World War had a profound impact on her own re-evaluation of ideas about nationalism, pacifism, freedom of expression, and democracy.

As a conservative and educated woman, Adıvar attempted to catalyse her frustrations about her inability to reconcile the in-betweenness of her Western and Eastern identities within her Turkish identity, which can be felt throughout almost all of her literary and academic works. These introspective frustrations, however, had a directly positive influence on the quality of her writings because of her ruminative, multi-layered, and multifocal analyses of literary, social, historical, and political issues.

A significant part of Adıvar's agenda to translate Milton was her perception of Abrahamic culture as a common ground to create a bond between the English text and Turkish readers with an Islamic background. Adıvar's translation combines different discourses and semiotic systems, namely the literary English text and the educational Turkish text, not only to teach the semiotic system of the source text and source culture but also to make sense in the target language by appropriating semiotic systems from the target culture. Adıvar is thereby not simply domesticating the source text but also constructing a liminal space for the intersections of Abrahamic interpretations of Genesis.

Possibly finding her cue from 'Abraham's race' in *Samson Agonistes*, which she translates as '*İbrahim nesline*' [Abraham's race], Adıvar is conscious of finding similar equivalences for Milton's diction to create the nearest possible homogeneity between the source text and reading audiences, differentiated through geographical origin and time (SA 29; IE 114).<sup>33</sup> Contrary to Nicola Dusi's idea that intersemiotic translation is always about 'variation' and 'difference' rather than 'transformation', and also against Umberto Eco's ideas that source and target cultures are 'two cultures', Adıvar's translations possess variations within a single

<sup>30</sup> Tarhan, '*Üç Devirde Bir Muhallif*', 392–5.

<sup>31</sup> Adıvar, *İngiliz Edebiyatı*, 21. This and all quotations of Adıvar's translation and commentary are from Adıvar, *İngiliz Edebiyatı*, and cited parenthetically as IE with page numbers. All Turkish translations are mine. Enginün, *Halide Edip Adıvar'ın Eserlerinde*, 70–3; Tarhan, '*Üç Devirde Bir Muhallif*', 392–5.

<sup>32</sup> Enginün, *Halide Edip Adıvar'ın Eserlerinde*, 71–2, 422–8.

<sup>33</sup> House, *A Model*, 29. All quotations of *Samson Agonistes* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Darbishire, and cited parenthetically in the text. Erlwein, *Arguments*, 97.

Abrahamic discourse that are not simply source text oriented, but also target culture oriented because she considers the two cultures as bifurcated branches of the same Abrahamic culture.<sup>34</sup>

Locating similarities between Milton's perceived Unitarianism and Islamic pantheism, Adivar claims that '*Milton için Allah birdir*' [for Milton, Allah is one] (IE 17).<sup>35</sup> Milton's disbelief—at least outside the epic—in religious intermediaries between humans and God, or his depiction of God not in a physical but a verbal way, are signs for her that '*İslam akidesine de çok yaklaşıyor*' [he came very close to the Islamic creed] (IE 17–19). Through competence in her native tongue and culture, Adivar 'provide[s] in the receptor language something that is parallel' to and 'provide[s] the flavor' of the source text.<sup>36</sup> Associating Milton's absolutist God with Allah and Unitarianism with Sufism, Adivar even compares Milton's pantheistic approach to that of Islamic mystics like the thirteenth-century poet Rumi, who considered the whole universe as God, or the Iranian mystic Mansour Hallaj, who some centuries earlier claimed that he is God (IE 18).<sup>37</sup>

For instance, Adivar sees Milton's pantheist approach in Satan's infamous words '*Cehennem ben kendimim*' [myself am Hell] as a representation of the omnipresence of Allah (PL 4.75; IE 18). Likewise, expressions like '*Sen ki*' [Thou who that]—used extensively in Turkish translations of the Qur'an—give religious overtones similar to the source text with target culture equivalences (IE 41). Adopting diction from Islamic mystical writings deepens that proximity, which is seen, for instance, in '*şol macera destanım*' [that adventurous epic of mine], where the demonstrative pronoun '*şol*' is used by mystics like Yunus Emre instead of the more contemporary '*şu*' (IE 41); or when '*eyler*' [make] is used instead of the modern word '*yapar*' in '*Dilerse Cehennemi Cennet, Cenneti Cehennem eyler*' [Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n] (PL 1.255; IE 47).<sup>38</sup> Some words are Islamized, like 'Oracle' as '*kelamının*' [God's words] or 'Stygian flood' as '*Cehennem gölü*' [Hell's Lake] (PL 1.12; IE 41; PL 1.239; IE 46). Despite the relative irony of linking a Puritan Milton to mystical ideas, these examples represent understandable equivalences that prevent breaks in reading and further evidence the translator's domestication.

For Adivar, it is not only Milton's ideas on Unitarianism that make him share common ground with Muslims, but also his ideas on the right to divorce, polygamy, and legitimate war against tyranny.<sup>39</sup> Adivar even states that readers of Islamic background will read Milton's works better when they study his biography

<sup>34</sup> Dusi, 'Intersemiotic Translation', 189–90. Eco, *Experiences*, 14–17.

<sup>35</sup> For the term *Unitarianism* as encompassing Arianism and Socinianism, see Rumrich, 'Milton's Arianism', 75–92.

<sup>36</sup> Resch, 'Die Rolle der muttersprachlichen Kompetenz', 344; Nida, 'Translator's Creativity', 135.

<sup>37</sup> Zarrabi-Zadeh, *Practical*, 144–6; Schimmel, *Mystical*, 64–77.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *The Poetry*, 126.

<sup>39</sup> For Milton's religious ideas, see Miller, *John Milton*, 120–2; Lim, *John Milton*, 23–4.



(IE 18–19).<sup>40</sup> Therefore, Adivar gives an extensive biographical, social, and literary background of Milton and his time and emphasizes the need to appreciate the classical and biblical sources that she provides in the commentaries and endnotes (IE 1–39). For instance, to guide the learning process of such non-Turkish sources, Adivar uses untranslation, that is, ‘selective lexical fidelity which leaves some words untranslated’ as a means to widen her Turkish students’ vocabulary and knowledge of classical references that are still an integral part of the curriculum in teaching English language and literature in Turkey (IE 53–5, 58).<sup>41</sup> She explains the untranslation of ‘*Pandæmonium*’ as ‘*Şeytan–Sarayı*’ [Palace of Satan/Daemons] (PL 1.756; IE 59, 38). Conversely, she relies on the first-hand experience of her Turkish audience, for example, in the description of bees working on the Taurus Mountains in her choice to translate ‘*Taurus*’ into the Turkish ‘*Toros*’ (PL 1.769; IE 59). The introductory parts highlight the proximity of source text material and target audience backgrounds, along with such practices that underscore some intersections of biblical and Qur’anic references (IE 34). She compares and contrasts, for example, Satan’s rebellion and the Father’s order for everyone to bow to the Son in book 5 with two Qur’anic episodes. In these, Satan claims that he is superior to humans because he is created from fire not clay, so disobeys God by refusing to bow to Adam (IE 34).<sup>42</sup>

Some of Adivar’s choices for interpretation seem to be filtered through her own moral ideas, expressed through amplifying references to Allah and Heaven or muting references to Satan and his minions. For example, God is repeatedly referred to with such terms as ‘*Kadiri Mutlak*’ [Almighty] to foreground God’s omnipotence (IE 42, 46–7, 57, 68, 71, 79, 91, 105). References to Satan, however, are lexically derogatory words with cacophonous sounds that emphasize his fallen and forlorn condition in Islam. References about the pain of Satan and his minions are rendered with cacophonous words like ‘*Zulmet*’ [gloom], ‘*azap*’ [torment], and ‘*kahr*’ [sorrow] to emphasize that pain in translating ‘highly they rag’d | Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms’ (IE 42–3; PL 1.666–7). Likewise, when Satan’s ostensive victory over humankind is cut short through a mirage turning their rewards into dust and the fallen angels into snakes, Adivar’s translation of ‘horrid sympathie’ as ‘*his–birliğı*’ [union of sentiment] creates an onomatopoeic hissing that underscores their demonic depictions (PL 10.540; IE 102).

To maintain the Islamic branch of her Abrahamic discourse, Adivar frequently resorts to what Eco defines as ‘narcotizing’ or ‘magnifying’ the source text material.<sup>43</sup> Adivar’s translations and comments either omit or downplay the importance of biblical source material (IE 62, 74, 95–6, 116). For example, Milton’s choice of

<sup>40</sup> For similar claims in the Arab region about the importance of biography and on Milton’s beliefs making him ‘a devout Muslim,’ see Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*, 3, 28.

<sup>41</sup> For untranslation, see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffins, *The Empire*, 64.

<sup>42</sup> For al-Baqara 30 and al-Araf 12, see *The Qur’an*, trans. Haleem, 7, 95.

<sup>43</sup> Eco, *From the Tree*, 90.

defining Satan's conceptualization of God's rule as 'Tyranny of Heav'n', used to follow poetic decorum in constructing Satan's characterization as a rebel angel, is transformed into absolutism with '*mutlak hüküm süren*' [absolute ruler] (PL 1.124; IE 44). Likewise, Satan's 'Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n' is translated as '*Cehennemde hükümet etmek Cennetteki hizmetkarlığa müreccaktır*' [It is preferable to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven] where the word *müreccah* means preferable, again downplaying Satan's demonic diction (PL 1.263; IE 47).

Although differences in source culture and target culture are consciously omitted, Adivar occasionally mentions differences either through untranslation or brief explanations. For example, Adivar emphasizes that '*Gabriel*' is the Islamic angel '*Cebrail*'s Christian counterpart' and retains '*Gabriel*' in her text and translation (PL 4.549; IE 84). Similarly, since Raphael's narration of Lucifer's origin story and his fall is an explicitly Christian lesson, it is omitted from Adivar's analysis and given only in the translation of the 'Argument' (PL 5.224–907; IE 85–6). Furthermore, summarizing books 11 and 12, Adivar either omits or emphasizes doctrinal differences between Christianity and Islam. She does so by explaining that the way book 12—specifically how humanity will be saved by the intercession of Christ—is part of Christian belief. Here, Adivar's contrast between Christianity and Islam is clear in the use of '*Hazreti İsa*' [St Jesus] for Christ as a prophet among many and '*Peygamberimizin*' [Our Prophet's] to define the Prophet Muhammad with a possessive pronoun, thus underlining the trifurcation of the Abrahamic religions into Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (IE 106). This raises questions concerning the 'ethics of translation' regarding the invisibility or impartiality of the translator and the extent to which correcting the source text is the business of a translator, especially set against cultural factors that possibly necessitate moral statements about the 'assumed acceptance or unacceptance of the ideologies' in the target culture.<sup>44</sup>

Adivar's comments are therefore like a personal reader response of a Muslim Turk that she shares with other Muslim Turkish readers. In her final comments on *Paradise Lost*, Adivar compares the expulsion of Satan to that of humans as a cathartic exemplum (IE 106–7). As Adivar further claims, the description of Adam and Eve's expulsion should make readers feel sadness, in coordination with the translation's constant emphasis that these are not simply characters of Christian doctrine in a foreign text but the Turkish readers' first parents (IE 107). Similarly, the narration of the Chorus of Samson's death in *Samson Agonistes* as an act of '*şahadet*'—a martyrdom in an Islamic sense which pleases '*Allah*' as a redemption of Samson's former sins (IE 127)—intends to heighten the empathy of her Turkish readers for cathartic and pedagogical ends.

The Abrahamic discourse which wrestles the source text to be more reader-friendly for Turkish audiences is a means towards the didactic ends of Adivar's

<sup>44</sup> Chesterman, 'Ethics', 147; Büyükkantarcioglu, 'Critical', 2. For the analogous ethics of adaptation, see Stephen Buhler's chapter in the present volume, 'Quoting Milton in Musical Appropriations'.

pedagogical translation. The translation emphasizes literary, social, political, religious, and, foremost, ethical issues, which the Turkish readers of 1949 should take into consideration to become better individuals and establish a better society in the post-Second World War period. For Adivar, the topicality of Milton and his time derives from how the seventeenth century laid the foundation of materialism dominant in her own time (*IE* viii). For her, mechanical thought patterns led to dangerous forms of materialisms seen in harmful practices devoid of moral filters especially in the Anglophone world, specifically in colonial and expansionist practices (*IE* ix). Therefore, Adivar sees the seventeenth century as a period to be analysed from multiple points of view to guard against possible humanitarian disasters caused by a lack of ethical concerns (*IE* ix).

Reading Adivar's Milton has didactic functions that move from the social to the personal. For her, a holistic analysis of Milton's prose and poetry shows that Milton believed that society can be re-established into an ideal one through morals and education (*IE* 27). Emphasizing the epic poet's aim to instruct about God's divine plan, the pedagogical function of the source text is rendered in an almost epigrammatic couplet in Adivar's translation that elucidates her aim, as well (*PL* 1.25–26): 'Ezeli inayeti beyan edeyim, | Allah yolunu insanlara izah edeyim' [I may assert eternal providence, | And explain the ways of God to men] (*IE* 41). According to Adivar's self-reflexive commentary on her reading practice of *Paradise Lost*, the last thirty years showed her that the text represents the psychomachia among an everlasting single power's two sides (*IE* 32–3). This psychomachia, however, is not just an abstract allegorical one, but was felt in the pangs of the Second World War. Particularly, her readings of Milton's association of dictatorship with Satan makes Adivar ponder how uncontrolled power has led to dictatorships between the First and Second World Wars, and how humans might learn that power should reside in the morally best people and be controlled by the rest of the people who can take back political control if power is abused (*IE* 23). Thus, justifying God's ways is also one of Adivar's aims (*PL* 1.26). Her translations and commentaries are not Romantic studies of literature for literature's sake. Rather, they create associations with her immediate environment to improve personal and social behaviour.

This psychomachia reveals some valuable lessons about human relations. Adivar argues that, while the books about Adam and Eve or Heaven are not as dramatic as those about Satan, Turkish readers might take valuable examples from domestic and educative issues like why (harmful) knowledge is forbidden and how the most harmonious couple can fall out with one another (*IE* 77–8). The empathetic and didactic function of studying Milton might illustrate how certain forms of knowledge can lead humans to do evil and how Adam and Eve's behaviours are similar to those of contemporary humans. Knowledge helps humans to solve problems through technological innovations that improve communication, nutrition, transportation, and many more aspects of daily life. But when knowledge is instrumentalized to do evil, just like Satan and his minions do in the epic,

humans face bondage and torment, as seen in the destructive improvements in war technologies, like the rebel angels' 'devilish Engines', manifested in the atomic bomb in 1945 (*PL* 6.Argument). For Adivar, the major question of her day is how knowledge can save humans from being instrumentalized to do evil (*IE* 82). Adivar thinks that after reading the last lines of the epic, readers will feel speechless and should be left to make their own judgements (*IE* 108). Emphasizing the importance of reader responses, Adivar underscores the use of pedagogical texts as preventive educative means.

Adivar comments extensively on Milton's Satan in her introductions and summaries to instruct her readers about the deceptiveness and destructiveness of evil and to associate it with contemporary social issues. For example, in the introductory part on 'Paradise Lost'un Diğer Kitapları' [*Paradise Lost's* Other Books], that is, book 2 to book 12, Satan's pride is instrumental to create a matchless psychological reflection about relatable evil and about poetic and divine justice (*IE* 61–3). As she argues, '*gayz ve hile ile elde edilen zaferin nasıl bir acı tadı olduğunu [ . . . ] görüyoruz*' [we see how victory achieved through hatred and treachery has a sour taste] (*IE* 62). For Adivar, the real tragedy is that of Satan and his minions who have lost '*hakiki Cennet*' [genuine Paradise], that is Heaven, for eternity while humans can return to, at least, a part of Paradise (*IE* 62). The pedagogic function of poetic justice at the expense of the tragedy of the fallen angels shows how evil does not lead to prosperity, which constitutes the framework of Adivar's aim in translating Milton.

Adivar's socio-political agenda is even more explicit in *Samson Agonistes* as she uses the ills of her own life experiences to educate future generations. For Adivar, Samson is an allegory of totalitarian regimes devoid of reason and ethics. Sheer physical strength divorced from reason, ethics, and self-control leads to individual downfall and to that of others (*IE* 126). Hinting at totalitarian regimes in the Second World War that were divorced of ethics, Adivar further explains that no matter which part of the ideological spectrum of right- or left-wing ideas one ascribes to, oppression, evil, treachery and malice for the sake of ideology does not engender any good to any country (*IE* 126). Polarisations through colonial practices of mass exploitation of other races, racial segregation, and science to prove malicious practices seem to Adivar the real problem of her own time. Associating these with Milton's depiction of evil in his works, she argues that different manifestations of evil can recur if younger generations are not educated against the use of evil knowledge. According to Adivar, '*ruhunun içindeki gözleri, Milton'a "Allahın yollarını insanlara izah" etmek kudretini vermiş*' [the inner eyes of his soul empowered Milton to relate Allah's ways to people], which, for her, constitutes Milton's didactic agenda (*IE* 129). Like Milton, Adivar is trying to teach God's ways, that is, ethics and morals to make humans not just clever beings but also ethical beings that can prevent further disasters like those that traumatized her and millions of people in the first half of the twentieth century.

For Adivar, Milton is both a good educator, as seen in his pamphlet *On Education* (1644) and his role as a private tutor, and a good author, as seen in his poetic works (*IE* 4–6, 74). The manner and agenda of her translations show that Adivar, especially through her emphasis on Milton as both author and educator, associates her own literary and educational sides with those of Milton. Adivar's knowledge of 'contextual' information related to Milton and seventeenth-century England, of 'intertextual' information through her profound knowledge of Turkish and Islamic literature, and of 'situational information' in her ideas that Milton's texts can be used for education and shared ethics, as well as confirm her expertise and the consciousness of her translation process.<sup>45</sup> Yet, despite the significance of her partial translations, they sit within a Turkish context still lacking complete translations of Milton's works and a widespread readership for the partial translations that exist.

Time will tell whether one day, Milton's works will cement themselves in the Turkish context, and maybe even find a Turkish translator as competent as Adivar for all of Milton's writings and for the Turkish reading world.

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<sup>45</sup> Holmes, 'Describing,' 84–5; Reiß and Vermeer, *Grundlegung*, 58.

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PART III

VERBAL BORDERS



# Madhusudan's Miltonic Epic, the *Meghnādbadh kābya*

*Amrita Dhar*

I have known of the English Renaissance author John Milton for as long as I have read the nineteenth-century Bengali writer Michael Madhusudan Dutt.<sup>1</sup> To read Madhusudan's writings is to brush up repeatedly against Milton, whose life in seventeenth-century London was lived halfway across the globe and centuries away from my late twentieth-century Calcutta (later Kolkata), India. Even in middle school—where I first read Madhusudan's sonnets and some excerpts from his epic poem *Meghnādbadh kābya* [*The Poem of the Slaying of Meghnād*] (1861) in my Bengali literature class—it was impossible not to register how intensely Madhusudan's poetry irradiated my language, pulling it both luminously back to its classical Sanskritic roots and proleptically forward to what the language was to become in my own time. There was no doubt about the artifice of the poetry I was reading. But in its irresistible sweep, it left an impression almost of artlessness, of sheer power and uncontainable passion for all that poetic language was and could be, for all that the Bengali language was and could be.

Almost a decade later, I read Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1674). It was after I had regained some balance following my vertiginous encounter with Milton's epic, in English, that I started to see Madhusudan's poetry, in Bengali, in greater relief. In this chapter, in a volume focused on Milton across borders and media, I must begin by stating what many scholars of Bengali have long known: that Milton, because of and through the works of Madhusudan, changed the landscape of Bengali literature forever. This assertion rests on four facts. First, Milton wrote the first and most famous original blank verse epic poem in the English language. Second, Madhusudan was immensely taken, even obsessed, with Milton's epic

I gratefully acknowledge the help that I had from Poushali Bhadury, Paromita Chakravarti, Abhijit Gupta, Ananda Lal, Romila Saha, and Jayanta Sengupta in the final stages of preparing this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I refer to Madhusudan by his given name. He was baptized on 9 February 1843 as Michael Madhusudan Dutt by his own choice and despite disapproval from his Hindu family and friends. Many readers also refer to him as Michael Madhusudan, or, simply, Michael. For more on Madhusudan's writing of his name, see Murshid, *The Heart of a Rebel Poet*. For transcriptions from the Bengali, I use a semi-diplomatic adaptation of the Library of Congress guidelines of Romanization.

blank verse. Third, Madhusudan wrote the first blank verse epic poem in the Bengali language. And fourth, Madhusudan's innovations in Bengali verse, especially blank verse, transformed Bengali literature. In asserting that Milton, through Madhusudan, changed the landscape of Bengali literature, I do not attribute to Milton any intentionality or credit in this matter. Bengali was not one of Milton's many languages.<sup>2</sup> All Milton knew of Bengal came to him from reading his day's travel literature. When Milton compares Satan's travel towards Hell-gates with the voyage of ships in unfamiliar seas, he does so with the interest and curiosity of the armchair voyager who has kept up with the most significant travel literature of his time, including Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* (1589, revised frequently thereafter) and Samuel Purchas's *Hakluytus Posthumus* (1624):

As when far off at sea a fleet descried  
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds  
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles  
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring  
Their spicy drugs [. . .]

(PL 2.636–40)<sup>3</sup>

Yet, as I show in this chapter, Milton came to substantively inhabit a rich language tradition distant from his own—the sixth most spoken language in the world, one that around 300 million speak as their native tongue in the twenty-first century—and Milton's poetic innovations influenced the advances of Bengali literature during the *Nabajagaran*, the Bengal Renaissance of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, a time of unprecedented vitality and cultural upsurge in a critical moment of subcontinental history.<sup>4</sup> This chapter explores a reception branch that has remained understudied among Anglophone readers and argues that an appreciation of the Miltonic making of Madhusudan's most enduring work and, conversely, Madhusudan's transcreation of Milton's epic instinct offer insights for Milton studies, for scholarship on poetry and poetics, and for studies of semiotic transfers between languages and media. My treatment of this complex and interweaved matter of epic and formal influence is necessarily brief in this current setting, but it is my hope that it will serve as an invitation for scholars of Milton and Madhusudan to engage these remarkable poets' works together, especially in

<sup>2</sup> For Milton's multilingualism, see Hale, *Milton's Languages*. For a brief summary of Milton's multilingualism, see Gordon Campbell, 'Epilogue: Multilingual and Multicultural Milton,' in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*, 493–7.

<sup>3</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Fowler, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>4</sup> The cultural phenomenon and nomenclature of the Bengali *Nabajagaran*—literally 'new awakening'—are at least as debated as those of the European Renaissance. I use the terms *Nabajagaran* and Renaissance as serviceable markers for historic periods within specific cultural realities, even as we turn towards investigations of such connected histories as advocated, for instance, in Subrahmanyam, *Connected History*.

ways that unfold Madhusudan's magnificent Bengali to a global audience.<sup>5</sup> My discussion of Madhusudan's epic will invoke questions of reason, authority, power, and responsibility, themes as profoundly important to Milton as to the Bengali poet.

### Madhusudan's Milton

Madhusudan introduced to Bengali poetry no fewer than three transformative forms and conventions, all of which have Miltonic precedent: first, *amitrakshar chhanda*, the rhythm of unrhymed metre, essentially blank verse; second, the modern epic; and third, the sonnet. Despite Madhusudan's contributions to Bengali theatre, he is better known as a poet than as a dramatist.<sup>6</sup> Madhusudan's first epic poem, the *Tilottamāshambhab kābya* [*The Poem of the Making of Tilottamā*] (1860) is the first blank verse epic in the Bengali language. Madhusudan followed *Tilottamā* with *Meghnād*.<sup>7</sup> Prior to this, significant translations and retellings of the classical epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* by the poets Krittibas Ojha (15th cent.) and Kasiram Das (sixteenth cent.) respectively remained in wide circulation and were published in Bengali by the Serampore Mission Press in 1802–3. Similarly, local retellings such as Chandrabati's *Rāmāyaṇa*—an oral sixteenth-century rendition by a woman poet that centres the voice of Sita, the female protagonist of the epic—remained in traditional vernacular circulation. These Bengali texts are retellings of the Sanskrit epic and comparable to George Chapman's 1598 and 1616 translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into English.<sup>8</sup> Madhusudan's remain the first modern epics in the Bengali language.

Madhusudan's poetry collection *Chaturdaśpadī Kabitābalī* [*The Book of Fourteen-Line Poems*] (1866) is a collection of 102 Bengali sonnets written in the Petrarchan tradition that also displays clear indebtedness to the works of Dante Alighieri, Pierre Ronsard, William Shakespeare, and Milton.<sup>9</sup> Madhusudan also innovated with versification, varying the rhyme-schemes in sonnets by John Donne, Henry Howard, Shakespeare, and Thomas Wyatt. In Madhusudan's hand, every line of every fourteen-line poem typically also becomes a fourteen-syllable unit, itself indebted to the Bengali *payār*, the most common metrical unit of the

<sup>5</sup> For representative work, see the two introductions to the English translations of *Meghnādbadh kābya* by Seely and Radice. See also Malabika Sarkar's overview of Milton's Indian presence in Corns, *A New Companion to Milton*. Similarly, see the overview of Madhusudan as an Indian writer in Chaudhuri, *The Vintage Book of Modern Indian Literature*.

<sup>6</sup> For an appreciation of Madhusudan's impact on Bengali theatre, see Kennedy, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*.

<sup>7</sup> I use these shorter titles for the full names of the epics, according to usual Bengali convention.

<sup>8</sup> For an exploration of the Indian subcontinent's plurality of epic traditions, see Ramanujan, 'Three Hundred Rāmāyaṇas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation'.

<sup>9</sup> Madhusudan mentions Petrarch in Sonnet 2 and Dante in Sonnet 82; see *Chaturdaśpadī Kabitābalī*, in Dutt, *Madhusudan Rachanābali*, ed. Gupta.

*panchali* genre.<sup>10</sup> Although the sonorous gravity of Madhusudan's sonnets could hardly be further from the sing-song vulgate of the *panchali*, something of the Middle Bengali form's metrical discipline carried over into Madhusudan's mature Bengali poetry.

Milton's poetic voice is thus perceptible in each major formal contribution by Madhusudan to Bengali poetry. Indeed, Madhusudan repeatedly names Milton as he registers his literary tutelage. In 1860: 'Good Blank Verse should be sonorous and the best writer of Blank Verse in English is the *toughest* of poets—I mean old John Milton!'<sup>11</sup> Again: 'If your friends know English, let them read the *Paradise Lost* [*sic*], and they will find how the verse, in which the Bengali poetaster writes, is constructed.'<sup>12</sup> And again, in 1861: 'The poem [*Meghnād*] is rising into splendid popularity. Some say it is better than Milton—but that is all bosh—nothing can be better than Milton; many say it licks Kalidasa [the superlative classical Sanskrit poet]; I have no objection to that. I don't think it impossible to equal Virgil, Kalidasa, and Tasso. Though glorious, still they are mortal poets; Milton is divine.'<sup>13</sup> As Rosinka Chaudhuri avers, it 'would not be an exaggeration to maintain that Milton was an obsession with Madhusudan [. . .]; we find the name cropping up with unfailing regularity, especially in the letters in which he [Madhusudan] talks of literary technique, of style and manner, of the epic and blank verse, and of what he himself was attempting to forge for the benefit of a modern and national literature for the country.'<sup>14</sup> But it is in what is still considered to be the defining epic in Bengali, Madhusudan's *Meghnādbadh kābya*, that the Miltonic style of *Paradise Lost* and the aesthetic innovations of that seventeenth-century poem are most strikingly evident.

Madhusudan was so influenced by Milton and especially *Paradise Lost* that he took it upon himself to write the Miltonic epic of his language and age. He produced, not as a derivation but as a profoundly generative Bengali in-habitation of Miltonic epic energies, an epic Miltonic turn away from rhyme and into blank verse, a Miltonic dedication to the vernacular even as that vernacular avows its classical roots, and a philosophical Miltonic interrogation of good and evil, freedom and bondage, power and love. The result is a milestone of Bengali and world literature, itself eternally intertwining Milton with the Bengali legacy. One of the best-known portraits of Madhusudan, by the twentieth-century painter Atul Bose, and which now hangs in the Victoria Memorial Hall of Kolkata, depicts a portrait of Milton on the wall behind a Western-clothes-dressed Madhusudan (see Figure 9.1). Albeit deeply problematic for its sexism and its liberties with

<sup>10</sup> For an outline of the metrical context of the *payār*, see d'Hubert, *In the Shade of the Golden Palace*.

<sup>11</sup> Madhusudan's letter dated 24 April 1860 to Rajnarain Basu (Letter 55); Murshid, *The Heart of a Rebel Poet*, 117–20.

<sup>12</sup> Letter 58 in Murshid, 1 July 1860, to Rajnarain; Murshid, *The Heart of a Rebel Poet*, 127–9.

<sup>13</sup> Letter 74 in Murshid, 15 January 1861, to Rajnarain; Murshid, *The Heart of a Rebel Poet*, 156–7. Kalidasa's dates are uncertain and his works may have been written in the fourth century.

<sup>14</sup> R. Chaudhuri, 'Refashioning Milton.'



Fig. 9.1. Atul Bose, *Michael Madhusudan Datta* (c. 1950), oil on canvas. By kind permission of the Trustees of the Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, India.

biographical facts, the Bengali film *Michael Madhusudan* (1950), directed by Modhu Bose, reflects the cultural currency that Milton enjoys around Madhusudan by similarly naming Milton multiple times in the course of the bio-drama, going so far as to portray Madhusudan, played by the celebrated Bengali stage actor Utpal Dutt in his first screen appearance, clutching a bust of Milton in the Bengali poet's final days.

That the *Meghnādbadh kābya* is a transposition of the Miltonic epic into learned and dramatic Sanskrit can be seen by paying attention to the poem's main invocation and a few key passages. The nine-canto *Meghnādbadh kābya* draws on important aspects of the twelve-book *Paradise Lost*, such as the relationship between received literary tradition and personal poetic innovation, ambition and authority, and the presence of complex, articulate, and compelling anti-heroes. These aspects resonate with the historical context in which *Meghnād* was written: the height of the Bengal Renaissance, that energized moment in pre-independence India when the colonial experience began to confront in unprecedented ways a dawning and collective anti/de/post-colonial aspiration. Madhusudan was writing nearly a century before the current Indian state of West Bengal and the country of Bangladesh were created. Upon Partition in 1947, Bangladesh was created as East Bengal, a part of Pakistan. It was renamed East Pakistan in 1955 and finally Bangladesh after the Bangladeshi Liberation War of 1971 and the secession of East Pakistan from Pakistan. Madhusudan was born in Sagardari, Jessore, now in Bangladesh, and spent his years of higher education and later years of greatest literary productivity in Calcutta. In Madhusudan's lifetime (1824–1873), Calcutta was the capital of the British Raj (1858–1947) from 1858 to 1911. Madhusudan's life and works remain intimately connected with the subcontinental history in which they are embedded.

### Into the *Nabajagaran*

The story of Madhusudan has been told as a story of brilliance, of apostasy, and of return.<sup>15</sup> *Meghnād* is not an autobiographical poem. But I shall mention some aspects of Madhusudan's biography because no consideration of *Meghnād* can ignore its author's life and times and what they mean for the poem.

Through his identities of male gender, high caste, and upper class, Madhusudan enjoyed enormous privileges within colonial Indian society, almost none of which he failed to abuse. For instance, Madhusudan's marital infidelity with Rebecca Thompson was matched only by his callousness in the abandonment of her and their four children in Madras (later Chennai) in 1856. His subsequent partner

<sup>15</sup> See M. Bose, *Michael Madhusudan Dutt*; Murshid, *Lured by Hope*; Massey, 'Dutt, Michael Madhusudan'.



was Amelia Henrietta White—they never formally married but remained together until their deaths within three days of one another. Madhusudan reproduced his long-standing male entitlement and negligence with his and Henrietta's children, failing to provide for this family, too. His living beyond his means and repeated borrowing of money from many quarters, most substantively from the reformer and scholar Iswar Chandra Bandyopadhyay (1820–1891; better known by his popular honorific, Vidyasagar [the ocean of learning]), reached epic proportions in his Europe years. Yet one good outcome of his privilege remains in the outstanding use Madhusudan made of his affluent training in languages, which aided his studies, travels, and pan-Indian and ultimately cosmopolitan outlook. As Milton wrote his thanks in the Latin poem *Ad patrem* [To his Father] to John Milton senior for enabling lessons in Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and Hebrew, so could Madhusudan have written to his parents in gratitude for the instruction he received in Bengali, Persian, Sanskrit, and English (*Ad patrem* 80–5). Madhusudan would later also study Greek, Latin, Tamil, Telugu, Italian, French, German, and Hebrew.

As an Indian, a Hindu, a colonial subject living in the tumultuous years surrounding the First War of Indian Independence (also called the Sepoy Mutiny), and someone who lived in Europe at the height of the British empire (he spent 1862–7 in London and Versailles), Madhusudan also faced enormous confines, privations, and discriminations, almost none of which he failed to challenge. For instance, Madhusudan's family subscribed to the practice of arranging a man's marriage with a child bride, a custom that destroyed the lives of millions of girls and women in the seventeenth to twentieth centuries and also, significantly, made a companionate marriage impossible for the men in the marital equation.<sup>16</sup> Some two centuries earlier than Madhusudan's time, Milton had written in his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* of how 'needful [it is] now against all the sorrows and casualties of this life to have an intimate and speaking help, a ready and reviving associate in marriage [. . .] whereof who misses, by chancing on a mute and spiritless mate, remains more alone then [*sic*] before.'<sup>17</sup> Madhusudan agreed. Notified by his family in 1842 of his imminent wedding to an upper-caste, Hindu, young, Bengali woman he had never met, Madhusudan rebelled by converting to Christianity.<sup>18</sup> This effectively broke the match that his family had arranged. It also broke his ties with his family and in turn with their fiscal provision of his studies and upkeep. Madhusudan was also no stranger to infrastructural and casual colonial racism, receiving, as he did, a wage at Madras University (1852–5) that was 40

<sup>16</sup> In India, child marriage was officially outlawed in 1929, but this practice still persists in parts of the country. See Bureau of Democracy, 'India 2015'.

<sup>17</sup> Milton, *Divorce Tracts*, 113–14.

<sup>18</sup> Letter 16 in Murshid, 27 November 1842, to his friend Gourdas Basak; Murshid, *The Heart of a Rebel Poet*, 32–4.

per cent lower than a white man's for the same work.<sup>19</sup> Finally, some of his rudest awakenings into British white supremacy came in his London years, when the racism he faced likely influenced his decision to move to Versailles.<sup>20</sup> The essential points to grasp from this mix of contradictions in Madhusudan's life remain in the complexities of an educated Indian man trying to find his place in between worlds and times; of great ambition nothing reined for being unlikely of fulfilment within the life of the person animating it; and of a humanistic sensibility intimately recognizable to us in the twenty-first century for its many intersectional privileges and precarities along what we identify as lines of gender, race, caste, class, sexuality, and ability.

Published just a couple of years after the Sepoy Mutiny (1857–9), the large-scale rebellion that took place in various parts of North and Central India and cost some 800,000 Indian lives and 3,000 British lives, and Bengal's Indigo Rebellion (1859), the peasant revolt against the forced cultivation of indigo by British planters, *Meghnād* ostensibly steers clear of political commentary—much as *Paradise Lost* might be seen to do, although published shortly into the Restoration and despite being Milton's first publication since his supremely risky attempt to stay the return of monarchy, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660).<sup>21</sup> Yet, *Meghnād's* composition was undertaken after a couple of chance invitations that Madhusudan received to translate two literary-theatrical works from Bengali into English—not unlike Milton's forays into patronaged drama with his *Arcades* (performed 1633) and *A Masque* (performed 1634). Madhusudan translated into English Ramnarayan Tarkaratna's unremarkable play based on a classical Sanskrit work, *Ratnabali* (1858), and Dinabandhu Mitra's acclaimed play *Nil-darpan* [*The Indigo-Planting Mirror*] (1860), which portrays the plight of Bengal's farmers at the hands of British indigo planters. After a decade of writing in English and dreaming of English literary fame, Madhusudan was suddenly confronted with both the power of his language to meaningfully reach wide audiences and the possibilities latent within the Bengali tradition for significant literary and formal innovation.<sup>22</sup>

Madhusudan's first Bengali play, *Sermista* (1858), was followed by his play *Padmavati* (1859), the first work to use blank verse in any non-English Indian language. Although intended for performance, *Padmavati* was never staged. This made the blank verse of Madhusudan's epics all the more striking when the *Tilottamāshambhab kābya* and the *Meghnādbadh kābya* appeared in manuscript circulation among the Calcutta readership and then publication. Madhusudan

<sup>19</sup> Madhusudan received 150 Rupees per month to a white teacher's 250 Rupees.

<sup>20</sup> For the coded allegations in Madhusudan's unhappy letters from 1862 to 1863, written aboard his England-bound ship and from London, see Murshid, *The Heart of a Rebel Poet*, 183–4, 197–275.

<sup>21</sup> On the rebellions, see Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire*.

<sup>22</sup> For evidence of Madhusudan's aspirations in the years 1849–55, see Letters 36–44 in Murshid, *The Heart of a Rebel Poet*, 61–80.

set himself a public challenge, in front of the literary cognoscenti of Calcutta, to do 'Things unattempted' in Bengali (*PL* 1.16). At this time, several influential patrons of literature and theatre, including Maharaja Jotindramohan Tagore and the Paikpara *zamindar* [landowner] brothers Pratap Chandra and Ishwar Chandra Singha, were still deeply sceptical about the use of blank verse in Bengali poetry. But *Tilottamā* met with a surprised and admiring reception among critics. In a letter to his friend Rajnarain Basu, Madhusudan wrote: 'I began the poem [*Tilottamā*] in a joke, and I see I have actually done something that ought to give our national Poetry a good lift'.<sup>23</sup> This sense of achievement effectively paved the way for Madhusudan to try his hand at something more ambitious.

### *Meghnād*

What Madhusudan planned after his first success with Bengali poetry was not only a more audacious experiment in blank verse, but a subject drawn from the sub-continent's universally known epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, yet with a terrific inversion. The *Rāmāyaṇa*'s hero Ram, who is considered to be an avatar of the god Vishnu, would, in *Meghnād*, be a tertiary character at best. *Meghnād*'s most powerful personages would be the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s anti-hero Ravan, Ravan's son Meghnād, and Meghnād's wife Pramila, a character of Madhusudan's creation. Some of *Meghnād*'s greatest poetry belong to these *asuras*, these beings *opposed* to the gods or *suras*, as well as to Ram's abducted wife, Sita, who, for all her significance in the classical epic, receives little space in the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa*. The stakes were high for Madhusudan—as Milton's were for his undertaking of 'long choosing, and beginning late' (*PL* 9.26). Madhusudan began, as Milton had done with Satan in his first epic, *in media res*. *Meghnād* begins in the middle of the confrontation between Ram and Ravan, the great epic battle of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Despite that plunge into the action of the epic, like *Paradise Lost*, *Meghnād* begins with a stirring invocation that summons multiple questions significant for Madhusudan, such as those of apostasy and return, selves lost and found, authorial surrender and ability. The opening is worth quoting at length:

সম্মুখ-সমরে পড়ি, বীর-চুড়ামণি  
বীরবাহু, চলি যবে গেলা যমপুরে  
অকালে, কহ, হে দেবি অমৃতভাষিণি  
কোন বীরবরে বরি সেনাপতি-পদে,  
পাঠাইলা রণে পুনঃ রক্ষকুলনিধি  
রাঘবাবরি? কি কৌশলে, রাক্ষসভরসা  
ইন্দ্রজিত মেঘনাদে—অজেয় জগতে—

<sup>23</sup> Letter 55 in Murshid, 24 April 1860; Murshid, *The Heart of a Rebel Poet*, 117–20.

উর্মিলাবিলাসী নাশি, ইন্দ্রে নিঃশঙ্কিলা?  
 বন্দি চরণারবিন্দ, অতি মন্দমতি  
 আমি, ডাকি আবার তোমায়, শ্বেতভুজে  
 ভারতি! যেমতি, মাতঃ, বসিলা আসিয়া  
 বান্ধীকির রসনায় (পাদ্মাসনে যেন)  
 যবে খরতর শরে, গহন কাননে,  
 ক্রৌঞ্চবধু সহ ক্রৌঞ্চ নিষাদ বিঁধিলা,  
 তেমতি দাসেরে, আসি, দয়া কর, সতি।  
 কে জানে মহিমা তব এ ভবমণ্ডলে?  
 নরাধম আছিল যে নর নরকুলে  
 চৌর্য্যে রত, হইল সে তোমার প্রসাদে,  
 মৃত্যুঞ্জয়, যথা মৃত্যুঞ্জয় উমাপতি!  
 হে বরদে, তব বরে চোর রত্নাকর  
 কাব্যরত্নাকর কবি! তোমার পরশে,  
 সুচন্দন বৃক্ষশোভা বিষবৃক্ষ ধরে!  
 হায়, মা, এ হেন পুণ্য আছে কি এ দাসে?  
 কিন্তু যে গো গুণহীন সন্তানের মাঝে  
 মুঢ়মতি, জননীর স্নেহ তার প্রতি  
 সমধিক। উর তবে, উর দয়াময়ি  
 বিশ্বরমে! গাইব, মা, বীররসে ভাসি,  
 মহাগীত: উরি, দাসে দেহ পদছায়া।<sup>24</sup>

[When the bravest of braves Virbahu, killed in open combat and before his time, departed for the land of the dead, say, o goddess of immortal speech, which warrior did the guardian of the *rakshasas* (*asuras*), the enemy of Raghav (Ram) send as general to the battle? By what trick then did the beloved of Urmila (Lakshman, Ram's younger brother) destroy that hope of the *rakshasas* (the warrior Meghnad), unbeatable in battle though he (Meghnad) otherwise was, and thus free Indra (the king of the gods) from fears (for Meghnad had previously defeated Indra in battle, and earned the name 'Indrajit', victorious over Indra)? I invoke your lotus-footed presence, I who am most base and unworthy; I call on you, white-armed Bharati. Just as, Mother, you came to sit, as though on a lotus throne, on the tongue of Valmiki, when, in the dense woods, the mate of the heron was pierced by a sharp arrow beside his heron-companion (and Valmiki, in grief and anger at the birds' suffering caused by the hunter's arrow, cursed the shooter in words at once poetic and metrical and deeply felt), in the same way, chaste goddess, come favour one who is devoted to you. Who knows your true glory in this world? He who was the lowest of men, and engaged in thievery and pillage,

<sup>24</sup> Dutt, *Madhusudan Racanābali*, 1.1–28. All citations from Madhusudan's poetry and non-epistolary prose are from Dutt, *Madhusudan Racanābali*, ed. Gupta. All translations from Madhusudan's Bengali poetry in this chapter are mine. For complete English versions of *Meghnād*, see Dutt, *The Slaying of Meghanada*, trans. Seely, and Dutt, *The Poem of the Killing of Meghnād*, trans. Radice.

even he became immortal by your kindness—as Mrityunjay, the husband of Uma (Shiv) is immortal. O giver of boons: by your boon, even that robber Ratnakar (who heretofore chased riches, whence his erstwhile name, 'Ratnakar', keeper of jewels) became a mine of the jewels of poetry (thereafter called the great poet Valmiki, the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*). By your touch, even the tree of poison can be transformed into the beautiful sandalwood tree. But alas, Mother, is there even such minimal worthiness (as in Ratnakar and as in the poison-tree) in me? Yet, a mother's affection and care are greater towards her most talentless, abject child. Entrancer of the universe, you who are all kindness, come to me, grace me with your presence (and gifts). I shall then sing, Mother, a brave song of brave deeds. Grant me the shadow of your feet.]

The story thus far is that Ravan had abducted Sita, Ram's wife, and Ram had consequently raised an army of forest-dwellers, the powerful and wise monkeys and bears, to enable his assault upon Lanka, Ravan's kingdom, to rescue Sita—and more importantly for him, to prove his manhood and valour in the world. At the opening of Madhusudan's epic, Ram's army is encamped around the four gates of Lanka, sieging Ravan's kingdom, and Ravan's son Virbahu has just been killed while fighting Ram's army on Ravan's behalf. The character of Virbahu is a creation of the Middle Bengali poet Krittibas, whose *Rāmāyaṇa*, in the popular genre of the *panchali*, would have been Madhusudan's first—and childhood—oral acquaintance with the epic. Similarly, the story of robber Ratnakar's conversion to poet Valmiki is told in Krittibas's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Valmiki is still credited as the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but as with the Greek epic poet Homer, little is known about the individual behind the name Valmiki, and it cannot be ascertained that 'Valmiki' is not simply short-hand for a centuries-long line of oral composers, retellers, singers, and transmitters before the epic came to be written down in Sanskrit in the fifth century BCE.

The invocation expresses Madhusudan's most personal stakes, adapting Milton's extraordinary rendition of ambition and purpose at the start of *Paradise Lost*. Even as Milton asks the 'heavenly Muse' to 'Sing' of all human history as the Christian ordering of the world understands it, of 'man's first disobedience' and 'loss of Eden' until the regaining of the 'blissful seat' of paradise, so too does Madhusudan ask his muse, the '*devi amritabhāshini*' [goddess of undying speech], to tell him of what happened in that decisive encounter between Ram and Ravan (*PL* 1.1–5). But, then, the personal weaves irresistibly with the theodical and the epic for both poets. Milton invokes the muse's aid to his 'adventurous song, | That with no middle flight intends to soar | Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues | Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme' (*PL* 1.13–16). His is a song, Milton claims, that will venture *beyond* the height of the classical epics. The 'Spirit' that recognizes and values above all 'the upright heart and pure' must now 'Instruct' the poet in composition, and 'Illumine', 'raise', and 'support' his endeavour to 'justify the ways

of God' (*PL* 1.17–26). This is not all metaphor, for what Milton intends is a story of Heaven and Hell, and thus of matters that no one in the human condition can have experiential knowledge of—events that are radically unknown, unknowable, and 'dark' to all (*PL* 1.22). Additionally, Milton is self-reflexively composing as a blind man, for whom a theodicy must account not only for the Fall and redemption of humankind but also justify, in all senses of the word, the poet's personal condition of acquired visual loss and, going forward, his ability to compose with an inner sight the better for his being laid 'dark' and 'low' in the human world (*PL* 1.23). Similarly, Madhusudan points to the story of Ratnakar, 'naradham' or lowest among men, who, through the intervention of Saraswati (also called Bharati, or she who is filled with all [knowledge]), was raised to the status of the immortal poet Valmiki.

Indeed, Madhusudan would later write a sonnet addressed to Saraswati. When finally in Europe, in 1862, after years of longing to see the continent yet now strangely heart-sick for home, he recalled a state of fundamental repose and contentment from his early formative years in Bengal. That sonnet revisits the sentiments expressed in the invocation to *Meghnād*: a sense of departure from what was the poet's own, a need for return, and the sanctuary provided by everything that Saraswati, the patron goddess of learning, represented to him, such as his belonging within the Bengali language. Thus in Sonnet 33, entitled 'Saraswati': 'এ দাস তেমতি, জ্বলে যবে প্রাণ তার দুঃখের জ্বলনে, ধরে রাঙা পা দুখানি, দেবি সরস্বতী!—| মার কোল-সম, মা গো, এ তিন ভুবনে | আছে কি আশ্রম আর?' [When this wretched being's soul burns with sorrow, he holds on with all his might to your radiant feet. In all the three worlds (of the underworld, the earth-world and the heavens), what shelter can compare to the refuge one finds in one's mother's lap?].<sup>25</sup> Remarkably, Madhusudan accomplished his daring near-conflation of the pan-Indian Hindu goddess of learning with the patron deity of Bengal, or of the Bengali language, not at the later time of writing Sonnet 33, or even while writing *Meghnād*. At the time of completing *Meghnād*, Madhusudan had already composed and enclosed in a letter to his friend Rajnarain Basu another sonnet that would, in a later version, become the celebrated poem 'Bangabhāshā' [The Bengali Language], a poem still read in school and college curricula across West Bengal and Bangladesh. 'I want to introduce the sonnet into our language,' wrote Madhusudan to his friend in 1860, 'and some mornings ago, made the following.' There follows a poem entitled 'Kabi Mātrībhāshā' [The Poet's Mother-Tongue], entire phrases of which would later show up in 'Bangabhāshā', including those of the poet's *abāhela* [negligence] of the *dhan* [riches] of what was his very own, namely, his language and its infinite opportunities, and the timely intervention by the *Banga-kula-lakshmi* [goddess of

<sup>25</sup> Dutt, *Chaturdaspadī Kabitābālī*, Sonnet 33 'Saraswati' 5–9.

the people of Bengal].<sup>26</sup> Patience had once purportedly replied to Milton about *his* sense of personal and vocational inadequacy in blindness: 'but Patience to prevent | That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need | Either man's work or his own gifts' ('Sonnet XVI' 8–10).<sup>27</sup> A divine voice tells Madhusudan, as well, to effectively 'look in thy heart, and write', even as another English poet had once heard from another muse.<sup>28</sup> In the heady and youthful essay itself orientally titled 'The Anglo-Saxon and the Hindu' (1854), Madhusudan had once declared his preference for the English language over his own: 'I say, give me the language—the beautiful language of the Anglo-Saxon!'<sup>29</sup> The turn back from English to Bengali later remained for Madhusudan a matter of constant reckoning and emphasis, as also of freedom and choice. It is likely that Madhusudan knew Milton's early poem 'At a Vacation Exercise' in which Milton beckoned, 'I pray thee then deny me not thy aid | For this same small neglect that I have made' ('At a Vacation Exercise' 15–16). Madhusudan, too, upholds repeatedly the use of poetry to energize an entire language. It is salient, as well, that in the tradition of Petrarch, Shakespeare, Philip Sidney, Howard, Wyatt, and Milton, all of whom Madhusudan was reading, Madhusudan's first sonnet is a love poem, but a love poem dedicated to a language, a love poem of longing, return, and belonging.

In canto 1 of *Meghnād*, we encounter Ravan overcome by grief at Virbahu's death and what he sees to be the portents of Lanka's last days. Yet, Ravan rouses himself and his forces with fresh resolve and courage, ultimately anointing his son Meghnad, the most invincible of warriors, as the commander of his army to take on the forces of Ram and Lakshman. In this opening canto, the parallels between Madhusudan's Ravan and Milton's Satan of *Paradise Lost*, book 1, are striking: we register Ravan's and Satan's profound defeat; their memory of glory that was but no longer is; their deliberate departure from the godly or divine; and unreasonably, inspiringly, movingly, their determination into further action. In Satan's words, 'What though the field be lost? | All is not lost; the unconquerable will, | And study of revenge, immortal hate, | And courage never to submit or yield' (*PL* 1.105–8). Similarly Ravan: 'কে আর রাখিবে | রাক্ষসকুলের মান? যাইব আপনি। | সাজ হে বীরেন্দ্রবৃন্দ, লঙ্কার ভূষণ! | দেখিব কি গুণ ধরে রঘুকুলমণি! | অরাবণ, অরাম বা হবে ভব আজি!' [Who will protect the pride of the *rakshasas*? I will go myself. Arm, O greatest of warriors, the ornaments of Lanka. We shall see what this jewel of the house of Raghu [Ram] is made of. The world stands to lose either Ravan or Ram today].<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Letter 72 in Murshid, from the end of September 1860, to Rajnarain in which the sonnet 'Kabi Mātribhāshā' is enclosed (152–5), and Sonnet 3, 'Bangabhāshā', in *Caturdaśpadī Kabitābali*.

<sup>27</sup> All quotations of Milton shorter poetry are from Milton, *Complete Shorter Poetry*, ed. Carey.

<sup>28</sup> Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella*, 'Sonnet 1', l. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Dutt, *Madhusudan Rachanābali*, 5–33. Madhusudan's use of the phrase 'Anglo-Saxon' follows the nineteenth-century English convention of his time.

<sup>30</sup> Dutt, *Meghnādbadh kābya* 1.406–10.

Madhusudan crafts the character of Ravan's warrior son Meghnad, whose killing gives Madhusudan's epic its name, as an unimpeachably brave hero. In Madhusudan's version, Meghnad is killed not in fair battle but by treachery, and even the gods are complicit in this underhand action. For all his professed adherence to *dharma* [the way of right], the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s protagonist Ram, in *Meghnād*, becomes a cowardly abettor in a scheme designed to dispatch Meghnad while he is unarmed, alone, and engaged in worship. Not only does Meghnad's killing happen in an open violation of the warrior code, but even the divines are shown to be on Ram's side, explicitly favouring Ram's victory over the ungodly yet powerful Ravan. Milton's poem takes pains to assert that Satan fell well before the start of the story of *Paradise Lost* and will fall again (books 1–4). Madhusudan similarly attempts to frame Ravan's continuing pride and sin—his violent capturing of Sita against her wishes, and his refusal to do the right thing and free her—as the reason he is by *bidhi* [fate] bound to fall in battle (cantos 2, 5, 6, and 9). But by avoiding any discussion of why Meghnad should partake of his father Ravan's just punishment, Madhusudan's epic lays open the questions of good and evil, human deserving and fate, and power and right that also occupy *Paradise Lost*.

The middle cantos of *Meghnād*, like the middle books of *Paradise Lost*, set up readers for the climax of the story. By canto 6, it is clear that Meghnad must be interrupted in his worship of the goddess of strength, lest he gain absolute invincibility. It is also clear that Lakshman must not simply interrupt Meghnad's act of worship, but that Meghnad must be caught unawares *and* without his arms or legions and finished off in an unequal encounter as Lakshman bears weapons against him and Vibhishan, Ravan's brother who has defected to Ram's party, bars the way of Meghnad's escape. But the real prologue for the killing of Meghnad, and the uneasy justification of the ways of Ram and the divines, occurs in the preceding cantos: in the warrior-like re-entrance into Lanka by Pramila, Meghnad's wife, who determines that she must see her husband before he leaves for battle and thus bravely challenge the full force of Ram's army if they come in her way of autonomy and marital right (canto 3), and in the conversation between the imprisoned Sita, Ram's wife, and Sarama, Vibhishan's wife (canto 4). In these cantos, structured on the middle four books of *Paradise Lost*—which tell the story of what came before—Madhusudan brings his readers up to speed on the sheer courage of the female *asura* Pramila and thus establishes, by extended deductive simile, the bravery of her husband Meghnad. The poet also gives Sita and Sarama the dignity and space of an entire conversation ruminating on Sita's life-that-was with Ram, involving the 'thousand decencies that daily flow' between a couple in mutual love, and tells the story of Ravan's unjust interruption of that life through his abduction of Sita (*PL* 8.601). Madhusudan models the couple Vibhishan and Sarama after Milton's Abdiel. They become the sole voices of moral right among the *asuras*, Vibhishan warning Ravan and ultimately decamping to Ram (even as the classical



*Rāmāyaṇa* has it), and Sarama courageously becoming Sita's ally in her lonely days of imprisonment in the Ashoka woods (Madhusudan's interpolation).

Among the greatest achievements of *Meghnād* is the gorgeous poetry Madhusudan uses to establish the desires, intellectual clarity, and strength of his epic's three main female characters. Pramila is entirely Madhusudan's creation, Sarama has more agency and significance in *Meghnād* than in any previous re-telling of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and Sita receives from Madhusudan some of the finest poetry of love, separation, and steadfastness thus far in the Bengali language. There is, as a result, no greater or more telling indication of the critical limits of Madhusudan's imagination than in his final outcome for Pramila, at the very end of *Meghnād*. Like Milton's Adam, Pramila's resolution is to 'die' (PL 9.907). In canto 8, Ram visits the underworld to ask his deceased father Dasharath how he may save Lakshman, who has been brought near death by Ravan in an assault to avenge the slaying of Meghnad. This episode's borrowings from Odysseus's and Aeneas's underworld experience—mainly book 11 of *The Odyssey* and book 6 of *The Aeneid*, although there are echoes also of Dante's *Inferno*—are clear and elegant in their recasting of Western classical characters and moods into the *patal* [underworld] and *narak* [Hell] of Hindu mythology. But *Meghnād* ends with a *sanskriya* [funeral rites] episode modelled primarily on the last book of *The Iliad*. Here, Madhusudan's apprehensive proximity and ultimate refusal to depict the kind of emotional and intellectual courage that Eve receives from Milton in the Fall books (9–10) of *Paradise Lost* betrays Madhusudan's final uneasiness with Milton's egalitarian world-making. The strangely conservative close of *Meghnād* thus allows us to see where Madhusudan's debts to Milton's radical imagination both accumulate and, ultimately, remain unpaid.

In book 24 of Homer's *Iliad*, the Trojan King Priam, encouraged by the gods, visits the enemy tent of Achilles with the request that he may return to Troy with the dead body of his son Hector. Achilles grants the request. In *Meghnād*, the gods similarly intervene to allow Ravan's claim on the body of his dead son. Ravan asks and receives of Ram a cessation of battle for seven days, while the body of Meghnad is honoured by cremation on the shores of the ocean (canto 9). Madhusudan then devotes significant energy to describing the funeral procession, in which Pramila sits beside her husband's corpse and ultimately his funeral pyre, which she climbs in an act leading to the sacrifice of her life at her husband's cremation: 'চিতায় আরোহি সতী (ফুলাসনে যেন!)| বসিলা আনন্দমতি পতি-পদতলে' [Climbing the pyre—as though ascending a seat of flowers—she sat at the foot of her dead husband].<sup>31</sup> Remarkably, Ravan grieves Pramila's death before she is dead, all the while doing nothing to dissuade her from sacrificing her life. It is painfully striking that a powerful character created by Madhusudan—a woman who is a warrior and who has consistently known and spoken her mind with clarity and passion—cannot imagine a

<sup>31</sup> Dutt, *Meghnādbadh kābya* 9.364–5.

life for herself after the death of her husband. She appears to be overwhelmed with grief and incapable of a future for herself, with no means of proving her worth to the world except through the practice of *sati* [widow immolation] at her husband's pyre. It is as though Madhusudan failed to read beyond the oft-quoted passage about Adam being 'for God only' while Eve is 'for God in him' (*PL* 4.299). It is as though Madhusudan missed utterly the Eve who in book 9 of *Paradise Lost* advocates for the discerning and radical freedom that Milton had once envisioned in *Areopagitica* (1644), or the Eve who in book 10 takes the first, courageous, human steps towards seeking redemption after the Fall. And it is as though Madhusudan missed entirely Milton's poignant account of Jesus' return to his mortal *maternal* place of love and refuge at the end of *Paradise Regained*: 'he unobserved | Home to his mother's house private returned' after his trials in the wilderness (*PR* 4.638–9).

Current-day readers of Madhusudan might know of his older contemporary Rammohan Roy (1772–1833), whose advocacy to end *sati* resulted in a legal ban in 1829, in Madhusudan's lifetime. They might also know of Madhusudan's friend Iswar Chandra Bandyopadhyay's advocacy for the marital prospects of widowed child brides, which resulted in the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, shortly before *Meghnād* was published. Finally, they might know of Madhusudan's own trenchant critiques of middle-class Bengali male hypocrisy in his two *prahasan* plays [farces], *Ekei Ki Bale Sabhyatā* [Is this Civility?] (1860) and *Buro Saliker Ghare Ron* [New Plumage on the Old Myna's Neck] (1860), written just before or even contemporaneously with *Meghnād*. There is thus no way to account for the violent conservatism enshrined in the final canto of *Meghnād*. Madhusudan concludes his epic tutelage under his beloved poet Milton in a position that dares not follow the earlier writer into radical liberty. Yet, it also bears mention that we so firmly register this last holding back of liberal and liberating energies in *Meghnād* precisely because of Madhusudan's willingness and ability, earlier in the epic, to depict all its personages, including its *asuras* and female characters, with the fullest of human desires, rationales, and critical abilities, for 'reason also is choice' (*PL* 3.108)—and because a profoundly radical reason had seemed within reach of everyone, regardless of class or status or divinity or lineage or gender.

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## Encountering Milton in Linmark's *Leche*

Stephen K. Kim

Scholarly work on early modern race has cracked open our understanding of literary works. It rewrites our understanding of early modern English literature's manifold interactions with past and present issues of perceived cultural hierarchy, colonialism, racism, and white supremacy. The field of Premodern Critical Race Studies has begun to interrogate the impact of early modern literary studies' rootedness in white epistemologies, drawing from various fields, including critical race theory. As Ambereen Dadabhoy notes about Shakespeare studies, a historically white field, 'the critical gaze [scholars] have directed at the work is implicated in their own racial, gendered, and classed positions.'<sup>1</sup> Daniel Shore encourages Milton studies to take up this interrogation too, since 'critical studies of race in premodernity have so far primarily grown up in the vicinity of the authorizing figure of Shakespeare.'<sup>2</sup>

For Milton studies, thought-provoking work on race has occurred in reception studies, though this is not the only way to use race as an analytic lens for Milton's work.<sup>3</sup> Scholars such as Reginald Wilburn argue for an open conception of what Miltonic scholarship on race should look like. Studying reception from a critical race standpoint necessitates going beyond the more obvious cases of Miltonic reception, to cross the colour line, so to speak, and take seriously the possibility that writers of colour can help us 'know Milton better than we do now.'<sup>4</sup> Wilburn notes that 'African Americans' Miltonic receptions and appropriations will not look identical to those performed by their white literary peers' and turns to black writers such as Ishmael Reed and Toni Morrison to provide models for examining race in Milton.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, Wilburn notes how, after noticing Morrison's more roundabout allusions to Milton in her work, he asked her about Milton's influence on her, only to be 'courteously dismissed.'<sup>6</sup> Later, however, Morrison's new foreword to her novel *Paradise* selectively pulls from book 4 of *Paradise Lost* to

<sup>1</sup> Dadabhoy, 'The Unbearable Whiteness of Being (in) Shakespeare', 230.

<sup>2</sup> Shore, 'Was Milton White?', 261.

<sup>3</sup> For in-depth examples of how reception studies can inform our understanding of Milton, see Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*, and Duran, *Milton among Spaniards*.

<sup>4</sup> Wilburn, 'Getting "Uppity" with Milton', 267.

<sup>5</sup> Wilburn, 'Getting "Uppity" with Milton', 276.

<sup>6</sup> Wilburn, 'Getting "Uppity" with Milton', 273.

describe her conception of Eden.<sup>7</sup> Morrison indeed knew Milton. But she ‘distort[s] Milton beyond clear intertextual recognition’ to prevent being ‘enslaved to or eclipsed by anything other than her own individual talent.’<sup>8</sup> Morrison subordinates Milton’s influence by making it intentionally diffuse, ensuring that her work is read on its own terms, a strategy as elusive as it is allusive.

Taking Wilburn’s approach as one important model, I turn to another author who clearly knew Milton and whose subtle intertextual relation to Milton can help us think more capaciously about Milton’s work. This chapter is a case study on how R. Zamora Linmark, an Asian American author who engages with Milton, opens up a conversation about race and immigration in *Paradise Lost*. Linmark was born in the Philippines, completed his undergraduate education in the United States, and now splits his time between the two countries. He has read Milton’s poetry and is also familiar with Milton’s biography. For example, Linmark got the title for his first novel, *Rolling the R’s*, from the legend that Milton ‘rolled his R’s to separate himself from the other British ex-pats in Italy’ during his European tour.<sup>9</sup> More connections between Linmark and Milton arise after examining their lives. Both are writers hailing from island or archipelago nations. Both respond to political regimes they oppose in their creative work. Both make a point to flout conventional poetics of their times. In an interview with Kundiman, a US-based organization dedicated to supporting Asian American writers, Linmark mentions that ‘[a]s a writer from the margins, I tend to gravitate to writers who were/are literary outcasts themselves, if not for their gender and/or race, then for their rebellion against literary conventions’. These include ‘Milton, Dante, the Renaissance poet John Skelton, Jonathan Swift.’<sup>10</sup> This constellation of influences appears full force in Linmark’s work, particularly in his second novel, *Leche*. It is fitting that Linmark invokes Milton within a list of other writers, as his work converses with Milton in his larger endeavour of speaking back to canonical Western writers. While this chapter primarily focuses on Linmark’s relationship to Milton, we should keep in mind that Linmark embeds Milton in a broader web of influences that includes Dante Alighieri most prominently, Swift, and so many others.

### To ‘Steal’ from Milton

For Linmark, Milton’s poetry is a creative resource. ‘First Lessons’, a poem in his debut collection, details how exactly Linmark uses the work of past poets: ‘Just remember: in poetry there is | only one cardinal rule practiced by all: steal | with

<sup>7</sup> Wilburn, ‘Getting “Uppity” with Milton’, 274.

<sup>8</sup> Wilburn, ‘Getting “Uppity” with Milton’, 274.

<sup>9</sup> Michael, ‘Rolling the R’s’ Is a Story about Coming Of Age and Coming Out’.

<sup>10</sup> Raneses, ‘A Conversation with R. Zamora Linmark’.

the intent to replace'.<sup>11</sup> Linmark's poem is written in loose iambic pentameter and uses enjambment strategically. The commandment 'steal' hangs at the end of the line before the important qualification at the beginning of the next. The word 'First' in the title also signals Milton's influence in helping shape Linmark's verse. Milton prominently repeats the word 'first' in the opening to *Paradise Lost* (PL 1.1, 1.8, 1.19, 1.27, 1.28, 1.33).<sup>12</sup> Though we may initially be offput by how Linmark is 'steal[ing]' from Milton, literary theft has a more accepted name: allusion. With this in mind, 'steal | with the intent to replace' echoes Milton's claim that *Paradise Lost* will succeed classical epic and 'soar | Above th' Aonian mount' (PL 1.14–15). Linmark's enjambment here mirrors Milton's enjambment, equating stealing with the intent to replace with Milton's aim to pen an epic superior to those written before.

Linmark is not the only author, or author of colour, to establish an intertextual relationship with Milton through literary theft. As Miriam Mansur argues, the Brazilian author Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis used the Brazilian Portuguese analogue for the word 'plagiarism' to identify his relationship to a network of literary texts, which include the work of William Shakespeare most prominently and Milton, whom he figures as a 'plagiarist of Creation.' For Machado de Assis, 'plagiarism is the deliberate use of a compositional trace, scene, or passage from another literary universe. As an act of appropriation, he takes on something supposedly old, but in a new context (or text) makes it new'.<sup>13</sup> This reworking of a source text can occlude the intertextual relationship since the source material is often amended beyond immediate recognition. In uncovering the intertextuality when its traces have been erased, Mansur chooses not to focus on intertextual dependence between Machado de Assis and Milton. Rather she explores intertextual dialogue, how this intertextual relationship across temporal and geographical borders can impact and revive the ways we read both interlocuting texts.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, these subtle forms of intertextuality across history and geography reframe our own understanding of Milton's geographical and historical positioning.

Linmark's dialogue with his canonical forebears takes on the form of what Christine Bacareza Balance describes as 'disobedient listening'. In her book on Filipino and Filipino American popular music after the Second World War, Balance proposes 'disobedient listening' as listening 'against and beyond the dominant discourses that continuously constrain and narrow our understanding of the sonic and musical in Filipino America'.<sup>15</sup> This practice compels 'us to question the hows and whys of established ways of thinking and to identify their impact, their *doing* in

<sup>11</sup> Linmark, *Prime Time Apparitions*, 54.

<sup>12</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Teskey, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>13</sup> Mansur, 'Machado de Assis and Milton', 179–80.

<sup>14</sup> Mansur, 'Machado de Assis and Milton', 180.

<sup>15</sup> Balance, *Tropical Renditions*, 4.

the world.’<sup>16</sup> I appreciate Balance’s claim that listening can, paradoxically, be a crucial component of resistance. I also appreciate how closely this practice resonates with so many of Milton’s direct and indirect articulations, as in *Areopagitica*, that an individual can be ‘a heretic in the truth’ if that individual unquestioningly believes ‘only because his pastor says so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason.’<sup>17</sup>

Listening to and understanding dominant discourses enable us to articulate cogently the ways that those discourses perpetuate and contribute to oppressive power structures, their ‘doing’ in the world. As one example, Linmark mentions how Filipinx people and writers ‘reverse the way we live their metaphors’, with ‘their’ referring to a group in power—it is ambiguous whether ‘their’ refers to Western academics, US Americans, or white people more broadly; ‘we’ refers to either Asians or Filipinxs more specifically.<sup>18</sup> As I show in my readings of *Paradise Lost*, rhetorical devices, such as metaphor, have been a rhetorical tool often used to associate racial minorities with negative value judgements, which accrete into racial oppression. In innovating with metaphors, Linmark demonstrates his capacity to understand how the original metaphors are working to perpetuate racist associations and also suggests a poetic assertion of autonomy, refusing the racist associations that metaphors in canonical texts have established. Linmark’s disobedient reading of *Paradise Lost* in *Leche* will help construct and articulate what *Paradise Lost* does in the world with respect to race and immigration.

The plot of *Leche* follows the return of Vicente De Los Reyes, or Vince, a queer Filipino American immigrant, to the Philippines after thirteen years of life in Honolulu.<sup>19</sup> Vince’s journey defies typical diasporic return narratives as noted by Robert Diaz: ‘Vince returns to the Philippines not because of an aching desire to reclaim his ancestral roots. Rather, he returns because the trip is his consolation prize for failing to win the Mr. Pogi (Mr. Handsome) beauty contest in Hawaii.’<sup>20</sup> *Leche* simultaneously reads like a primer on Manila’s pop culture in the 1990s and an episodic travelogue, focusing on Vince’s misrememberings and mistranslations—the capital city of Manila he encounters is both familiar and strange, inconsistent with his memories. The novel meanders through Vince’s return, rife with disorientation, desire, frustration, and nostalgia. Fittingly, the narrative eschews chronology, a consistent narrator, and even a consistent form. Linmark interrupts the narrative with postcards, dream sequences, pages

<sup>16</sup> Balance, *Tropical Renditions*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Milton, *Milton’s Selected Poetry and Prose*, 365.

<sup>18</sup> Linmark, *Prime Time Apparitions*, 55. On the existence of ‘an occidental, monolingual [. . .] archetype’ that creates a ‘mainstream’ at the expense of a ‘periphery’, see Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*, 17.

<sup>19</sup> When referring to Vince, this chapter uses the masculine ‘Filipino’ to reflect his gender identity in *Leche*. When not referring to a specific character who identifies as a woman or a man, this chapter uses the gender-inclusive term ‘Filipinx’.

<sup>20</sup> Diaz, ‘Failed Returns’, 337.



from a fictional travel guide to the Philippines, excerpts from fictional scholarly works, radio scripts, poems, and song lyrics. This generic mingle-mangle is then divided into nine 'books' indicated with Roman numerals rather than more typical chapters with Arabic numbers. The book divisions are on separated pages, rather than on the top of the page of a new chapter, as is more typical in contemporary novels. If Linmark's nod to the European epic tradition were not clear enough, he dedicates the book to his grandfather, whom he calls 'my Virgil', referring both to the author of the *Aeneid* and to Dante's guide in *The Divine Comedy*, and one of the epigraphs comes from Dante's *Inferno*: 'But to draw the lessons of the good that came my way, | I will describe the other things I saw'.<sup>21</sup> Though the references to Milton are less obvious in the novel's paratext, I here read Linmark as messing with epic lineage. For many, it is Milton who would follow Virgil and Dante in the epic tradition, but with his dedication and epigraph, Linmark coyly inserts *Leche* where we would expect *Paradise Lost*. The main text of the novel follows the Virgilian dedication and the Dantean epigraph. I take this move as an invitation to read the texts together.

Juxtaposing these two texts reveals so many resonances in their representations of race. Both texts prompt readers to explore the racial meanings of darkness, the racialization of Hell, the association between babble and foreignness, and the intertwining of linguistic and racial identity. Linmark compares Manila in the early 1990s to a Hell with Oriental undertones. *Leche* intertwines moral and aesthetic meanings of darkness and fairness, especially in its discussion of skin whitening, in ways that echo the work that Kim Hall has done on early modern English discourse around those terms.<sup>22</sup> The novel's interweaving of English, Spanish, and Tagalog also comments on the linguistic project of nation building through elevating the English language, as argued by Jenny Mann and Ian Smith, and the subsequent infliction of English (the language and the literature) as part of colonial projects.<sup>23</sup>

While the resonances I have noted could each be explored and examined more fully, I focus the remainder of this chapter on a specific intertextual moment: Linmark's rewriting of the Miltonic Fall's racial dynamics. While Adam and Eve's disobedience involves defying a direct order from the Father to refrain from eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Vince's 'original sin' is his refusal of a well-established cultural norm: attending his grandfather's funeral. Acts of disobedience set into motion the climaxes and bittersweet conclusions in both *Paradise Lost* and *Leche*. These episodes of disobedience also rely on complex webs of racial associations that reveal the fraught relationships between race and morality in

<sup>21</sup> Linmark, *Leche*, iv.

<sup>22</sup> Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 2–4.

<sup>23</sup> Mann, *Outlaw Rhetoric*, 2; Smith, *Race and Rhetoric in the Renaissance*, 13. For an in-depth examination of the use of canonical texts in colonial educational projects, see Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*.

both texts. For the sake of clarity, I proceed first with *Paradise Lost* to establish that the Fall is far from a race-neutral moment.

### Race and the Fall in *Paradise Lost*

When Adam and Eve fall in book 9 of *Paradise Lost*, Milton invokes both the Indian herdsman and the Indigenous American.<sup>24</sup> Balachandra Rajan notes that, while ‘the general disposition is to treat the handful of references to India as unrelated excursions into the exotic,’ viewing them together yields a different interpretation: ‘their most conspicuous characteristic is that nearly all of them occur in infernal or postlapsarian contexts.’<sup>25</sup> Rajan argues that, specifically in the episode of Adam and Eve’s Fall, the serpent in which Satan is ‘enclosed’ is associated with India and with the banyan tree that provides the leaves for Adam and Eve to cover themselves after their Fall, and that these contribute to a series of associations between Asia and the Fall in *Paradise Lost* (PL 9.494). Walter Lim argues: ‘In *Paradise Lost*, the East and the Orient are directly related to the world of the Fall. Asia appears particularly susceptible to the wiles of the devil.’<sup>26</sup> I examine this episode more closely to better articulate the multiple racializations taking place.

Milton is careful to define the particular fig tree from which Adam and Eve take leaves to cover their ‘middle parts’ (PL 9.1097):

there soon they chose  
The fig-tree: not that kind for fruit renowned  
But such as this day to Indians known  
In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms  
Branching so broad and long that in the ground  
The bended twigs take root and daughters grow  
About the mother tree, a pillared shade  
High overarched and echoing walks between.  
(PL 9.1100–7)

Milton distinguishes this fig tree from the more well-known variety in the Mediterranean by what Rajan calls ‘its expanding assault on hierarchical order.’<sup>27</sup> Branches, normally reaching upwards, wander and err into the ground in which they become roots for new trees. The banyan tree, however, is not unequivocally a symbol of erring. As much as the tree is unruly and resistant to standard hierarchies, it is

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of these figures in the context of the colonialist discourse of a seventeenth century Latin translation of *Paradise Lost*, see Katie Mennis’s chapter in the present volume, ‘Latinizing Milton in the English West Indies.’

<sup>25</sup> Rajan, ‘Banyan Trees and Fig Leaves,’ 73–4.

<sup>26</sup> Lim, ‘John Milton, Orientalism, and the Empires of the East in *Paradise Lost*,’ 225.

<sup>27</sup> Rajan, ‘Banyan Trees and Fig Leaves,’ 83.

also a place of shelter: 'There oft the Indian herdsman shunning heat | Shelters in cool and tends his pasturing herds | At loopholes cut through thickest shade' (*PL* 9.1108–10). The Indian herdsman here is standing under the shade of the tree and watches his flock through the holes in the tree's cover. The tree cannot mean one single thing—clearly its own chaotic unruliness resists such a single-minded reading. Even the positive connotations of shelter become nuanced because of shelter's association with fallenness. As Mary Nyquist notes, 'the "*Indian Herdsman*" is a representative of the life of labour, while the intricately roofed and pillared walkway created by the banyan trees is an example [. . .] of the shelter required in postlapsarian climates.'<sup>28</sup> These simultaneously existing representations of the banyan tree are evidence of the complex racial power dynamics in *Paradise Lost*. The epic's banyan tree, India, and the Indian herdsman are part of the world that falls and attains the possibility of redemption through the Son's crucifixion. But, they are also ultimately markers of fallenness. Milton's banyan tree points to larger tensions present in Milton's depiction of Eden. Eric Song, for example, remarks how '*Paradise Lost* imagines Eden as at once homely and unhomely, familiar and distant. Both Eastern and New World imagery locate within Eden the internal problems it inherits from the divine kingdom at large.'<sup>29</sup> Eden is both metropole and colony, particular and universal, a prelapsarian garden with fallen plants. This tension, like the banyan tree itself, is never untangled—perhaps it cannot be. And, Milton makes no effort to untangle this racial quandary but instead complicates it further by invoking another figure.

Milton transports his readers to the other side of the globe by comparing Adam and Eve covered with leaves to Indigenous Americans:

Such of late  
Columbus found th' American so girt  
With feathered cincture, naked else and wild  
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.  
(*PL* 9.1115–18)

Unlike some of his contemporaries who believed that Indigenous Americans existed in a prelapsarian state, Milton argues that Indigenous Americans share a 'common participation in the Fall'.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as Elizabeth Sauer notes, '[i]n Eden, nudity—innocent and noble—is distinct from American nakedness, discovered "of late" in the New World, a land originally mistaken for India.'<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, while we get an intricate, even heart-breaking, discussion of Adam's shame, we get very little about the Indigenous American's motivation for covering their

<sup>28</sup> Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, 249.

<sup>29</sup> Song, *Dominion Undeserved*, 47.

<sup>30</sup> Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, 251.

<sup>31</sup> Sauer, *Milton, Toleration, and Nationhood*, 124.

nakedness. Nyquist remarks that ‘the absence of even the most oblique commentary on the American’s motivation [. . .] suggest[s] that readers are to find a corresponding lack of subjective complexity in the concealment of sexual parts with “feathered cincture”’.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the only representation of the Indigenous American we get in all of *Paradise Lost* is inextricable from Adam and Eve’s fallenness, especially since the suggested lack of interiority gives us little to work with otherwise.

The Indigenous ‘American’ is a syntactical object ‘Columbus found’: the specimens of European knowledge-production rather than any kind of agent. Carol Edelman Warrior argues this kind of objectification is a key strategy of settler colonialism: ‘definition as a discursive act—even if the group “defines” itself—uses one of the most effective strategies of colonization because the act of definition fixes the object of definition and renders it (in this case, Indigenous peoples) controllable, domitable, and, ultimately, consumable.’<sup>33</sup> Given the lack of interiority in the epic, the Indigenous American becomes controlled, dominated, and consumed by Milton’s simile. The monolithic, grammatically singular figure exists only within the comparisons to fallenness, becoming merely a means to Milton’s rhetorical ends.

What the yoking of America and India does is manifold. Sauer argues that ‘[t]he descriptions of the “pillared shade” of the tree under which the Indian herdsman shelters himself and of the “feathered cincture” used by the Americanized Adam and Eve to cover themselves rely on an architectural trope that bridges and binds the worlds of the Indian and Amerindian.’<sup>34</sup> For Sauer, what indicates the high point of the tragedy of the Fall is the combination of two racist emblems of degeneracy: the naked savagery of Indigenous Americans and the laziness of the Indian herdsman. The combination of these two figures is what Adam and Eve have fallen to. This yoking of Asian fallenness and American fallenness resonates with an argument Marissa Nicosia makes about Milton’s banyan tree: that Milton may have been referring to a banana tree, an early modern English signifier of Barbados and the wider Caribbean, due to a potential misreading of a botanical source.<sup>35</sup> The banyan/banana tree demonstrates how Milton’s Eden is aligned with England’s colonial project, collecting specimens from England’s imperial ventures within the lines of *Paradise Lost*. Maureen Quilligan argues that the black slave is another potential racial Other that is invoked by the banyan/banana tree which suggests that Milton, who was aware of slavery in Barbados, ‘shared his culture’s alignment of blackness to slavery’.<sup>36</sup> I add that this tree, as well as Milton’s comparisons of Adam and Eve to the Indian herdsman and the Indigenous American,

<sup>32</sup> Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, 251.

<sup>33</sup> Warrior, ‘Indigenous Collectives’, 386.

<sup>34</sup> Sauer, *Milton, Toleration, and Nationhood*, 124.

<sup>35</sup> Nicosia, ‘Milton’s Banana’, 57.

<sup>36</sup> Quilligan, ‘Freedom, Service, and the Trade in Slaves’, 220.

also participates in a racial project that justifies colonial exploration and domination. A substantial association between racial Otherness, that is, non-whiteness, and fallenness emerges from Milton's narrative of the Fall. As Ania Loomba notes, 'racial difference is itself erroneously understood to be a product, rather than an agent, of colonialism.'<sup>37</sup> Racial and colonial projects in *Paradise Lost* are intertwined within Milton's representation of Eden and the Fall. One does not simply produce the other.

### *Leche's Rewriting of Milton's Fall*

What does *Leche* do with this density of racial associations from the epic's Fall? Linmark starts by picking up on the way moral transgressions can complicate racial identity. Milton's description of the Fall makes Adam and Eve less white by rhetorically yoking them to the Indian herdsman and the Indigenous American, despite the complex racial dynamics and entanglements. Eve, and by extension Adam, is potentially coded as racially white when first described in the poem as 'fairest of her daughters' (*PL* 4.324, emphasis mine). But, the Fall distances them from whiteness.<sup>38</sup>

All this bears on Vince's responsibility to his grandfather's funeral, especially as the favourite grandchild: 'It was imperative that he went. He knew it. It was his grandfather. It was customary, especially in the Philippines, where the dead are feared perhaps more than they are revered.'<sup>39</sup> Attending the funeral is more a commandment than a recommendation. The novel initially presents Vince's refusal to attend the funeral as his unwillingness to miss a select band concert for talented musicians elsewhere. Despite his mother's exhortation that 'It's bad luck', Vince, in a seeming capitulation to the Asian American model minority narrative, mentions how 'Only the best in the state made it.'<sup>40</sup> He presumably does not want to miss the concert due to his aim to maintain his musical excellence. Later in the novel, we learn that Vince was, in fact, motivated by a different desire. As his sister Jing says, 'You missed his funeral because of two words [. . .] Carl. Yamagita.'<sup>41</sup> Carl is Vince's adolescent crush. A week before his grandfather's death, Vince slept over at Carl's house, and the two 'hooked up'. The text itself is coy as to what exactly happened and which, if any, sexual acts occurred. Vince, hoping for an(other) opportunity to have sex with Carl and possibly turn their friendship into romance, uses the band concert as an excuse to stay in Honolulu. Nothing comes of Vince's waiting. Carl and Vince lapse into indifference, and Vince eventually quits the band.

<sup>37</sup> Loomba, 'Early Modern or Early Colonial?', 147.

<sup>38</sup> For these descriptions, see *PL* 4.300–7.

<sup>39</sup> Linmark, *Leche*, 341.

<sup>40</sup> Linmark, *Leche*, 197.

<sup>41</sup> Linmark, *Leche*, 339.

The consequence of Vince's refusal to attend the funeral is that he misses his last opportunity to see his childhood home as he remembered it. When he returns to his hometown of San Vicente and his grandfather's old house at the end of the novel, Vince expects to find the furniture, photographs, and artwork that adorned the memories of his childhood. Instead, he finds nothing: '[Don Alfonso] took everything with him to his grave, Vince tells himself. He didn't want me to return and reclaim what was mine—my family history, objects from my childhood. [. . .] Why did Lolo Al do this—erase all the dust and dirt of my past? Why did he renounce everything? Nothing salvaged. Nothing.'<sup>42</sup> This inability to access the physical fixtures of his memories subverts many of the tropes of diasporic returnees rediscovering culture and tradition in their native homeland. Instead, Vince is forever barred from revisiting the sites of his most cherished memories of the Philippines. His grandfather is dead, and his house has been sanitized of any traces that connect Vince to the home he grew up in.

This lack of access to these memories and keepsakes mirrors the disorientation Vince feels throughout the earlier parts of the novel. Diaz notes how '[i]n *Leche*, Vince is continually confronted with an inability to translate, to understand, and to navigate Manila.'<sup>43</sup> Many of his conversations with other characters in Manila invoke the chasm he feels between himself and those he encounters: "You grew up in America. You speak English. You shit on toilets with working flush, therefore you are an American" is what Kris and Sister Marie told him when they put him on the witness stand of ethnoracial authenticity. Jonas didn't even bother questioning Vince's Filipino identity. As far as he was concerned, Vince was an outsider: "It's *my*—not *our*—country. Simple as that."<sup>44</sup> Vince clearly feels judged, especially with the reference to the witness stand. To be blunt, other characters in the novel find Vince's 'Filipinoness' lacking. In a reversal of the racial dynamics of the Miltonic Fall in which Adam and Eve no longer belong to Paradise when they are racially darkened by the Fall, Vince's proximity to US whiteness suggests that Vince does not belong in the Philippines. This reversal in racial dynamics is echoed in yet another reversal in which the language of light and dark is relevant, indicating the time of day. It is likely that Adam and Eve are expelled from Paradise at dawn, when darkness transitions to light.<sup>45</sup> *Leche* ends at dusk as Vince watches darkness overtake light.

From a critical race perspective, it is important to resist the reading that Vince chooses his queerness over his ethnic or racial identity, that being queer and US American makes him less Filipino. Indeed, Vince's history and his choices make some of the Philippines less legible to him, but the novel does not endorse the conclusion that Vince's queer identity, entangled with his decision to skip his

<sup>42</sup> Linmark, *Leche*, 354.

<sup>43</sup> Diaz, 'Failed Returns', 347.

<sup>44</sup> Linmark, *Leche*, 249.

<sup>45</sup> Zivley, 'The Thirty-Three Days of *Paradise Lost*', 123.

grandfather's funeral, impugns his 'ethnoracial authenticity' and bars him from the Filipinx community. Immediately after 'Nothing salvaged. Nothing', *Leche* closes with this final paragraph:

Back in the living room, he goes and stands by the window, an unlit cigarette in his hand, looking out at the white sheets and towels hanging on the clothesline, at the church steeple, and beyond it, at the Sierra Madre that gave birth to the legend of four women who had turned their backs on San Vicente; looking, just looking at the coming darkness the way his grandfather, on the same spot, used to sit on his favorite cane-backed chair, listening to the radio and smoking Marlboro Reds in his pajamas with his legs crossed, his foot tapping against his slipper, watching dusk as it claimed San Vicente light by light.<sup>46</sup>

Though Vince earlier professes that he has no access to his past, we find him echoing the past at the novel's end, staring into the sunset in the same way as his grandfather did, even in the same spot. There are, however, key differences. Vince is looking after he has returned to the Philippines from the US while his grandfather is looking on a skyline that is decidedly familiar. Vince is standing while his grandfather is sitting. Though Vince and his grandfather are 'looking' at the same San Vicente skyline, they are not looking at it the exact same way. The novel does not indicate what either Vince or his grandfather is thinking about as they look or any kind of judgement in favour or against Vince or his grandfather. Similar to how they are both 'just looking', the narrator is also 'just looking' and giving little to no interpretive guidance as to which vision exhibits more 'authenticity'. In fact, the novel challenges any reading that associates Vince's grandfather with an authentic Filipinxness. Lolo Al is smoking a brand of cigarettes from the US, a nod to the permeability of national identity but also the complicated history of colonial oppression exercised on the Philippines by the US. Readers, similarly left with the double vision of Vince and his grandfather looking at San Vicente, are also left with different visions of Filipinxness from the perspectives of characters across the Filipinx diaspora, with Vince being one of them. While *Paradise Lost* imbricates moral meaning with racial meaning through its equation of racial Otherness with sin, *Leche* seems to create distance between morality and race. Vince's disobedience of an ethnocultural norm has negative consequences, but it does not necessitate punishment or restitution. While *Leche* also explores the racial consequences of a disobedient act, it shows how closely morality and race are linked in *Paradise Lost* by rewriting a crucial scene without associating any racial identity with either purity or sin.

<sup>46</sup> Linmark, *Leche*, 355.

## Migrations

As Vince looks out at the novel's end to watch the setting sun darken on his hometown, he is left with the challenge that Jasbir Puar mentions is a challenging task of queer returnees: 'to be queer or to negotiate a queer self in the homeland'.<sup>47</sup> Diaz elaborates on this idea further by proposing that readers not view Vince's return to the Philippines 'as a futile endeavor with no purpose,' but rather as an example of how, 'for queer racialized subjects, returns require that we imagine alternative routes to belonging'.<sup>48</sup> Given that Vince's return requires him to chart his own path to a state of belonging, he seems tasked at the end of the novel with a project similar to Adam and Eve at the end of *Paradise Lost*:

Some natural tears they dropped but wiped them soon.  
The world was all before them, where to choose  
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.  
They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow  
Through Eden took their solitary way.

(PL 12.645–9)

Like Adam and Eve, after a moment of grief, he looks out to San Vicente, which is 'all before' him, before he must continue to chart his solitary journey in navigating his sexual and racial identities. The endings of both *Paradise Lost* and *Leche* are also beginnings. Vince's queer return narrative is part of his renegotiation of his Filipino ethnoracial identity, rather than his loss of it.

The ending of *Leche* seems like a disobedient rewriting, to use Balance's term, of the ending of *Paradise Lost*. Both endings express a mournful yearning for the lost past and a bittersweet look to the uncertain future. Vince is banished from his childhood home, as Adam and Eve are banished from Eden, because of a transgression. Adam and Eve eat the fruit and are expelled from Paradise. Vince, in refusing to attend his grandfather's funeral, unwittingly denies himself the opportunity to relive his childhood memories. Vince, like Adam and Eve, now has the task of 'with wandr'ing steps and slow' leaving the childhood home he can no longer access, the 'alpha of [his] history'.<sup>49</sup> What Linmark's rewriting of Milton's Fall suggests is how *Paradise Lost* can be read as an immigration narrative. *Leche* resonates profoundly with Filipinx immigration and return, among many other things. Reading Linmark's rewriting of the Fall reveals that the Fall is also a story about why Adam and Eve left Eden in search of a new home. Furthermore, Milton's epic contains other migration narratives, including Satan's expulsion from Heaven to Hell.

<sup>47</sup> Puar, 'Circuits of Queer Mobility', 113.

<sup>48</sup> Diaz, 'Failed Returns', 349.

<sup>49</sup> Linmark, *Leche*, 351.



Given that immigration was a contentious concern in early modern England, it makes sense that it is also a concern of Milton's all-encompassing epic. Historians such as Lien Bich Luu attribute much of London's economic transformation in the early modern period to waves of immigration that occurred between 1550 and 1750.<sup>50</sup> Groups living in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London included Ashkenazi Jews, Iberians, Dutch, French, Germans, Hungarians, Moroccans, Sephardi Jews, sub-Saharan Africans, and Turks.<sup>51</sup> Scott Oldenburg has also traced the presence of pro- and anti-immigrant narratives in texts adjacent to the traditional canon.<sup>52</sup> Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter contend, in their introduction to the first collection of essays on immigration in Shakespeare, that 'the presence of immigrants often reveals more about the host society than it does about the immigrant him/herself'.<sup>53</sup> In a similar move, I close with two questions. What do the presence of migration narratives in *Paradise Lost* reveal about the poem's stance towards immigration and race? And how is *Paradise Lost* implicated in our present-day conversations about immigration?

Reading *Paradise Lost* in dialogue with *Leche* shows how Milton's epic, in its most prominent migration narrative, associates immigration with fallenness and racial Otherness, reminiscent of rhetoric surrounding immigration today. Adam's and Eve's migratory movement arises because of a moral failing, one that is coded through comparison to non-white figures. Their disobedience results both in their Expulsion from Eden and a need for the Son's Crucifixion. As Eve states before their departure from Eden, they 'for my willful crime art banished hence' (*PL* 12.619). The line's syntax, in putting the crime before the banishment, emphasizes the causal relationship between one and the other, and the steady iambic rhythm of the line suggests the justness of this reasoning. There are no irregularities or breaks in the cadence from crime to consequence. *Leche* is less invested in assigning a moral value to Vince and his actions than *Paradise Lost* is for Adam and Eve. Vince 'tells himself' that Lolo Al 'took everything' to the grave as a retributive move for Vince leaving the Philippines, but the text remains ambivalent in signalling whether Vince's interpretation is valid. Rather, it leaves Vince the task of negotiating his own queer self in the face of a failure to return to the Philippines he remembers. In acknowledging and then separating the moralizing impulse from queer migration and return narratives, *Leche* not only reveals how intertwined migration and morality are, but also that they need not be. By associating fallenness with racial Otherness and then presenting migration as the consequences of the Fall, *Paradise Lost* potentially traffics in the xenophobic assumptions about the character of immigrants and their motivations for migration, providing an example of how race and immigration were already intersecting in Milton's time.

<sup>50</sup> Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500–1700*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London*, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Oldenburg, *Alien Albion*, 17.

<sup>53</sup> Espinosa and Ruiter, 'Introduction', 5.

*Leche*, in its disobedient listening and rewriting of key Miltonic moments, shows how *Paradise Lost* contributes to the entanglement of morality, race, immigration, and sexuality in the early modern period through the early twenty-first century. It provides an example for how articulating and critiquing the oppressive logics of race, immigration, and morality in canonical texts can help lead to alternative and more just imaginations.

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## *Paradise Lost* for Hispanoamerica's Youth

Mario Murgia

### Changes Worth Waiting For

The first encounter that many children and younger readers across the globe have with the Western literary canon is through illustrated adaptations and translations of such works, whether the latter be inter- or intra-lingual. Under the right editorial and distributional circumstances, these modified, reconfigured pieces sometimes become paradigmatic themselves in the field of children's literature or youth classics. Clear examples of this phenomenon are the immensely popular *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), written by the siblings Charles and Mary Lamb, and, in the Hispanosphere, the countless rewritings and versions of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* [*The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of la Mancha*] (1605, 1615).<sup>1</sup> A case in point is the 2014 homage re-issue of *Aventuras de Don Quixote* [*The Adventures of Don Quixote*], published by the Republic of Argentina's Ministry of Education within the very successful and now highly nostalgic series of children's classics *Cuentos de Polidoro* [*Polydorus's Tales*], which originally ran for almost thirty years (1966–95). Indeed, 'the powerful cultural role of children's literature cannot be denied: its "Classics" and best-sellers have been absorbed into our bloodstreams; they are cherished, revisited, and shared like secret toys and secret loves'.<sup>2</sup> And it is precisely in the sense of discovery offered by these adaptations, in the possibility of unravelling those 'secret loves', that the classics-turned-children's literature fulfil the aesthetic and educational needs of young readers who, through diverse (inter)cultural channels, access these types of reading materials.

After John Milton's *Paradise Lost* was published in its first version in 1667, the epic began undergoing a series of adaptations, modifications, rewritings, re-formatting, and translations. Milton himself famously modified *Paradise Lost*, in transforming it from ten books to twelve books in 1674.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent transformations, no doubt, intend to refashion, with particular audiences in mind, the English

<sup>1</sup> All English translations of Spanish and French originals are mine unless otherwise noted. For the Lamb adaptation in relation to John Carey's adaptation of *Paradise Lost*, see Peter C. Herman's chapter in the present volume, 'Milton in the Age of Twitter'.

<sup>2</sup> Zipes et al., 'Preface', *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature*, xxix.

<sup>3</sup> For the 1667 edition with helpful editorial discussion, see Milton, '*Paradise Lost: A Poem Written in Ten Books*', eds. Shawcross and Lieb.

poet and polemicist's perceived poetical complexity, or 'supreme mastery', and the multiple meanings and significations of his epic, which, more often than not, have been deemed 'discernible only to the initiated'.<sup>4</sup> One such example is Eliza Weaver Bradburn's *The Story of Paradise Lost, for Children* (1830).<sup>5</sup> The book's main characters are Mamma and her children: Eliza, Emily, and William. Morbidly enthralled by the overheard line 'Grinn'd horribly [*sic*] a ghastly smile' (*PL* 2.846), William asks his mother to let him 'read [*Paradise Lost*] aloud, while you and my sisters are making the clothes for that poor family we visited yesterday'.<sup>6</sup> The ensuing exchange is self-explanatory as to the adapting processes that the Miltonic text, with Mamma as a somewhat reluctant storyteller, will need to sustain in order to quench the children's urge for narrative satisfaction:

*Mamma*.—It was not written for children, my dear; and there is so much in the poem which you do not understand, that you should soon be weary of it.

[...]

*Emily*.—Could you not find all the pretty parts that would be likely to amuse us?

[...]

*Eliza*.—Now I think the best plan would be for Mamma to relate all the principal parts as a story: Will you be so very kind, dear Mamma? And then you can leave out all that we know nothing about.

*William*.—Or else you can explain in your pleasant way, all those things; and then you will be teaching as well as entertaining us.

*Mamma*.—You know my dear children, I love to please you, but I think it will be very difficult to form *Paradise Lost* into a suitable tale for children; however I am willing to try.<sup>7</sup>

Bradburn's characters lay out the very outline of the book's discourse as an adaptation, if we understand 'adaptation' as being 'a transpositional practice, casting a specific genre into another generic mode, an act of re-revision in itself'.<sup>8</sup> Readers can recognize the three main axes of the text's adaptive reconfiguration: 1) that a children's narrative ought to be straightforward and amusing; 2) that this is achieved through formal modification—verse must morph into prose; and 3) that pedagogy and entertainment should be the ultimate goals, and one must not supersede the other.

Throughout their very civilized and intellectually fluent exchange, Bradburn's characters discuss the difficulties inherent in the adaptation of *Paradise Lost*. Also, the child who is particularly drawn to poetry, Eliza, gives listeners and readers a

<sup>4</sup> Eliot, 'Milton II', 179; Macaulay, *Essay on Milton*, 27.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed study of the book's purposes, see Sircy, 'Educating Milton'.

<sup>6</sup> Bradburn, *The Story of 'Paradise Lost'*, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Bradburn, *The Story of 'Paradise Lost'*, 4–5.

<sup>8</sup> Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, 22.

glimpse of the future and the use to which she will put the assimilated oral paratext of *Paradise Lost* in her life as a grown-up: 'I intend, on my poetry days, to learn extracts from Milton, till I can repeat all you have read today. And when I have a class in the Sunday-School, (you know, you promised I should be a teacher at fourteen years of age, if not before,) I shall write, in a plain hand, my favourite passages, that the other girls may commit them to memory.'<sup>9</sup> The phrase 'on my poetry days' betrays the young girl's newfound literary calling, one that will bear artistic fruit. Also significant is Eliza's final word: 'memory'. This memory is purely associational and verbal: unlike many other children's books, Bradburn's volume is not illustrated, despite the fact that children's books containing images were common in English since the early eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> In turn, Mamma's version and re-telling of *Paradise Lost* is mostly evocative, which reinforces the original notion that the poet 'tell[s] | Of things invisible to mortal sight' (*PL* 3.54–55).<sup>11</sup> Mamma's adaptation of *Paradise Lost*, the 'children's story' derived from Milton's verse, allows new readers to access the basic narrative of the epic as an exercise both didactic and pleasant.

However fragmentary and tangential the approach of Bradburn's Mamma to *Paradise Lost* may seem, it serves to kindle her young audience's intellectual and aesthetic curiosity, as well as their devotion, whether it be to their God or to a poetry they now feel belongs to them, particularly in the case of Eliza. *Paradise Lost* has been rendered both memorable and worth memorizing, if by narrative mediation but also thanks to it. It has also been made *suitable*, which is one of the ultimate functions and purposes of adaptation.<sup>12</sup> Surely the interpretational possibilities of the re-configuring process also account for the epic's adaptational transcoding not only in English but, as we shall see, also in other languages of global relevance, like Spanish.

### Thy Perfect Image Viewing

Milton's complete *Paradise Lost* began travelling from English into Spanish in the late eighteenth century in the form of translation and through intercultural adaptations responding to either the prosodic needs of the Spanish language or the ideological-religious requirements of Hispanophone societies, both in Europe and in the Americas. Even if it is clear that not all translations are adaptive in

<sup>9</sup> Bradburn, *The Story of 'Paradise Lost'*, 143.

<sup>10</sup> For the printed features of English children's books, see Grenby, 'The Origins of Children's Literature'.

<sup>11</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Leonard, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>12</sup> For more on the aims of adaptation, such as adjusting, altering, and even correcting particular texts and other forms of musical, verbal, or visual art, see Hutcheon and O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 6–9.

nature, at least some degree of adaptation may be unavoidable in every act of intra-lingual, inter-lingual, and transcultural exchange, as specialists like Susan Bassnett and Julie Sanders have contended.<sup>13</sup> Others have gone so far as to claim that the adaptation-translation pairing is but 'a double-headed coin,' or that the two concepts overlap, as also do those of textual or medial 'manipulation, transfer, and remake.'<sup>14</sup> Experts outside the Anglosphere, like the Québécois poet and playwright Michel Garneau, have even detected and characterized the indivisibility of those two concepts. In pondering his translations of William Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest* into Quebec French in the 1970s and 1980s, Garneau coined the term *tradaptation*, which bases itself upon the certainty that '[u]ne traduction se doit d'être une renaissance, parce qu'on doit retrouver l'enthousiasme de la création dans le labeur de la traduction. Le texte traduit doit fonctionner dans la langue d'arrivée avec bonheur, n'y être pas en étranger' [a translation must be a rebirth, because we must find the enthusiasm of creation in the labour of translation. The translated text must function in the language of arrival with happiness, not be a foreigner there].<sup>15</sup> That 'language of arrival' can be extralinguistic, as is often the case with children's 'Classics,' where image and text tend to be mutually referential. Tradaptation, in this sense, exceeds the boundaries of drama translation and Shakespeare studies because 'it is a kind of translation / adaptation that exists at a particular conjuncture of memory and intentionality with respect to the language(s) of the past and of the future.'<sup>16</sup> We may affirm, then, that the scope and practice of tradaptation may also overflow not only temporality, but also the possible limits of national languages, or regional variants, and localized cultural expressions.

The early Spanish-speaking *tradaptors* and translators of Milton's epic were clearly unaware of such theoretical nuances with regard to the development of their literary and poetical activities. What they were very aware of was the 'vast design' or 'work so infinite,' as Milton's contemporary Andrew Marvell rightly put it, that their original source represented.<sup>17</sup> For example, the Ibero-Spanish cleric Juan de Escóiquiz, who published the first Hispanophone translation of *Paradise Lost*, *El Paraíso perdido* (1812), clarifies in his prologue that

*Para hacerla más útil y agradable, resolví añadirla las eruditas notas de Addison, y algunas mías, que aclarasen las dificultades que habían de ocurrir al comun de los lectores, en gran parte poco instruidos para resolverlas por sí solos.*

<sup>13</sup> For such definitions of translation, see Bassnett, *Translation*, and Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*.

<sup>14</sup> Katja Krebs, 'Translation and Adaptation,' 51, in Raw, *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation*, 42–53; Gambier, 'The Position of Audiovisual Translation Studies,' 56.

<sup>15</sup> Hellot, '*Le poète qui traduit*,' *Jeu*, 84.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Knutson, "'Tradaptation'" *Dans le Sens Québécois: A Word for the Future*, 114, in Raw, *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation*, 112–22.

<sup>17</sup> Marvell, 'On Mr Milton's *Paradise Lost*,' 183.



*Estas explicaciones eran tanto más necesarias, cuanto el asunto de que trata el poema es uno de los más misteriosos, delicados é importantes de nuestra religion cristiana, y por consiguiente expuesto á más equivocaciones y errores.*<sup>18</sup>

[In order to make it more useful and agreeable, I decided to add to it the erudite notes of Addison, and a few of my own, which would clarify the difficulties befalling general readers, who for the most part lack sufficient knowledge to resolve them by themselves.

Such explanations were all the more necessary, for the topic upon which the poem touches is one of the most mysterious, sensitive, and important ones in our Christian religion, and it is therefore prone to mistakes and errors.]

From Escóiquiz's patronizing justification for his translational attempts, we can safely derive that his goal is similar to that of Mamma in Bradburn's book, to disseminate the epic. Even if both works coincide in favouring their respective audiences' moral-religious instruction and literary delight, their ultimate aims are quite different. *The Story's* scope is basically formative, while Escóiquiz's version explicitly intends to be (re)presentational. The 1886 edition of Escóiquiz's *Paraíso perdido* is interspersed with greyscale images variously cropped, rather than reproduced, from the vastly famous plates by France's Gustave Doré. These 'quickly became the visual lingua franca of Milton's epic' in a great number of editions translated into other European languages since first appearing in an English edition of *Paradise Lost* in c. 1866.<sup>19</sup> The reading process of this edition is as much visually associative as semantically evocative. This is a tendency that many, if not most, Spanish language *Paraísos perdidos* would follow on both sides of the Atlantic as of the 1870s.

To the present day, the adaptors, editors, and translators of Milton's epic are aware of the formal difficulties and allusive complexities that their labours entail in terms of dissemination and reception, mostly when younger readers come into play. Starting with the hendecasyllabic *Paraíso perdido* (1858) by Mexico's Francisco Granados Maldonado, and continuing with two Colombian versions, by Aníbal Galindo (1868) in prose and Enrique Álvarez Bonilla (1896) using *ottava rima*, *Paradise Lost* was subjected to a series of tradaptations that undoubtedly placed it among the most admired works of international literature among Latin America's intellectual elites. But despite their virtues, these local, unillustrated editions rapidly fell into almost complete oblivion. At the same time, Ibero-Spanish renditions of *Paradise Lost*, such as those by the aforementioned Escóiquiz, and by

<sup>18</sup> Milton, *El Paraíso perdido* (1886), XI.

<sup>19</sup> Angelica Duran, 'Doré's Illustrations with *Cromos* in *El Paraíso perdido*', 89, in Duran and Murgia, *Global Milton and Visual Art*, 89–116. For the possible impact of international visual art on the French artist's illustrations of Milton's epic, see Hiroko Sano, 'Doré's *Paradise Lost* and *Ukiyo-e* Prints', 75–88, in Duran and Murgia, *Global Milton and Visual Art*.

Cayetano Rosell published in 1873, were promptly establishing themselves as the canonical sources for almost every edition of Milton's monumental poem in the Spanish-speaking Americas. We might as well venture that these volumes achieved that respectable status due in part to the fact that, starting with Rosell's translation, many of them included at least some of Doré's plates as visual reinforcement and accompaniment to the verbal contents. This was until the twentieth century, when editorial and artistic innovations further redefined the literary and intercultural presence of the epic south of the Rio Grande and even north of it at times. A much-needed popularization, and downright refashioning, of *Paradise Lost* was under way, *en español*.<sup>20</sup>

### To See His Wondrous Works

The dissemination of Milton's poetry, and indeed many other world classics, picked up speed in Hispanophone America during the 1950s and 1960s due to an increased sense of cultural and educational advancement. This was the result also of a number of vigorous social and political movements taking place in the region:

*En los años sesenta se desarrolló en América Latina una corriente conocida como concientización, que pretendía desafiar a las políticas estatales y a las estructuras elitistas a objeto de propagar la causa de los sectores populares de la población. Esto se desarrolló creando instituciones no gubernamentales, y buscando una alianza con instituciones tradicionales como la Iglesia para legitimar los conocimientos incorporados en las prácticas populares.*<sup>21</sup>

[In the 1960s a current known as *awareness* developed in Latin America. It sought to defy state policies and elitist structures in order to disseminate the causes of the popular segments of the population. This was developed by creating non-governmental institutions and establishing alliances with traditional institutions such as the Church so as to legitimize the knowledge incorporated into popular practices.]

And one of those 'causes' was the promotion of reading habits with pedagogical purposes, mostly among the children and young adults of countries like Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia, in a process that has offered '*elementos para acercarse*

<sup>20</sup> For an overview of the more than twenty Hispanophone translations of *Paradise Lost*, see Angelica Duran, '*Paradise Lost* in Spanish Translation and as World Literature', and Murgia, 'Either in Prose or Rhyme', in Duran, Issa, and Olson, *Milton in Translation*, 265–78, 279–92; and Mario Murgia, 'Milton in Revolutionary Hispanoamerica'.

<sup>21</sup> Ramos Curd, *Promoción de la lectura en América Latina*, 5.

*al patrimonio cultural y libre acceso a la información, el conocimiento, la cultura y la recreación, en un contexto latinoamericano* [resources to approach the cultural heritage and guarantee free access to information, knowledge, culture, and recreation, in a Latin American context].<sup>22</sup>

In Mexico, however, these promotional efforts and programmes found their origins as early as the 1920s, when the Secretaría de Educación Pública [Secretariat for Public Education], under the active supervision of the Mexican author, philosopher, and politician José Vasconcelos (1882–1959), launched several educational projects that included the publication of eighteen unabridged *Clásicos universales* [Universal Classics]. Vasconcelos's programme, implemented by his Deputy Secretary, the diplomat and essayist Bernardo J. Gastélum (1886–1981), took the children of Mexico into consideration as well. First published in 1924, and reissued in 1984, the paradigmatic collection *Lecturas clásicas para niños* [Classical Readings for Children] features literary masterpieces from all over the world. In his prologue, Vasconcelos loosely defines the 'Classics' as those authors and texts that should '*servir de modelo, de tipo, lo mejor de una época*' [serve as models, as types, as the best of an era].<sup>23</sup> What is most arresting about Vasconcelos's reading model is that the national literature of Mexico can be enriched by introducing translated and adapted masterpieces: '*¿Dónde están en castellano los bellos cuentos, las adaptaciones de Shakespeare y de Swift, de Grecia y Roma, que andan en las manos de todos los niños ingleses? [...] Se hace menester, por lo mismo, fabricar los libros; así como es necesario construir los edificios de la escuela*' [Where are, in Castilian (Spanish), the beautiful stories, the adaptations of Shakespeare and Swift, of Greece and Rome, that all English children hold in their hands? (...)] It is necessary, therefore, to manufacture the books, just as much as it necessary to erect the buildings of a school].<sup>24</sup> Vasconcelos makes his case by attempting to fill a gap that he perceived to be hindering the education and intellectual upbringing of Mexico's children and young adults, through the programmes of the Secretariat for Public Education.

Despite Vasconcelos's belief that children are as cognitively savvy as adults are, the role of (suitable) literary adaptation is key in the promotion of literacy and in the cosmopolitization of an otherwise provincial, navel-gazing education system. Indeed, the book layout of *Lecturas clásicas* is quite explicit in this regard. With its lavish, albeit uncredited, Art Déco illustrations and its sections organized by country, the two volumes that form part of this project speak of the far-reaching scope of Mexico's and Hispanoamerica's notion of their educational duties in the first half of the twentieth century. As regards reading (and writing) habits, the cultural paradigm that Vasconcelos had in mind comes from the Anglophere:

<sup>22</sup> Ramos Curd, *Promoción de la lectura en América Latina*, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Vasconcelos, *Lecturas clásicas para niños*, XII.

<sup>24</sup> Vasconcelos, *Lecturas clásicas para niños*, XII.

all English children are active, imaginative readers, and Hispanophone children of the Americas should not be less so.<sup>25</sup> Similar ideas would seep into the Latin American editorial industry of the day, in both the public and private sectors.

While Milton's works are sadly absent from *Lecturas clásicas*, the English poet's literary presence in Spanish-speaking America during the early twentieth century was far from overlooked. *Paradise Lost* started being distributed in Hispanophone America of the late 1940s and the 1950s mostly in illustrated prose versions still stemming from Ibero-Spanish translations and containing either well-known pictorial works, such as Doré's plates, or drawings by local, less-renowned artists. The Argentine publishing house Biblioteca Nueva reissued the Rosell translation of *Paradise Lost* in 1949, complete with a number of Doré's illustrations elegantly printed on boxwood paper, which certainly can make for an effective perusing incentive. In 1951 Mexico, the epic would be published twice by the same press, the now defunct Editora Nacional. One of these editions is a pocketbook included in the 'Colección económica' [Affordable Collection], the motto of which was the alliterative Mexican adage: 'Buenos, bonitos, baratos' [Good, pretty, cheap], a definition of the ideal consumer product for any thrifty, yet culture-thirsty, individual.

The translation is Escóiquiz's, and it includes Dorés, *de rigueur*. An aspect of this volume that deserves consideration is its cover, because of the discreet intentionality with which it presents Milton's poem. It shows a mountainous landscape crossed by a river, in the colourful style of mid-twentieth century Mexican graphic design. In the centre is a waterfall that changes hues as it reaches the bottom of a ravine—its crystalline blue fades into bright orange and red, thus suggesting a transition from the heavenly skies into the depths of Hell. An angelic shape with bat-like wings stands atop a boulder, taking in the scene with pensive attitude. The uncredited drawing is reminiscent of the opening lines of book 4 of *Paradise Lost*, particularly the opening, which verbally depicts God the Father's adversary beholding the prospect of Earth and Eden while also reflecting on his disgraced state (see Figure 11.1). This is the book's sole colour image, and its mid-century, comic-like aesthetics betrays an evoking air intended to attract younger audiences visually: the contrasting legend 'EDICION ILUSTRADA' [ILLUSTRATED EDITION], in white-font capitals over the dark brown of the boulder is further proof of this.

The other volume of *El Paraíso perdido* published by Editora Nacional belongs in a collection that is descriptively called *Obras famosas ilustradas* [Famous Illustrated Works]. This hardback issue features the 1868 Spanish prose translation

<sup>25</sup> In the section of *Lecturas clásicas* dedicated to English literature, Shakespeare's plays are strongly represented and serve the purpose of adapting world literature without muting its inherent challenges, for example, with *King Lear* and *The Tempest* rather than a comedy or a history play in volume 2. The edition gives no credit to the adaptors or translators of the works. For a discussion of simplifying the works of Milton and Shakespeare, see Peter C. Herman's chapter in the present volume, 'Milton in the Age of Twitter: Carey's *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*'.



Fig. 11.1. Unknown artist, book covers, colour drawing, from the sibling editions of *El paraíso perdido* (1951) published by Mexico's Editora Nacional S. A.

by Dionisio Sanjuán and uncredited greyscale engravings by the rather obscure Catalan artist Celestino Sadurní (c. 1830–1896), evidently influenced by Doré's style. A plate referencing the last line of *Paradise Lost*, '*Siguieron á través del Eden su camino solitario*' [Through Eden took their solitary way] is used on the book cover (PL 12.649). It is treated in such a way that it resembles a Mexican *cromo*, a type of illustration 'in the vibrantly colored chromolithography genre' and presenting idealized human figures with a somewhat *naïf* air to them.<sup>26</sup> In the upper-right corner of the picture is a feminine-looking archangel Michael clasp- ing a fiery sword in his right hand while conveniently pointing at the bright-red title, *El Paraíso perdido*, with his left index finger. Adam grievously puts his hands to his face while Eve, right behind him, looks away with a disgruntled expres- sion and into the readers' eyes. Her hair and left arm cover her breasts, and the leaves of a shrub modestly keep her pudenda out of sight. The legend '*EDICION ILUSTRADA*' [ILLUSTRATED EDITION] appears in black uppercase against a white cloud enveloping Michael's lower body. Just like its sibling volume, this *Paraíso perdido* appeals to the kind of readers who are drawn to images in the first place. Its vivid book cover is evidently intended to attract the Mexican readership,

<sup>26</sup> Duran, 'Doré's Illustrations with *Cromos*', 97.

and most probably its younger segments, by shrewdly reconverting a nineteenth-century Spanish etching into a mid-twentieth century piece of popular visual art. In both printings, the mutually referential relationship between image and text evokes, on the one hand, the inherent capacity of visual art to represent place and, on the other, the action-laden sense of time that verballity brings about. But while these Spanish-language editions prefigure the full potentiality of popular Miltonic tradaptation in mid-twentieth century Hispanoamerica, *Paradise Lost* would have to wait a couple of decades before its visual appeal could be converted in a straightforward manner to the perceived literary tastes and educational needs of children and youths in the region.

In the 1970s, simplified versions of *Paradise Lost* aimed at children and young adults would appear with purposely crafted illustrations. Through interlinguistic-intermedial tradaptation, the Ecuadorian poet Rafael Díaz Ycaza (1925–2013) and Spain's Manuel Vallvé (n.d.), in Mexico, managed to reinterpret Milton's express need to 'justify the ways of God to men' for children and teenagers (*PL* 1.26).<sup>27</sup> Their tradaptations function as intercultural literary artefacts that successfully capture the attention of young Hispanophone readers through visual-verbal entertainment and moral identification.

Díaz Ycaza's *El Paraíso perdido*, divided into only nine books, was first published in Quito, Ecuador, by Editorial Ariel in the collection *Juvenil ilustrada* [Illustrated for Youngsters]. The black-and-white illustrations for the book interiors are by the Ecuadorian artist Tarquino Mejía, while the colour image for the cover is the work of fellow countryman Nelson Jácome. This '*adaptación en prosa*' [adaptation in prose], as Díaz Ycaza himself calls it, intends to present Milton as '*el épico cuya potente voz desborda todas las medidas, cuya avasalladora inspiración brinda magia y colorido insuperables a los temas bíblicos*' [the epic poet whose powerful voice overflows all measures, whose overwhelming inspiration invests biblical themes with unmatched magic and colour].<sup>28</sup> Díaz Ycaza eccentrically associates the English poet's style with 'magic and colour', a description suited to children's stories and fairy tales. The cover features the fallen Adam and Eve sporting seventies-looking hairstyles, their lower bodies blocked by the Garden's lush thickets. Eve conceals her breasts with her long tresses and right arm, while a nipple-less Adam looks directly ahead and reaches out his left hand to readers. In stark contrast, a gigantic, red-furred Satan looms over them with a growling grimace, which curiously reminds one of the Morlocks in the filmic rendition of H. G. Wells's novel *The Time Machine* (1960) or, as Matt Dolloff has averred, a jaguar.<sup>29</sup> A green serpent replicates Satan's fierce facial expression.

<sup>27</sup> Very little information is available on Manuel Vallvé, other than that he was born in Barcelona, Spain, and is (was?) vastly prolific as a literary author for children, with adaptational works ranging from *Beowulf* to Agatha Christie's novels and authors from Archimedes to Hans Christian Andersen.

<sup>28</sup> Milton and Díaz Ycaza, *El Paraíso perdido*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Dolloff, 'A Young Adult *Paradise Lost*'.

Jácome's drawing enticingly summarizes one of the poem's main topical axes. It also balances out the condensed abridgement into which Díaz Ycaza's prose converts Milton's extensive contents. In this sense, this visual component of the slim volume both introduces the adapted contents and resystematizes them in such a way that '*todas nuestras desgracias con la pérdida del Edén*' [all our woe[s], | With loss of Eden] (*PL* 1.3–4) become the stuff of a verbal-visual narrative that 'transforms, often radically, the previous text, inevitably explicating the unsaid'.<sup>30</sup> The 'unsaid' being, in this case, each human soul's '*conflictos y tormentas*' [conflicts and storms], according to Díaz Ycaza.<sup>31</sup>

Mejía's interior illustrations and their correlation to Díaz Ycaza's adapted narrative reinforce the transformation by juxtaposing texts and images in a type of referentiality that draws upon the possibilities of comic strips. Mejía's black-and-white drawings rely upon a very recognizable psychedelic style influenced by Art Nouveau, which inspired much of the drawings and graphic designs of the 1960s and 1970s across the West. Most of these illustrations also feature word insets in the form of *fumetti*, 'little puffs of smoke' or balloons—squares in this particular case—containing excerpts from the texts on adjacent pages. A drawing that illustrates Adam and Eve's exchanges about Satan's menace exemplifies how the edition's layout functions in terms of the intersemiotic relationship between the adapted Miltonic contents and the images that explicate them (see Figure 11.2). In the full-page sketch, readers can see Adam and Eve from the waist up. Once again, their nakedness is blocked by a thick shrub of leaves and flowers. Three seagull-like birds, possibly a symbol of the Trinity, fly overhead while they have a verbal exchange in two separate *fumetti*. With only a few minor changes, the dialogue translates the lines from Milton's original, 'That such an Enemy we have, who seeks | Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn, | And from the parting angel overheard' and 'Not diffident of thee do I dissuade | Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid | Th' attempt itself, intended by our Foe' (*PL* 9.274–6, 9.293–5).

Adam and Eve's affable, carefree facial expressions contrast with the sense of impending danger that their framed words evoke. Similarly, the crammed combination of thin and broad lines outlining the thicket and its flowers are at visual odds with the thin, brisk lines in the upper half of the composition. Together, the translated text and the luscious image constitute a repositioning of signifiers from the evocative poeticism of the English epic to the imagistic exemplarity of a tradapted composite in Spanish.

The Ecuadorian *Paraíso perdido* both suggests meanings and demonstrates interpretive possibilities; it visually delights and morally instructs. In this last sense, the ultimate aim of the edition is evidenced by a closing section of questions,

<sup>30</sup> Milton and Díaz Ycaza, *El Paraíso perdido*, 11; Dusi, 'Intersemiotic Translation', 184.

<sup>31</sup> Milton and Díaz Ycaza, *El Paraíso perdido*, 7.





Fig. 11.2. Tarquino Mejía, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, black-and-white sketch, from *El Paraíso perdido* (1973). Courtesy of Editorial Radmandí Press.

cleverly entitled '*Ahora, ¿qué me cuentas tú?*' [Now, what can you tell me?].<sup>32</sup> The children and young readers that make up Díaz Ycaza's audience are now

<sup>32</sup> Milton and Díaz Ycaza, *El Paraíso perdido*, 103–5.



offered the opportunity of participating in the story and becoming narrators in themselves. They may now be not only the recipients of the epic's message, but also the potential tradaptors of an already mediated work of literature.

The Mexican tradaptation of *Paradise Lost* by the Ibero-Spanish Manuel Vallvé preserves a discreet instructionality in its conception, yet parts from Díaz Ycaza's pedagogical purposes. The back cover of the 77-page-long booklet is explicit with regard to the aims of the collection *Biblioteca juvenil Porrúa* [Porrúa Library for Youngsters]:

*La BIBLIOTECA JUVENIL PORRÚA pretende ser un primer contacto entre ellos y los clásicos. Sólo el primero, porque su más cara aspiración es que mantengan un continuo trato con ese mundo maravilloso de sus grandes obras.*

[The PORRÚA LIBRARY FOR YOUNGSTERS means to be the first contact between them and the classics. Just the first one, because its ultimate purpose is for them to keep a steady rapport with the wonderful world of its great works.]

The brevity of Vallvé's volume reflects the collection's introductory nature and even its very *raison d'être*. It follows that the formal constitution of this *Paraíso perdido* is literarily developmental, rather than scholarly pedagogical—its verbal contents are not strictly translated, but rather paraphrastically condensed. Take, for instance, the opening lines to book 1:

*Después de la batalla que el orgulloso arcángel Lucifer se atrevió a dar en el cielo contra Dios Todopoderoso, para vencer al Altísimo y arrebatarle su poder, él y sus compañeros, ángeles todos, habían sido precipitados a un abismo tenebroso, envueltos en llamas y destinados a consumirse para siempre en aquel fuego que los atormentaba sin cesar.*<sup>33</sup>

[After the battle that Lucifer, the proud archangel, dared to wage in Heaven against God Almighty, in order to defeat the Most High and grab his power, he and his band, all of them angels, had been cast into a dreary abyss; they were surrounded by flames and destined to be consumed forever in a fire that ceaselessly tormented them.]

Milton's central argument or his grandly stated narrative purpose are nowhere to be found. Neither is the high resounding justification for the poet's unmatched poetical enterprise, memorably presented in the epic's opening invocation (*PL* 1.1–26). Instead, the adaptor cuts to Lucifer's—not Satan's—dismal situation after the Fall, which betrays a narrative interest centring on action rather than evocation or

<sup>33</sup> Milton and Vallvé, *El Paraíso perdido*, 9.

poetical grandeur. This periphrastic tendency extends through the twelve books that the edition ‘respect[fully]’ preserves from the epic.

The prose reconfiguration of Milton’s lines in Vallvé’s passages becomes peculiarly symbolical, however, when readers encounter the illustrations that accompany specific scenes. Of special interest is the vignette that references Satan’s famous vision of the ‘stairs’ to Heaven (*PL* 3.501–54):

*Satán recorría velozmente el espacio. Llegó de pronto a un magnífico edificio que formaba una espléndida escalera, la cual conducía hasta los muros que en las alturas rodeaban el cielo.*<sup>34</sup>

[Satan darted swiftly through space. Suddenly he arrived at a magnificent structure forming a splendid staircase, which led to the wall that surrounded Heaven up high.]

The colour drawing illustrating this passage is far more suggestive than the text is (see Figure 11.3). In it, a hoofed demon sits on a staircase that winds upwards into a cloud. On the cloud is not a ‘kingly palace gate’ but a minuscule structure vaguely resembling the Parthenon (*PL* 3.505). Satan’s angry face rests on his right palm. He looks straight at readers from the corners of his eyes while waving at them with his left hand in a despondent gesture. The small orb of the world floats above the steps, right behind the devil’s backside in what cannot but be interpreted as a supreme sign of demonic contempt for the Father’s creation.

The rather surreal illustration says what the paraphrase does not, thus connecting the text’s slant verbal referentiality with the picture’s visual explicitness. This effect is enhanced by the tension, and even opposition, that exists between the drawing and its caption: ‘. . . Satan pudo contemplar entonces la Tierra . . .’ [*. . . Satan could then contemplate the Earth . . .*], which he is far from doing in the illustration. The result of this juxtaposition of meanings is highly ironic, which provides the reading with an added interpretive possibility. Also, the purposely childish appearance of all the vignettes—plus the occasional verbal-visual cheekiness—promotes a less formal and more ‘casual’ approach to the Miltonic (hyper)text. Vallvé’s *Paraíso perdido* and its uncredited illustrations are thus articulated in a *transmutation*, in the Jakobsonian sense of term: ‘an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems.’<sup>35</sup> And this is, in the context of tradaptation and children’s literature, a clever incentive for the potential young readers of Milton’s verse.

Milton was very much aware of the role that adaptation plays in the dissemination and teaching of literature in general, and the classics in particular. In his tractate *Of Education*, the poet and polemicist states that ‘the main skill and

<sup>34</sup> Milton and Vallvé, *El Paraíso perdido*, 23–4.

<sup>35</sup> Jakobson, ‘On Linguistic Aspects of Translation’, 233.



Fig. 11.3. Unknown artist, '... Satán pudo contemplar entonces la Tierra ...', colour drawing, from *El Paraíso perdido* (1992). By kind permission of Porrúa Press.

groundwork will be, to temper them [students] such Lectures and Explanations upon every opportunity, as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, enflam'd with the study of Learning, and the admiration of Vertue; stirr'd up with high hopes of living to be brave men, and worthy Patriots, dear to God, and famous to all ages.<sup>36</sup> '[T]emper' here means to modify, or in one of the archaic senses of the verb, 'to regulate suitably to need or requirement; to fit, adapt, conform, accommodate, make suitable.'<sup>37</sup> To Milton, the instilment of knowledge and admiration, then, lies at the core of any adaptational effort that may be directed to readers and students, particularly those who require a heightened sense of belonging in a community, whether it be ethno-social or intellectual. Little did Milton know—even if it was probably a wish dear to him—that his poem on the Fall of humankind would serve such purposes beyond his own cultural and linguistic sphere.

The practice of adapting-converting-translating Milton into a somewhat familiar author, in Hispanomerica, has now a pretty considerable age. In the wake of national pedagogic and editorial projects, the mid-twentieth century intra-linguistic tradaptation of *Paradise Lost* and other classics into the Spanish language originally developed over the course of at least three decades, beginning in the late 1940s. Since the early 1970s, the process has led to modest yet significant transmutations that can be considered veritable contributions to young readers' literature in the region. From the novelty of the Ibero-Spanish translations reprinted in Argentina and Mexico, to the textual-visual conversions of authors like Rafael Díaz Ycaza and Manuel Vallvé, with original illustrations, Milton's magnum opus continues to gather innovative afterlives that challenge its reputation as a nearly inaccessible paradigm of poetry. Far from being childishly simplified, *Paradise Lost*, as the *Paraíso perdido ilustrado*, is provided with alluring, and even surprising, intersemiotic possibilities in editions with specific purposes. The Spanish-speaking adaptors, translators, and illustrators—some of them sadly anonymous—that keep converting the epic into a pedagogical resource, and a source of narrative enjoyment, also represent exemplary figures in the context of translation as both a creative practice and a field of study. It is true, Milton may not be Shakespeare in terms of referentiality and popularity in the Hispanosphere (yet), but his transadaptors ensure that, in their young readers' 'wonder and astonishment', he will convert, eventually, into 'a live-long monument'.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Milton, *Of Education*, 282.

<sup>37</sup> Little, *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 2145. The usage sample that Little provides in this regard is from Milton's *Eikonoklastes*: 'They were indeed not temper'd to his temper'.

<sup>38</sup> Milton, 'On Shakespeare' 8, in Milton, *The Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Carey, 127.

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PART IV

VISUAL MEDIA





## Narrative Structure, Intervisuality, and Theology in Auladell's *El Paraíso perdido*

Jan F. van Dijkhuizen and Lucy McGourty

*Paradise Lost* has been a steady presence in comic books and graphic novels for more than thirty years, mostly through allusions to the themes of John Milton's epic poem.<sup>1</sup> *El Paraíso perdido* [*Paradise Lost*] (2015) by Spain's Pablo Auladell, however, is the first adaptation into graphic-novel or comic-book form of the poem's full storyline, from the exaltation of the Son to Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise. Divided into four cantos—'Satan', 'A Garden of Delights', 'First Memories of the World', 'The Flaming Sword'—*El Paraíso perdido* was first published in Spanish in 2015. In adapting *Paradise Lost*, Auladell used the 1813 Spanish translation by the Catholic cleric Juan de Escóiquiz as his main source.<sup>2</sup> While our analysis in this chapter is based on Ángel Gurría's re-translation into the English language (2016), we refer to Auladell's adaptation as *El Paraíso perdido* throughout, to distinguish it readily from Milton's own *Paradise Lost*.<sup>3</sup> Almost all of the text in the English version is taken directly from the 1674 edition of Milton's poem, though in modernized spelling, without line breaks, and in all uppercase letters, as is common of graphic-novel text—we use lowercase in this chapter. There are occasional changes in the original syntax. There is also some textual invention, for example in the description of Satan as he approaches the Gates of Hell, which does not occur in *Paradise Lost*, though the postnominal adjective in 'claw invisible' clearly mimics Miltonic syntax: 'intense and unknown pestilence around him tightens like a claw invisible.'<sup>4</sup> Auladell also adds a range of comic-book-style onomatopoeia, especially during the War in Heaven, narrated in the third canto.

<sup>1</sup> See for example, Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series (1988–96); Mike Carey's *All His Engines* (2005), which forms part of the *John Constantine: Hellblazer* series; and Phil Jimenez and George Pérez's 'Paradise Island Lost' (2001), published as part of the *Wonder Woman* series.

<sup>2</sup> Murgia, 'Paradise Lost as (Hispanic) Graphic Novel', 225–45; using Escóiquiz may have affected his approach to the poem and its theology.

<sup>3</sup> Auladell, *John Milton's Paradise Lost*. It has also been translated into French and Dutch. While a comparative analysis of Auladell's 'original' Spanish and Ángel Gurría's re-translation into (Miltonic) English is beyond the scope of this chapter, aspects of our reading may apply differently to the Spanish version of *El Paraíso perdido*.

<sup>4</sup> Auladell, *John Milton's Paradise Lost*, trans. Gurría, 73. This and all quotations and images of *El Paraíso perdido* are from this edition.

As Laura Lunger Knoppers and Gregory M. Colón Semenza note, 'one important lens for Milton in popular culture is that of the Romantics, and in particular, William Blake', and this certainly holds for the approach to *Paradise Lost* in pre-Auladell comic books and graphic novels.<sup>5</sup> For example, the Satan figure in Steve Orlando's *Paradise Lost: Book One* (2007) echoes the sympathetic reading of—and the fascination with—Milton's Satan that began with Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley, depicting him as a simultaneously heroic, glamorous, and tormented figure. In Auladell, too, Satan figures as a central character, and the motto of the canto named after him quotes one of the poem's most frequently cited lines, especially in allusions to or reworkings of *Paradise Lost* in popular culture: 'Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n' (*PL* 1.263).<sup>6</sup> Yet Auladell does not turn Satan into the rebellious freedom fighter of Romantic and post-Romantic Milton lore, and the motto to his first canto is best seen as an ironic comment on pro-Satanic readings of *Paradise Lost*. Far from securing anyone's freedom—including his own—from tyranny, Auladell's Satan destroys the beauty of the Garden of Eden and the happiness Adam and Eve enjoy before the Fall. In this sense, Auladell can be said to be adhering to—instead of resisting or subverting—the theology of Milton's poem.

Where *El Paraíso perdido* departs most conspicuously from Milton's theology is in its downplaying of the Son's redemptive work and the idea that, after their Expulsion from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve will be able to cultivate a 'paradise within' that is in some respects 'happier farr' than the paradise they left behind (*PL* 12.587). Auladell sees no *felix culpa* [happy fall] in Adam and Eve's sin. Indeed, Auladell's Satan successfully accomplishes the aim of transforming God's Creation into the Hell into which he himself was hurled: 'to confound the race | Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell | To mingle and involve' (*PL* 2.382–84). This is made clear in Auladell's use of colour as a narrative device throughout *El Paraíso perdido* and in the severe narrative condensation of the poem's final two cantos. After the Fall, Adam and Eve's colourful garden, predominantly rendered in muted hues of green and blue that echo the colours of Auladell's Heaven, is transformed into an ashen world. Indeed, the landscape outside the Garden into which Adam and Eve wander at the end of *El Paraíso perdido* looks eerily similar to the hellscapes of Auladell's first canto, and even to his evocation of Chaos. While *El Paraíso perdido* makes ample room for Satan's punishment in book 10 and for his defeat during the War in Heaven, therefore, it also suggests that Satan succeeds not only in tempting Adam and Eve but also in undoing God's Creation, thus thwarting God's plan to 'repare' the 'detriment' of Satan's fall by creating 'Another World' (*PL* 7.152–5). Auladell's adaptation also undermines the insistence in Milton's epic

<sup>5</sup> Laura Lunger Knoppers and Gregory M. Colón Semenza, 'Introduction', 6, in Knoppers and Colón Semenza, *Milton in Popular Culture*, 1–19.

<sup>6</sup> This and all quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Flannagan, and cited parenthetically in the text.

on human free will: his Adam and Eve have limited agency, entangled from the start in a cosmic battle that is beyond their control.

An important trend in recent adaptation studies has been, as Jørgen Bruhn, Anna Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen note, 'the movement away from a one-to-one relationship, that is, between one source (such as a novel) and one film. Instead, adaptation is viewed within a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural and textual networks into which any textual phenomena [are] understood.'<sup>7</sup> *El Paraíso perdido* offers a compelling case study for this capacious approach. Far from existing in a one-to-one relationship with *Paradise Lost*, *El Paraíso perdido* draws on a broad and complex set of visual traditions and iconographies that are as much part of Auladell's source materials as Milton's epic. These range from the work of the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael, Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, to Blake's early nineteenth-century illustrations for *Paradise Lost*, and from F. W. Murnau's silent horror film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) to the science fiction movie series *Star Wars*, to name but a few. While Auladell engages in exquisite detail with *Paradise Lost*, he also uses Milton's poem to comment on, upend, and rework—that is to say, to *adapt*—artistic media writ large.<sup>8</sup>

The many visual allusions in *El Paraíso perdido* create an allusive network that functions as a modern-day, visual equivalent to that of *Paradise Lost*. *Paradise Lost* is an intensely intertextual poem, constantly remembering the traditions—epic, classical mythology, and ancient history—in which it takes part and with which it enters into conversation. Likewise, *El Paraíso perdido* remembers the iconography and visual traditions that have helped to shape perceptions of Heaven and Hell, Adam, Eve, and Satan, as well as of *Paradise Lost* itself. Indeed, as much as *Paradise Lost* repeatedly stresses readers' inevitably fallen perception of the prelapsarian world it evokes, *El Paraíso perdido* emphasizes the myriad ways in which readers' understanding of both the poem and the theological and political issues it examines is necessarily conditioned by existing visual traditions. This is true for the very technique that Auladell employs: his use of charcoal and pastels allude to the visual media used in illustrations of *Paradise Lost* especially during the nineteenth century, including Blake's watercolour illustrations, John Martin's mezzotints, William Strang's etchings, and Gustave Doré's engravings.<sup>9</sup> Unlike ink—used in the many comic-book reworkings of *Paradise Lost* already

<sup>7</sup> Bruhn, Gjelsvik, and Hanssen, *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges*, 8. For this point, see also Leitch, 'Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory'. As the tenth of these fallacies, Leitch singles out the idea that '[a]daptations are adapting exactly one text apiece' (164–5).

<sup>8</sup> The contributors thank Inger Leemans and Han van der Vegt for their valuable help in tracking down the visual intertexts of *El Paraíso perdido*.

<sup>9</sup> For Blake and Martin, see Camille Adnot's chapter in the present volume, 'From Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Blake's *Milton*'. For the global reach of Doré's wood engravings, see the three chapters in 'Part II: Cameos' of Duran and Murgia, *Global Milton and Visual Art*, 73–138.

referred to—charcoal encompasses a range of references to various visual media, from painterly to etchings.

It has become a commonplace in adaptation studies to dismiss as misguided any preoccupation with an adaptation's 'fidelity' to the work it adapts.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, this chapter does not address the question of how 'true' *El Paraíso perdido* remains to *Paradise Lost*. As Linda Hutcheon explains, it is more fruitful to conceive of adaptations as 'palimpsestuous', 'haunted at all times by their adapted texts', yet never simply reproducing their source materials.<sup>11</sup> This palimpsestuousness is also registered in the fact that the title page of the English-language version introduces *El Paraíso perdido* as 'John Milton's *Paradise Lost*' before identifying Auladell as its author.

Yet, *El Paraíso perdido* also evinces a profound interest in and a fundamental openness to its main source text. Indeed, in analysing Auladell's Milton adaptation, it is worth bearing in mind Esther Bendit Saltzman's suggestion that graphic-novel adaptations 'stimulate imagination, speculation, and critical thinking by instituting minor and major changes from their adapted texts; these translations or changes encourage a return to those texts for further analysis.'<sup>12</sup> In his preface, Auladell notes that 'only now that I have finished drawing it do I feel truly ready to start drawing *Paradise Lost*'.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, *El Paraíso perdido* invites readers to return to and reread the work it adapts. In the narrative and thematic strands which it highlights, *El Paraíso perdido* encourages us to ask new questions about *Paradise Lost*.

### **Narrative and Visual Time in *El Paraíso perdido*: Condensation and Expansion**

Throughout *El Paraíso perdido*, Auladell responds in imaginative ways to specific narrative moments or sequences in Milton's poem, often representing them in highly condensed and evocative panels, which readers are invited to unpack, inferring the narrative movement suggested by single images. The very first two panels provide an important case in point. The first panel presents an image of almost featureless, near-total darkness, shading into dark grey at the lower right edge, inside of which indistinct shapes seem to move. In the second panel, a female figure, whom we later learn is Sin, appears inside this darkness, and the two panels may well constitute a single image, suggesting an aspect-to-aspect transition, or camera movement, between them. These first two panels represent a visual miniature version of *Paradise Lost* as a whole: the birth of Sin from the darkness that

<sup>10</sup> Johnson, 'Adaptation and Fidelity'.

<sup>11</sup> Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Saltzman, 'Novel to Graphic Novel', 155.

<sup>13</sup> Auladell, *El paraíso perdido*, 7.

is associated with Satan throughout Auladell's adaptation. In this way, Auladell announces the nature of his medium: his is a transposition of Milton's textual narrative into the primarily visual genre of the graphic novel. Second, he alerts readers to the narrative condensation and selection inherent in such visual adaptation. Not only is it impossible to visualize every textual element of *Paradise Lost*, but such condensation is in fact at the heart of Auladell's creative engagement with Milton's poem. Auladell captures extended narrative passages in short panel sequences, sometimes even single panels. In doing so, he replaces the linear, temporal dimension of verbal narrative with a dense and intensely allusive form of visual narration, in which even single images suggest temporal movement and encapsulate a range of meanings.

In the first of two notable examples, Auladell depicts Adam and Eve's lovemaking in two panels (PL 4.492–504). In the second of these panels, Satan's bird-like silhouette appears near the right outer edge, implying, as Milton does, that readers are watching Adam and Eve along with Satan and were already doing so in the preceding panel. These two panels are followed by a close-up of Satan's face as he watches the couple (see Figure 12.1), suggesting a mixture of puzzlement, shock, and torment that evokes the description in Milton's poem: 'aside the Devil turn'd | For envie, yet with jealous leer maligne | Ey'd them askance' (PL 4.502–4).

The second instance, when Satan spies Eve alone, again presents a close-up of Satan's face, following a panel that shows Eve plucking fruits from a tree (PL 9.424–72). Satan's face is inscrutable, suggesting not the 'Pleasure' at seeing Eve and her 'Flourie Plat' that Milton ascribes to Satan at this point, but rather the 'fierce desire' from the earlier scene, as well as a sense of paralysis and shock, underlining Milton's notion that Satan is shaken and briefly not himself, 'abstracted [. . .] From his own evil' (PL 9.454, 456, 4.509, 9.463–4).

Auladell uses visual analogues for Milton's prolepsis, doing so in a way that foregrounds key themes in *Paradise Lost*, such as the problem of imagining a prelapsarian world from an inevitably postlapsarian perspective, and the vexed question of free will and human responsibility for the Fall. Milton's Eve is famously tempted twice by the forbidden fruit—the first time in the dream which she recounts to Adam (PL 5.28–94), the second time at the actual moment of the Fall (PL 9.780–94). Auladell adds a third, parallel moment early on in *El Paraíso perdido*, when Eve takes a non-forbidden fruit from a bowl, bites into it and comments on its delicious taste (see Figure 12.2). This is the first panel in which only Eve is shown. In the next panel, Adam, who is also feasting on the bowl of fruit, responds: 'Let us praise him that placed us here in all this happiness, who at his hand have nothing merited'.<sup>14</sup> Readers are briefly tempted to read the close-up of Eve biting into fruit as prefiguring the Fall but are corrected in the very next panel, which

<sup>14</sup> Auladell, *El Paraíso perdido*, 124.

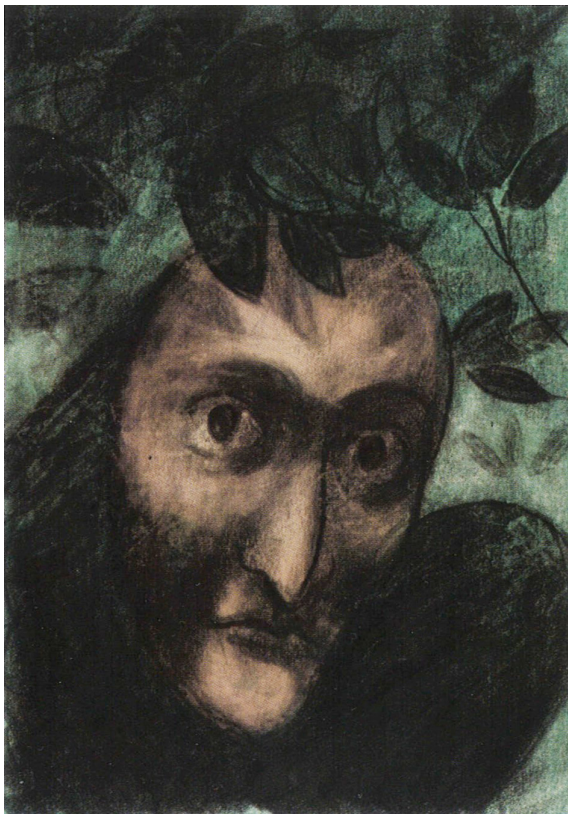


Fig. 12.1. Pablo Auladell, detail of Satan watching Adam and Eve make love, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 135. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.



Fig. 12.2. Pablo Auladell, Eve biting into forbidden fruit, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 124. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.



reveals that Eve is simply enjoying a delicious fruit, as a manifestation of God's benevolence.

Auladell employs a similar strategy in the first complete image of Adam and Eve, which shows Adam sitting under a tree as Eve plucks its fruits (see Figure 12.3). This panel closely echoes Renaissance and Baroque paintings depicting the Fall, for example by Titian, Tiziano Vecelli, later emulated by Peter Paul Rubens (see Figure 12.4). Yet while these paintings show the standing Eve on the verge of



Fig. 12.3. Pablo Auladell, Adam and Eve in Paradise, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 120. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.



Fig. 12.4. Titian, *The Fall of Man* (c. 1550), oil on canvas, from Museo del Prado, Madrid. Public domain.

falling into sin and the sitting Adam trying in vain to stop her, Auladell shows a fully prelapsarian Eve simply plucking fruit and Adam arranging fruit in a basket. Auladell's readers, therefore, are asked to adopt two narrative and temporal perspectives at once: the prelapsarian perspective of Adam and Eve, who savour the moment, ignorant of what the future brings, and the postlapsarian point of view that is Satan's and inevitably the readers' too.



Readers are reminded repeatedly of the dangers facing Adam and Eve: in *El Paraíso perdido*, as in *Paradise Lost*, Eden is rarely seen without what John R. Knott aptly describes as the 'ominous shadows' of the Fall.<sup>15</sup> Yet Auladell's unfallen Adam and Eve do not adequately grasp the danger to which they are exposed. This is underscored by the conversation they have about the Tree of Knowledge, immediately after their first appearance in the narrative. Adam's insistence that the prohibition is an 'easie charge' is belied by the fact that there are no visual clues that clearly mark the Tree of Knowledge as different from other trees, including the tree under which Adam and Eve sit when readers first encounter them (*PL* 4.421).<sup>16</sup> Indeed, when Adam urges Eve to 'not think hard one easy prohibition', the panel shows a close-up of a half-human, half-lupine Satan.<sup>17</sup> Auladell's Satan overhears Adam and Eve's conversation, just as Milton's Satan is 'all eare' for Adam's speech (*PL* 4.410). When Eve points to the Tree of Knowledge, inquiring about its fruits, the next panel shows the wolflike Satan running past it, in a rich visual translation of Milton's epic simile likening Satan to a 'prowling Wolfe' that 'Leaps o're the fence with ease into the Fould' (*PL* 4.183, 4.187). While readers know that the wolf is Satan, for unfallen Adam and Eve, it is merely a wolf.

The idea that Adam and Eve are exposed to a danger they do not fully understand, and of whose presence they are even insufficiently aware, is underscored strongly in Auladell's reimagining of the dream that Milton's Eve narrates (*PL* 5.28–94). Eve's dream is significantly expanded and fused with Satan's encounter with the angels Ithuriel, Zephon, and Gabriel. Auladell shifts the narrative perspective to Satan: the dream seems to be mainly Satan's instead of Eve's. A toad-like Satan approaches the sleeping Eve, speaks lines directly from *Paradise Lost*—'Why sleepest thou *Eve*' (*PL* 5.38)—and is then shown inserting his tongue into her ear. While he at first tries to tempt Eve to taste the forbidden fruit, he drops it just as she is about to do so and rapes her. At this moment, Ithuriel and Zephon interrupt him as they, as Milton has it, '*find him at the ear of Eve*', in a panel that shows Satan hastily retracting his reptilian tongue from the sleeping Eve (*PL* 4.Argument). In the next panel, Satan transforms back into his angelic shape with an erect penis and explodes into rage at Ithuriel and Zephon. In *Paradise Lost*, Eve's dream is satanically induced but it is nevertheless *her* dream. In Auladell, it is transformed into Satan's rape fantasy, suggesting that he has been sexually aroused by Adam and Eve's lovemaking immediately before the dream sequence.

Auladell's dream sequence displays clearly the violent sexuality implied in Satan's 'fierce desire [. . .] Still unfulfill'd' (*PL* 4.509, 4.511).<sup>18</sup> In *Paradise Lost*, the threat of sexual violence is registered by allusions to classical mythology, especially to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. For example, Milton compares Eve in her bower

<sup>15</sup> Knott, 'Symbolic Landscape in *Paradise Lost*', 47.

<sup>16</sup> Auladell, *El Paraíso perdido*, 125.

<sup>17</sup> Auladell, *El Paraíso perdido*, 125.

<sup>18</sup> Auladell, *El Paraíso perdido*, 135.

to the nymph Pomona, who in *Metamorphoses* sequesters herself in her enclosed orchard, to ward off unwelcome suitors:

In shadier Bower  
More sacred and sequesterd, though but feignd,  
*Pan* or *Silvanus* never slept, nor Nymph,  
Nor *Faunus* haunted.

(PL 4.705–8)

Pomona's name identifies her both with her orchard and with its fruits—just as *Paradise Lost* describes Eve as the 'fairest unsupported Flour' (PL 9.432)—suggesting that she is in danger of sexual violation.<sup>19</sup> That Milton identifies Satan with such a sexual threat also becomes clear when the latter approaches Eden but is 'deni'd' 'Access' to the garden by its 'enclosure green' (PL 4.137, 133). As Mandy Green explains, the phrase 'Access deni'd' recalls Ovid's '*accessus prohibet*'.<sup>20</sup> Further, as Maggie Kilgour argues, Milton also links Eve's dream to Ovidian moments of more explicit sexual violence: Eve's 'Tresses discompos'd' on the morning after the dream echo descriptions of the raped Philomela and Lucretia in *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*, as both tear their hair in anguish (PL 5.10).<sup>21</sup>

Auladell translates such Ovidian sexual violence through visual allusions. The panel that shows Satan raping Eve is strikingly similar to Rubens's *Rape of Proserpina* (1636–37) and Alexandre Cabanel's *Nymph Abducted by a Faun* (1860); Eve's posture, with her long hair hanging down, recalls Rubens's Proserpine and Cabanel's nymph, while Satan's posture resembles Pluto and the faun (see Figures 12.5, 12.6).<sup>22</sup> Auladell also intensifies the impact the dream has on Eve: she remains unresponsive to Adam when he wakes her and informs her that 'the morning shines', and keeps her distance from him as he works the garden, her arms clasped tight around her waist in a self-protective gesture (PL 5.20).<sup>23</sup>

Auladell's interventions with the dream sequence and Eve's response to Adam afterwards suggest that the Fall has already taken place with Satan's sexual assault on Eve, given that he has managed to disturb the (sexual) harmony between Adam and Eve. In Auladell, the first earthly sin is not Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit

<sup>19</sup> Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 162.

<sup>20</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 14.635–6.

<sup>21</sup> Kilgour, 'Eve and Flora', 6; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 6.531; Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.813.

<sup>22</sup> A noteworthy visual intertext for the panel is Salvador Dalí's dry-point etching 'The Temptation', Plate C from *Paradis perdu* (1974), a series of ten etchings illustrating *Paradise Lost*. For discussions of Dalí's illustrations in *Paradis perdu*, see Joseph Wittreich's "'More Worlds . . . Other Worlds . . . New Worlds': Translation/Illustration/*Paradise Lost*", and Joshua Reid's 'Gender, Nature, and Desire in Dalí's *Paradise Lost*', in Duran and Murgia, *Global Milton and Visual Art* 21–71, 199–225.

<sup>23</sup> Auladell, *El Paraíso perdido*, 152. An allusive visual network of Adam awaking before Eve in Book 5 that we do not explore here are illustrated editions of *Paradise Lost*, including in the first illustrated edition of 1688 and in the highly popular bicentennial edition of c. 1866 with illustrations by France's Gustave Doré.

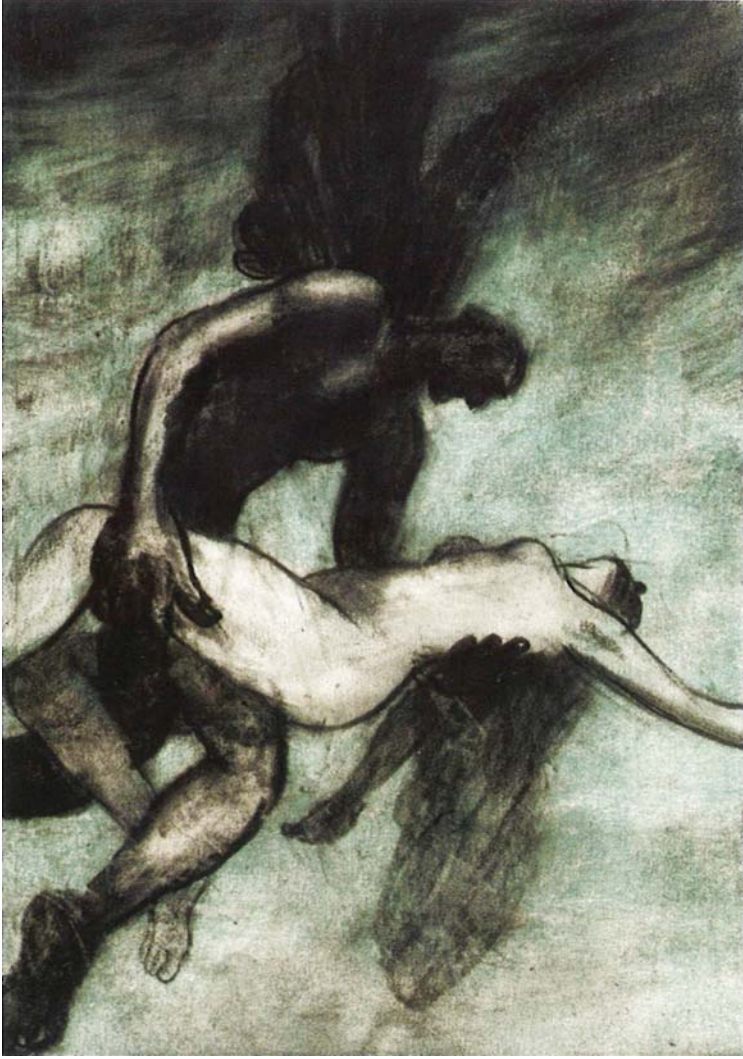


Fig. 12.5. Pablo Auladell, *The rape of Eve*, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 142. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.

but Satan's act of sexual violence, occurring well before the human Fall itself, and occupying more narrative space. It is entirely beyond Adam and Eve's control—rendering problematic God's insistence on human free will in book 3—and Eve is its principal victim. This is underscored by the fact that Eve repeats her self-protective gesture of hugging her own body various times after the Fall, most prominently in the penultimate image of Adam and Eve outside the Garden. Satan's sin renders Adam and Eve's eventual punishment—strongly foregrounded



**Fig. 12.6.** Du Four, *Nymph Abducted by a Faun* (after 1860), engraving, from Rijksmuseum, after the painting by Alexandre Cabanel (1860), oil on canvas, from Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille. Public domain.

by Auladell—all the more tragic, while also undermining God’s efforts to prevent ‘Surprisal [. . .] unforewarnd’ and ensure that Adam and Eve are properly alerted to the danger that threatens them (*PL* 5.245).<sup>24</sup> When the archangel Raphael arrives in the Garden to inform Adam and Eve of their fallibility, it is already too late.

<sup>24</sup> Auladell, *El Paraíso perdido*, 155.



As much as *El Paraíso perdido* downplays Adam and Eve's agency and free will, it also magnifies their eventual punishment, meted out by the lightsaber-wielding archangel Michael. In the final, eight-panel sequence, Auladell jumps from Michael's announcement—'to remove thee I am come' (*PL* 11.260)—directly to Adam and Eve's Expulsion. Unlike Milton's Michael, Auladell's Michael has not 'disappee'r'd' (*PL* 12.640) but remains very much visible in the closing panel (see Figure 12.7). In a remarkable instance of Auladell's characteristic use of scale throughout *El Paraíso perdido*, this panel represents Michael towering hugely over the landscape, with Adam and Eve utterly dwarfed by both Michael and their surroundings. It is impossible to tell, and arguably irrelevant, whether they are



Fig. 12.7. Pablo Auladell, *The Expulsion from Paradise*, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 312. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.

holding hands, as they do in Milton's epic. Furthermore, Auladell's Michael does not gently lead them to the gate or hold their hands but figures as an agent of cosmic, divine wrath.

Unlike Auladell's Michael, Milton's Michael does not wield the 'brandisht Sword of God' (PL 12.633). Rather, the sword moves of its own volition: 'Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery Sword waving behind them' (PL 12.Argument). In the closing sequence of *El Paraíso perdido*, therefore, Auladell does not take his cue from *Paradise Lost* but rather from a long iconographic tradition going back at least to the late Middle Ages, in which Michael is shown holding a sword as he chases Adam and Eve from Paradise (see Figure 12.8). At the same time, Auladell radically revises this tradition: while in late medieval and early modern depictions of the Expulsion, Adam and Eve hold centre stage, Auladell almost expels them from the closing panel, which is dominated by Michael, 'Fierce as a Comet' (PL 12.634).

The closing sequence is preceded by a close-up of Michael's face that echoes various moments in *El Paraíso perdido*. The first occurs in the narration of Satan's memory of his dalliance with Sin and his subsequent expulsion from Heaven. In these close-ups, it is difficult to determine whether Michael wears a Pulcinella mask, or whether his face is itself mask-like. Michael figures as a watchful but also impersonal and unmoved agent of divine punishment, echoing the eagle's head and neck as an image of divine justice in Dante's *Paradiso*. Indeed, there is a suggestion throughout *El Paraíso perdido* that Michael represents God's wrathful side and he even acts independently of God, disapproving of God's decision to show clemency towards humanity and of the Son's self-sacrifice. When God asks which of the angels is willing to 'be mortal to redeem | Mans mortal crime', the panel shows Michael's masked, inscrutable, and unresponsive face (PL 3.214–5). Unlike the Son, Michael appears eager to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden rather than exhibiting love for them, ignoring God's insistence that he 'Dismiss them not disconsolate' (PL 11.113). The depiction of Michael as an 'aquiline-nosed Renaissance prince' combines with Auladell's depiction of Heaven as an Italian Renaissance city to suggest that it is Michael who rules in Heaven.<sup>25</sup>

Auladell's narrative condensation in the final pages of *El Paraíso perdido* and the prominence afforded to the vengeful archangel Michael are part of the broad narrative strand in *El Paraíso perdido* that suggests that Adam and Eve are ensnared in a drama that is not of their own making, in which they have limited agency, and to which they are in an important sense external. The real dramatic agents, Auladell suggests, are the cosmic antagonists, Satan and God, with Michael acting as an instrument of the latter's wrath. If Milton's innovativeness as an epic poet lay in part in his creation of a domestic epic, Auladell in turn underlines the tension between the domestic drama of Adam and Eve's falling out and eventual reconciliation on

<sup>25</sup> Leonard, 'Review of Auladell, Pablo', 128.



Fig. 12.8. Masaccio, *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (c. 1425), from Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence. The Picture Art Collection/Alamy Stock Photo.

the one hand, and the cosmic and in some ways more traditionally epic drama of God and Satan on the other.

### Visual Allusions in *El Paraíso perdido*

Auladell's allusions throughout *El Paraíso perdido* to a wide range of iconographies and idioms in visual culture, from the late Middle Ages to the twenty-first century, constitute a sustained commentary on the visual traditions that mediate readers' understanding of the figures of Milton's Adam, Eve, and Satan, and of the themes *Paradise Lost* explores. We find a key example in the resemblances between the iconography of the Madonna figure in Renaissance art and Auladell's Eve. Auladell's Eve shares various features with the Madonnas in Raphael's *Madonna of the Meadow* and *The Small Cowper Madonna*, Sandro Botticelli's *Madonna of the Book*, and Ambrogio Borgognone's *Madonna with Child*, such as a soft, rounded, and wide face, thin and highly placed eyebrows, a refined nose, heavy eyelids, a narrow mouth with full lips, and a gaze averted from viewers. The similarities between Eve and Renaissance Madonnas are established in the very first close-up of Eve, in which, as noted, she bites into an unforbidden fruit, her posture recalling the Madonnas of Raphael, Botticelli, and Borgognone. This first image links Eve to the Virgin Mary and therefore to humanity's redemption through Christ, while simultaneously alluding proleptically to the Fall—though the subsequent panels partially undermine this allusion.

In associating Eve with the Virgin Mary, Auladell engages with a long typological tradition in which Eve and Mary are understood as both antithetical opposites and as doubles. As Emma Solberg points out, 'exegetes began to construct [the] typological opposition [between Eve and Mary] as early as the second century. Justin Martyr argued that Mary was a second Eve just as Jesus was a second Adam: while the first Eve "conceived the word of the serpent, and brought forth disobedience and death", the new Eve conceived the word of God and brought forth salvation.'<sup>26</sup> An illuminating example of the typological antithesis between the two figures occurs in a late medieval Italian altarpiece showing a chaste and modest Virgin suckling the Christ Child, with a sexualized Eve occupying the lower part of the image, the Tree of Knowledge with the serpent coiled around it emerging between her legs.<sup>27</sup> Yet, as Solberg explains, the relation between Eve and Mary is

<sup>26</sup> Solberg, *Virgin Whore*, 76. For an authoritative study of the iconography surrounding the figures of Eve and Mary, see Guldán, *Eva und Maria*.

<sup>27</sup> *The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve*, c. 1400, Italy, tempera and gold on wood panel; framed 191.5×99 x 11 cm. Ascribed to Olivuccio di Ceccarello. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Holden Collection 1916.795. For a useful and concise analysis of the altarpiece, see Gertsman and Rosenwein, *The Middle Ages in 50 Objects*, 88–91.



not merely one of opposition. For example, in an illumination from the famous fifteenth-century Salzburg Missal, 'Mary and Eve pluck different fruit from the same tree. Mary [. . .] plucks a Eucharist wafer from the foot of the Cross [. . .], while Eve plucks the apple of Death from the serpent's mouth, much to the delight of the grinning skeleton standing over her shoulder. [. . .] Despite their many differences, these mirror images of Mary and Eve reflect each other in every gesture and feature.'<sup>28</sup> In effectively merging the figures of Eve and Mary, Auladell creates an unstable representation of the former: a condensed image that functions as a kind of art-historical Rorschach test, pushing to the limit Eve's long typological and iconographical entwinement with the Virgin.

The parallels between Eve and Mary also resonate with an important theological strand in *Paradise Lost*. Not only does Milton's Eve make divine forgiveness possible both for herself and for Adam by being the first to admit responsibility for the Fall, but she also starts Christ's redemptive work in the last spoken words in the poem: 'By mee the Promis'd Seed shall all restore' (*PL* 12.623). While Auladell does not include these words, Eve's link to Mary as the mother of humanity's Redeemer is strongly underlined by the repeated allusions to Renaissance Madonna iconography. Moreover, Eve's resemblance to Renaissance Madonnas is sustained after the Fall, most clearly in her supplication with Adam.<sup>29</sup> Yet in the final image of Eve, freshly expelled from the Garden with Adam, her resemblance to the Virgin Mary is gone. With her arms clasping her chest and eyes screwed up in a mixture of grief and terror at the glare of Michael's lightsaber (see Figure 12.9), she most strongly resembles the Eve figure in the famous fifteenth-century fresco by Masaccio, Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Simone (Figure 12.8). The suggestion is that Eve is stripped of her Madonna-like status not by her own sinful act but rather by the Son's eventual judgement and the terrifying punishment which Michael inflicts on her.

Auladell's conflation of Eve and the Virgin Mary is paralleled in his doubling of Adam and the Son. A panel of Adam after the Fall is conspicuously modelled on the art-historical *ecce homo* [behold the man] and Man of Sorrows traditions, in which Christ, wearing a crown of thorns and robe, is shown by Pilate to the crowd before his crucifixion (see Figures 12.10, 12.11). Auladell's allusion to the *ecce homo* tradition is underlined by the punning text balloon of the Son's judgement of fallen humanity, which reads 'Adam!'—the Hebrew word for 'man'.

Throughout this sequence, the dark-grey trees behind both Adam and Eve are shaped like wings, suggesting that Adam and Eve have become like the fallen angels of book 1. The suggestion of a kind of anti-halo is strengthened by the visual echoes of the charcoal sketch *The Fallen Angel* by Odilon Redon, especially the highly

<sup>28</sup> Solberg, *Virgin Whore*, 77.

<sup>29</sup> Auladell, *El Paraíso perdido*, 302–3.



Fig. 12.9. Pablo Auladell, Adam and Eve freshly expelled from Paradise, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 311. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.

similar use of colour and the asymmetrical wings suggested by the background (see Figure 12.12). As with the panel showing the Madonna-like Eve biting into a fruit, Auladell offers a condensed, paradoxical image of Adam (see Figure 12.2). In his anguish over the Fall, Adam becomes simultaneously more Christ-like and more Satan-like, more similar both to his Redeemer and to his tempter.

The effects of these composite images of ‘our first Grand Parents’ are variously Miltonic and entwined in a long typological history, of ‘Mary, second Eve’ and the ‘greater Man’ of the Son who undoes the first man’s sin (*PL* 1.29, 10.183, 1.4). In the panel in which he is shown as an *ecce homo* figure, Auladell’s Adam takes Christ’s place as an embodiment of suffering. By contrast, Auladell’s Son, invisible and present only in the text balloons, becomes a figure only of judgement rather than loving self-sacrifice. In this way, readers are invited to feel compassion for the fallen, suffering, human Adam, and to see themselves—*ecce homo*—in him. Auladell here subverts a long art-historical and devotional tradition, which flourished during the late Middle Ages and early modern period, in which humans are urged to feel compassion for the suffering Christ and to see their own sinfulness in the physical pains which he endures.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> For this tradition, see Merback, *The Thief, The Cross and the Wheel*; Ross, *The Grief of God*; and van Dijkhuizen, *Pain and Compassion in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*.

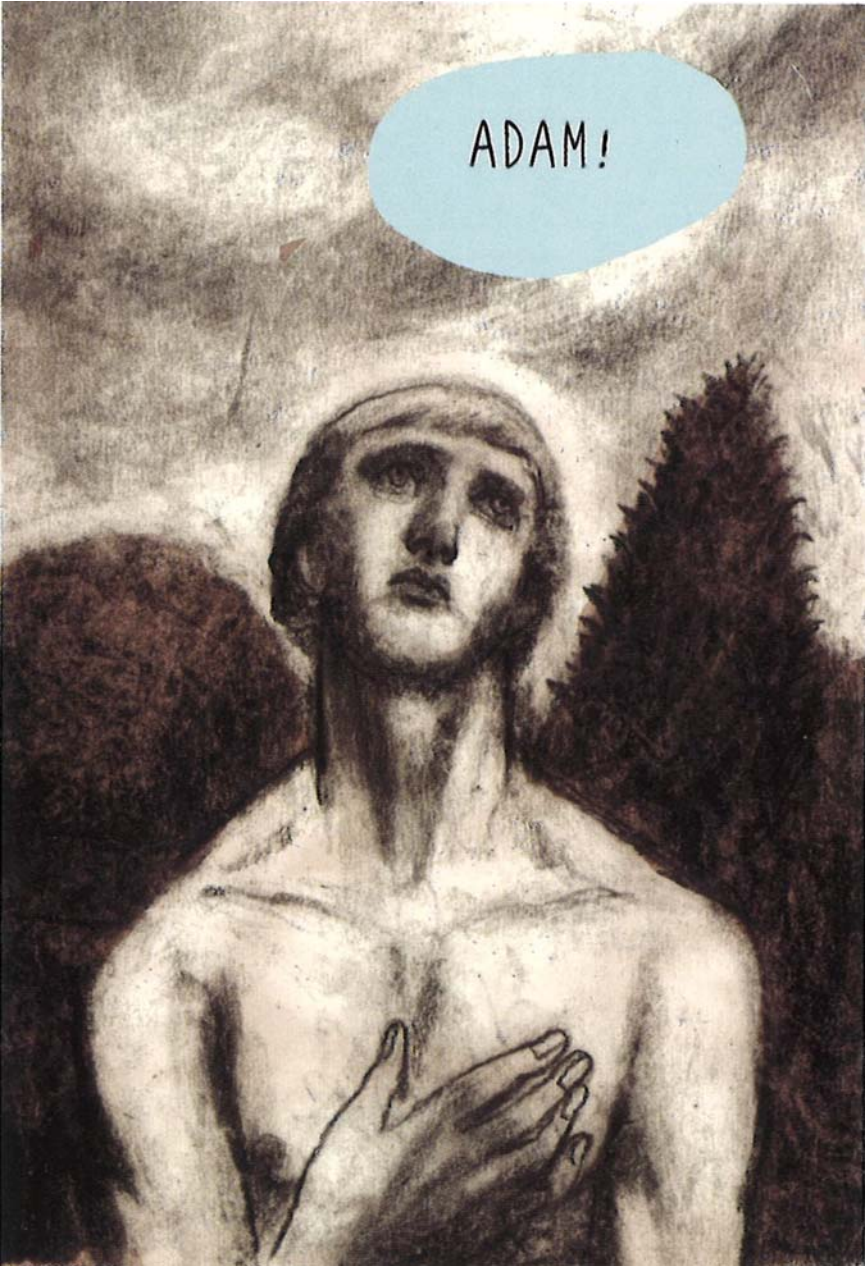


Fig. 12.10. Pablo Auladell, Adam after the Fall, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 285. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.



**Fig. 12.11.** Guido Reni (follower of), *Man of Sorrows* (c. 1630–1700), oil on canvas, from Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Legaat van de heer J. W. E. vom Rath [Bequeathed by J. W. E. vom Rath], Amsterdam.

In a further striking allusion to early modern visual culture, Auladell's depictions of Adam and Eve draw upon the engravings that Theodore de Bry made for his famous 1590 edition of Thomas Hariot's *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*.<sup>31</sup> The clearest echoes of De Bry include one of the first

<sup>31</sup> De Bry's engravings were modelled on watercolour paintings by John White (c. 1539–1593).





Fig. 12.12. Odilon Redon, *L'ange perdu ouvrit alors des ailes noires* [Then the Fallen Angel Opened his Black Wings] (1886), charcoal on paper, from Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo.

panels of Adam and Eve in *El Paraíso perdido* and 'Their Sitting at Meat', which shows an Algonquian man and woman sharing a platter of what De Bry calls 'Mayz sodden': corn which has been boiled to remove the hulls (see Figures 12.13, 12.14); and a panel showing Adam running 'With supple joints' during his first moments on Earth and De Bry's engraving 'The Conjuerer', which shows a native



Fig. 12.13. Pablo Auladell, Adam and Eve eating fruit, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 123. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.



Fig. 12.14. Theodore de Bry, 'Their Sitting at Meate', engraving, from Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report* (1590), p. 55. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of William Gray from the collection of Francis Calley Gray, Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College, G580.

priest performing what De Bry describes as 'strange gestures' (*PL* 8.269; see Figures 12.15, 12.16).<sup>32</sup>

These two allusions form part of Auladell's engagement with the early modern colonial contexts present in *Paradise Lost*. As J. Martin Evans states in what remains the most comprehensive analysis of colonial discourses in Milton's epic, 'the association of Eden with the paradisaical landscapes of America and of Adam and Eve with the noble savages who inhabited them, were all familiar common-places in the colonial literature that appeared in print during the years preceding the composition of *Paradise Lost*. To write a poem based on the Genesis narrative was to engage a text that was already thoroughly impregnated with the ideology of



Fig. 12.15. Pablo Auladell, Adam enjoying the use of his 'supple joints', graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 123. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.

<sup>32</sup> Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report*, 49.





Fig. 12.16. Theodore de Bry, 'The Conquerer', engraving, from Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report* (1590), p. 49. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of William Gray from the collection of Francis Calley Gray, Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College, G575.

European imperialism.<sup>33</sup> De Bry's frontispiece for the *Briefe and True Report* shows the temptation and Fall, linking the 'New World' to Paradise at the outset (PL 4,34).

It is important to remark that De Bry did not represent the original inhabitants of the 'New World' as innocent or prelapsarian. Rather, his preface suggests that the Native American is to be seen as similar to the freshly fallen Adam and Eve, existing in an unredeemed state, in which he is able to satisfy his physical needs, but not 'such as appartayne to his soules healthe'.<sup>34</sup> *Paradise Lost* reiterates this idea in its most explicit comparison between Native Americans and Adam and Eve gathering leaves to cover their naked bodies after the Fall:

O how unlike  
To that first naked Glorie. Such of late  
*Columbus* found th' *American* so girt

<sup>33</sup> Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic*, 6. For a discussion of colonialism in another engagement with *Paradise Lost*, see Katie Mennis's chapter in the present volume, 'Latinizing Milton in the English West Indies'.

<sup>34</sup> Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report*, 31.



With featherd Cincture, naked else and wilde  
Among the Trees on Iles and woodie Shores.

(PL 9.1114–18)

Auladell, by contrast, places his allusions to De Bry well *before* the Fall: in one of the first panels showing the Edenic couple together and immediately after God's creation of the human race, when Adam tests out the use of his limbs. Yet this does not mean that Auladell unambiguously conflates Adam and Eve in their unfallen state with Native Americans. The panel in which Adam and Eve eat fruit together from a basket also shows Satan in the shape of a wolf running past them, his long tail cutting across the basket of fruit, alerting readers once again to the threat already looming over them. The cumulative effect of the allusions to De Bry is to complicate and destabilize the conceptual relation between Paradise and the 'New World', at once evoking and undermining this relation.

The allusions in *El Paraíso perdido* to the 'New World' extend beyond the early modern period to include a visual reference to the Lincoln Memorial, in a panel showing Satan 'Hlgh on a Throne of Royal State' sitting 'exalted' (PL 2.1, 2.5) after the erection of Pandemonium (see Figures 12.17, 12.18). The clear visual



Fig. 12.17. Pablo Auladell, Satan on his throne of royal state, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 51. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.



Fig. 12.18. Daniel Chester French, Statue of Abraham Lincoln (1920), Georgia marble, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC. Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith (1946–).

echo of the Statue of Abraham Lincoln, with Satan towering massively over his fellow-fallen angels—in a moment that foreshadows the final panel of *El Paraíso perdido*—evokes a range of meanings. First, it invites readers to compare Satan to one of the most iconic state leaders of modern history and Pandemonium to the ‘Temple’ in which ‘the memory of Abraham Lincoln | is enshrined forever’, as stated in the motto by Royal Cortissoz inscribed on the wall behind the statue. Famously, the inscription also remembers the sixteenth US President as having ‘saved the union’ for ‘the people’ of the United States. The allusion to the Lincoln Memorial therefore evokes Satan’s claim that the fallen angels have the advantage of ‘union, and firm Faith, and firm accord, | More then can be in Heav’n’, and especially the ways in which he casts himself as a self-sacrificing, Christ-like—or, in this context, Lincoln-like—figure, who will ‘seek | Deliverance for us all’ and who is praised by the other fallen angels for his selflessness (*PL* 2.36–7, 2.464–5). In suggesting a fleeting, single-panel analogy between Satan and Lincoln, Auladell captures a crucial aspect of the narrative which Satan forges about his mission to tempt Adam and Eve into sin, and by which the other fallen angels seem to be taken in. Yet in its narrative context, the analogy is also self-undermining, pointing

to its own incongruity, much like the corresponding passage in *Paradise Lost* that presents Satan's exaltation as a parody of the Son's genuine exaltation and genuine self-sacrifice.

The analogy between Satan's throne and the Lincoln Memorial also functions as a modern-day visual equivalent of the comparisons in *Paradise Lost* of Pandemonium to other architectural edifices and Satan's throne to other thrones, both literary and historical. Satan's throne evokes both the throne of Lucifera in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596) and Milton's own description in *Joannis Miltoni Angli pro populo Anglicano defensio* [John Milton Englishman, *Defense of the English People*] (1651) of Charles I 'sitting upon his throne under the golden and silken heaven of his canopy of state'.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, Milton compares Pandemonium to Nimrod's tower of Babel and to the Egyptian Pharaohs' pyramids, sarcastically describing these as 'thir greatest Monuments of Fame' (*PL* 1.695). Auladell's Satan, too, looks distinctly Pharaoh-like on his throne. As Eric Brown notes, 'Satan's capitol has shape and form only insofar as it can conjure up its physical and textual Others—Babylon or Cairo, Babel or Memphis—and its architecture is equally driven by texts always prior to itself'.<sup>36</sup> In the Lincoln Memorial, Auladell finds an appropriately jarring modern-day '[Monument] of Fame' for Satan. Fittingly, it is simultaneously a throne and not a throne—a monument to a republic rather than a monarchy. In this sense, it lightly and powerfully points to Milton's own republicanism and impact in the Americas.<sup>37</sup>

*El Paraíso perdido* is quintessentially Miltonic in its capacious allusiveness. Amid visual allusions ranging from Renaissance religious art to *Star Wars*, one of Auladell's more unexpected visual references is to Maurice Sendak's 1963 children's book *Where the Wild Things Are*. When Satan descends into the Garden, he morphs into a man-wolf that distinctly recalls the wolf suit which Sendak's Max dons, in a moment that echoes Milton's comparison of Satan to a 'prowling Wolfe' (*PL* 4.183; see Figures 12.19, 12.20). The caption for this panel forms part of Satan's reflections when he first sees Adam and Eve: 'so lively shines in them divine resemblance, and such grace the hand that formed them hath poured'.<sup>38</sup> The contrast between image and caption underlines that Satan has lost any resemblance to God and is now deliberately dressing up in order to remain undetected by Adam and Eve, as well as the angels. Moreover, just as both Auladell's and Milton's Satan is about to tempt Adam and Eve into sin, Sendak's Max is about to make 'mischief of one kind, and another', leaving his parental home for an imaginary wilderness, as

<sup>35</sup> Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 1.4.8.1–2; Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Kastan, 40.

<sup>36</sup> Eric C. Brown, 'Popularizing Pandaemonium: Milton and the Horror Film', 95, in Knoppers and Semenza, *Milton in Popular Culture*, 85–97.

<sup>37</sup> For this last issue, see, for example, Sensebaugh, *Milton in Early America*; and Tanner and Collings, 'How Adams and Jefferson Read Milton and Milton Read Them'.

<sup>38</sup> Auladell, *El Paraíso perdido*, 122.



Fig. 12.19. Pablo Auladell, Satan entering Paradise in the shape of a man-wolf, graphite and computer-added colour, from *El Paraíso perdido* (2016), p. 122. Courtesy of Pablo Auladell.

his room mysteriously morphs into a jungle not dissimilar to Auladell's Paradise.<sup>39</sup> The allusion to Sendak also evokes Max's eventual return home and his discovery that his mother loves him and has left 'still hot' food for him. The prominence of food as a signifier of maternal love in Sendak resonates with the importance of food and eating in *Paradise Lost*, evident especially, of course, in the moment of the Fall itself. In linking Satan to Sendak's Max, therefore, Auladell evokes precisely what *El Paraíso perdido* as a whole subverts: the idea that God and the Son, as paternal equivalents of Max's mother, continue to love Adam and Eve, and that the Son sacrifices himself out of 'Love without end, and without measure Grace' (PL 3.142).

<sup>39</sup> Sendak, [n.p.]. Auladell's allusion to Sendak also evokes the adaptation history of *Where the Wild Things Are* itself, which includes an animation movie (dir. Gene Deitch, 1975), a children's opera (composed by Oliver Knussen, 1984), and a film (dir. Spike Jonze, 2009).





**Fig. 12.20.** Maurice Sendak, Max in his wolf suit, watercolour, from *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963). Copyright © 1963 by Maurice Sendak, copyright renewed 1991 by Maurice Sendak. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

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# Milonic Motifs in Russian Poetry and Art

Amina Gabrielova

From November to March 2022, Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow presented a comprehensive exhibition of artist Mikhail Vrubel, one of the leading figures of the so-called Silver Age of Russian culture, when Russia experienced a spectacular renewal in the arts and literature, a period of ‘unprecedented flowering’ and ‘creative brilliance.’<sup>1</sup> As curator Irina Shumanova notes, ‘the focal point of this exhibition is Vrubel’s creative process’, the organic growth and branching of his preferred images and motifs into different art forms.<sup>2</sup> For that reason, the exhibition was structured by themes rather than by periods or art forms. The major underlying motif of Vrubel’s art is the idea of metamorphosis. One of Vrubel’s major themes is the character of Демон [Demon], of whom the artist made multiple versions, from the vigorous and youthful Демон сидящий / *Demon Sidyashchii* [Demon Seated] (1890) to the broken and vanquished Демон поверженный / *Demon Poverzhennyi* [Demon Downcast] (1902). Through the years, his representations of Demon, Prophet, and an accompanying character, Angel, slowly merge into a portrait of a complex, tortured, and solitary human soul. Many scholars have studied the literary and pictorial sources of Demon in Russian literature and art.<sup>3</sup> But the connections of this character to the Milonic Satan have been insufficiently explored.

Russian reading publics became well acquainted with the *oeuvre* of John Milton (1607–1674) by the end of the eighteenth century, when the process of modernization and Westernization of Russian culture firmly took hold. Fragments of *Paradise Lost* were known as early as the 1740s. Full Russian translations of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* emerged in the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Milton was held in high regard as the христианский Гомер / *khristianskii Gomer* [Christian Homer] and божественный слепец / *bozhestvennyi slepets* [divine blindman].<sup>5</sup> Milton’s Satan became a particular point of fascination for Russian translators and artists

<sup>1</sup> Bowlit, *Moscow & St. Peterburg 1900–1920: Art, Life and Culture of the Russian Silver Age*, 9. This name implies a connection and a comparison to the so-called Golden Age of Russian poetry and literature, the 1810s to 1830s, the era of Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, and Nikolai Gogol.

<sup>2</sup> Shumanova, ‘Vrubel: An Artist for the Ages’.

<sup>3</sup> See Boss, *Milton and the Rise of Russian Satanism*; Oleinik, ‘Лермонтов и Мильтон: «Демон» и «Потерянный рай»»; Korovin, ‘О библейских мотивах в лермонтовском «Демоне»’.

<sup>4</sup> See ‘Bibliography of Full and Partial Translations of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*’ at the end of this chapter.

<sup>5</sup> Lyutsenko, ‘Нѣчто о достоинствѣ», vii; Terpyakov, ‘Два ангела’.

alike, as for those of many cultures. Russian artists slowly internalized him under the name of Demon, a lesser evil spirit, as a character less monumental and more intimate, closer to human scale. In Russian tradition, the character is not so much an 'enemy' of humankind and a 'Prince of Darkness', but rather a rebellious and doubting recluse (*PL* 5.Argument, 10.383).<sup>6</sup> This development is consistent with Robert Muchembled's observation that, beginning from the Age of the Enlightenment, the image of the archfiend in art fades because of a 'gradual movement towards the internalization of the concept of Evil'.<sup>7</sup> With this context in mind, I discuss how Milton's poetry is echoed—sometimes faintly yet still powerfully—in Russian literature and art, in different genres, in the character of Demon and related philosophical themes of good and evil, and in the shifts from Romantic to realist to symbolic. My focus is on how Miltonic themes, reinterpreted in their different historical and cultural contexts, from the poets Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) and Mikhail Lermontov (1814–41) and visual artist Mikhail Vrubel (1856–1910), served as the core of their artistic and philosophical quest in Russian literature, visual arts, and theatre.

### Pushkin and Milton

Alexander Pushkin taught himself English and owned a copy of Milton's works in his library. We can assume that he read *Paradise Lost* in the original English.<sup>8</sup> Pushkin admired both Milton's artistic audacity and political courage. He praised him as civic-minded poet and called Milton a 'prophetic' poet, who would tell historic truth to the powerful. Pushkin valued 'the highest courage—the courage of inventing, of creating, where an extensive plan is enveloped by a creative thought—like in Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe in *Faust*, or Moliere in *Tartuffe*'.<sup>9</sup> In his unfinished article 'On Milton and on Chateaubriand's translation of "Paradise Lost"' (1836), Pushkin displays knowledge of Milton's works and, on the topic of 'poet and power', underscores the importance of the fearless civic themes in Milton's poetry. He praises Milton's creative courage: 'He who "though fall'n on evil days"'.<sup>10</sup>

Pushkin evidences Milton as poet and prophet in his poem *The Prophet* (1826), which was primarily inspired by the biblical book of Isaiah, completely apt given Milton's 'increasing self-identification with the Old Testament prophets'.<sup>11</sup> Early in

<sup>6</sup> This and all quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *The Milton Reading Room*, ed. Luxon, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>7</sup> Muchembled, *Damned*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview of Pushkin's connections to Milton, see Rak, 'Мильтон, Джон'.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Pushkin, 'Notes for Excerpts from Letters, Thoughts and Comments (1827)', 214, in Pushkin, *Pushkin on Literature*.

<sup>10</sup> Pushkin, *Pushkin on Literature*, 457.

<sup>11</sup> Hill, *John Milton, Poet, Priest and Prophet*, 77–113.



his life, the first-person narrator of *The Prophet* is aimlessly wandering in a gloomy desert. He is visited by a six-winged Seraph who, through a set of four touches affecting his eyes, ears, mouth, and heart, fully opens the narrator's senses to the world and turns him into a prophet. The Seraph makes him as sharp-sighted as an eagle, enhances his hearing, and replaces his heart with a burning coal. Fascinatingly, the hero's tongue is replaced by the sting of a wise snake. Snakes were symbols of wisdom in classical antiquity, but in Christianity, as in Milton's works, the serpent relates to temptation. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton calls the serpent 'the subtlest Beast' and 'the wilie Snake', cunning and deceitful (*PL* 9.86–96). As with Milton's opening invocation, Pushkin asserts the role of poet as prophet whose legitimate role in society is to tell the higher, often stinging truth:

Corpse-like I lay upon the sand  
 And then God's voice called out to me:  
 'Arise, O Prophet, watch and hark,  
 Fulfill all my commands:  
 Go forth now over land and sea,  
 And with your word ignite men's hearts.'<sup>12</sup>

It is by placing this poem within the context of Pushkin's *oeuvre* that we recognize general Christian representations, such as the six-winged 'Seraph' as Milton's Raphael and serpent as Milton's Satan (*PL* 5.277, *PL* 9.179–91). Pushkin is just among the most notable of Russian authors who were inspired by Milton and reimagined Milton's epic figures as relevant to their public: with closer ties to their personal struggles and contemporary historical realities.<sup>13</sup>

Pushkin's demonic heroes reflect his own creative courage and are inflected by a Miltonic heritage. He continued the Miltonic tradition of reinterpreting the spirit of evil for a contemporary social and literary situation. In Pushkin's *oeuvre*, the Demon character reflects the movement towards psychological depth and realism, primarily not in the genre of epic or romantic poem, but in lyric poetry and in the verse novel. In his short lyrical poem 'The Demon' (1823), Pushkin describes a dark 'wicked genius' with 'galling speech' who haunts the author:

[He] did not believe in love, in freedom,  
 Looked mockingly on life,  
 And nothing in all nature  
 Did he desire to bless.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Pushkin, 'The Prophet', in Pushkin, *From the Ends to the Beginnings*.

<sup>13</sup> For just a few examples, see Yevgeny Baratynsky (1800–1844), В дни безграничных увлечений [*In the Days of Boundless Passions*] (1831), Apollon Maykov (1821–1897), Ангел и демон [*Angel and Demon*] (1841), and Alexander Blok (1880–1921), Демон [*The Demon*] (1910).

<sup>14</sup> Boyd, Shvabrin, and Nabokov, *Verses and Versions*, 97.

This poem, written at a time when Pushkin was moving towards historical writing, refers to a real person, by all accounts: Alexander Raevsky, a friend whom Pushkin admired but who later betrayed him. Thus, the poet is not writing about an abstract, metaphysical evil: his demon has a human prototype. He also has a literary model in Milton's Satan who retains genius, displays strong rhetoric, and boldly recommends to his recently fallen cohort, 'Our labour must be to pervert that end, | And out of good still to find means of evil', in contrast to the small nightmarish beasts of medieval iconography or Milton's own nihilist war-monger Moloch or sly Belial (*PL* 1.164–5, 2.43–108, 2.108–228).

It must be noted that Pushkin drew from Milton's multivalent representations of the demonic in his own innovations of national literature. For example, Pushkin features different demonic features in the protagonist of his verse novel *Eugene Onegin*, Pushkin's experiment in creating a Russian novel. The titular protagonist, always haughty and bored, or maybe just striking a pose of a disenchanted Byronic hero, senselessly kills a friend at a duel. As such, the protagonist and his habits recall Milton's Belial, 'flown with insolence and wine' (*PL* 1.502). Pushkin's demonic character is placed in realistic situations of contemporary life, the first representative of the 'superfluous man' type in Russian literature.<sup>15</sup>

We also see the appearance of Angel as a counterpoint to Demon, bearing traces of Milton's ability to represent with nuance both sides of the spectrum of divine beings. In the lyrical poem 'The Angel' (1827), the Demon is shown in the process of changing. At the beginning of the poem, he is depicted as 'gloomy and restless', a 'spirit of negation and doubt', but towards the end, influenced by the redemptive power of the Angel, he displays signs of enlightenment and tenderness:

The spirit of negation, the spirit of doubt  
Gazed at the stainless spirit  
And an involuntary glow of tender feeling  
For the first time he dimly knew.  
Quoth he: 'Forgive me, I have seen you,  
And your radiance has not been lost on me:  
Not everything in heaven I hated,  
Not everything on earth I scorned'.<sup>16</sup>

This moment is a fractured version, a Russian vision of Milton's Satan struck 'Stupidly good' at the sight of the unfallen Eve working in the Garden, albeit here directed to another figure of good (*PL* 9.465).

<sup>15</sup> For analysis of Miltonic influence on demonic characters in Russian literature, including other 'superfluous men' like Lermontov's Pechorin or Turgenev's Rudin, see Boss, *Milton and the Rise of Russian Satanism*.

<sup>16</sup> Boyd, Shvabrin, and Nabokov, *Verses and Versions*, 115.

## Lermontov's Demonic Characters

Demonic themes come to the fore in Mikhail Lermontov's *oeuvre* and evolve from earlier Byronism towards deeper psychological and philosophical writing. While Lermontov's Byronic links are well explored, his important Miltonic connections have drawn less scholarly attention. The only grandson of an affluent landowner, Lermontov received an excellent home education, knew English, and was versed in European literature; his private tutor and professor at Moscow University's boarding school for nobility's children, A. Z. Zinoviev, later in life published a highly acclaimed Russian prose translation of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>17</sup> Lermontov's earlier poetry, Romantic in nature and focused on a rebellious solitary hero, reflects his fascination with Lord Byron—at some points of his life, he constantly carried with him a volume of Byron's works. Lermontov acquired prominence with the reading public through his poem *Death of the Poet* (1837), lamenting Pushkin's death in a duel, in which he accused the authorities and high society of instigating Pushkin's foes. As a result, Lermontov was arrested and sent to war in a regiment in Caucasus. Lermontov had been fascinated with Caucasus since childhood; he was impressed by the primeval beauty of its landscapes and by its fiercely independent local people. During his first exile, which proved to be short and relatively easy, he was able to meet local people and a few political exiles. Early the following year, he was back in St Petersburg, but two years later, he was exiled again following a duel with the son of the French ambassador to Russia. This time, the government verdict was much more severe, and he was sent to the front line. Ever defiant and impetuous, Lermontov was killed in another duel.

Lermontov scholar Boris Eikhenbaum notes that in the 1830s, the importance of Caucasus as a destination for political exile almost equalled Siberia's.<sup>18</sup> The dark negative worldview of Lermontov's demonic characters should be understood in terms of the socio-historical realities of his time, in the context of the stifling reactionary politics by the government of Emperor Nicholas I that followed the unsuccessful revolt on December 1825 in St Petersburg.<sup>19</sup> Poets of the post-Pushkin generation lived 'in a wasteland', deprived of the stimulating companionship of other writers.<sup>20</sup> Intellectuals lived in 'quiet anger', unable to speak their minds. In the words of Lermontov's contemporary Alexander Herzen, these were dark and cold times, a 'sinister epoch', and 'national wound'.<sup>21</sup> This explains why Lermontov's heroes are solitary figures, whose rebellion against supreme

<sup>17</sup> For this translation, see the bibliography at the end of this chapter.

<sup>18</sup> Eikhenbaum, 'Герой нашего времени', 271.

<sup>19</sup> The revolt was brutally suppressed. Five people were executed, other leading participants were sent to hard labour in remote locations of Siberia. Scores of suspects, vaguely related to secret societies, were demoted from officers to ordinary soldiers and exiled to Caucasus to war.

<sup>20</sup> Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature*, 136.

<sup>21</sup> Herzen, 'On the Development of Revolutionary Ideas in Russia', 15.

power takes the form of a quest for individual happiness and love. However, in a hostile world even such a limited uprising is doomed. Inner disdain and indignation, typical of one branch of demonic characters, can be interpreted as a suppressed protest in the prevailing atmosphere of fear, silence, and acquiescence. It also accounts for Miltonic presence in Lermontov's work. As Gabriela Villanueva Noriega has convincingly argued in 'How Milton's Rebel Angels Landed in Nineteenth-Century Mexico', Milton's Satan served as both an inspiration and a warning for nineteenth-century politically engaged artists who lived active civic lives.<sup>22</sup>

Lermontov used demonism not only as a literary concept but also as a vehicle with which to interpret his own inner life. In the lyrical poem 'My Demon' (1831), he describes the title character as his permanent companion or an integral part of himself, a demon within that makes it impossible for the poet any love, human trust, or happiness:

И гордый демон не отстанет,	[The proud demon does not leave me alone
Пока живу я, от меня	As long as I live
И ум мой озарять он станет	He lights up my mind
Лучом чудесного огня;	By a ray of marvelous fire;
Покажет образ совершенства	He shows me an image of perfection
И вдруг отнимет навсегда	And then takes it away forever,
И, дав предчувствие блаженства,	Gives me a presentiment of a bliss,
Не даст мне счастья никогда. <sup>23</sup>	But will never give me happiness.]

It is as if the demon involves the poet in his own longing, Promethean certainly, but Miltonic more so, with the echoes of his Satan whose own 'Pride and worse Ambition threw [him] down' (*PL* 4.40).

Lermontov's seminal demonic work is his narrative poem *The Demon: An Eastern Tale*. He began composing it at the age of fifteen and continued working on it his whole life. There are eight drafts, the first from 1829 and the last from 1838. As the drafts went on, the characters' motivations became more complex and the Miltonic connections increased.<sup>24</sup> The short first draft includes the definition of Demon as an exile:

A Demon, soul of all the banished,  
Sadly above the sinful earth  
Floated and thoughts of days now vanished  
Before him crowdingly unfurled.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Gabriela Villanueva Noriega, 'How Milton's Rebel Angels Landed in Nineteenth-Century Mexico.'

<sup>23</sup> Lermontov, *Собрание сочинений*, 1.292; Russian-to-English translation mine.

<sup>24</sup> See Oleinik, 'Лермонтов и Мильтон: «Демон» и «Потерянный рай»', 299–315; and Korovin, 'О библейских мотивах в лермонтовском «Демоне» в связи с его творческой историей'.

<sup>25</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 1.I.107.

In the same vein, but in much angrier words, Beelzebub deplores the recent expulsion of the rebel angels from Heaven to Hell after their defeat in the War in Heaven:

Too well I see and rue the dire event,  
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat  
Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty Host  
In horrible destruction laid thus low,  
As far as Gods and Heav'nly Essences  
Can perish [...]

(PL 1.134–9)

Called Satan's 'Mate', with all its nautical associations, Beelzebub's posture in Hell seems like it too would be like that of Satan, who lays 'Prone on the Flood, extended long and large | Lay floating many a rood' (PL 1.191, 1.195–6).

Lermontov's *Demon*, similar to Milton's Satan, remains unchanged by the majesty and beauty of the natural world, and hates the world created by the Maker.<sup>26</sup> The alienated malevolent spirit has been gliding for centuries in the universe spreading misfortune. This too finds an analogue in the Satan of *Paradise Regained*, who in Jesus' time can be found 'roving still | About the world' (PR 1.33–4). Eventually bored with doing evil, Lermontov's *Demon* flies over the Caucasus mountains and notices the beautiful Georgian princess Tamara dancing at a feast:

The hall resounds, wine's flowing in it [...]  
[...] the youthful bride  
Takes up her tambourine and, swinging  
It round her head in sweeping-wide  
Circles, abruptly starts to glide;  
One moment, like a bird, she dashes  
And swoops; the next, she stands at gaze.<sup>27</sup>

The scene of dance recalls the account of a celestial feast by Milton's archangel Raphael in his conversation with Adam:

That day, as other solemn dayes, they spent  
In song and dance about the sacred Hill,  
Mystical dance, which yonder starrie Spheare  
Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheelles  
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate [...]  
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn [...]

(PL 5.618–30)

<sup>26</sup> See Rodnianskaya, 'Biblical Motifs'.

<sup>27</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, lVI.110–11.

Seeing Tamara in such a context, Demon's soul wakes up to a hope of redemption through love. For the sake of love, he vows to reject evil:

I swear by bliss and by travailing,  
I swear, believe it, by my love.  
Old plans of vengeance and destruction  
I have renounced, and dreams of pride [...].<sup>28</sup>

This is a step further than Milton's Satan, struck 'stupidly dumb' before Eve. Meanwhile, Tamara is getting ready for her wedding, but her fiancé is killed as a result of a demonic curse, a clear indication that Demon's words do not match actions.

Another Miltonic element is involved as the plot continues, when Demon pursues Tamara into a convent cell where she recuses herself. He tries to seduce her by promising her eternal life and happiness. Tamara is ready to surrender to his passion, but his first kiss brings her death. We are reminded of Milton's unholy Trinity in *Paradise Lost* of Satan, his daughter Sin, and their incestuous offspring Death, and of the inseparability of Sin and Death (*PL* 2.736–870). We are also reminded of the importance of choice. In contrast to each member of the unholy Trinity, Adam and Eve are saved because they repent, that is, they exhibit continued goodness. In similar fashion, Tamara's guardian Angel, who tried unsuccessfully to shield her from Demon, now carries her soul to Heaven. Indeed, even angelic faltering in protecting humans is Miltonic rather than biblical, since biblical angels are not seen to falter on Earth: Milton's Adam and Eve do disobey, despite the angel Uriel on the Sun, Gabriel and his angelic guard on Earth, and Raphael, who warns Adam and Eve against disobedience (*PL* 3.621–53, 4.549–85, 5.224–45).

Miltonic influence is even clearer in Tamara's auditory and visual apparitions of Demon soon after her fiancé's death. In a weakened condition,

[...] Tamara drooped  
onto her bed [...]  
when from above a voice addressed her;  
she seemed in magic tones to hear:  
Don't weep, my child.<sup>29</sup>

When an exhausted Tamara falls asleep, he appears in a murky dream to her: 'He was like evening in clear weather: | Not day, nor night—not gloom, nor glow!'<sup>30</sup> This is highly reminiscent of Eve's dream in *Paradise Lost*. Satan tempts Eve in her

<sup>28</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 2.X.134.

<sup>29</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 1. XV.117.

<sup>30</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 1.XVI.120.

dream with a 'gentle voice' in an atmosphere of night, beneath the 'Moon', to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (*PL* 5.37, 5. 42). In her dream, Eve does not eat the fruit and remains innocent, 'glad' to have 'wak'd | To find this but a dream' (*PL* 5.85–93). After the dream, Tamara finds refuge in a monastery, which functions as an enclosed sanctified earthly space, much as does Milton's Garden of Eden, thus showing that evil can occur in any earthly space. Demon persists in gently tempting Tamara day after day:

She sighs and waits, waits the whole day [. . .]  
a whisper comes: he is on his way!  
Her dreams, his manner of appearing,  
such flattery had not failed to reach  
her heart; his sad gaze, the endearing,  
the tender strangeness of his speech.<sup>31</sup>

The similarities between the words of Adam upon Eve's awakening from her sleep and Demon's passionate speech during his in-person conversation with Tamara, when he finally is able to enter her cell and makes a desperate attempt to seduce her, are also clear. Demon states his longing for Tamara by saying 'my days in paradise had lacked | just your perfection for completeness. | If you could guess [. . .] how much it costs [. . .] to live for self, by self be bored.'<sup>32</sup> Demon's complaint echoes the request by Milton's Adam to God for a companion, after naming the animals and seeing the companionship they enjoy: 'but with mee | I see not who partakes. In solitude | What happiness, who can enjoy alone, | Or all enjoying, what contentment find?' (*PL* 8.363–6). Both express a need for partnership.

A major difference between the two stories, however, is the manner in which Demon seeks to persuade Tamara to join him as World Queen. He implores her to love him and claims:

With me, free son of the ethereal,  
To stellar regions you'll be whirled;  
You're fated to be my imperial  
Consort, and first queen of the world.<sup>33</sup>

The temptation of pre-eminence is similar to that by Milton's Satan in his seduction of Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan disguised as serpent claims that he is

<sup>31</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 2.VI.123–4.

<sup>32</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 2.X.129.

<sup>33</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 2.X.134.

importune perhaps, to come  
And gaze, and worship thee of right declar'd  
Sovran of Creatures, universal Dame. (*PL* 9.610–12)

But Satan also tempts Eve with the promise of divine knowledge: 'atchieving what might leade | To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil' (*PL* 9.696–7).

Lermontov's description of the region of Georgia as part of the benefits Demon is offering is also reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, even though the lush natural beauty leaves Demon unmoved, as it does Satan:

Luxurious Georgia's vales and ranges  
Are counterpaned-out for his view;  
Fortunate land, and sumptuous too!  
Pillar-like ruined halls and granges,  
And watercourses that run loud,  
over the dappled pebbles rolling,  
and nightingales that in the crowd  
of roses voice their amorous trolling  
to which no answer is allowed;  
plane-trees inside their ivy sheathing  
with branching shadows; caves with deer.<sup>34</sup>

Certainly, Lermontov had many other rich literary descriptions of natural beauty from which to pick. But, key features and words from Milton's Eden are integrated with local Russian ones: 'the flourie lap | Of som irriguous Valley spred her store, | Flours of all hue, and without Thorn the Rose' where 'The Birds thir quire apply; aires, vernal aires, | Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune | The trembling leaves' (*PL* 4.254–6, 264–6).

One set of images is particularly striking in linking *Demon: An Eastern Tale* to *Paradise Lost*: the two appearances of a snake, at the beginning and at the end. As part of parallel descriptions of Caucasus, they frame the story. Early in the poem, a snake's crevasse is briefly mentioned as a landscape detail.<sup>35</sup> At the end of the poem, Lermontov returns to the image, suggesting a sad lesson for the insurgents. In the yard of Tamara's deserted castle, a snake moves:

a canny snake from his dark crack  
comes out punctiliously crawling,  
across the flags of the old stair;  
now in three coils he gathers there,

<sup>34</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 1.IV.109.

<sup>35</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 1.III.108.



and now in one long streak he's creeping,  
just like a blade all bright and steeled,  
forgot on some old battlefield,  
no use to heroes dead and sleeping!<sup>36</sup>

The comparison of this snake to a weapon indicates its danger. In this description is the general one of the biblical snake that Milton also describes. In *Paradise Lost*, as in Genesis, the 'Lord God' declares the judgement on the snake, 'Upon thy Belly groveling thou shalt goe, | And dust shalt eat all the dayes of thy Life. | Between Thee and the Woman I will put | Enmitie, and between thine and her Seed' (PL 10.177–80). Lermontov goes further and conjures the transformation of Milton's Satan and the other rebel angels into snakes upon Satan's return to Hell after successfully tempting Eve. Rather than receiving 'universal shout' for his success, the other rebel angels fall, amid an array of weaponry: 'They felt themselves now changing; down thir arms, | Down fell both Spear and Shield' (PL 10.505, 10.541–2). Lermontov's scene is presented with the background of a solemn frozen landscape formed of barren mountains with a lonely church on top of a cliff, and not a person in sight. If Milton's poem reads like a foreword to human history, *The Demon's* finale reads like its conclusion, after which nature is restored to its icy calm.

Lermontov's Russian readers have rightly valued the stories, themes, and prosody of *Demon: An Eastern Tale*; and have recognized the Miltonic undercurrents. With the rise of Russian classical music in the second half of the nineteenth century, Lermontov's poem was made into an opera, *The Demon* (finished 1872, staged 1875) by Anton Rubinstein. Overall, the libretto closely follows the poem, but its author, Lermontov scholar and biographer Pavel Viskovatov, introduced a choir of evil spirits, thus presenting Demon as a more Miltonic, epic character, a sovereign of dark forces, rather than a solitary figure.

### Vrubel and Pictorial Demon

Mikhail Vrubel considered Lermontov one of his favourite poets, and the Lermontovian characters of Angel, Prophet and, most importantly, Demon were at the forefront of Vrubel's work from his youth until the last years of his life.<sup>37</sup> Vrubel's infatuation with Demon included interest in artistic translation between media. His suggestion in 1883 to stage a reading of Lermontov's *The Demon* with musical illustrations and a lantern show presents an early example of his openness

<sup>36</sup> Lermontov, *The Demon*, 2.XVI.143.

<sup>37</sup> See Durylin, 'Vrubel and Lermontov', 544–6.

to intersemiotic and synaesthetic experiences, where different art forms enrich each other.

After studying art in St Petersburg, Vrubel lived and worked in Kyiv (in current Ukraine; 1884–9) and then in Moscow (1889–1910). Even before he graduated from the Academy of Arts, Vrubel received his first major commission: he was charged with restoring the interiors of ancient Kyivan churches. Renovating the dome of the church of St Sofia that used to be decorated with mosaic figures, Vrubel imitated the shape of mosaic tesserae in oil paint. This experience was formative for his signature ‘crystalline’ style. At the same time, the visual image of Demon was emerging. The mural *Prophet Moses* (1884) in St Cyril church, with its large eyes and a mane of hair, gestures towards Vrubel’s future Demons. Indeed, biblical themes played an important part in Vrubel’s art. Inspired by his study of Byzantine art and his experience in restoration, he created his original works in Byzantine style, which was unusual and innovative at this time. Vrubel dreamed of producing colossal works and continuing monumental church painting and in 1887–8 submitted a large number of watercolour sketches for a very high-profile job, the interior decoration of the newly built St Vladimir’s Cathedral in Kyiv. The jury rejected his designs and the commission went to Victor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Nesterov, artists close to the realist style of the Society of Itinerant Art Exhibitions, or Peredvizhniki as it was commonly known, which offered more conventionally naturalistic drawings. Today, though, these innovative modernistic watercolours are considered among the highest of Vrubel’s achievements. His contemporary, the distinguished artist and art critic Alexander Benoit, expressed disappointment with Vasnetsov’s murals and noted that, if Vrubel had been allowed to work in the cathedral, the result would have been more vital and vibrant.<sup>38</sup>

Similar to many other artists of the Silver Age, Vrubel worked with different materials. He created Demons in a range of media, including painting, drawings, book illustrations, sculpture, and theatrical stage and costume design. He always insisted on painting after nature. In one of his letters, he asserts ‘let nature speak for itself!’ He also emphasizes the importance of a ‘living dialog with nature’, to have real models, that nourish his creativity and inspire his technique and formal experimentation.<sup>39</sup> To have a real-life three-dimensional model for his Demon, between 1887 and mid 1890s Vrubel completed several plaster versions of Demon’s head (see Figure 13.1).

During his Moscow period (1889–1902), representations of Demon became one of the main themes in Vrubel’s art. His major works were three large oil paintings of Demon and the set of illustrations for Lermontov’s works. All three Demon oil paintings have a long narrow shape, which emphasizes that Vrubel considered them monumental works rather than easel paintings. In the first one, *Demon*

<sup>38</sup> See Tarutina, ‘From Angels to Demons’.

<sup>39</sup> Cited by Isdebsky-Pritchard, *The Art of Mikhail Vrubel*, 141.



Fig. 13.1. Mikhail Vrubel, *Head of Demon* (1890 or 1894), ceramics (painted plaster). Collections of State Russian Museum, St Petersburg. Public domain.

*Seated* (1890), about 4 × 7 feet, Vrubel shows a vigorous young man with a mane of black hair, with resonances of Milton's Adam (see Figure 13.2):

His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd  
 Absolute rule; and Hyacinthin Locks  
 Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
 Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad [...].  
 (PL 4.300–3)

He is seated, deeply in thought, and surrounded by flowers. Demon's pose corresponds to Adam's recollections of his first moments in life:

As new wak't from soundest sleep  
 Soft on the flourie herb I found me laid  
 In Balmie Sweat [...]  
 On a green shadie Bank profuse of Flours  
 Pensive I sate me down [...].  
 (PL 8.253–5, 8.286–7)



Fig. 13.2. Mikhail Vrubel, *Demon Seated* (1890), oil on canvas. Collections of Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Public domain.

Vrubel is thus extending the confusion between Milton's Adam and Satan, represented in Eve's dream of *Paradise Lost*, then in Lermontov's further poetic distillations. Vrubel reflected on the complexity of this character in one of his letters, underscoring that Demon is 'the spirit [. . .] not so much evil as suffering and mournful [. . .] a lofty, sovereign spirit'.<sup>40</sup> Demon becomes a yet more ambivalent and contradictory character.

In the same year of 1890, preparations were taking place to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Lermontov's death. Vrubel was invited to make illustrations for one of the editions of Lermontov's works, the Kushnirev Jubilee edition published in 1891. Twenty-two of Vrubel's works were published, including eleven illustrations for *Demon* and eleven for other poems and for the novel *Герой нашего времени* / *Geroi nashego vremeni* [*A Hero of Our Time*]. Most are in black watercolour and white gouache on a brown paper background, occasionally with other tints added. The Demon of the illustrations has the same look as *Demon Seated*, but this time he has wings. He is shown as a force of nature, a rebellious and suffering titan, towering over Tamara. In the scene of Tamara's dance, we see at the forefront musicians' hands with their instruments, augmenting the strong Miltonic connotations already discussed: 'And in their motions harmonie Divine | So smooths her charming tones, that Gods own ear | Listens delighted' (*PL* 5.625–7; see Figure 13.3).

In the illustration *The Angel with Tamara's Soul and the Demon*, Vrubel shows the moment when, after Tamara's death, Demon, helpless, watches an angel take her soul to Heaven (see Figure 13.4). The angel in the upper right-hand side looks

<sup>40</sup> Cited by Isdebsky-Pritchard, *The Art of Michael Vrubel*, 103.



Fig. 13.3. Mikhail Vrubel, *The Dance of Tamara* (1890–91), watercolour on cardboard. Collections of Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia. Public domain.

similar to Demon himself, a reminder of the inseparability of the good and bad sides of the human soul.

The two stages of Demon's downfall become clear in two later, interconnected Demon paintings. The backgrounds for both works are barren mountains,





Fig. 13.4. Mikhail Vrubel, *The Angel with Tamara's Soul and the Demon* (1890–91), wash, watercolour on paper. Collections of Museum of Russian Art, Erevan, Armenia. Public domain.

reminiscent of Lermontov's Caucasian landscapes. Demon's appearance is very different from the one in *Demon Seated*. He looks ageless rather than young. His figure takes an elongated, emaciated form. Gone is the muscular strength of Demon seated. His face shows suffering and fear, but also pride and defiance (see Figure 13.5).

Demon's positions on the paintings, one flying, another fallen to the ground, almost mirror each other. The position of fallen Demon in *Demon Downcast* (see Figure 13.6) alludes to the position of Christ in Vrubel's early Kyivan mural *Lamentation I* (see Figure 13.7). As Isdebsky-Pritchard notes, there is also a striking similarity between *Demon Downcast* and the description of the scene after Satan's fall in *Paradise Lost* (PL 1.37–67).<sup>41</sup>

Demon downcast is laying on peacock feathers. This detail recalls Demon's original nature as an angel. To Milton, peacock feathers are a reminder of human eyes: 'and th' other whose gay Traine | Adorns him, colour'd with the Florid hue | Of Rainbows and Starrie Eyes' (PL 7.444–6); and the four Cherubs who draw



Fig. 13.5. Mikhail Vrubel, *Flying Demon* (1899), oil on canvas. Collections of State Russian Museum, St Petersburg. Public domain.



Fig. 13.6. Mikhail Vrubel, *Demon Downcast* (1902), oil on canvas. Collections of Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Public domain.

<sup>41</sup> Isdebsky-Pritchard, *The Art of Mikhail Vrubel*, 120.



Fig. 13.7. Mikhail Vrubel, *Lamentation I* (1887), sketch for a mural in the St Vladimir Cathedral, Kyiv, pencil, watercolour, and whitewash on paper. National Museum 'Kyiv Picture Gallery', Kyiv. Public domain.

the divine chariot have wings from peacock feathers: 'four Cherubic shapes, four Faces each | Had wondrous, as with Starrs thir bodies all | And Wings were set with Eyes, with Eyes the wheels | Of Beril, and careering Fires between' (*PL* 6.753–6). Peacock feathers enabled Vrubel to use the bright colours he loved. Moreover, the colour palette calls to mind the description of Satan as a serpent: 'his Head | Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes; | With burnisht Neck of verdant Gold' (*PL* 9.499–501). These colours and sheen also express the motif of metamorphosis, the transfiguration of stone or metal into live matter and back again. Aptly enough, in *The Metamorphoses*, Ovid compares peacock feathers to jewels.<sup>42</sup> The peacock is an ancient symbol of rebirth and eternal life because it loses its tail feathers then grows them again. The bird sometimes appears in funerary scenes in Byzantine and medieval Christian mosaics and art. Suggesting the possibility for resurrection, Vrubel further transforms the idea of Demon.

Furthermore, flowers were symbols of terrestrial beauty for Vrubel. Here his visual art aligns with Milton's verbal art, given free rein in describing Eden. Milton's archangel Raphael voices the connection between flowers and

<sup>42</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1.723.



metamorphosis, stating 'So from the root | Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves | More aerie, last the bright consummate floure | Spirits odorous breathes' (PL 5.479–82). The narrator draws the connection between natural flowers and human artifice in the description of Adam and Eve's 'blissful Bower' (PL 4.690). The floor is a floral mosaic:

each beauteous flour,  
*Iris* all hues, *Roses*, and *Gessamin*  
 Rear'd high thir flourisht heads between, and wrought  
 Mosaic; underfoot the *Violet*,  
*Crocus*, and *Hyacinth* with rich inlay  
 Broiderd the ground, more colour'd then with stone  
 Of costliest Emblem [. . .].

(PL 4.697–703)

Keeping in mind Satan's hatred towards the beauty of nature as God's creation, we can see how Vrubel's Demon-youth-flowers connections, first apparent in *Demon Seated*, suggest a subtle transition from Demon to Adam. The painting *Lilacs* (1901) was planned as a portrait of Vrubel's wife, the Russian opera singer Nadezhda Zabela-Vrubel, on a background of lilacs. The background, however, became the centre of the painting. There are two versions of the painting. In the first, which Vrubel called a draft for the second, Zabela is shown as a figure in black and slightly resembles Demon. The second version shows the two characters separated: Zabela appears as a white figure sitting on a white garden bench at the bottom of the painting; the dark face of Demon can be seen at the top in between the leaves (see Figure 13.8). This setting coordinates with Eve's temptation scene in Milton's epic:

So varied hee, and of his tortuous Trainee  
 Curld many a wanton wreath in sight of *Eve*,  
 To lure her Eye; shee busied heard the sound  
 Of rusling Leaves, but minded not, as us'd  
 To such disport before her through the Field,  
 From every Beast [. . .]

(PL 9.516–21)

Vrubel's last painting, *Six-Wing Seraph* (1906), combines the features of Demon and of the artist's wife Nadezhda Zabela-Vrubel: his angel, and an artist and singer herself (see Figure 13.9). The seraph carries a sword, a symbol of strength, divine judgement, and power. Thus, the borders between Demon, Angel, and Prophet fade and the new image of a higher spirit emerges, a representation that shows doubt, suffering, and hate inseparable from love, creativity, and judgement, a strikingly modern reinterpretation of traditional mythological and literary character types.



Fig. 13.8. Mikhail Vrubel, *Unfinished Lilac* (1901), oil on canvas. Collections of Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Public domain.



Fig. 13.9. Mikhail Vrubel, *Six-Wing Seraph (Azrail)* (1906), oil on canvas. Collections of State Russian Museum, St Petersburg. Public domain.

The convergence of Demon, Angel and Prophet symbolizes the complex interplay of good and evil in the human soul, and a world in a state of incompleteness, transition, and metamorphosis. Vrubel included the demonic facet to his majestic characters and in doing so expressed doubt, suffering, maybe even involuntary harm and pain, which add to the humanity of his characters, and in turn, the Miltonic characters that influenced them.

The Miltonic tradition is discernible in many important works of Russian literature and art. Through the years, Milton's Satan has been reinterpreted in a wide range of artistic movements and styles, only one line of which has been discussed here. The character of the fiend, first a force of unquestionable evil, slowly came to represent a quintessential human being, tortured and torn between impulses of love and destruction. The art of Vrubel brought images of Demon, Angel, and Prophet particularly closer together. Through their allusions to Milton, they complicate our readings of Milton's characters, while also providing new cosmological and artistic paradigms that cross both borders and media.

### **Bibliography of Full and Partial Translations of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* into Russian Compiled by Andrew Kroninger with Vladislav N. Zabaluev**

Milton, John. *Погубленный рай* [*Destroyed Paradise*], trans. Baron Alexander Grigoryevich Stroganov (1698–1754) ([n. p.]: [n. p.], 1745).<sup>43</sup>

Milton, John. *Потерянный рай* [*Paradise Lost; Books 1–3*], trans. Vasily Petrovich Petrov (1736–99) ([n. p.]: [n. p.], 1777).<sup>44</sup>

Milton, John. *Потерянный рай, поэма героическая творение И. Милтона переведено съ французскаго языка* [*Paradise Lost, the Heroic Poem by J. Milton Translated from French*], trans. Avraam Nikitich Serebrennikov (or Serebryakov; 1745–92) (Moscow: N. Novikov, 1780).<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> According to Valentin Boss, Stroganov was not fluent in English but was able to produce his version based on Dupré de Saint-Maur's French translation (1729). The exact nature of its dissemination is difficult to ascertain, though Stroganov's manuscript was circulated during his lifetime (Boss, *Milton and the Rise of Russian Satanism*, 4–5, 11–13). The title of this translation is different from all that follow it, calling the text *Погубленный рай* rather than *Потерянный рай*, with the former indicating a ruined or destroyed rather than a lost paradise.

<sup>44</sup> Petrov's translation is in verse and was published by a 'private printer' under Catherine II (Boss, *Milton and the Rise of Russian Satanism*, 11–12).

<sup>45</sup> This translator's name is often rendered differently to reflect his status as an archbishop. He was widely known as Ambrose (1745–1792) and has been listed by his birth name in this bibliography to avoid confusion with other archbishops who adopted the same name. Also, the specific place of manufacture is included on the title page of this edition, listed as the University Printing House in Moscow. It is a prose translation based on the French, per WorldCat.

Milton, John. *Возвращенный рай* [*Paradise Regained*], trans. Ivan Greshishchev (Moscow: University Printing House, 1787).

Milton, John. *Возвращенный рай* [*Paradise Regained*], trans. Avraam Nikitich Serebrennikov ([n. p.]: [n. p.], 1803).<sup>46</sup>

Milton, John. *Потерянный рай* [*Paradise Lost*], 2 vols., trans. Fyodor Zagorsky (Moscow: [n. p.], 1795).<sup>47</sup>

Milton, John. *Потерянный рай: Поэма Иоанна Милтона Съ приобщениемъ его же творения: Возвращенный Рай* [*Paradise Lost: John Milton's Poem with the Introduction of his Other Work: Paradise Regained*], 4 vols., trans. Yefim Petrovich Lyutsenko (St Petersburg: N. Gretsch, 1824).<sup>48</sup>

Milton, John. *Потерянный рай* [*Paradise Lost*], fragment, trans. Vassily Zhukovsky ([n. p.]: [n. p.], c. 1837).<sup>49</sup>

Milton, John. *Потерянный рай съ приобщениемъ поэмы Возвращенный рай* [*Paradise Lost with the Introduction of the Poem Paradise Returned*], trans. Elizaveta Zhadovskaya (Moscow: Sovremennik no. 12, 1859).

Milton, John. *Потерянный рай* [*Paradise Lost*], trans. A. Z. Zinoviev (Moscow: University Printing House, 1861).<sup>50</sup>

Milton, John. *Потерянный рай* [*Paradise Lost*], trans. S. I. Pisarev<sup>51</sup> (1819–?) (St Petersburg: Korableva and Siryakova, 1871).<sup>52</sup>

Milton, John. 'Изъ первой пѣсни' [From the First Song] and 'Изъ четвертой пѣсни' [From the Fourth Song], trans. Lev Alexandrovich Mei (1822–1862) (St Petersburg: A. M. Potomin, 1875).<sup>53</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Though little information is available regarding the posthumous publication of this translation, literary critic Andrey Nikolaevich Gorbunov (1940–2021) attests to its existence in part 14 of 'Поэзия Джона Милтона – От пасторали к эпосе' [The Poetry of John Milton—From Pastoral to Epic].

<sup>47</sup> According to *Русско-европейские литературные связи XVIII век* [Russian-European Literary Connections, 18th Century], this translation was published in Moscow by an unnamed source, and Zagorsky claimed to have worked with the English text as a basis while relying heavily on Ambrose's work (153).

<sup>48</sup> Lyutsenko's work, translated from French, was posthumously accompanied with his essay 'Нѣчто о достоинствѣ и прежнихъ переводахъ Потеряннаго и Возвращеннаго рая' [On the Dignity and Former Translations of *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*]. The first volume of this translation is available on GoogleBooks at [https://www.google.com/books/edition/\\_/QehxwdjnyhIC?hl=en&gbpv=0](https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/QehxwdjnyhIC?hl=en&gbpv=0).

<sup>49</sup> *Paradise Lost* is one of many translations that Zhukovsky began and subsequently abandoned. This is a rough draft containing 19 lines, confirmed by the Fundamental Electronic Library of Russian Literature and Folklore. <http://feb-web.ru/feb/zhukovsky/texts/zh0/zh5/zh5-311-.htm?cmd=p>.

<sup>50</sup> Translated in prose from the English original.

<sup>51</sup> The translator is the uncle of the famous Russian literary critic Dmitry Ivanovich Pisarev (1840–1868).

<sup>52</sup> This edition includes a biography of Milton, the full text of *Paradise Lost*, and an engraving of Milton by E. Damuller.

<sup>53</sup> These two texts are grouped into a single citation, as they are some of, if not the only, excerpts of *Paradise Lost* translated by Mei and were later published. The full text of this and the next translations can be found at Lib.ru: The Library of Maxim Moshkov [http://az.lib.ru/m/milxtom\\_d/text\\_1875\\_iz\\_poemy\\_oldorfo.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/m/milxtom_d/text_1875_iz_poemy_oldorfo.shtml). See the citation for Nikolai Gnedich's translation for a similar incomplete version; the publisher appears to have collected these fragments and published them together after both translators' deaths.

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<sup>54</sup> This is the only known excerpt of *Paradise Lost* translated by Gnedich, who was met with great renown in Russia for his 1829 translation of Homer's *Iliad*.

<sup>55</sup> This information was found in the April 1891 edition of *Русская школа* [*Russian School*], a pedagogical periodical published by I. N. Skorohodov that also indicates where the text was available for purchase (228). According to the description in this source, Borodin's translation is constituted of 336 pages. It was translated from French.

<sup>56</sup> This edition contains the fifty illustrations by Gustave Doré originally published in an English *Paradise Lost* (c. 1866), as well as Milton's original English verse alongside the translation, which is written as prose. A scan is available at Internet Archive, [https://archive.org/details/20201120\\_milton\\_rojus/page/n7/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/20201120_milton_rojus/page/n7/mode/2up); it is a copy from 1895, but the translation itself first arose in 1878. WorldCat lists the press or printer as 'Marksa' (accessed 4 April 2022).

<sup>57</sup> Chyumina was a prolific original poet who gained fame because of her numerous translations of European poetry.

<sup>58</sup> Listed as being 'Съ 50-ю большими рисунками художника Г. Доре' [With 50 large drawings by the artist G. Doré]. The full text and illustrations may be found at Babel HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hwkmhm&view=1up&seq=6&skin=2021>, based on a scan of the copy found at Harvard College Library. Per WorldCat, it is also available at the University of South Carolina and Vanderbilt University Jean and Alexander Heard Library (accessed 4 April 2022). This translation was awarded the Pushkin Prize of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1901.

<sup>59</sup> Translated into verse.

<sup>60</sup> Kholodkovsky, a zoologist, is best known for his translation of Goethe's *Faust*. For him, Milton was a predecessor of Goethe. Otherwise, Kholodkovsky was not fond of Milton's poem. In the preface to his translation, he criticizes Milton for his florid style.

<sup>61</sup> The entirety of this translation is available at <https://coollib.com/b/480042-dzhon-milton-poteryannyi-ray> (WorldCat, accessed 4 April 2022).

<sup>62</sup> An original poet, a painter, a Gulag survivor, Steinberg is considered to be the best translator of *Paradise Lost* into Russian at present.

<sup>63</sup> Steinberg's translation was reprinted in the collection *Потерянный рай. Возвращенный рай. Другие поэтические произведения* [*Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, Other Poetic Works*] (Moscow: Nauka, 2006).



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<sup>64</sup> Given the regions discussed in this chapter, it is worth noting this translation into Ukrainian: Milton, John. *Утрачений рай* [*Paradise Lost*], trans. Zhomnir Oleksandr Vasilovich (Kyiv: Zhupansky Publishing House, 2019).

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# Artists Illuminating Milton's Gendered Instant of Creation

Wendy Furman-Adams

What if that light  
Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air,  
To the terrestrial moon be as a star  
Enlight'ning her by day, as she by night  
This Earth? [. . .]  
[. . .] and other suns perhaps  
With their attendant moons thou wilt descry  
Communicating male and female light,  
Which two great sexes animate the world[.]  
(*PL* 8.140–44, 8.148–51)<sup>1</sup>

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, Miltonists such as Judith Scherer, Amy Boesky, Anthony Welch, and Gordon Teskey have worked to make sense of the poet's 'delirious' representation of time in *Paradise Lost*. Each suggests ways in which John Milton explodes linear narrative, 'deliberately exploiting the imaginative power of experiential over chronometric time'.<sup>2</sup> As the archangel Raphael explains to Adam, 'time, *though in eternity*, applied | To motion, measures all things durable | By present, past, and future' (*PL* 5.580–2, emphasis mine). Rejecting the Boethian conception of a God outside of time, Milton imagines even Heaven as a realm within which time exists, as Boesky puts it, 'for pleasure and diversion, but also to enable counting and recounting'.<sup>3</sup> Yet since time, as Lawrence Babb notes, is the measure of motion, and since space is its medium, Milton's narrative frequently takes on a spatial quality highly conducive to representation by visual artists.<sup>4</sup> Nowhere is this paradox more obvious than in Raphael's narrative of Creation. 'Immediate are the acts of God', he tells our first parents, 'but to human ears | Cannot without process of speech be told' (*PL* 7.175, 7.176–7).

<sup>1</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of Milton's poetry are from Milton, *Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, eds. Kerrigan, Rumrich, and Fallon, and cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Welch, 'Reconsidering Chronology in *Paradise Lost*', 5. The adjective 'delirious' is Gordon Teskey's, from *Delirious Milton*. See also Scherer, 'Meanwhile: (Un)making Time in *Paradise Lost*'.

<sup>3</sup> Boesky, 'Paradise Lost and the Multiplicity of Time', 384.

<sup>4</sup> Babb, *The Moral Cosmos of 'Paradise Lost'*, 120.

Milton's illustrators face a challenge both analogous and opposite to that faced by his angelic narrator: to represent the birth of earthly time literally in spatial terms—through various 'moments', as G. E. Lessing would have it, selected out of a temporally related event.<sup>5</sup> This was very much the approach taken by the first illustrators of *Paradise Lost*, especially John Baptiste de Medina, in 1688 (see Figure 14.1).<sup>6</sup> The 1688 artists, who created a total of twelve frontispieces for each of the twelve books, were primarily concerned with making sense of the poem's narrative, which they, like early editors, read as a more or less literal transcription of Genesis 1–3. They were also almost entirely concerned with the poem's human, divine, and demonic agents—relegating issues of space and time to the distant background.

Thus Medina, perhaps the only early artist even to attempt an illustration of book 7, focuses almost entirely on Raphael as narrator and on Adam and Eve as auditors. Adam and the angel appear rapt in conversation, both seated on a rock and framed by a tree just double their size. Adam gazes, astonished, at the angel's face, as tiny rondels at the top of the page narrate the second through sixth days of Creation, from left to right, in an imitation of temporal order. In the first rondel, a young angelic figure, most likely the Son, forcefully separates 'The waters from the waters' to create the 'firmament' and 'Crystalline ocean' (*PL* 7.263–71). In the second, the same figure flies over a miniature globe, planting trees and presumably grasslands. In the third, flying just above the globe, he creates the corona-clad sun with his left hand and the smaller, un-rayed moon with his right. And finally, he pulls an outsized, full-grown cat out of the earth, while a second angelic figure sculpts a unicorn.

Were it not for Adam's astonishment, viewers could almost miss these rondels, so completely are they subordinated to the life-sized human actors beneath them. Eve stands farther away from the angel, as is typical in Medina's designs. For example, in book 5, Medina represents Eve still shadowed in her Edenic kitchen, entirely intent on meal preparation, when the angel arrives at the couple's bower—whereas the narrator clearly states that she 'Stood to entertain her guest from Heav'n' (*PL* 5.383). His Eve, in short, is always at least potentially less aware of the spiritual significance of events. Here in book 7, her gesture—one hand over her breast, the other modestly covering her pudenda like a *Venus pudica*—can indicate either a more self-conscious, feminine version of Adam's rapturous attention or a proleptic departure from the scene. Eve's departure does not actually occur in book 7, but rather in book 8, when the angel has already completed his hexameral history and Adam's discourse turns towards 'studious thoughts abstruse'. At that point in Milton's text, and not before, Eve rises 'With lowliness majestic from her seat' to go 'forth among her fruits and flow'rs' (*PL* 8.40–4).

<sup>5</sup> See Lessing, *Lacoön*.

<sup>6</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1688).

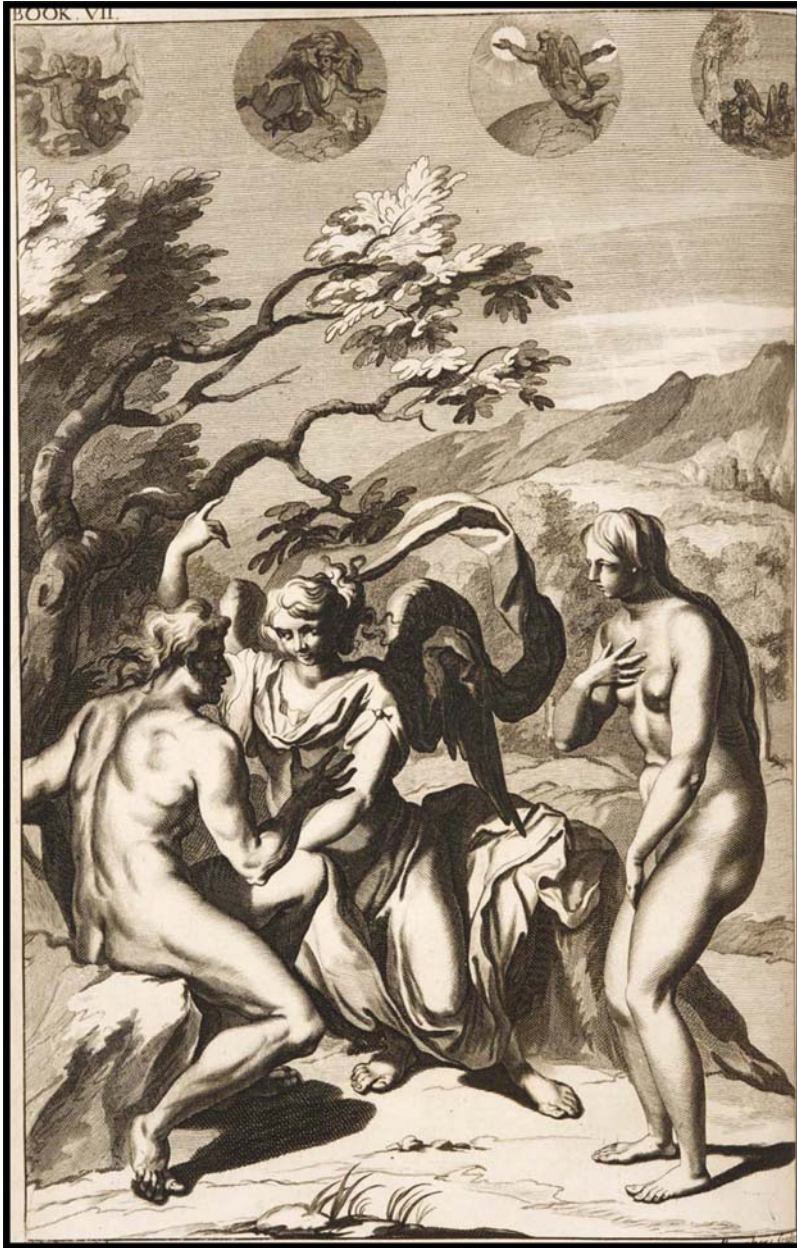


Fig. 14.1. John Baptiste de Medina, book 7 of *Paradise Lost*, engraving, Tonson edition, from *Paradise Lost* (1688). Courtesy of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Medina's visual translation flattens Milton's text, suppressing not only its heterodoxy but also its potentially liberating implications for gender relations. Yet those implications, rarely noticed until the nineteenth century, are very much present in Milton's account of a creation in which nothing is literally prior to anything else and in which God—an intrinsically androgynous God—is ultimately 'all in all' (*PL* 3.341). In the epic, Milton uses the male pronoun for God, as is traditional in many churches even today. But he insists that, although all we can know of God comes from the scriptures, we can never presume to know the full divine reality, both hidden and revealed in human speech. In such speech, God's 'immediate act' of Creation must be described temporally, his justice and love described in terms of human justice and love. The God of book 3 of *Paradise Lost*, like the biblical Jehovah, appears entirely patriarchal, as befits his role as the law-giving Father. But the dance of the Creation portrayed in books 7 and 8—a dance, Milton says, growing entirely out of the material substance of God—contains other aspects of the divinity's heterogeneous virtue: matter and spirit, feminine and masculine, eternal and temporal.

'When we talk about knowing God', Milton writes in the *Christian Doctrine*, 'it must be understood in terms of man's limited powers of comprehension. God, as he really is, is far beyond man's imagination, let alone his understanding.' Immense and 'infinite', God perpetually '*dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man can see*, I Tim. vi. 16. Bliss and glory [...] have [...] emanated from this light and exist as a result of it'. God's 'supreme power and goodness', moreover, are demonstrated in the fact that God has not 'shut up this heterogeneous and substantial virtue within himself', but rather 'should disperse propagate and extend it' through all matter—which, from its very origin, is not only good but contains 'the seeds of all subsequent good' (*CD*, 133, 311, 308).<sup>7</sup>

No one has elucidated Milton's gendered material universe as fully as Diane Kelsey McColley. And no one has analysed as astutely the poem's delicate dance between traditional gender hierarchy and radical mutuality, first in *Milton's Eve* (1983) and later in *A Gust for Paradise* (1993). 'Male and female light', she reminds us,

is a Pythagorean concept, but Milton declines the dichotomies that usually go with it. [...] Night is 'she' and the sun is 'he' in *Paradise Lost*, too; the convention is found in Hesiod and embedded in Greek and Latin myth and grammar. But whereas myths often align day and night with good and evil, Milton assures us that as parts of creation both are good. [...] Similarly, sun is 'he' and moon and earth are both 'she'. The moon borrows her light from the sun [...] but does not

<sup>7</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of *De Doctrina Christiana* are the English translations of John Carey and Maurice Kelley in Milton, *The Complete Prose Works*, vol. 6, and cited parenthetically in the text.

appear as a symbol of female mutability. [...] Milton is not always egalitarian, but he always questions stereotypes and false hierarchies.<sup>8</sup>

McColley's analysis rightly suggests that the Miltonic dynamics of creation are far more complex than Medina conveys with his quaintly sequential rondels. She likewise reads a far more active and co-creative Eve than the artist's submissive version. But Milton goes well beyond even McColley's formulation of gender in Raphael's account of the creation of light: first-born of all creation and associated, at least in the invocation to book 3, with Milton's heavenly muse: 'Bright effluence of bright essence increate [. . .] Or of th' Eternal coeternal beam' (*PL* 3.6, 3.2). Assuming Milton's authorship of the *Christian Doctrine*, few assertions from that text are more apposite than the assertion that 'God produced all things not out of nothing but out of himself' (*CD*, 310). Moreover, the principal thing created, by the Father through the Son—first in causal power if not literally in time—is light:

'Let there be light', said God, and forthwith light  
Ethereal, *first of things*, quintessence pure  
Sprung from the deep, and from *her* native east  
To journey through the airy gloom began,  
Sphered in a radiant cloud, *for yet the sun*  
*Was not; she* in a cloudy tabernacle  
Sojourned the while.

(*PL* 7.243–9, emphasis mine)

It is not until the fourth day that the 'two great lights' are created—greater and lesser, both made for the same purpose: to serve the fruitful, feminine Earth—and both from the same primal, feminine light:

For of celestial bodies first the sun  
A mighty sphere he framed, *unlightsome first*,  
Though of ethereal mold: then formed the moon  
Globose, and every magnitude of stars, [. . .]  
Of light by far the greater part he took,  
Transplanted from *her* cloudy shrine, and placed  
In the sun's orb, made porous to receive  
And drink the liquid light, firm to retain  
*Her* gathered beams, great palace now of light.

(*PL* 7.354–63, emphasis mine)

A few lines later, we meet the feminine moon, 'with full face borrowing her light | From him', the masculine sun (*PL* 7.377–8). Yet, as Raphael has made clear,

<sup>8</sup> McColley, *A Gust for Paradise*, 211–12.

she merely (and graciously) borrows back what is already primally hers. Light is the Form—‘bright effluence of bright essence’—either present from all eternity or ancient beyond all other created entities. The sun is merely her first instantiation into what Milton calls visible time and space, she herself having been present in Heaven, where God perpetually ‘*dwells in unapproachable light*’.

This cosmic pattern reverses, and thus complicates, the human creation in Genesis 2. In this second account, humankind’s seemingly simultaneous creation from Genesis 1 is spun out into temporal order, a temporal order in which Eve is made from Adam’s prior substance. And yet, as St Paul suggests in an especially vexed passage, if hierarchy is implied in Eve’s being created from Adam—and in being, as such, his ‘reflection’—that hierarchy is challenged in turn by the reverse pattern likewise expressed in Milton’s creation of light: ‘For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman.’ And ultimately, according to Paul, ‘all things come from God’<sup>9</sup>—for Milton, literally, even *materially*, out of God’s own ‘bodily force’ (CD, 309). Prior to hierarchy, prior even to difference, is the divine material intrinsic to the invisible, unknowable One: the One who, instantaneously and out of his own ‘substance’, creates all things, feminine and masculine.

Even for the unfallen Adam, this mutual, kenotic dance presents a conundrum. Having heard Raphael’s inevitably temporal account of God’s ‘Immediate [...] acts’, he finds that ‘something yet of doubt remains’ (PL 7.176, 8.13):

When I behold this goodly frame, this world  
Of heav’n and Earth consisting, and compute  
Their magnitudes, this Earth a spot, a grain,  
An atom, with the firmament compared  
And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll  
Spaces incomprehensible [...]   
[...] merely to officiate light  
Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,  
[...] reasoning I oft admire,  
How nature wise and frugal could commit  
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand  
So many nobler bodies to create, [...]   
[...] while the sedentary Earth,  
[...] attains  
Her end without the least motion.

(PL 8.15–35)

The disproportion, Adam repeats, is that ‘nobler bodies’ should condescend, should ‘officiate’ their brighter light in ‘tribute’ to a smaller, seemingly less noble

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:8–12.

one (*PL* 8.36). At this point, having already heard Raphael's fulsome and lyrical retelling of Genesis 1, Eve at last rises 'With lowliness majestic from her seat' and goes 'forth among her fruits and flow'rs' (*PL* 8.42–4).

Raphael is patient with Adam in this teachable moment. But he forcefully rebuts Adam's false supposition 'That bodies bright and greater should not serve | The less not bright' (*PL* 8.87–8). The archangel may well recognize, in the young man's innocent misconception, a faint but unmistakable echo of Satan's fatal confusion of 'service' with 'servitude'—a confusion Adam has heard described in the angel's account of the War in Heaven.<sup>10</sup> Foreseeing how Adam's 'reasoning' might (mis)lead his 'offspring', Raphael calls into question not only his student's desire to know the unknowable but also his simplistic hierarchal reasoning (*PL* 8.85–86):

consider first, that great  
Or bright infers not excellence: the Earth  
Though, in comparison of heav'n, so small,  
Nor glistening, may of solid good contain  
More plenty than the sun that barren shines  
Whose virtue on itself works no effect,  
But in the fruitful Earth; *there* first received  
His beams, unactive else, their vigor find.  
(*PL* 8.90–97, emphasis mine)

All human speculation set aside, heavenly hierarchy, Raphael suggests, matters very little. What matters is reciprocity and its cosmic origin—'Communicating male and female light, | Which two great sexes animate the world' (*PL* 8.150–1).

Three artists, and possibly only three, have visually translated the full complexity of Milton's gendered creation and its complex relation to time: to a God who creates all things entirely out of his own substance, which then includes the 'two great sexes' that animate the universe; to a creation told in time 'by process of speech' but accomplished immediately, through the creative Word associated both with Light and the heavenly muse; and to an eternal-temporal perspective that unsettles all notions of priority, whether in 'dignity' or time, of all things except of the living, ineffable One out of whom all being proceeds (*PL* 7.178; *CD*, 309–11).

The first of these three artists, John Martin (1789–1854), worked in the 1820s and was arguably Milton's first ecocritical visual reader.<sup>11</sup> Martin was also an

<sup>10</sup> For one confusion, see *PL* 6.164–88.

<sup>11</sup> For more on John Martin, see Furman-Adams and Tufte, 'Earth Felt the Wound'. For more on all three artists—John Martin, Mary Groom, and Carlotta Petrina—see Furman-Adams, 'Ecofeminist Eve' and 'The Fate of Place in *Paradise Lost*'.

astute lay interpreter, and frequent illustrator, of the Bible. Moreover, as Petrarch remembered carrying a pocket copy of St Augustine's *Confessions* wherever he went, so Martin carried a small edition of *Paradise Lost*, and it is not impossible that he was familiar with the first translated edition of the *Christian Doctrine*, which was published in 1825, shortly before he published his illustrations. According to Maurice Kelley, the publication of the *Christian Doctrine* produced immediate controversy and a significant stir in the national press. Martin, like Milton, was both deeply religious and fascinated with all things modern: a friend of the famous engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806–1860), he rode on one of the earliest trains and added dinosaurs to his representation of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise. If he had read Milton's newly released work, or even read about it, he would likely have been in sympathy with many of its assertions—especially about the process of creation and about a spiritual yet material light from which everything 'emanates'. For Martin, too, the created universe—from 'God's supreme citadel and dwelling-place' to the almost equally boundless, if more vulnerable, expanse of Eden—was not simply a background to human and angelic action, but the epic's centre and the subject of his twenty-four luminous mezzotints (CD, 311).

Just over a century later, two women artists—one working in England and one in Italy, each without knowledge of the other—produced two more richly gendered readings of *Paradise Lost*. Carlotta Petrina (1901–1997) and Mary Elizabeth Groom (1903–1958) brought to their work, as Martin had, a profound knowledge of both the Bible and Milton.<sup>12</sup> Petrina knew Milton, as well as the Bible, almost by heart. An adult convert to Roman Catholicism during her long residence in Italy, she continued for the rest of her long life to paint both Miltonic and biblical, as well as mythological, subjects. Groom studied Milton at the famously feminist St Felix School and was, according to her family, besotted with *Paradise Lost*. In addition to her Golden Cockerel masterpiece, she illustrated other Miltonic works, such as *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, and biblical subjects, such as her contributions to the feminist-friendly *Roses of Sharon*. And she served more than once as Warden in the parish church adjacent to her home at Chediston Grange, in rural Suffolk. These two artists focus, like the earlier artist, on both Heaven and Earth, but on a far more intimate, human scale.

In a glorious mezzotint, Martin attempts to convey the entire temporal mystery of God's 'immediate' act, and to do so, more literally than the angel narrator could, in spatial terms (see Figure 14.2).<sup>13</sup> To cite Babb again, space here, rather than time, becomes the 'medium of motion'. Gone too, along with the rondels indicating a literal sequence, is the human-centred focus of Medina's conventional rendering. Remembering, perhaps, that only Satan believes the Creation took place over

<sup>12</sup> For more on Mary Groom, see Furman, 'Consider First'. For more on Petrina, see Furman and Tufte, 'Metaphysical Tears'.

<sup>13</sup> Milton, *The Paradise Lost of John Milton*.





Fig. 14.2. John Martin, *Creation of Light*, mezzotint, from book 7 of *Paradise Lost* (1826). Courtesy of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

seven literal days, Martin shows us what instantaneous creation might look like to a more attentive angelic witness. In his *Creation of Light*, the artist fuses days one and four to represent the exact instant in which Light gives birth to lights. The Son is now carried by the 'cloudy tabernacle' of primal light rather than by the paternal chariot of the Father, 'Dark with excessive bright'—moving with 'Speed almost spiritual' towards the 'mighty sphere' of the sun (*PL* 7.248, 3.380, 8.110, 7.355). That sun, newly lighted, pours down rays of reciprocal light to envelope his soaring, reaching figure. Behind the Son's retreating left hand, to the lower right of the engraving, a crescent moon is suddenly attended by 'Spangling' stars (*PL* 7.384). The Son's right hand stretches far into the sun's rays, and his two arms form a diagonal axis, showing time as simultaneous motion, from the generous dimmed moon to the more assertively shining sun. Like the primal light herself, the moon dims her brightness as the sun begins to shine with 'the greater part' (*PL* 7.359). But God, at the centre, is clearly 'all in all' (*PL* 3.341). Male and female light are now 'Communicating' through his creating, outstretched arms and begin to awaken the 'fruitful Earth', to which both will minister perpetually, day and night (*PL* 8.150, 8.96). As Beverley Sherry has remarked, 'Light and darkness are, mysteriously, at once temporal and eternal in Milton's epic. [. . .] Light is "first-born" (3.1), "first of things" (7.244), yet one with the eternal "bright essence increate" (3.6). While Martin's unfolding series shows light and darkness operating in time [. . .] his images of ever-receding light and ever-deepening darkness represent



Fig. 14.3. John Martin, *The Land of the Blessed*, mezzotint, from book 3 of *Paradise Lost* (1826). Courtesy of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

dimensions of timelessness which correspond to the apocalyptic perspectives of *Paradise Lost* and the “mystery at the end of the universe”<sup>14</sup>

In another design (see Figure 14.3), Martin explicitly parallels the emerging natural world with ‘the highest heaven, [. . .] God’s supreme citadel’, where God ‘dwells in unapproachable light’, and from which ‘Bliss and glory’ perpetually ‘emanate’ (CD, 311). This remarkable image, *The Land of the Blessed*, gives viewers a glimpse into the ‘invisible’ world: a perpetual world that is yet possessed of time and motion, prior to the creation of the sun and moon—prior, that is, to the introduction of human, ‘visible’ time. ‘There is certainly no reason,’ Milton writes, ‘why we should conform to the popular notion that motion and time, which is the measure of motion, could not, according to our concepts of “before” and “after,” have existed before this world was made’ (CD, 313–14). As Raphael suggests to Adam and Eve, ‘what if Earth | Be but the shadow of Heav’n, and things therein | Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?’ (PL 5.574–6).

Martin represents Heaven as a gigantic ‘citadel’, lined by countless columns receding into nearly infinite space, surmounted by an architrave and frieze. In the background, vast towers, alabaster cities, blur into an invisible, perhaps limitless,

<sup>14</sup> Sherry, ‘John Martin’s Apocalyptic Illustrations to *Paradise Lost*’, 139. Sherry has called Martin ‘the most truly Miltonic illustrator of *Paradise Lost*’ (Sherry, Email).

horizon, gradually receding into a dazzling blur of varied light in which even the shadows, like those of the One, are bright. To the left of the design, a stadium full of angels sit and stand, making various gestures as, in the foreground, an angelic concert takes place on a series of raised platforms. One angel, with raised left hand, conducts the symphony as others play the unheard music on harps. And, in a huge enclosure at the centre, yet other angels stroll in conversation, as rays from the ineffable light rain down 'Bliss and glory' upon the entire assembly. In time, but in time immemorial, these divine beings engage in their own blessed life. As Milton writes, 'Anyone who asks what God did before the creation of the world is a fool; and anyone who answers him is not much wiser [. . .] it would clearly be disproportionate for God to have been totally occupied from eternity in decreeing things which it was to take him only six days to create: things which were to be governed in various ways for a few thousand years, and then finally either received into an unchanging state with God forever, or else for ever thrown away' (*CD*, 299). Or, as Raphael says to Adam,

What if the sun  
Be center to the world, and other stars  
By his attractive virtue and their own  
Incited, dance about him various rounds?  
[. . .] What if that light  
Sent from her [Earth] through the wide transpicious air,  
To the terrestrial moon be as a star  
Enlight'ning her by day, as she by night  
This Earth? Reciprocal, if land be there,  
Fields and inhabitants: her spots thou seest  
As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce  
Fruits in her softened soil, for some to eat  
Allotted there; and other suns perhaps  
With their attendant moons thou wilt descry  
Communicating male and female light,  
Which two great sexes animate the world,  
Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live.  
(*PL* 8.122–5, 8.140–52)

This is Martin's vast Miltonic vision: one in which eternity and time, Heaven and Earth, fade into an infinite reciprocal dance. Martin achieves such a Miltonic vision in visual representation by manifesting not only the previous quoted passages but also others, like Milton's verbal description of the 'mazes intricate, | Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular | Then most, when most irregular they seem, | And in their motions harmony divine | So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear | Listens delighted' (*PL* 5.622–7).

Although working more than a century after Martin, Petrina and Groom also read Raphael's account of Creation as the very heart of Milton's theodicy, embodied, as for Martin, in the mystery of both cosmic and human gender. But their focus is far more intimate, less attuned to the vastness of space than to the 'fruitful Earth' and the powerful, co-creative female body. In their designs, those gendered bodies, natural and human, come together so tightly that tenor can hardly be distinguished from vehicle.

In her stunning 1936 illustration to book 7, Petrina represents the Earth itself as a sleeping, dreaming woman who gives incarnate shape to the invisible god-head's creative Word (see Figure 14.4).<sup>15</sup> At the upper and lower right of Petrina's design, the sun and stars of Martin's earlier illustration still appear. But Petrina, like Groom, chooses to focus not on the fourth but on the sixth day: first on the creation of the animals, then on the creation of Eve. In this first illustration, from Raphael's hexameral account, she represents the Earth explicitly, if not literally, as a womb in which all creatures lie in wait for their emergence into life at the call of the Word. Trees have already risen into the air 'as in dance,' where already 'Main ocean [. . .] with warm | Prolific humor' is 'soft'ning all her globe,' and has already 'Fermented the great mother to conceive' (*PL* 7.324, 7.279–81). Now 'Op'ning her fertile womb,' the Earth 'teem[s] at a birth | Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms, | Limbed and full-grown' (*PL* 7.454–6). Here are Raphael's 'ounce and libbard,' the 'tawny lion,' and the 'swift stag,' all about to burst into full, realized existence: from eternal dream into a new dimension of time, which will henceforth be measured by sun and moon (*PL* 7.464–9).

Groom represents the slightly later moment when the animals actively paw their way out into life, 'the crumbled earth above them' rising in hillocks (*PL* 7.468; see Figure 14.5).<sup>16</sup> Out of a lush tangle of grasses—as yet watered by 'a dewy mist' and spiked with vigorous, turgid flowers (*PL* 7.333)—a panther and two eager 'libbards' claw, with animal vigor, to breathe their first air and the fragrance of flowering grain that, in Eden, will provide their food. The 'ounce,' not yet paired, is suddenly emergent and, awkwardly, almost atop an equally puzzled-looking leopard. Perfect and full-grown, they are still new to their environment, and tangle like puppies in a box, while the leopard's mate, fully free, sniffs the fresh air and new grass with an evident pleasure that echoes, in another key, the pleasure of seraphic music.

Groom, indeed, is the great visual translator of Miltonic pleasure. And in her most iconic image, one from book 4, she joyously mirrors Petrina's identification of Earth with the female body—only in reverse (see Figure 14.6). As Petrina has suggested that the Earth itself is the primal Eve, Groom portrays Eve as a

<sup>15</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained*. Most of the original pencil drawings made in preparation for this edition are housed in the special collections of Whittier College's Bonnie Bell Wardman Library.

<sup>16</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1937).



Fig. 14.4. Carlotta Petrina, greyscale illustration, from book 7 of *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained* (1936). Courtesy of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

fully human microcosm of Eden. Conversely yet again, the garden can be seen, in Stevie Davies's words, as 'an externalisation of the fruitful person of Eve'.<sup>17</sup> On the 'soft downy bank' of the 'brimming stream [. . .] damasked with flow'rs', the mother of humankind lies before Adam in a proleptically birth-giving posture

<sup>17</sup> Davies, *The Feminine Reclaimed*, 210.



Fig. 14.5. Mary Groom, white-on-black wood engraving, from book 7 of *Paradise Lost* (1937). Courtesy of the Golden Cockerel Press and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

while Adam playfully serves her grapes—‘officiating’ to her as the otherwise barren sun officiates to the fruitful Earth, the Earth in her turn to the moon. As Eve ‘reciprocates’, holding another piece of fruit up to Adam, nature joins in the dance: three ‘unwieldy’ elephants, not just one as in Milton’s text, ‘wreath[ing their] lithe probos[ci]’ to ‘make them mirth’ (*PL* 4.334–47).

Adam and Eve’s bodies, however stylized in this white-on-black engraving, could hardly be more sensuous, especially when juxtaposed with the array of ‘Nectarine fruits’ lying within the crook of Eve’s left arm and next to her swelling breasts, open thighs, and slightly rounded belly (*PL* 4.332). Adam, for his part, is as buff and broad-shouldered as in the poet’s description (*PL* 4.300–3). In Milton’s epic as read by Groom, the body is paradise, and paradise is the body. It is Eve and Adam’s erotic connection, their physical and spiritual oneness in diversity, that most fully embodies the nature of Eden: paradise within a tiny space, on a very human scale. Yet this erotic freedom is ‘true filial’ freedom; their ‘looks divine’ bear ‘the image of their glorious Maker’ (*PL* 4.294, 4.291, 4.292). In her illustration to book 3, Groom carefully parallels the love within the Godhead to the love between Adam and Eve. And here she borrows ‘birds of calm’ from *On the Morning*





Fig. 14.6. Mary Groom, white-on-black wood engraving, from book 4 of *Paradise Lost* (1937). Courtesy of the Golden Cockerel Press and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

of *Christ's Nativity* to suggest that this scene, however lush and erotic, not only is innocent but partakes of, and reveals, the holy (l. 68)—‘Whatever hypocrites austere talk’ (*PL* 4.744).<sup>18</sup>

Both Petrina and Groom also represent the moment from Genesis 2 when Eve is drawn forth from the momentarily maternal body of the sleeping Adam (see Figures 14.7, 14.8). In Petrina’s version of the scene, the Father appears working almost like a sculptor to shape Eve’s feminine form out of the very same clay from which he has made Adam’s (see Figure 14.7). Adam sleeps with arms raised over his head in a posture exactly parallel to the sleeping Earth in Petrina’s previous

<sup>18</sup> Milton’s ode imagines, then reluctantly rejects, a restored golden age, a pastoral Eden, with the birth of the Christ child. Groom, with her deep knowledge and love of Milton, borrows the image for the epic, backward—to the original golden age.



**Fig. 14.7.** Carlotta Petrina, greyscale illustration, from book 8 of *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained* (1936). Courtesy of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

design, his flesh giving way to allow Eve's emergence (Figure 14.4). Here, as in St Paul's struggling account of sexual difference, a male human being is endowed, this once, with the power and privilege of giving birth, just as the sun, having been





Fig. 14.8. Mary Groom, white-on-black wood engraving, from book 8 of *Paradise Lost* (1937). Courtesy of the Golden Cockerel Press and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

given his substance by the feminine Light, is enabled, in turn, to light the moon. In Milton's universe, as channelled by Petrina, reciprocity is the essential feature of reality: humankind has come out of the feminine fruitful earth, woman out of man, then man—for the rest of human time—out of woman.

Groom takes this idea even farther by representing the Son not sculpting Eve, as in Petrina's design, but rather drawing forth her perfect but limp natural form, as if she had been growing over time in Adam's body (see Figure 14.8). Adam's birth-giving posture mimics, as Groom's Eve has done earlier, the posture of a woman in labour. The Son's tender expression suggests that of a careful midwife. The abstract ribbon-like forms enveloping this divine-human trinity remind viewers of the umbilical connection between every mother and child to come—and bind the three in an indissoluble bond. He is of her, she is of him, both are of God, and God is 'all in all'.<sup>19</sup>

It is worth pausing at biblical, specifically Pauline, accounts that are at the root of the difficulty of parsing gender in *Paradise Lost*, as well as of two millennia of both cripplingly reactionary and radically liberating views of gender. In Milton's divorce

<sup>19</sup> Gordon Teskey rightly says they are of 'God's body' (Teskey, *Delirious Milton*, chapter 5).

tracts and *Paradise Lost*, traditional Pauline statements about hierarchy repeatedly contend, exactly as in Paul's own letters, with stunning moments of complete mutuality. Readers of Paul, like readers of Milton, have consistently disagreed on which pole of his clearly unresolved thinking predominates: the Paul who writes that 'man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of the woman, but woman for the sake of the man'; or the Paul who writes that both, 'nevertheless', are entirely interdependent and come equally from the same God.<sup>20</sup> For some readers, Paul is the ultimate anti-feminist 'bogey', just as Milton is for some critics—especially in earlier feminist discussions.<sup>21</sup> No one should skip over the statement by Milton's epic narrator, direct from the Pauline epistles, that our first parents' 'sex not equal seemed': that 'He [is] for God only, she for God in him' (*PL* 4.296, 299). But readers who dismiss the poem based on these lines will miss a great deal that points in a very different direction. And this is where the intersemiotic history of Miltonic reception becomes especially illuminating. Early illustrators, including Medina, consistently privileged gender hierarchy, missing the manifold tensions in Milton's verbal text—a tendency that can be seen even in some, less attentive, contemporary illustrators. Other readers have been far more sympathetic to Milton's, and Paul's, struggle to write within the framework of certain intellectual givens—Genesis 2, first-century rabbinical thought and synagogue praxis, the roles of women in middle-class Roman society or in seventeenth-century England—while grasping, by something like divine inspiration, at a vision of something far more liberating. Petrina and Groom were two such readers. They found both in the apostle and in the poet a profound impulse towards intersubjectivity, towards an embrace of the feminine in a cosmos made up of 'two great sexes'.

Milton says in the *Christian Doctrine* that the scriptures must always be read contextually and through the guidance of faith: less according to the letter than to the spirit (*CD*, 582). All reading, visual as well as verbal, must by definition be intersemiotic: a kind of translation not just between languages but between realities, none of which is entirely real except God's. Raphael says as much when he reminds his human auditors that 'what surmounts the reach | Of human sense' must be 'delineate[d]' in human terms (*PL* 5.571–2). That is, it must be expressed in terms of a linear sequence that may or may not reflect the transcendent nature of time and space—and in terms of gender relations that are far more complex than surface hierarchies might suggest. Thus, time and space, matter and spirit, stand in for one

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:8–9, 1 Corinthians 11:11–12.

<sup>21</sup> For a classic salvo in this genre, see the aptly named chapter 'Milton's Bogey: Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers' in Gilbert, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 187–212.

another in almost vertiginous—or as Teskey has it, *delirious*—ways. Yet, Milton insists, although the scriptures are by definition accommodations to human sense, they are nonetheless clear in their spiritual import. Milton's illustrators, for over 300 years, have sought in turn to capture the spirit of that spirit—in spatial representations of a temporal discourse in which male and female light communicate both eternally and in each of the moments that make up eternity.

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## From Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Blake's *Milton*

Camille Adnot

In his illuminated work, *Milton: A Poem in Two Books* (composed c. 1804–11), William Blake tapped into the repository of light and dark images in *Paradise Lost* and transposed them to enrich his own cosmic view, as well as to address issues he identified in John Milton's Christian epic.<sup>1</sup> Milton is the hero of Blake's poem, in which his reembodied soul goes on a visionary quest to redeem his legacy as a poet. The heroic bard succeeds in freeing poetry and consequently humanity, after a series of struggles with the human faculties personified, which opens life and art to infinite variety.

Unlike Blake's later illustrations to *Paradise Lost* (c. 1807–08, 1822), the designs on the plates of *Milton* are not intended as direct illustrations of Milton's epic poem, but rather are filtered through Blake's poem, which freely adapts Miltonic images and displaces them. Blake was fundamentally at odds with his contemporary Joshua Reynolds, co-founder and president of the Royal Academy of Arts, who declared that 'genius, at least what generally is so called, is the child of imitation.'<sup>2</sup> Blake advocated a more emancipated, expressive role for the artist: 'I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans | I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create.'<sup>3</sup> I argue that *Milton*, through its visual adaptation, embodies Blake's conception of a new system. I address this visual adaptation to show that Blake is at his most innovative when he shifts the meaning of Miltonic images to represent that which defies representation, be it 'unessential night' or the flames of Hell from which come 'No light, but rather darkness visible' (*PL* 2.439, 1.63).<sup>4</sup> Rather than making an inventory of light and dark images, I examine those which are ambivalent and feature both of these images, to demonstrate that they create a

<sup>1</sup> The approximate dates of Blake's completion vary. I follow the one used by The Blake Archive.

<sup>2</sup> Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art*, 135.

<sup>3</sup> Blake, *Jerusalem*, 8.20–1, in Blake, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. Erdman. This and all subsequent quotations of Blake's works are from the same edition and cited with the title of the work, then plate and line numbers. Quotations from Blake's *Milton* are cited parenthetically as *M*, followed by book, plate, and line number, then page number. For the Romantics favouring expressive rather than mimetic forms of creation, see Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*.

<sup>4</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Fowler, and cited parenthetically in the text as *PL*.

spectrum. The main images are among the most arrestingly ambiguous in *Paradise Lost*: the dark flames of Hell, the clouded moon, and Chaos as a sea of darkness. Blake's visual transposition gives them an added layer of ambiguity. Indeed, the four versions of Blake's *Milton* are coloured in different ways, thus multiplying the creative effect of displacement expressed in Milton's verbal text. Defying the resistance of light and dark, Blake uses these as light and 'dark materials' to delineate impossible images such as 'the unapparent deep' (*PL* 2.916, 7.103).

The printmaking technique Blake invented is decisive in that process, as relief etching on copper leaves designs standing in relief. The undesigned parts are dissolved by acid, which Blake uses as a tool to outline images that are supposedly formless. In relief etching, the design is raised, contrary to intaglio engraving techniques, which involve inking lines carved into the plate. Intaglio methods, and mezzotint in particular, favour depth with their tonal quality and are apt to better render contrasts between light and dark through chiaroscuro. In that respect, John Martin's set of mezzotint illustrations of *Paradise Lost* (1827) is significantly contrary to Blake's *Milton*. Blake's and Martin's are among the most iconic and enduring illustrations of *Paradise Lost*, and they not only bear testimony to its reception in the early nineteenth century, but are now integral to its contemporary reception. The fact that these two artists have illustrated Milton's poem with opposite methods emphasizes how flexible visual responses were to Milton's ambiguous images in the Romantic period. As Joseph Wittreich observes, '[t]he finest of Milton's illustrators open his poetry', placing Blake within that group.<sup>5</sup> Wittreich praises visual transpositions for their capacity for polysemy, stating that 'illustrations create borderlands with texts [...] spaces where ambiguities multiply, indeterminacies thrive, and new perspectives surprise.'<sup>6</sup> This chapter explores such 'borderlands', starting with Blake's appropriation of Milton's 'dark materials', moving on to nightscapes and light shifts, especially moonlight, before comparing Blake's and Martin's contrary renditions of specific light and dark images from Milton's poem. These striking renditions interpret and materialize Milton's poem in antithetical ways, underlining the range of Romantic visual responses to *Paradise Lost*.

## Dark Materials

Blake borrows many cosmic elements from *Paradise Lost*, and he incorporates a number of Miltonic images in the very text of his poem. Thus, Milton's 'Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy' (*PL* 2.970) reappears in Blake's 'Seek not thy Heavenly Father beyond the skies | There Chaos dwells and Ancient Night' (*M*

<sup>5</sup> Wittreich, 'More Worlds', 57.

<sup>6</sup> Wittreich, 'More Worlds', 53.

1.20:32–3, 114). Likewise, Milton's 'In the wide womb of uncreated night' (*PL* 2.150) is transposed by Blake as 'Is this the Void outside of Existence, which if entered into | Becomes a womb?' (*M* 2.41:37, 2.42:1, 143) and Milton's 'the void and formless infinite' (*PL* 3.12) is echoed by Blake's 'the unformd void' (*M* 1.18:44, 112). The very mapping of their worlds is similar, with significant variations. For instance, Blake's Albion, who is both a character and a vision of humanity as a whole, encompasses at once God the Father, the Son, Adam and Eve, and Satan. The different personae are simply states that Albion goes through, like Milton, as Blake's character, goes through them. It follows that Milton is a prisoner of the Satanic state at the beginning of Blake's poem, as he has clouded himself against the Divine Vision; but by the end of the poem, Milton has freed himself from Satanic blindness and has taken on a Christlike role, rescuing Albion.<sup>7</sup>

This symbolic narrative corresponds to a parallel, political narrative, in which Milton's works become authoritative in England after his death, which leads them, in Blake's mind, to become tyrannical, before their spirit of freedom is restored by the author-protagonist as Blake constructs him in *Milton*. In her study of Milton and the Romantics, Lucy Newlyn analyses the 'sustained formal ambiguities of a poem [*Paradise Lost*] which is traditionally thought of as authoritarian and closed' and its reception in that era. She discusses in detail the Romantics', and particularly Blake's, way of amplifying such ambiguities.<sup>8</sup> I do not plan to provide more in-depth analysis as to how Blake verbally exploits allusions, echoes, and polysemic processes in Milton's text and extends them in his own, but I do want to state that, although mainly visual, my analysis is indebted to Newlyn's points about how Milton's Romantic readers, and Blake more than any other, reactivated ambivalences in *Paradise Lost* that had become downplayed over the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

Rather than simply imitating Milton, Blake answers Milton's request at the start of *Paradise Lost*: 'what in me is dark | Illumine' with his illuminated book (*PL* 1.22–3). He thus pays tribute to Milton as an image-maker, a quality which the Romantic critic William Hazlitt emphasized: 'He makes words tell as pictures.'<sup>10</sup> In the twentieth century, T. S. Eliot too acknowledged, albeit tentatively, Milton's verbal image-making, and celebrated his talent for conjuring up light and dark images in particular: 'to me it seems that Milton is at his best in imagery suggestive of vast size, limitless space, abysmal depth, and light and darkness.'<sup>11</sup> This section focuses on the latter.

<sup>7</sup> For Blake, the neoclassical strand of British nationalism, and the use of Milton as a national hero at the turn of the nineteenth century, see Wright, *Blake, Nationalism, and the Politics of Alienation*, 114–15.

<sup>8</sup> Newlyn, 'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Newlyn, 'Paradise Lost' and the Romantic Reader, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Thorpe, *Milton Criticism*, 101.

<sup>11</sup> Thorpe, *Milton Criticism*, 322.

On the frontispiece of his poem, Blake illustrates Milton's deeply personal struggle with his blindness, aligning with the epic narrator who compares physical blindness to being surrounded by a cloud in his address to light at the beginning of book 3: 'cloud instead, and ever-during dark | Surrounds me' (*PL* 3.45–6). Blake represents Milton standing full-page in heroic nudity with his back to viewers, his head in profile, and blocked by dark clouds or smoke, raising his hand as though he wanted to dispel them or break through them (see Figure 15.1).

The plate appears in all four known copies of *Milton*. The first three copies, A–C, were produced c. 1811, while Copy D was made in 1818, along with a number of reprints of Blake's former works. Each copy is unique, with none of the copies featuring all fifty-one plates. Copies A and B are most similar to each other due to the affinity of their visual aesthetics and number of plates. Copy A is notable for its blue palette, while Copy B features less saturated colours and has the darkest blacks. In Copy C, which has a predominantly yellow palette, Blake introduced more plates, and built on them by adding more in Copy D, which is striking for its orange visuals. Variations in colour schemes create different effects on the frontispiece of *Milton*, which also has figurative differences. While copies A and B feature dark clouds—especially Copy B, which has a strong sooty quality—copies C and D present a more hopeful version of Milton's struggle with the clouds, foreshadowing Milton's ultimate redemption and recovery of vision. Copy C features a life-asserting fire at the bottom of the clouds, implying that the clouds are agents of light and energy rather than darkness. Reddish hues on Milton's naked skin assert his kinship with the fire, and hint at his control over the clouds. In Copy D, there is intense light on the other side of the clouds, which are parting in a ray of light that goes from Milton's outstretched right hand to his left foot, along his body. The contrast is intense between the black billows and the golden opening in the middle, suggesting Milton is carving a way through the clouds and that ultimate clarity is just behind them. Moreover, Milton's eyes are resolutely open in all of the copies, signalling the triumph of divine vision over mortal sight.

The image of intense but clouded light is itself Miltonic. In *Paradise Lost*, both the fallen light of Satan and the heavenly light of the Father are presented through ambiguous cloud similes. Satan's light is 'as when the sun new ris'n | Looks through the horizontal misty air | Shorn of his beams' (*PL* 1.594–6). The Father's light, too overpowering for direct vision, must be seen through a cloud: 'Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st | The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud | Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine, | Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear' (*PL* 3.377–80). Such depictions qualify as sublime, as do many arresting images in *Paradise Lost*. Examining its legacy for eighteenth-century theories of the sublime, Newlyn observes, the 'concept of the sublime is inseparable from Milton's influence on eighteenth-century theorists: [Joseph] Addison, [Samuel] Johnson, [Edmund] Burke, [Hugh] Blair all turn to *Paradise Lost* for their prime examples of sublimity of language; so that by the end of the





Fig. 15.1. William Blake, Plate 1, hand-coloured relief and white-line etching, from *Milton*, Copy A (c. 1811). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

eighteenth century, Milton and the sublime have come to be regarded as practically synonymous.<sup>12</sup> In other words, *Paradise Lost* was seen as a paragon of verbal sublime, which, through further canonization in treatises of aesthetics, became the dominant model for achieving sublime effect in visual art. Burke is of particular relevance when looking at sublime images of light and darkness, as he specifically links darkness to the sublime: 'darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light'.<sup>13</sup> His judgement marks Satan's tainted, darkened light as sublime. Yet, the Father's clouded light also qualifies as such, as it partakes of both light and darkness. Burke writes that the Father's is 'a light which by its very excess is converted into a species of darkness'.<sup>14</sup> Such images of dark light abound in Milton's text when he describes the tainted lights of Hell and fallen angels. Oxymorons like 'Black fire' or 'grim fires' are recurrent, like the 'livid flames' that cast 'pale' shadows (*PL* 2.67, 2.170, 1.182, 1.183). Milton offers a Mannerist conceit of hellfire which defies visual representation: 'from those flames | No light, but rather darkness visible' (*PL* 1.62–3). The poet pushes language to its limit in a series of paradoxes that convey what Newlyn calls the 'aesthetics of indeterminacy'.<sup>15</sup>

Blake explores the many nuances of the colour palette and takes on the challenge of representing dark fire in a confrontation between two of his protagonists, Satan and Palamabron. Satan is the personification of hypocrisy and Palamabron that of pity. It has to be noted here that the Satan of *Milton* is different from the Satan of Blake's earlier works. While in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1794), Blake sided with the devils and famously wrote that Milton was 'a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it', by the time he wrote *Milton*, Satan had become a villain.<sup>16</sup> Blake's relation to Satan as a character was as ambivalent as Milton's, and this is manifest in Blake's visual representations. In the narrative, after Satan has deceived Palamabron, the latter calls an assembly, in which Satan accuses Palamabron. Their brother Rintrah, indignant rage personified, flames with anger: '[Rintrah] Flam'd above all the plowed furrows, angry red and furious' (*M* 1.8:36, 102). Satan then flames back, assuming the powers of Rintrah. Blake's unusual syntax makes it unclear whether Rintrah or Satan is the one ablaze: 'And Palamabron appeal'd to all Eden, and reciev'd | Judgment: and Lo! it fell on Rintrah and his rage: | Which now flam'd high & furious in Satan against Palamabron' (*M* 1.9:9–11, 102–3). A later passage clearly has Satan as the one ablaze, yet combines him with Rintrah again: 'For Satan flaming with Rintrahs fury hidden beneath

<sup>12</sup> Newlyn, *Paradise Lost and the Romantic Reader*, 3. For the sublime in stained glass, with reference to chiaroscuro and Martin, see Beverley Sherry's chapter in the present volume, 'Paradise Lost in Stained Glass'.

<sup>13</sup> Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 145.

<sup>14</sup> Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 146.

<sup>15</sup> Newlyn, *Paradise Lost and the Romantic Reader*, 11.

<sup>16</sup> William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 6.

his own mildness | Accus'd Palamabron before the Assembly of ingratitude!' (*M* 1.9:19–20, 103). The scene is visually represented on plate 8, in which three characters stand in a dark, indefinite environment, two of them on the ground and one on a rock, surrounded by flames that emanate from his body as he seemingly braces himself for attack, his face angry (see Figure 15.2).

While scholars concur that the three characters are Satan, Rintrah, and Palamabron, there is no unanimous agreement about which figure is which, especially the figure surrounded by flames. The narrative opens the possibility for this figure to be either Rintrah or Satan, in an 'aesthetics of indeterminacy', to take up Newlyn's term, reminiscent of the one Milton uses in his own poem. The uncertainty related to the identity of the figure on the rock is strengthened by the fact that he looks both heroic, standing in muscular nudity, and villainous, with his contorted face and threatening posture. Such uncertainty of representation calls to mind the uncertainty of Milton's allegiances in *Paradise Lost*—many Romantics saw Satan as an antihero, but believed Milton was on his side.<sup>17</sup> However, the figure's identity is ultimately unimportant, because Satan is the one fuelling Rintrah's rage, making that rage in essence Satanic. Depending on the copy, the flames are more or less potent and have different colours. Yet there is always a sharp contrast between the fire and the surrounding darkness, suggesting that the flames are powerless against the dark, and not so potent after all—therefore, 'pale', echoing the term from *Paradise Lost* quoted earlier and in its fuller context at the end of this paragraph. This is especially true of the plate from Copy A, which has the blackest background and the whitest flames. This has a double effect, from which opposite conclusions may be drawn. While the juxtaposition of black and white creates a striking contrast, making the flames stand out vividly and stressing their potency, it also makes them appear somewhat weak, as they are unable to light the surroundings despite their apparent strength. This is an inventive transposition of Hell as Milton depicts it: 'The seat of desolation, void of light, | Save what the glimmering of these livid flames | Casts pale and dreadful' (*PL* 1.181–3). Like Milton before him, Blake allows audiences to focus either on the strength or weakness of such flames, playing on the polysemy of 'pale', which implies both the idea of a light colour and a faded, lacking colour—at best a light grey, which makes it akin to darkness as much as light.

One key way in which Blake incorporates 'dark materials' is his use of darkness as a tool or a medium that he turns against itself. In this manner, he echoes the declaration of the Son of *Paradise Lost* that he will 'show | The powers of darkness bound' (*PL* 3.255–6). The word 'bound' is of particular significance, since Blake, as an engraver, praised the superiority of the 'bounding line'.<sup>18</sup> Blake writes that 'the great and golden rule of art, as well as of life, is this: That the more distinct,

<sup>17</sup> For the Romantics, Satan as a protagonist, and 'the attitude of Romantic Satanism', see Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 250–6.

<sup>18</sup> William Blake, 'Blake's Exhibition Catalogue of 1809', 64.





Fig. 15.2. William Blake, Plate 8, hand-coloured relief and white-line etching, from *Milton*, Copy A (c. 1811). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

sharp, and wirey the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art'<sup>19</sup> Indeed, many of the plates are surrounded by an impenetrable frame of black ink. Mimicking Satan's journey through Chaos's 'gloomy bounds', Blake makes his poem go through the dark, or 'through the palpable obscure', with enjambments (*PL* 2.976, 2.406).

There is a particularly remarkable case of an enjambment that enacts the very process it goes through. Ololon, the cast-out female Emanation of Blake's Milton—who represents the feminine side of the protagonist's psyche—laments: 'Is this the Void Outside of Existence, which if enterd into | Becomes a Womb?' (*M* 2.41:37, 2.42:1, 143). As Blake writes of the void, his text is materially cut by darkness, entering the void and emerging on the other side, on another plate of the bound book. The journey through Chaos is also paralleled by the character Milton, as Blake has him travelling like a comet through Chaos, like the Satan of *Paradise Lost*: 'the shades | Of Hell beheld him in a trail of light as of a comet | That travels into Chaos: so Milton went guarded within' and acknowledge the Satanic part of himself (*M* 1.15:18–20, 109). He then passes a vortex, and a sun appears where there was nothing before, radiating through the dark.

### Nightscares

Milton's text is supremely ambiguous when it depicts night scenes. Which are the regions that can be subsumed under the category of night, and how do they shift? The poem states that night is the realm of darkness, day that of light: 'light the day, and darkness night | He [God] named' (*PL* 7.251–2). Yet much of the poem debunks a watertight dichotomy. The affinity between 'night' and 'light'—verbally distinguished by just one letter, one phoneme—is one which the poem repeatedly explores, almost bringing it to a breaking point. In book 7, when God creates light, it is not clear which exists first, darkness or light:

Let there be light, said God, and forthwith light  
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure  
Sprung from the deep, and from her native east  
To journey through the airy gloom began,  
Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun  
Was not [.]

(*PL* 7.243–8)

Here, the 'deep' and the 'gloom' exist before Light, that is, they were not created by God, which suggests they did not exist in the first place: they are 'the

<sup>19</sup> William Blake, 'Blake's Exhibition Catalogue of 1809', 63–4.

wide womb of uncreated night.' Moreover, the advent of light is what dynamizes them, introducing movement. Milton's idea of light as movement operates within the contemporary *episteme*, as Don Cameron Allen demonstrates in *The Harmonious Vision*, his study on Milton's poetry: 'Light, which the seventeenth century thought of as first form and motion [. . .] appeared to Milton's contemporaries as a graduated divine impulsion.'<sup>20</sup> The question of light in motion is central to visual adaptations of Miltonic images. Light being referred to as 'first of things' also implies that nothing could exist beforehand, and that to be is essentially to be created. However, light is light insofar as it is contrasted to the dark night, which makes light and night effectively generative of each other.

Light is also independent from the sun and moon, as it is created before them according to the hexameral tradition of Genesis that Milton expands in book 7. Although the two orbs are sources of light, they are not its ultimate source, that is, God. By definition, this makes them less potent in terms of light, which raises the question of where they lie on the spectrum of light and dark. The most prominent nexus of such paradoxes is the moon. While the poem states that the male light of the sun is superior to the lesser, female light of the moon, the relative darkness over which the moon reigns is also brighter than the utter darkness of Chaos, making for ambivalent and shifting prospects of night. The moon belongs to the night, but it also protects from it, keeping complete darkness at bay: she 'in her pale dominion checks the night' (*PL* 3.732). The use of the epithet 'pale' generates an ambiguity which is furthered by the use of the verb 'checks', implying that the moon repels night, even though its existence depends on it. There is another way to interpret the word 'night': Milton may be referring to the night of Chaos, not the starry night that can be glimpsed from Paradise. Thus, 'night' is a polysemic signifier. Despite how extensively the world is charted in *Paradise Lost*, it is not always clear to which part of the night sky Milton is referring. The poem thrives on ambiguities, making different nocturnal territories overlap.

Moreover, the light of the moon is unstable: it varies from one scene to another and is complemented by clouds that are agents of either light or darkness. In the passage quoted earlier, light first appears 'in a radiant cloud'. If in book 4, the moon is likewise 'Rising in clouded majesty' and shines with 'peerless light' 'o'er the dark', in book 6, during the battle between the heavenly angels and the rebel angels, the moon is 'Inducing darkness', and the armies go away 'Under her cloudy covert' (*PL* 4.607–8, 6.407–9). As Milton makes his nightscapes vary, so does Blake in the different copies of his book. Here, then, I focus on the variations on the design from plate 4 (see Figure 15.3).

In the design, a huge dolmen towers over a rocky landscape, where a massive rocking stone stands out in the foreground. A few spots of grass and some trees appear amid the rocks, foreshadowing the advent of the holy Jerusalem, which

<sup>20</sup> Allen, *The Harmonious Vision*, 100–1.



Fig. 15.3. William Blake, detail from Plate 4, hand-coloured relief and white-line etching, from *Milton*, Copy A (c. 1811). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Blake endeavoured to build in 'Englands green & pleasant Land' in the Preface (*M* Preface.1:16, 96). Blake's Jerusalem would in effect be a Paradise inspired by Milton's. The night sky is overwhelming above two tiny human figures and a flock of sheep. The crescent moon is present in all of the copies, as are stars, clouds, and the night sky. Yet, these elements take up different portions of the design. The various arrangements of the copies make for light shifts which reveal the essential instability of light as a subject for painting.

Copy A appears at first glance to be the darkest, with its dominant navy-blue palette and dark-blue clouds that fill the sky. In comparison, Copy C, which features pale clouds, initially seems lighter. Yet on second look, the plate from Copy C is the one that opens the largest portion to a starless black sky that tears through the clouds like a gaping abyss—the night of Chaos. On the contrary, in Copy A, there is almost no portion of empty black sky, and the clouds, though on the darker side of the spectrum, are not pitch-black. Thus, in all copies, the clouds may be seen as extensions of the moon, protecting the Earth from the emptiness of the dark nothingness beyond. This is especially true of Copy B, in which the black sky is confined to the smallest of spaces, and the moon seems to protect the Earth with a ubiquitous curtain of white clouds. Therefore, the clouds are a protective mantle, an idea which is reinforced by the stars being superimposed on them in all three copies. However, Copy D turns things around by having the stars appear in a portion of the sky separate from the clouds. For the first time as well, this cloudless region is

not black, but blue. This version suggests that the world beyond the clouds is not so empty and dark after all.

With its orange palette, Copy D is substantially brighter than the other copies, so much so that it seems to be a day scene. This raises the question of what time of day, or what time of night, it is in each copy. Although the moon is in the same shape and position in all four designs, light falls differently on the landscape. This indicates Blake experimented with the idea of a light gradient. To trace the light shifts, it is useful to look at the rocking stone in the foreground. In each copy, light falls on it from a different direction. In Copy A, the light comes from above and from behind, slightly from the right, which corresponds to where the moon is. However, in Copy B, light comes from a direction somewhere in between the right and the front, making it impossible for the moon to be its source. In Copy C, light comes from the right too, but from a higher source. Finally, in Copy D, light hits the bottom of the stone but not its top and seems to be coming from the front. Because of such plays on light and shadows, most copies suggest that there is another source of light, distinct from the moon. Although Blake does not represent the creation of light, the coexistence of different sources of light calls to mind the creation of the sun and moon in Milton's book 7:<sup>21</sup>

For of celestial bodies first the sun  
 A mighty sphere he framed, unlightsome first,  
 Though of ethereal mould: then formed the moon  
 Globose, and every magnitude of stars,  
 And sowed with stars the heaven thick as a field:  
 Of light by far the greater part he took,  
 Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed  
 In the sun's orb, made porous to receive  
 And drink the liquid light, firm to retain  
 Her gathered beams, great palace now of light.  
 (PL 7.354–63)

Blake's design with the dolmen hints at this passage in several ways: the heavens sown with stars, as well as the moon and her 'cloudy shrine'. Blake, however, does not represent the moment when God creates the orbs, even in his direct illustrations of *Paradise Lost*. By contrast, the painter and engraver Martin represents this very moment in his illustrations of the poem, in a dramatic composition with billows of clouds parting to reveal the gigantic figure of the Creator, his right hand outstretched upward, towards the sun, and his left arm outstretched downward, towards the moon and its accompanying set of stars. Reluctant clouds partly

<sup>21</sup> For an examination of visual art and the creation of light in *Paradise Lost*, see Wendy Furman-Adams's chapter in the present volume, 'Artists Illuminating Milton's Gendered Instant of Creation'.



blocking the sun's rays are streaked by lightning, and the vast, dark ocean beneath seems impervious to light. Such a difference of perspective between Blake and Martin prompts the question of what each adapt from Milton's text. Their contrary focuses and printmaking processes make for widely different renditions of light and dark.

### Blake and Martin: Two Visions of 'Unessential Night'

Although the two artists are often grouped together as Romantic painters whose works are known for sublime and dark imagery, Blake and Martin belonged to quite different worlds. Blake was born in 1757, making him an early Romantic; he was more than thirty years old at the time of the 1789 French Revolution, while Martin was born that year, which positions him as a second-generation Romantic. Moreover, Blake died the year that Martin's illustrations for *Paradise Lost* were published, in 1827. They also enjoyed widely different fame as painters during their lifetimes, as Martin was successful while Blake died in relative poverty and, apart from niches, was largely unknown until the end of the nineteenth century. Additionally, Martin generally painted with oil, which Blake abhorred. Martin also made a living as a glass-painter in his youth, which taught him to use light as a shaping element for his compositions, playing with translucency.<sup>22</sup> Yet, in the case of the *Paradise Lost* illustrations, Martin produced mezzotint engravings, which makes for a striking comparison with Blake's relief etchings. The latter involve painting on copper with an acid-resistant solution so as to leave the design standing in relief once the rest of the plate has been dissolved by acid. In contrast, mezzotint is an intaglio printing technique, which means the design is carved into the plate and the ink goes into the lines, not on the surface. To put it differently, Blake's inking process focuses on the surface of the plate, Martin's on its depth. Through diametrically opposite methods of engraving, the two artists created different interpretations of Milton's 'unessential night,' depicted in book 2 as a void: 'if any pass, the void profound | Of unessential night receives him next | Wide gaping' (*PL* 2.438–40).

For instance, when representing 'the unapparent deep,' one of Milton's many names for Chaos, Martin concentrates on dramatic perspectives and depth, while Blake concentrates on the surface of his scenes where everything is apparent except the deep. There is hardly depth or perspective in his designs. He does not show the deep, but hides it from sight. In contrast, Martin explores the horrifying fantastic hellscapes that appear in *Paradise Lost*. His illustration of the scene in which Satan meets Sin and Death on the bridge over Chaos after returning from Paradise, pays

<sup>22</sup> For more on glass-painting and *Paradise Lost*, see Beverley Sherry's chapter in the present volume, 'Paradise Lost in Stained Glass'.

remarkable tribute to verbal details. Martin renders ‘a ridge of pendent rock,’ a spectacular rocky structure contrasted to the emptiness of chaos around it: ‘Over the foaming deep high arched, a bridge | Of length prodigious joining to the wall | Immovable of this now fenceless world’ (*PL* 10.313, 10.301–3). Again disguised as an angel, Satan points to Paradise from which light emanates at the end of the tunnel, echoing the moment when Satan orders Sin and Death to go corrupt the world: ‘You two this way, among those numerous orbs | All yours, right down to Paradise descend’ (*PL* 10.397–8). The environment looks like a cave made of hardened clouds or lava. As viewers look down, shapes dissolve into nothingness, giving a sense of vertigo (see Figure 15.4).

This illustration is faithful to the architectural paradoxes in Milton’s poem. Indeed, Milton’s shapes dissolve and reassemble in ambiguous ways, in ekphrastic tour de forces that Martin renders with a mezzotint bridge that tricks perception to the extent that it seems tactile and material, though surrounded by emptiness. In his study *Milton, Mannerism, and Baroque*, Roy Daniells analyses space in *Paradise Lost*, especially the tension between formless Chaos and elaborate figures silhouetted against it. He argues that Milton uses empty space as a canvas for constructing prominent forms: ‘From its nature, chaos cannot be firmly bounded, nor can structure be achieved within it, nor can it project any constructive dynamism from itself into another region. It is a wild amoral ocean [. . .]. Formless in itself, chaos defines



Fig. 15.4. John Martin, *The Bridge over Chaos*, mezzotint, from *The Paradise Lost of Milton* (1827). © The British Library Board, 643.m.18.

and accentuates form in other regions'.<sup>23</sup> Martin proceeds in precisely the same way, as his *Bridge over Chaos* is an outstanding example of structure in the midst of formlessness, all the more impressive as it is surrounded by the void. The building stands out powerfully, drawing viewers in and achieving a kinaesthetic sensation with plays on light and perspective. Satan, Sin, and Death are minuscule in the dramatic composition.

By contrast, Blake illustrates only the moment when Satan meets Sin and Death in book 2. The composition does not go as far as the bridge built over Chaos that follows their encounter, and the characters take centre stage. An instance in which Blake does represent some prospect of Chaos is plate 38 of *Milton*. On the full-page design, Albion and his Emanation, Jerusalem, lie on the rock which represents the world, amidst a sea of darkness echoing Milton's description of Chaos as 'the hoary deep, a dark | Illimitable ocean without bound' (*PL* 2.891–2). Yet, Blake's ocean is far from 'Illimitable' and 'without bound'; he does not allow viewers to lose sight of structures in dizzying depths, but gives only a small portion of the picture to the sea of Chaos, and lends it no depth. In that way, he is closer to the Miltonic vision of 'vast infinitude confined' (*PL* 3.711), advocating an aesthetics of containment, or as he writes in his text, 'with bounds to the Infinite putting off the Indefinite' (*M* 1.28:4, 125). The idea of 'bounds' is central to Blake's visual system, as it refers to the 'bounding line' of the engraver, strong and impenetrable. As he writes, 'Leave out this line and you leave out life itself; all is chaos again'.<sup>24</sup> Chiaroscuro or 'that infernal machine' falls in the category of what Blake calls chaotic, as it allows light to dissolve into dark and dark to dissolve into light.<sup>25</sup> He did not produce mezzotints like Martin's, which openly play with the affinity between light and dark. Indeed, Martin's mezzotints explore the possibilities of chiaroscuro, juxtaposing nuances of grey to convey the illusion of three-dimensional forms. While Martin's engravings look like one could fall into them, Blake's look solid and stable, like sculptures.

Martin and Blake also have opposite ways of emphasizing the lack of light in Hell. Allen comments on Milton's methods to convey fallenness, especially through images of poor or non-existent light: 'Absence from God is symbolized throughout the epic by a privation of light'.<sup>26</sup> Martin represents this by dramatizing the decline of lights in Hell, while Blake chooses not to show light there at all. In *Paradise Lost*, looking at his new kingdom, Satan deplores the trade of 'this mournful gloom | For that celestial light', underlining the profound decline in light quality the fallen angels are experiencing. As a result, they create artificial lights to break the darkness, lamps fuelled by 'naphtha and asphaltus' that mimic skylights (*PL* 1.729). Martin illustrates these in his *Satan in Council*, which has

<sup>23</sup> Daniells, *Milton, Mannerism, and Baroque*, 92.

<sup>24</sup> William Blake, 'Blake's Exhibition Catalogue of 1809', 65.

<sup>25</sup> William Blake, 'Blake's Exhibition Catalogue of 1809', 55.

<sup>26</sup> Allen, *The Harmonious Vision*, 103.

great depth of field, allowing viewers to see far into the hellscape. There, Martin explores the full range of light greys and dark greys on the black and white palette. These nuances convey the gradations of light and shadow as if ‘by shading pencil drawn’, in tonal variations reminiscent of those used verbally by Milton (*PL* 3.509). While the lamps in the foreground are blinding, the ones in the background lose all brightness. Thus, Martin insists on the fading quality of these lights. Blake does not represent this scene either in *Milton* or in his illustrations to *Paradise Lost*. Yet a recurrent motif in his works is the light of the fallen world—often a red sun. Such a sun appears in plate 8 from *Milton*. It appears only in Copy C, though, while other copies feature complete darkness. Through this, Blake might be suggesting that fallen light is ultimately just as dark as darkness. As it happens, Blake does not use this light to form shapes in the background of this design; although somewhat lighter, it remains just as inscrutable and empty, signalling that there is nothing to see, while Martin invites viewers to make out figures receding in the distance.

### Ways of Picturing

T. S. Eliot famously criticized Milton’s supposedly excessive imagination: ‘I do not think that we should attempt to see very clearly any scene that Milton depicts: it should be accepted as a shifting phantasmagory.’<sup>27</sup> Blake, who celebrated the power of imagination throughout his life, did not find the attempt to be daunting. In addition to clearly picturing scenes from *Paradise Lost*, he also channelled this mental imagery into *Milton*. Yet, picturing images did not prevent him from making them shift from one version to another. His interpretations of light and darkness in particular kept changing, as they do in Milton’s poem. Martin also illustrated such impossible images; and again, stars, clouds, and the moon are conjured up in the midst of dark skies. However, the results are opposite. While Martin uses chiaroscuro to give depth and reality to the fantastic vistas he engraves, Blake’s hellscapes are decidedly alien, and refuse to accommodate the senses. In vastly different ways, both artists make light and darkness not only visible, but palpable. One feels drawn in by Martin’s realistic mezzotints, while Blake’s plates reject realism but feature variations that invite viewers to reflect on the multiple shapes light and darkness can take. Both artists pay tribute to Milton’s imagination and build on the visual shifts in *Paradise Lost*. What better homage to the ever-shifting quality of light than pictorial transpositions that further its instability? Their ambivalent takes attest to the allusive richness of Milton’s poem, which paves the way for widely different interpretations and allows them to proliferate. Newlyn’s study

<sup>27</sup> Thorpe, *Milton Criticism*, 323.

focuses on the ways in which 'Romantic writing reproduces, amplifies, and prolongs the ambiguities of *Paradise Lost*'.<sup>28</sup> The word 'writing' could very well be replaced by 'engraving' or 'picturing', and that statement would be just as true. Wittreich draws similar conclusions regarding the prolific character of Romantic visual transpositions: 'What Romanticism encourages and what its accompanying wave of interlingual translation coupled with illustration ultimately promotes is the remapping, reconfiguration, and redating of horizontal changes and expectations concerning Milton and his poetry'.<sup>29</sup> Through the medium change from the verbal to the visual, Blake's and Martin's engravings offer fecund environments in which potent Miltonic images not only resonate, but are also substantialized in infinite ways.

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<sup>28</sup> Newlyn, *Paradise Lost and the Romantic Reader*, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Wittreich, 'More Worlds', 22.



## *Paradise Lost* in Stained Glass

Beverley Sherry

John Milton and his works are represented in various artistic media from the seventeenth century on, but not in stained glass until the nineteenth century. After the glories of Gothic architecture with its peak in the thirteenth century, stained glass gradually declined and, by the eighteenth century, was virtually a lost art. It enjoyed a vibrant rebirth with the Gothic Revival of the nineteenth century and flourished until at least the First World War. The result was a wealth of stained glass in churches and, especially through the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite artists, secular themes came into their own as well.<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Milton, as of William Shakespeare, proliferated in the Anglosphere from at least 1859—in libraries, schools, universities, civic buildings, even residences.<sup>2</sup> A fine example from King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford, UK, appears on the cover of *Milton in Translation* (2017), the partner of this volume, which also showcases stained glass on its cover. Milton's works, however, were rarely—albeit spectacularly—depicted in stained glass. Paintings illustrating *Paradise Lost* and illustrated editions are plentiful from 1688 into the twenty-first century, but to illustrate Milton's epic, or any literary work, in stained glass is an ambitious feat. Apart from the cost, the fundamental reason for the rarity is that, unlike paintings and illustrated books, stained glass is not a portable or autonomous art. It is an architectural art, tied to a building, a building constructed at a particular time and place for a particular purpose, and its meaning is part of that context.<sup>3</sup>

Any illustration of *Paradise Lost* in stained glass would therefore have to find an amenable context. The Milton window (1888) in St Margaret's Church, Westminster, UK, is a classic example. It draws on a particularly rich provenance and encompasses both portraits of Milton, at different stages of his life, and scenes

This chapter would not have been possible without the digital photographs generously provided to me by the Art Centre, University of New Brunswick; McCartney Library, Geneva College; and Michel M. Raguin for his photographs of Princeton University Chapel.

<sup>1</sup> On the nineteenth-century revival of stained glass, see Sewter, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and his Circle*; Harrison, *Victorian Stained Glass*; and for secular themes particularly, Sherry, *Australia's Historic Stained Glass*.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest portrait of Milton in stained glass that I have found is Clayton & Bell's full-length portrayal (1859) in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney. See Sherry, 'Portraits of Milton in Stained Glass', 312–13.

<sup>3</sup> I have explained this in relation to the acclaimed Britomart windows (1881–2) at the Cheltenham Ladies' College in Gloucestershire; see Sherry, 'Review of *Henry Lee Willet and McCartney Library's Paradise Lost Windows*', 58.

from *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd*.<sup>4</sup> It exemplifies Milton's own description of stained glass, before he lost his sight, as 'storied Windows richly dight' (*Il Penseroso* 159). Milton was no hide-bound Puritan and his appreciation of stained glass is consonant with his sensibility and the baroque richness of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>5</sup>

The present essay considers three 'storied Windows richly dight' that focus only upon *Paradise Lost*. They date from 1927 to 1931, when Milton had a secure place in education, and were designed for two universities and a liberal arts college in North America. My purpose is to show how the meaning and individuality of each window result from a particular artistic execution as well as from distinct architectural, social, cultural, and historical contexts. I also provide some answers to the question: what is lost and what is gained in these vitreous translations of Milton's epic?

### ***Paradise Lost* Window at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, Canada**

One episode from *Paradise Lost*, the War in Heaven, is rendered in a dramatic window designed by the London firm of Clayton & Bell for the Memorial Hall of the University of New Brunswick. The hall was built in 1923 and honours young men who lost their lives in the First World War. Windows by Robert McCausland Company of Toronto line either side of the hall, while Clayton & Bell's *Paradise Lost* window is the focus and centrepiece at the south end. It has been described as 'an immense glazed vision behind the stage of Milton's fallen and triumphant angels in the Original Battle in Heaven' and has been judged 'the masterpiece' of Fredericton's collection of stained glass.<sup>6</sup> Installed in 1927, it commemorates Franklin Sharp Rankin, Flight Lieutenant of the Royal Flying Corps. The inscription at the base of the window records that he was shot down 'above Bapaume', France, in 1916 at the age of twenty-three. The donor was his father, Dr W. D. Rankin, an alumnus of the University (class of 1886), and he gave the window in memory of his daughter too, Marjory Rankin Coleman, who died in 1926 at the age of twenty-seven, wife of Lieutenant Commander Coleman, detailed also in the inscription.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sherry, 'The Milton Memorial Window' and 'Milton in Stained Glass'.

<sup>5</sup> See *Il Penseroso* 159, in Milton *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Revard. For Milton as no hide-bound Puritan, see Martin, *Milton among the Puritans*.

<sup>6</sup> Bentley, 'Foreword', 17.

<sup>7</sup> Marie Maltais, Director of the University of New Brunswick's Art Centre, has generously provided information on the stained glass of the Memorial Hall together with professional photographs. For published material on the window, see University of New Brunswick, *Alumni Bulletin*; Leroux, *Glorious Light*, 17, 102–4; University of New Brunswick, *The Windows of Memorial Hall 2016–2017 Calendar*; and material on the University's website.



A blaze of light and colour, this window has a shock effect. Designed in four lights in predominantly blue, gold, red, and white glass, the subject extends across the lights and, at the same time, vertically from Heaven at the top to Hell at the bottom of the window (see Figure 16.1). The blue deepens to purple in the infernal regions and the golden rays of heavenly light contrast with the lurid flames of Hell. At the top, the Son is portrayed in his 'Chariot of Paternal Deitie', flanked by his 'Saints' on white horses, standing 'still in bright array' (*PL* 6.750, 6.801).<sup>8</sup> It is a scene of majestic calm and power. Directly below, angels with trumpets are blowing a fanfare; below that again, 'storming furie' is depicted, the violent clash of the warring angels armed with swords, shields, and bows and arrows (*PL* 6.207). The scene is alive with kinetic energy, and one horse seems to be galloping out of the window.

Two angels in the lower part of the window stand out—one victorious, the other fleeing into Hell (see Figure 16.2). The victor is in the third light and I interpret him as the archangel Michael, 'of Celestial Armies Prince', wielding his great 'avenging Sword' (*PL* 6.44, 6.278). Blonde hair flying and glorious golden wings fanning behind him, he brandishes his sword in his right hand and in his left grasps a standard topped with a cross. A deep red banner flies behind him and painted on it is a sunburst and cross, perhaps suggesting the Son/sun. On the left, at the bottom of the first light, the dominant fallen angel is breathing out hate and defiance against his pursuers, although terror is in the eyes of his horse and of his followers. This surely must be Satan, leader of the rebellion and 'Antagonist of Heav'ns Almighty King' (*PL* 10.387). The artists have distinguished him as the only fallen angel with golden hair and a red cape flying behind him, not unlike the red banner above the golden-haired Michael. As in *Paradise Lost*, Satan is still a splendid figure: 'his form had yet not lost | All her Original brightness, nor appear'd | Less then Arch Angel ruind' (*PL* 1.591–3).

The window does not attempt to follow the time scheme of book 6 of *Paradise Lost*. Rather, it shows an action or actions brought together and frozen in time, in glass. It is not unlike some of the frozen tableaux of Homer's *Iliad* and the friezes on the Parthenon, which capture the sense of intense, strenuous action. The Son is at the top, in an eternal present ('Stand still in bright array ye Saints, here stand', *PL* 6.801); below is the violent war of the angels ('now storming furie rose', *PL* 6.207) and the rout of Satan and his followers ('Eternal wrauth | Burnt after them to the bottomless pit', *PL* 6.865–6). The window has an epic drive and translates into glass something of the essence of book 6: the garish spectacle and huge havoc of the War in Heaven and the overarching control and triumph of the Son.

Of special significance is the extent to which the provenance of the window is translated in the glass—in the inscription, the drawing, and the symbolism. At the

<sup>8</sup> This and all quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Lewalski, and cited parenthetically in the text.



Fig. 16.1. Clayton & Bell, *Paradise Lost* window (1927) depicting the War in Heaven, Memorial Hall, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton. Courtesy of University of New Brunswick Art Centre.



Fig. 16.2. Clayton & Bell, warring angels: detail, *Paradise Lost* window (1927), University of New Brunswick, Fredericton. Courtesy of University of New Brunswick Art Centre.

base of the window, the inscription includes the moving biblical words, ‘They ever jeopardied their lives unto death,’ which allude at once to the young pilot and the instance of the First World War in the eternal cycle of war.<sup>9</sup> Artistic skill animates the facial expressions of the angels, and the faces are those of young men, even boys, suggesting the youth—of both victors and defeated—in the First World War. The Cross of St George is ubiquitous. The loyal angels wear it on their shields, thus identifying them as British and Canadian. The Son, his halo marked with a cross, holds aloft the flag of St George, while the hand of God at the apex of the window points to the Son and the dove descending (‘This is my beloved Son,’ Matthew 3:17). The victorious angels are suffused with a glory by being depicted in gold and white glass: the most visually prominent, those blowing the fanfare and the warring angels below, have golden hair, and the victors ride golden-harnessed white horses, while the rebel angels have brown steeds. Perhaps suggesting the battle in the air of the First World War, the defeated angels are being shot down mid-air, one seriously determined angel aiming an arrow. Though suffering heavy losses in the Great War, the Canadians were on the side of the victors.

<sup>9</sup> Judges 5:18.

This strong evocation of the First World War constitutes an extension in Clayton & Bell's translation of Milton's War in Heaven, lending it overtones of both victory and tragedy. What we see is an interpenetration of two wars—in effect a dual translation in stained glass. Via Milton's War in Heaven showing the triumph of good over evil, the First World War iconography of this window carries a strong message that 'God is on our side'. Considering that the Germans prayed to the same god, this is deeply ironic. Writing in 2011, the Canadian architect John Leroux rightly observed that 'the window's symbolic reach is robust and powerful, but also supremely partisan.'<sup>10</sup> Over time and depending on the viewers, the meaning of this window will change, but the unique 'aura' of its physical presence within the University of New Brunswick's Memorial Hall will survive.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Paradise Lost* Window at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, US**

Clayton & Bell's window at the University of New Brunswick is a translation into stained glass of one stupendous episode from *Paradise Lost*. The US artist, Henry Lee Willet (1899–1983), attempted the entire epic at Geneva College in Pennsylvania (see Figure 16.3). This Presbyterian college was founded on the tradition of the Reformed Christian faith, so *Paradise Lost* was a natural choice. Willet was also Presbyterian and a close friend of Dr Clarence E. McCartney, the Presbyterian minister whom the library commemorates. The donors of the library, the Deal sisters of Philadelphia, were also Presbyterians and parishioners of Dr McCartney, and Willet recalled, 'I was thrilled when the Misses Deal commissioned me in the depth of the depression' to design the stained glass.<sup>12</sup> He designed two windows for the McCartney Library: John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* for the east reading room and *Paradise Lost* for the west, both installed in 1931.<sup>13</sup> The inspiration for the windows was the prestigious Stone Lecture given by McCartney at Princeton University in 1928 for the tercentenary of Bunyan's birth. In the lecture, McCartney refers to Milton's dream 'of writing poetry "such as the world would not willingly let die"'; and he observes that, 'Like Milton in *Paradise Lost*, Bunyan in *The Holy War* takes us into the councils of the Almighty.'<sup>14</sup> The Geneva College

<sup>10</sup> Leroux, *Glorious Light*, 102. Leroux incorrectly interprets the window as depicting 'the battle between good and evil from book 1 of Milton's *Paradise Lost*', quoting *Paradise Lost* 1.544–5, a description of Satan's battalion of rebel angels in Hell. Allen Bentley, in the Foreword to Leroux's book, correctly reads the window as depicting the War in Heaven.

<sup>11</sup> On the 'aura' of a work of art, see Benjamin, 'The Work of Art', 220.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Kilpatrick and Mattson-Bozé, *Pilgrim's Progress Windows*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> For a commentary on the windows by two faculty members of Geneva College, see Kilpatrick and Mattson-Bozé, *Paradise Lost Windows* and *Pilgrim's Progress Windows*. This chapter incorporates some material from my review of these books in Sherry, 'Review'.

<sup>14</sup> McCartney, 'Behold, This Dreamer—John Bunyan', 573–4, 604.





Fig. 16.3. Henry Lee Willet, *Paradise Lost* window (1931), Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. Courtesy of McCartney Library, Geneva College.

windows thus exemplify how stained glass is not an autonomous art but exists within a particular architectural, social, cultural, and historical context.

In 1966, the artist Henry Willet returned to Geneva College to receive an honorary doctorate. By then a prolific artist, he singled out the windows: 'I doubt if I ever had more sheer joy than in developing these windows', work he undertook mainly on Nantucket Island in the summer of 1930. He believed that 'these great epics in their subject matter were peculiarly well suited for personification and translating into the idiom of stained glass.'<sup>15</sup> Each window has eighteen panels arranged in three tiers, with six illustrative panels in each tier. Thus, the east window displays eighteen episodes from *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the west, eighteen from *Paradise Lost*. The structure of each work is an easily read sequence that begins at the bottom tier on the extreme left, moves along to the right, then up to the middle tier and thence along to the left, then up to the top tier and along to the right. Unobtrusive captions or quotations are included in each panel.

<sup>15</sup> Kilpatrick and Mattson-Bozé, *Paradise Lost Windows*, 4, and *Pilgrim's Progress Windows*, 9; 'Willet, Henry Lee Willet Speech', 3.

For the *Paradise Lost* window, the first panel has ‘Sing Heavenly Muse’ (PL 1.6) and portrays Milton dictating to his daughter, while the last panel, on the extreme right of the top tier, has ‘Expulsion from the Garden’, and shows Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise by the archangel Michael. Further aiding legibility, the figures and scenes stand out clearly against a background of pale quarries. The window is readily accessible so that students can approach and read it close-up (see Figure 16.4). At the dedication of the library in 1931, McCartney commented on the rightness of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* window being placed in a library, and, returning to the College in 1966, Willet recalled, ‘[i]n those days, one room was for the boys and the other the girls, so I selected *Pilgrim’s Progress* for the boys and *Paradise Lost* for the girls’, presumably because *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Part 1, has mainly male characters, while Eve is a central character in *Paradise Lost*.<sup>16</sup> These are students’ windows, meant to be read, as part of the library. Indeed, they are



Fig. 16.4. Students reading Henry Lee Willet’s *Paradise Lost* window (1931), Geneva College. Courtesy of McCartney Library, Geneva College.

<sup>16</sup> Kilpatrick and Mattson-Bozé, *Pilgrim’s Progress Windows*, 9; Willet, ‘Henry Lee Willet Speech’, 3.

written into the physical fabric of the building and are to be read, together with the Bible, as central texts for this college founded on the Reformed faith.

A comparison between the windows reveals how Willet handles these two very different literary works. The same style of draughtsmanship, colours, and structure are followed for both windows, as well as the short quotations. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, however, has many more explanatory insets, of both text and images, than *Paradise Lost*. These insets fill out details of Bunyan's allegory, an allegory characterized by what C. S. Lewis terms a 'homely immediacy'.<sup>17</sup> *Paradise Lost* is not an allegory, nor is it homely. It is an august visionary epic and Willet works more by suggestion with this window and largely lets the images speak for themselves. At the base of the Expulsion scene, for example, a post marks the division between Paradise and the fallen world: rich colours of grass and flowers on the left of the post are set against the earthy colours of brown thorns on the right, a reminder of the judgement: 'Curs'd is the ground for thy sake [...] Thorns also and Thistles it shall bring thee forth' (*PL* 10.201–3) (see Figure 16.5). Geneva College's Professor Shirley Kilpatrick has lived with the window and reads many symbolic details in it, especially connections between the First and the Second Adam.<sup>18</sup>

Working in stained glass, not surprisingly, Willet uses colour symbolism. The Father and the Son are distinguished by robes of clear blue and red, traditional colours of the heavens and the spirit, and the unfallen angels wear the same colours. In his notes, held in Geneva College archives, Willet expresses his strong belief that Milton was not an anti-Trinitarian and explains that he tried to convey the unity of the Father and the Son in his third panel ('God's Council'). He writes that he portrays them as almost identical figures, with their blue and red robes flowing together, 'so that one cannot tell where God ends and Christ begins'.<sup>19</sup> In translating the evolving action of the epic, Willet also makes use of skin tones. Before the Fall, Eve's skin is white, as in panel six (Satan tempting her in sleep) and panel seven (the visit of the archangel Raphael), but by the time of the Fall in panel thirteen, she is turning the colour of Sin, who had made a formidable entrance in the third panel ('Gates of Hell') as orange-red, accompanied by the purple figure of Death. By the fourteenth panel, with the Son 'Pitying how they stood | Before him', Eve is redder, while Adam's skin has now become the purple colour of Death (*PL* 10.211–12). By the sixteenth panel, inscribed 'Christ Intercedes', as he does in book 11, Adam is fully the colour of Death and Eve the colour of Sin; they are overcome with shame and hide their faces even from each other. Their skin tones are most emphatic in the final panel ('Expulsion from the Garden'), where they are bowed down in grief below the archangel Michael (see Figure 16.5).

<sup>17</sup> Lewis, *Selected Literary Essays*, 148.

<sup>18</sup> Kilpatrick and Mattson-Bozé, *Paradise Lost Windows*, 29–30, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Kilpatrick and Mattson-Bozé, *Paradise Lost Windows*, 19.



Fig. 16.5. Henry Lee Willet, 'Expulsion from the Garden': detail, *Paradise Lost* window (1931), Geneva College. Courtesy of McCartney Library, Geneva College.



As noted, Willet affirmed that he was ‘translating’ *Paradise Lost* into the medium of stained glass. Like all illustration and translation of Milton’s epic, Willet’s window is revelatory in that it provokes a fresh view of the poem—by what is lost, added, and even gained in his translation. The War in Heaven, handled so well in the large Canadian window, was surely a challenge for Willet working with small panels, and the majesty of the Son in his ‘Chariot of Paternal Deitie’ is lost in the ninth panel (‘Christ Drives Out the Rebel Angels’). However, Willet adds imaginative material which provokes thought about Milton’s poem. His emphasis on Creation is striking—three panels of the eighteen. The inscription of panel ten (‘Conglobing Like Things to Like’) adapts ‘then conglob’d | Like things to like’ and, through a familiar biblical metaphor, Willet represents the Creator as a potter fashioning a work from clay (*PL* 7.239–40). Panel seventeen (‘Sin and Death Defeated’) is a daring visualization of a subject that Milton does not visualize, the Son’s final victory over Satan, foretold by the archangel Michael (*PL* 12.411–35). Milton scarcely mentions the Virgin Mary, but Willet translates imaginatively, showing Michael and Adam at the base of the image looking up at a vision of Mary with the Son in his human form of Jesus, a sturdy infant holding a cross and trampling on the serpent.

Willet’s use of colour symbolism is a distinct gain in his translation, leading most eloquently to the final panel, ‘Expulsion from the Garden’ (see Figure 16.5). All the individual panels, however, provoke renewed understanding of Milton’s original. Panel three (‘Satan’s Council’) works particularly well. It immediately evokes the council in Hell, with Satan high above his followers on a throne of ‘Barbaric’ splendour (*PL* 2.4). His chief offside Beelzebub kneels at his right, ‘then whom, | *Satan* except, none higher sat’ (*PL* 2.299–300). On his left, Moloch is standing up, holding a spear—immediately after Satan’s opening speech, ‘*Moloch*, Scepter’d King | Stood up’ (*PL* 2.43–4). In his illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost*, the nineteenth-century artist John Martin invests Satan with heroic grandeur in this scene.<sup>20</sup> In stark contrast, Willet strips every scrap of nobility and heroism from Satan, though not his power. He is a strong, brooding, self-absorbed figure hunched over his ‘Throne of Royal State’ (*PL* 2.1). While the infernal council of book 2 is evoked, this panel translates at the same time an aspect of Milton’s Hell that is manifest in the catalogue of fallen angels (*PL* 1.392–521)—this Hell is ugly, obscene, and pagan. The word ‘obscene’ is used only once in *Paradise Lost*, in Hell and specifically for ‘*Chemos*, th’ obscene dread of *Moabs* Sons’ (*PL* 1.406). In the catalogue of fallen angels, Chemos is next after Moloch, ‘lust hard by hate’, exactly as Willet represents them in this panel (*PL* 1.417). These two are followed by six more, an

<sup>20</sup> ‘Satan on the Throne of Pandemonium’ in Milton, *The Paradise Lost of John Milton, Designed and Engraved by John Martin*. Martin’s line reference below his mezzotint is book 2 line 1. For a discussion of Martin’s visual translation of Milton’s verbal representation of light and dark, see Camille Adnot’s chapter in the present volume, ‘From Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to Blake’s *Milton*’.

ugly procession of 'gross' figures, all identified by Willet in his notes (*PL* 1.491).<sup>21</sup> The colours of the glass come into play: whereas Willet distinguishes the Father and the Son by the clear blue and red of their robes, here he uses a murky mix of red and green for Satan (see Figure 16.4). He is surrounded by the paraphernalia of demonic pagan power—star, trident, and what appear to be grotesque golden serpents on either side of his throne. This is the only panel too in which flames are depicted, the flames of Hell breaking out of the lead cross bars. Curiously, John Carey chose to delete the entire catalogue of fallen angels in his redaction of *Paradise Lost*, a manifest loss in his 'translation'.<sup>22</sup> In Willet's vitreous translation, the imaginative treatment of 'Satan's Council' is a gain.

### ***Paradise Lost* Window at Princeton University Chapel, New Jersey, US**

In 1931, the same year that Willet's windows were installed at Geneva College, Charles J. Connick (1875–1945) completed his four 'Christian Epics' for the Chapel of Princeton University: Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* in 1929, Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1930, Milton's *Paradise Lost* in 1930, and Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* in 1931.<sup>23</sup> Whether the two artists communicated directly about their respective works is not known, but there was a strong cross-generational connection between them. Connick knew Willet's father, William Willet (1869–1921), worked with him around 1904, and considered him an artist of the first rank and a pioneer in US stained glass, while the young Henry Lee Willet 'admired immeasurably' his senior, Charles Connick.<sup>24</sup> In 1928, the Stone Lecture for Bunyan's tercentenary was delivered at Princeton; as noted above, it inspired Willet's windows, so perhaps it had an influence also on Connick's windows.

The four 'Christian Epics' are major works that university students might be expected to study. As Virginia Raguin observes, Connick's windows 'presented the university with images reflecting the Christian tradition in biblical literature and the canon of great books associated with a Christian education'.<sup>25</sup> Connick himself, in his great work *Adventures in Light and Color* (1937), recalls how he

<sup>21</sup> Willet's notes are as follows: '1. Moloch holding a spear: murder. 2. Chemos holding a goblet: lust. 3. Astorete holding a mirror: pride. 4. Thammuz kneeling: envy. 5. Rimmon holding fruit: gluttony. 6. Dagon with sea serpent tail: covetousness. 7. Belial with crossed arms: spirit of idleness. 8. Mammon (in the lower right-hand corner) looking into a jar: worldliness' (From Geneva College Archives, quoted in Kilpatrick and Mattson-Bozé, *Paradise Lost Windows*, 16).

<sup>22</sup> Carey and Milton, *The Essential 'Paradise Lost'*. For a discussion of Carey's adaptation, see Peter C. Herman's chapter in the present volume, 'Milton in the Age of Twitter'.

<sup>23</sup> 'Connick Completes "Christian Epic" Windows'; 'The Milton Window', 468, 480. For a detailed study of the chapel and its stained glass, see Stillwell, *The Chapel of Princeton University*.

<sup>24</sup> Connick, *Adventures in Light and Color*, 135, 404 n 43; Tannler, *Charles J. Connick*, 17–14; Willet, 'Henry Lee Willet Troublesome Fellow', 24, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Raguin, *Style, Status, and Religion*.

came to design secular windows for churches and colleges in Pennsylvania and Ohio, notably the series made in 1929 for Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio.<sup>26</sup> He concludes that,

All these efforts merge with the Princeton Epic windows in my thought of what my craft can do for the Sunday school. Dante, Malory, Milton and Bunyan have, with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, glowing and colorful inspirations for boys and girls everywhere. When a professor of literature announced those great symbols as glorious and successful invitations to the warm heart of Gospels and Epics together, I thought at once of their place in an ideal church school.<sup>27</sup>

The ‘professor of literature’ was surely Albert Mathias Friend, Princeton’s official iconographer for the Chapel, who worked out the programme for every window and proposed the four Christian Epics in 1928. He was a faculty member in the Department of Art and Archaeology but had a wide knowledge of the humanities, including literature.<sup>28</sup>

What is immediately striking is that the *Paradise Lost* window at Princeton is part of a grand architectural design in a building of almost cathedral proportions (see Figure 16.6). It is situated in the choir and, as the Princeton historian Richard Stillwell writes, ‘the choir is unusually large and is intended, as in English chapels, not only for the singers but for the entire congregation at a small service’.<sup>29</sup> The chapel was built in 1925–8 and designed by Ralph Adams Cram (1863–1942), the leading architect of the Collegiate Gothic style. Connick had a close working relationship with Cram, and the four ‘Christian Epics’ are part of a majestic ensemble at the east end of the chapel: the East Window (‘The Love of Christ’) flanked by the *Divine Comedy* and *Le Morte d’Arthur* (north side) and *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (south side). Each epic is in four lights divided into three tiers, with twelve panels in each tier. Thus, the *Paradise Lost* window comprises thirty-six panels depicting episodes from the poem.<sup>30</sup> The bottom tier depicts the fall of Satan and his angels; the middle tier, Earth and the Fall of humankind; and the top tier, the redemption of humankind through Christ. There is an upwards progression towards more light and the three tiers might be seen as a visual correlative of the vertical ‘spatial’ axis of *Paradise Lost*—Hell, Earth, Heaven (see Figure 16.7).

<sup>26</sup> Connick, *Adventures in Light and Color*, 225–31 and ‘Collotype XXIV’.

<sup>27</sup> Connick, *Adventures in Light and Color*, 232.

<sup>28</sup> Friend, ‘The Sculpture and Glass of the Chapel’; Stillwell, *The Chapel of Princeton University*, 39; Milliner, ‘*Primus inter pares*’; Seasonwein, *Princeton and the Gothic Revival 1870–1930*, 108–9; Raguin, *Style, Status, and Religion*.

<sup>29</sup> Stillwell, *The Chapel of Princeton University*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> For a full account of the subjects depicted and their accompanying quotations from *Paradise Lost* as well as a detailed diagram showing how to navigate the window, see Stillwell, *The Chapel of Princeton University*, 75–83.



Fig. 16.6. Charles J. Connick, Great East window (1928), *Paradise Lost* window (1930), and *The Pilgrim's Progress* window (1930), Princeton University Chapel. Courtesy of Princeton University. Photograph by Michel M. Raguin.

Connick had a formidable knowledge of the text of all four epics, and central to his designs is the incorporation of quotations from the works. The historian of stained glass Peter Cormack notes the appropriateness of Connick's technique and his originality:

As befits a sequence of literary-themed glazing, texts have a prominent role [. . .]. The many quotations are a repeated diagonal motif throughout all four windows, sometimes dissecting or passing over the figures. Connick was familiar with canting inscribed bands as a decorative motif found in fifteenth-century glass, but here he reinvented it in a wholly modern and quasi-expressionistic way, so that the texts provide a jagged, insistent momentum for each epic narrative and thus communicate the potency of the written word.<sup>31</sup>

In the *Paradise Lost* window, the quotations have a direct visual force, demanding to be read because inscribed heavily right across the figures portrayed. There is a progression upwards, however, from the darkest colours and jagged text towards

<sup>31</sup> Cormack, *Arts & Crafts Stained Glass*, 230. Cormack believes that the *Paradise Lost* window is 'perhaps the finest modern depiction of Milton's work in any medium' (Cormack, Email to author).



**Fig. 16.7.** Charles J. Connick, *Paradise Lost* window (1930), Princeton University Chapel. Courtesy of Princeton University. Photograph by Michel M. Raguin.

the top tier, where a sense of peace prevails. There, the heavenly colour, blue, predominates, and the jagged lines disappear, replaced by long quotations written horizontally across the base of the panels.

The window is radically different from Willet's *Paradise Lost*. It encompasses twice as many episodes from the poem (thirty-six) and, in accord with its architectural context, is designed on a far larger scale, 350 square feet (32.5 square metres) and 24 feet 8 inches (7.5 metres) from the floor.<sup>32</sup> It is less accessible and more difficult to read than Willet's window, where the figures stand out clearly against a background of pale quarries. Here, the design is analogous to the stained glass of medieval cathedrals, from a distance not unlike Chartres, France, which profoundly influenced Connick—solid colour with myriad details only legible with binoculars. Stillwell observes that, 'many of the legends are difficult to read without a glass, but they, and the scenes that go with them, will amply repay prolonged study, not only for the subject matter but also for the appreciation of the painstaking research and imagination of the artist'. Stillwell provides a detailed diagram to help viewers navigate the window.<sup>33</sup>

Extending horizontally across the base of the entire work is a quotation that defines what the blind Milton was trying to do and also what the stained glass artist, painting with light, was attempting: 'Celestial light | Shine inward [. . .] that I may see and tell | Of things invisible to mortal sight' (*PL* 3.51–2, 54–5).<sup>34</sup> The individual images with their accompanying texts then begin with an introductory panel, the furthest left of the bottom tier. Milton is dictating to his daughter and inscribed diagonally across the panel are words adapted from his invocation, 'That I may [. . .] justify the wayes of God to men' (*PL* 1.24–6). Stillwell had access to Connick's programme, which 'was carefully written out as the designs progressed', and he interprets the small figure in the upper right of this panel as 'Satan, defiant, with bat-like wings and clad in armor'.<sup>35</sup>

As with Willet's design, the narrative progresses from the base to the top of the window, but Connick follows Milton's narrative more complexly. One of the first readers of the window found it bewildering compared with the Dante window on the opposite side, but admired its 'elaborate intermingling of upward and downward movements to symbolize not only the ascents and descents described by Milton in his poem, but the general idea of the play of good and evil which runs through *Paradise Lost*'.<sup>36</sup> There is a general movement upward, but within each tier there are indeed movements up and down. Stillwell explains that the top panel furthest right in the bottom and middle tiers is the 'crucial link' in the progress of

<sup>32</sup> Statistics from Connick's job file on the completion of the *Paradise Lost* window: 'Report 1175', dated Christmas 1930, held in Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Collection Job Files. The three other Epic windows are of identical dimensions.

<sup>33</sup> Stillwell, *The Chapel of Princeton University*, 45, 75–83, 78 (diagram for *Paradise Lost* window).

<sup>34</sup> Stained glass artists refer to themselves as 'painting with light'; see Brent, 'Artists of Light', 259.

<sup>35</sup> Stillwell, *The Chapel of Princeton University*, 45, 75.

<sup>36</sup> 'The Milton Window', 468, 480.



the narrative from one tier up to the next.<sup>37</sup> More importantly, Connick's insistent quotations are the best guide to reading the window.

The bottom tier, on the fall of Satan and his angels, encompasses scenes from both Hell and the War in Heaven (see Figure 16.8). The uppermost panels show 'Michael of Celestial Armies Prince' confronting 'Satan antagonist of heavens King', while the fearsome Son shoots thunderbolts from his quiver, inscribed across him, 'Eternal wrauth | Burnt after them to the bottomless pit' (*PL* 6.44, 10.387, 6.865–6). That early reader detected a small canon below Satan alluding to his invention of artillery in the War in Heaven. Still following Milton's narrative accurately, Connick portrays Gabriel defeating Moloch, Raphael overcoming Asmodai, and Uriel descending on a sunbeam slaying Adramelec (*PL* 6.354–66). In this vitreous translation, the unfallen archangels are resplendent in golden armour, the defeated angels hopelessly tarnished. Likewise, in the two panels below, Satan and Beelzebub in Hell, almost identical figures, have lost their lustre. Satan is flanked by Moloch and Belial, Beelzebub by Mammon and Mulciber. Written defiantly in opposite diagonal lines across the two panels are Satan's bold words to Beelzebub (*PL* 1.263), 'Better to reign in hell than serve in heav'n'. The cartoon for these panels is reproduced in Connick's book *Adventures in Light and Color*, with the caption, 'Cartoons for Medallions in base of Paradise Lost Window—Princeton University. Celebrating Milton's Princes of Hell—including Mulciber, the Architect of Pandemonium' (*PL* 1.740–51).<sup>38</sup> As in the cartoon, Mulciber is holding a compass in his left hand and an architect's right-angle rule in his right.

The middle tier of the window focuses upon Earth (see Figure 16.9). The violent clashing effects of the bottom tier give way to more composed drawing and blue, green, and brown tones. The first panel to be read is at the top left, the crowned Son as Creator with his huge 'golden' compass and the inscription, 'His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread' (*PL* 7.225, 235). Small roundels in this panel show the six days of Creation, including the figure of a man.<sup>39</sup> The quotation then leads directly below to the creation of Adam with the words, 'Adam rise | First man' (*PL* 8.296–7). Below that again is the creation of Eve with 'Woman is her Name' (*PL* 8.496). Further panels, all with accurate quotations, show Raphael's meal with Adam and Eve, Satan tempting Eve in her dream, the Fall, and Adam and Eve being expelled from Paradise. The fatal act shows a supremely confident Eve reaching for the fruit, a huge serpent around the tree, and written forcefully across the panel, 'the Tree | Of prohibition, root of all our woe' (*PL* 9.644–5). When Eve tempts Adam, Connick does not forget the 'Garland' falling from his hand (*PL* 9.892), while five jagged lines read (*PL* 9.996): 'Shee gave him of that fair enticing fruit'.

<sup>37</sup> Stillwell, *The Chapel of Princeton University*, 75.

<sup>38</sup> Connick, *Adventures in Light and Color*, 198; see also 'Collotype XXV', which reproduces the cartoons of the introductory panels of all four Epic windows.

<sup>39</sup> For the use of roundels in the first illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost* (1688), see Wendy Furman-Adams's chapter in the present volume, 'Artists Illuminating Milton's Gendered Instant of Creation'.

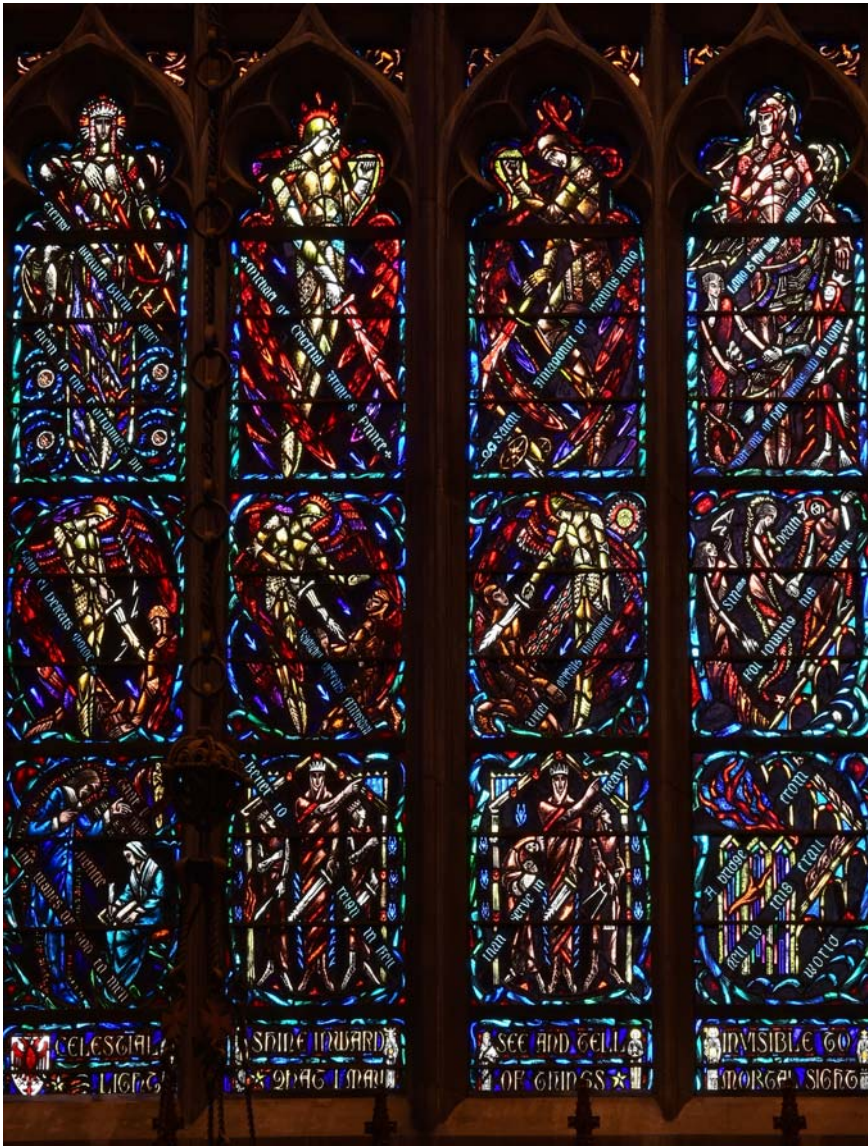


Fig. 16.8. Charles J. Connick, bottom tier of *Paradise Lost* window (1930), Princeton University Chapel. Courtesy of Princeton University. Photograph by Michel M. Raguin.

Adam and Eve appear noble in these panels; in the Expulsion panel, far right of the middle row, they are wretched figures clad in fig leaves, the broken text reading (*PL* 10.208): ‘dust thou art’ slanting downwards, ‘and shalt to dust return’ beneath it. But in the top row of this middle tier, imposing figures of Michael and Adam face



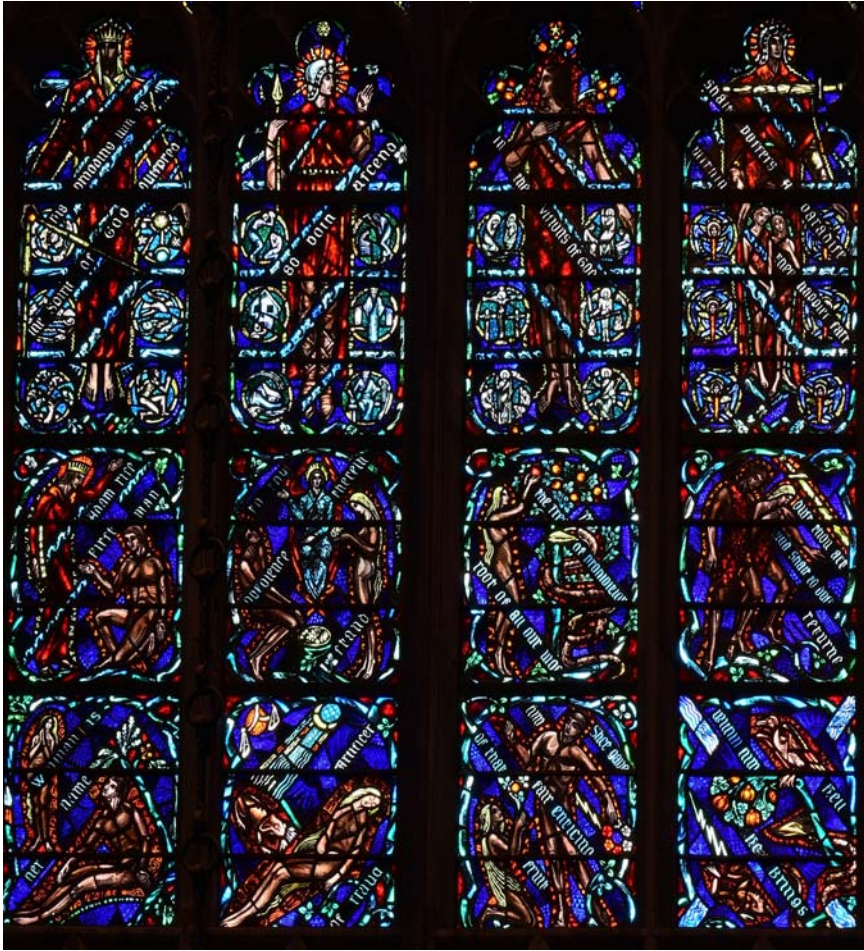


Fig. 16.9. Charles J. Connick, middle tier of *Paradise Lost* window (1930), Princeton University Chapel. Courtesy of Princeton University. Photograph by Michel M. Raguin.

each other with this inscription across both panels, 'so both ascend in the visions of God' (PL 11.376–7). Connick's knowledge of the poem is again manifest in twelve small roundels showing the history foretold by Michael, beginning with Cain and Abel.

The twelve panels of the top tier are devoted entirely to human redemption and depict scenes from Jesus' life: four panels on the Nativity; above that, four showing Jesus mocked, condemned, scourged, and crucified; above these, four panels showing the Resurrection of Jesus with Sin and Satan in serpentine form at his feet and Death beneath his feet, St Peter with apostles, the Virgin Mary, and the Ascension of Jesus (see Figure 16.10). It has often been noted that Milton seems

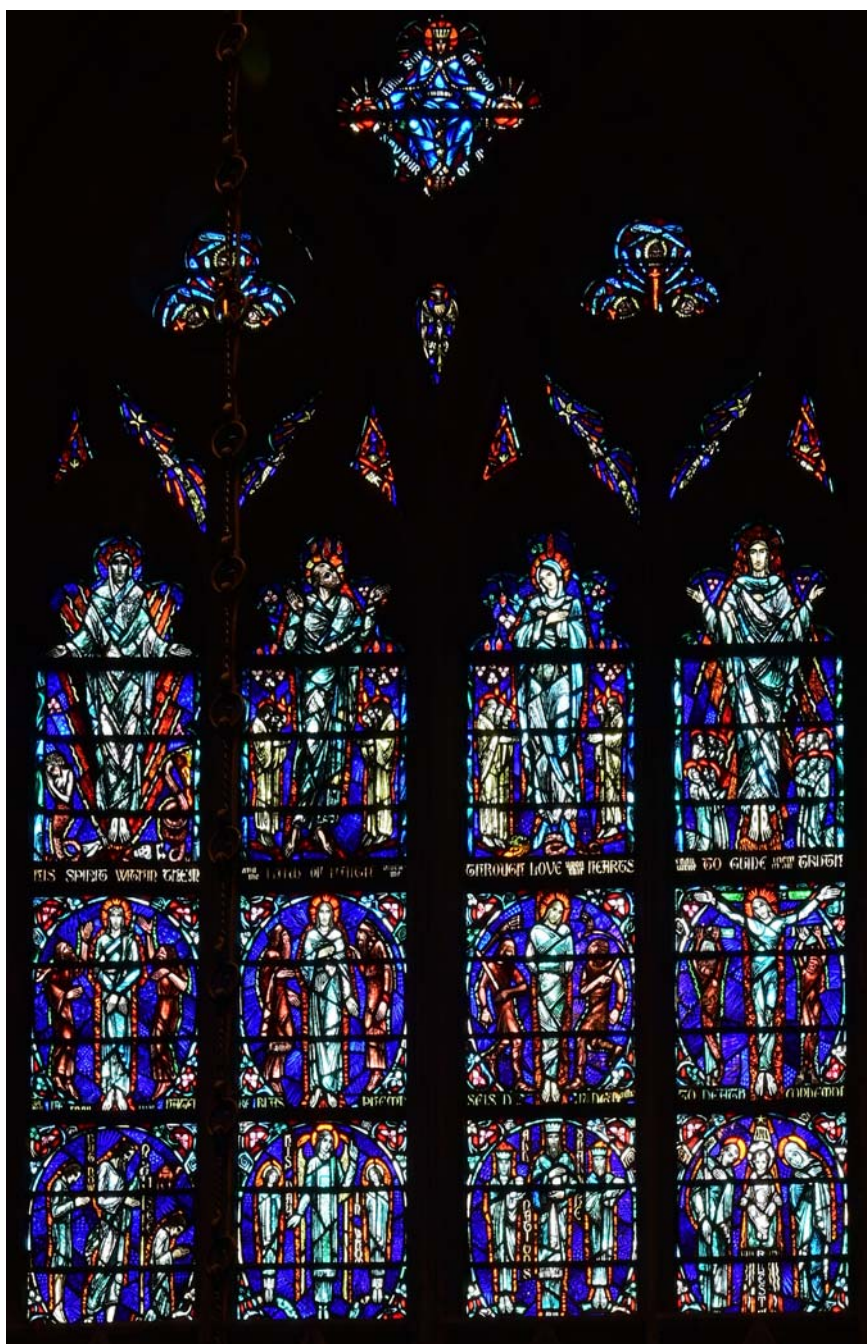


Fig. 16.10. Charles J. Connick, top tier of *Paradise Lost* window (1930), Princeton University Chapel. Courtesy of Princeton University. Photograph by Michel M. Raguin.

unable or unwilling to deal with the Crucifixion, which he recounts in a few lines (*PL* 12.411–14), but Connick devotes four panels to the sufferings of Jesus and his death. He reaffirms the theme of redemption through the rose in the tracery at the very top of the window, which portrays the enthroned Son and is inscribed ‘Hail Son of God, Saviour of Men’ (*PL* 3.412). Analysing the top tier, Stillwell concludes, ‘Milton’s majestic theme—the intervention of Omnipotence itself to prevent the destruction of mankind by the united powers of Hell—is celebrated in glorious colors in which blue, the heavenly color, predominates.’<sup>40</sup>

That majestic theme has recurred as a promise throughout *Paradise Lost* and is most powerfully expressed in book 3, which provides the text for the apex of Connick’s window. Yet the overarching action and theme of Milton’s poem is the loss of paradise. Connick shows that devastating loss unsparingly, but his translation moves inexorably towards the ‘one greater Man’ (*PL* 1.4). The entire top tier is devoted to the salvation offered by Jesus, and is suffused with azure, called by Connick ‘Heaven’s First Hue.’<sup>41</sup> As well, a panel on the top row of the middle tier shows Adam and Eve—small, woebegone figures—sheltered by the archangel Michael and his consoling words, ‘shalt possess a paradise within thee, happier farr’ (*PL* 12.586–7).

By means of the top tier and the visionary scenes of the middle tier, Connick seems to be trying to encompass, within one window, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain’d*. His job report from December 1930, on the completion of the window, provides some evidence for this: he records the subject as ‘Milton’s Paradise “Lost and Regained”’.<sup>42</sup> He is following the authority of Albert Friend, who had proposed that subject in 1928, and had also declared that Christ is ‘the goal of each epic.’<sup>43</sup> Milton’s is a poem of loss but Connick’s daring and hugely imaginative design moves upwards to transcendent hope at the top of the window. Moreover, in the composition of his four Christian Epics, he surely intends this window to cohere with the other three, which all move in a heavenward trajectory.

## Conclusion

The three windows considered in this chapter differ from other visual representations of *Paradise Lost* in that they are works of architectural art, bringing with them a rich freight of meaning as part of a particular building. More fundamentally, they differ from all other *Paradise Lost* illustrations—paintings, drawings, engravings—because of the medium itself. Distinct from the other visual arts, stained glass relies

<sup>40</sup> Stillwell, *The Chapel of Princeton University*, 82.

<sup>41</sup> Connick, *Adventures in Color and Light*, 217.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Report 1175’, dated Christmas 1930, held in Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Collection Job Files.

<sup>43</sup> Friend, ‘The Sculpture and Glass of the Chapel’, 991; Milliner, ‘Primus inter pares’, 497.

for its existence on the indwelling presence of light. It is dead without light passing through it, and it changes as the light changes—with the time of day, season of the year, even within half an hour if clouds pass outside the building.<sup>44</sup> These three windows ‘perform’ in the light. Connick recounts how he learned much from ‘a great window in performance’ and came to discover this deep truth about stained glass:

A new region of beauty slowly opened to me when I realized how sensitively a translucent stained glass window comes alive in light. [. . .] I had not appreciated the one thing that makes a stained glass window unique among all craft-works. Ancient windows taught me that light changes constantly, and that a window balanced in light, is more like music than it is like any sort of picture. It sings in the light, and I learned to listen to the shifting colors in glowing windows, much as I learned to listen to vibrant sounds in music.<sup>45</sup>

Connick’s *Paradise Lost* window is on the south wall of the Princeton Chapel, and the Reverend Alison Boden writes that, ‘it receives direct light from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Its colors glow on the stonework of the opposite wall during our Sunday chapel service, adding significantly to the beauty of the total experience.’<sup>46</sup> Similar reports were sent to me from the University of New Brunswick and Geneva College.<sup>47</sup> Each of the three windows discussed in this chapter has a unique life as it responds to light, an ‘aura’ that cannot be lifted out of context or reproduced. However, the digital photographs of this chapter, accessible worldwide, convey in fair measure how *Paradise Lost* has been translated into stained glass, while also revealing details inaccessible to the naked eye.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, how do the three windows compare as translations of *Paradise Lost*? Robert Frost considered that, ‘poetry is what is lost in translation.’<sup>49</sup> Challenging that idea in relation to the sound of *Paradise Lost*, I found that both interlingual and intralingual translations can jolt us into hearing anew the power of Milton’s original.<sup>50</sup> These vitreous translations are similarly revealing. The Canadian window can reignite an awareness of the shock and awe of the War in Heaven coexistent with the high control of the Son. It does this more effectively than Willet’s and Connick’s windows, which include the War only as details. In addition, the First World War provenance of the Canadian window deepens the translation

<sup>44</sup> Sherry, *Australia’s Historic Stained Glass*, 9–10, 90–1. Charles Connick’s Great West Rose window (1935) in the Cathedral of St John the Divine, New York, is a stunning example. See the two contrasting photographs of the window at different times of the day, in Sturm, *Stained Glass*, 67, Figs. 64, 65.

<sup>45</sup> Connick, *Adventures in Light and Color*, 139.

<sup>46</sup> Alison Boden is Dean of the Princeton Chapel (Email to author).

<sup>47</sup> Maltais and Quick of the University of New Brunswick Art Centre, Emails to author; Kilpatrick and Joseph at Geneva College, Emails to author.

<sup>48</sup> The access occurs especially when magnified on screen.

<sup>49</sup> Untermeyer, *Robert Frost*, 18.

<sup>50</sup> Sherry, ‘Lost and Regained in Translation.’

of the War in Heaven. In a different way, Willet's window at Geneva College adds creatively to *Paradise Lost* through evocative images and especially through colour symbolism. Different again, Connick's *Paradise Lost* accords Milton's text a powerful co-presence with the images, which strengthens his translation. At the same time, his window opens up a new vision of the poem through its soaring structure rising from the violent scenes at the bottom to the serenity at the top. Connick bends *Paradise Lost* heavenward, while Willet shapes his window towards the tragic departure from Paradise. In this respect, Willet's is the truer translation of Milton's narrative. Still, the Miltonic sublime eludes him.

Indeed, the most daunting challenge that confronts translators of *Paradise Lost*, working in any medium, is the poem's sublimity. John Hale, reviewing *Milton in Translation*, concludes that translators wrestle with 'Milton's inspiring difficulty, his unique sublime'.<sup>51</sup> The sublime sets *Paradise Lost* apart and has been a constant in Milton studies ever since Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, applied it to the poem in 1670.<sup>52</sup> Salient components of its sublimity are the astonishing subject and language, the chiaroscuro of light and darkness, the vast spatial and temporal perspectives, the sound of the poem, and the characters. Edmund Burke identified sublimity supremely in the character of Satan.<sup>53</sup> But Burke had a low estimation of pictures and would have held that no visual representation could capture the sublimity of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>54</sup> He would be wrong: artists who come close to the Miltonic sublime are William Blake, Henry Fuseli, and especially John Martin with his visionary mezzotints.<sup>55</sup> Painting with light and colour in the medium of stained glass, Charles Connick, too, translates the astonishing subject and imaginative reach of *Paradise Lost* in a work that aspires to the sublime.

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<sup>51</sup> Hale, 'Review', 239.

<sup>52</sup> Phillips, *Compendiosa enumeratio poetarum*. Phillips was using the first edition of *Paradise Lost* (1667). Studies of the sublimity of *Paradise Lost* continue into the twenty-first century; see McDowell, 'Refining the Sublime'.

<sup>53</sup> Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry*, 63, 59–63.

<sup>54</sup> Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry*, 60–4, 172–3. Writing thirty years before Burke, Jonathan Richardson had no such mean opinion of painting and readily includes artists, especially Rembrandt, in the sublime; see the last chapter, 'Of the Sublime', in Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*.

<sup>55</sup> See Sherry, 'John Martin's Apocalyptic Illustrations to *Paradise Lost*'.



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# The Synergies of Drawing and Painting

## *Paradise Lost*

Richard Kenton Webb, Islam Issa, and Angelica Duran

### A Preview from the Artist

It was John Martin's mezzotints for *Paradise Lost* (1827) in the Tate Britain *Apocalypse* show in November 2011 that propelled me into what would turn out to be a ten-year artistic conversation with John Milton's epic. While standing in front of the mezzotints, my son asked me if I had read the poem.<sup>1</sup> I explained that I was saving it. Resonant with the story of Milton's younger friend Thomas Elwood propelling the poet to publish what would become *Paradise Regain'd*, my son told me that it was about time I got on with it.<sup>2</sup> Over the coming decade, I completed 179 uncommissioned artworks to make up a collection named *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2021).

With these artworks, I want reader-viewers of my drawings, linocuts, and paintings to understand exactly how alive, fresh, and relevant Milton's poetry remains. In *Paradise Lost*, as Milton's younger contemporary Andrew Marvell recognized early on, Milton 'unfold[s]' a 'vast design', addressing issues that are just as alive and just as challenging today as they were in the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> The important question for me as an artist and academic of the twenty-first century is why this poem has been so consistently significant for every age over the past 350 years. After a great deal of reading and reflection, I find that a key answer lies in its contemporaneity, coupled with its scope, simultaneously epic and intimate.<sup>4</sup> The artworks are sizeable—most are over two metres in length—so that the sheer breadth pushes audiences into a panoramic vision. But I also selected a short height to invite audiences into an intimacy, to encounter detail, to understand their personal experiences as linked to humanity and artistry.

*A Conversation* is a deeply personal exploration of relationships writ large as much as it is a love story with all the internal struggles of two people, Adam and

<sup>1</sup> For discussions of Martin's illustrations in relation to creation and creativity, see Wendy Furman-Adams' chapter, 'Artists Illuminating Milton's Gendered Instant of Creation', and to tone and colour, see Camille Adnot's chapter, 'From Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Blake's *Milton*', both in the present volume.

<sup>2</sup> Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, 4; Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, 413.

<sup>3</sup> Marvell, 'On Mr. Milton's "Paradise Lost"', l. 3.

<sup>4</sup> For contemporaneity, see Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, and Stokes, *The Naked Self*.

Eve—with themselves, each other, their environment, and their creator. From the very start, I have been astounded by Milton's exploration of the ongoing problem of good and evil, with aspects of his struggles mirrored in some way in my own life, as other readers over the centuries too have recorded, but wholly unique to me. I discovered through the creation process how profoundly the poet's eventual representation of goodness and hope presents exit strategies to struggles we ourselves may be experiencing. I also see the conversation as a gloss, as opposed to an illustration. I am providing drawings, paintings, or prints to illuminate or adorn Milton's text in order to expand, open up, improvise, play, and philosophize. This is my way of thinking through an idea, making the words visible, and encouraging reader-viewers to engage with Milton's words in different ways. The judges of the Sunny Art Centre, which awarded the Sunny Art Prize 2020 to me for 'Wreck', did not define or limit but rather saw and felt the 'visual poetry, communicating a hidden realm' (see Figure 17.4).<sup>5</sup>

Martin may have been a source of inspiration, but my response to the poem departs from the extreme tonal range of black and white that he used in all twenty-four of his mezzotints. Rather, I employ three very different visual languages to interpret the narrative of the poem: line, colour, and tone.

The dominant language I have chosen for nine of the twelve books is line, which is present in all of the images—exclusively so, without colour or tone, in 101 of the 179 artworks.<sup>6</sup> The visual language of line is processed separately in the visual brain from the eye–brain pathways of tone and colour. Pure line is a fabrication of the artist's mind; it is not the way we see and experience the world at all. Line is a construct, a shorthand for making sense of what we see. Line is a language for the imagination and, for that reason, it has been used to great effect by artists for centuries. Examples include those by Sandro Botticelli (1480) and John Flaxman (1793) in their drawings for Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, and William Blake in his twenty-two engravings for the *Book of Job* (1826). The line employed by these artists is open, limited, and ambiguous, allowing for a more poetical play in interpreting their ideas and thinking.

The absence of tone and colour means that those languages are potentially imagined by individual viewers—and by listeners of the poem, as in radio plays, audiobooks, or oral readings.<sup>7</sup> The interpretation of pure line can allude to—even hallucinate—the presence of tonal and colour qualities by their very absence. But when we arrive at Heaven in book 3, the language and scale of the work needs to

<sup>5</sup> 'Sunny Art Prize 2020—Prize Winners.'

<sup>6</sup> For another twenty-first century artist who responds to *Paradise Lost* by similarly using mostly line with sparse and well-placed colour to much different effect, see Jan F. van Dijkhuizen and Lucy McGourty's chapter in the present volume, 'Narrative Structure, Intervisuality, and Theology in Auladell's *El Paraíso perdido*'.

<sup>7</sup> For marathon readings of *Paradise Lost*, see John Hale's chapter in the present volume, 'Milton Marathons.'

change into a different quality and dimension: one that lifts the veil on what line could mean as interpreted through colour.

Therefore, I employ colour and tone at specific moments in *A Conversation*: when portraying Heaven in book 3 with 38 paintings in colour; and then again at the end of book 10 with three paintings in colour, when the Son descends in response to Adam and Eve's repentance. By representing only Heaven in colour, I express Heaven's unique stability and eternal state. It stands alone from the rest of the narrative conveyed in line and tone. Heaven needs to be expressed through the subtle qualities and nuances of colour contrasts.

A light/dark *colour* contrast, though, is completely different from a light/dark *tonal* contrast. Colour contrast has more to do with the unique difference of each colour than with its tonal difference of light and dark. The colour qualities of even near-identical colours can be completely different in temperature and personality because tonal differences are expressed more through the light and darkness of the paint, rather than the contrast of the colour through its personality of hue or saturation of colour. Colour contrast can be seen in my specific 'language-game' choices, to invoke Ludwig Wittgenstein, for the colour palette for each unique painting.<sup>8</sup> Heaven and the use of colour interrupts just once more, at the end of book 10, when the Son descends in response to Adam and Eve's repentance before the final two books are represented with the extreme tonal language of black and white, as in Martin's work.

Milton washes over us with words that evoke multi-sensory places of the imagination. He uses an artist's language to express textures, sensations, and emotions to open our minds to concepts like free will, Hell, Heaven, and a garden of perfection called Eden. By employing these separate languages of line, colour, and tone, I hope to rise to that task in a kind of visual poetry.

### A View of the Artist's Creative Process

In this section, the co-editors of the volume provide a contextualization, then move on, appropriately enough, to a conversation that gives due space and attention to the artworks themselves.

After a dramatic encounter with the 2011 Tate exhibition, Webb read the 1827 edition of *Paradise Lost* with engravings based on John Martin's mezzotints and swiftly realized that he was seeing the epic's emphases in a substantially different way from Martin's. As he devoured key texts in Milton studies—all the Cambridge commentaries and works by John Broadbent, Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, Barbara Lewalski, Christopher Hill, Denis Saurat, and more—he realized the hardships of Milton's life and, by extension, a sense of kinship. Webb

<sup>8</sup> For the concept of language games, see Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*.

discovered that, when Milton was writing *Paradise Lost*, he was blind and hiding from assassins. Lewalski indicates that '[h]e lived in fear of his life for months', while his friends '[hid] him in time of danger'; and Hill notes that Milton's '[f]ear of assassination remained' with him for several years.<sup>9</sup> Milton was at his lowest ebb, having lost so much, but from this visual and emotional darkness, he spilt out to his scribes humanity's foundational story, imagined as epic—and in Webb's view, as an epic of hope. For a full decade—into the age of COVID—Webb was led in this artistic conversation to contemplate light/dark contrasts using metaphors for the challenges of our own daily lives. In the next section, we discuss just a few of Webb's pictorial metaphors: 'Visual representation, juxtaposed or merged depictions of two different objects or actions designed to encourage reader-viewers to infer an implicit conceptual link.'<sup>10</sup> These prompt reader-viewers to actively engage in interpretative conversations with each of the 179 drawings.

Drawing is at the heart of Webb's pedagogical ethos as much as his artistic one. Webb has witnessed and experienced what he calls a positively reductionist process that can enable individuals to generate ideas. Thus, he guides students in the art of composition: to visualize their personal concepts and then find appropriate materials to express their ideas. They start to understand that a thought can exist on a sheet of paper in the same way that it exists in the unconscious mind, independent of nature, space, and time. Seeing thus becomes an active process and a creative force, where mental processes contribute to the work being made. In Webb's case, this might be why the art is figurative but not always literally representational. Creativity of this kind removes the barrier between the conscious and unconscious self, enabling communication through play, engaging all five senses. Vision and touch join through the six visual languages of colour, line, movement, shape, space, and tone. These languages come together to assign meaning to artists' expressions within the composition, content, and texture of their created objects.

Particularly germane to *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* is Webb's interest in colour literacy. For visual artists, colour is a material, an actual substance: physical paint. Equivalents for emotions and memories can be created by engaging with the paint. Colour can also be used as a translation of emotions. Webb's approach to understanding the origins of a creative approach to life is rooted in D. W. Winnicott's ideas concerning the transitional object and play; Ludwig Wittgenstein's work on languages, aspect perception, and language games; Lev Vygotsky's thinking on concept formation and teaching practice; Wilfred Bion's theory of thinking—that thoughts can be in search of a thinker as much as a thinker be in search of thoughts; and finally, Semir Zeki's and Eric Kandel's theories on the workings of artists' brains, reductionism, and the unity of artistic pedagogy and practice.

<sup>9</sup> Lewalski, *The Life of Milton*, 398, 399–402; Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, 207–8.

<sup>10</sup> Chandler and Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*.

Webb worked in conversation with Milton's poem as an active interlocutor, aiming to illuminate concepts and ideas presented by the poem.<sup>11</sup> Out of the twelve books, he saw eight concepts to explore in terms of his own experience and artistic commitments. They culminate in his overarching reading of the epic's key theme of hope:

Book 1: The Concept of Hell

Book 2: The Concept of Satan

Book 3: The Concept of Heaven

Books 4 and 5: The Concept of Eden

Book 6: The Concept of Apostasy—The War in Heaven

Books 7 and 8: The Concept of Creation

Books 9 and 10: The Concept of Death—A Mystery Play

Books 11 and 12: The Concept of Hope—A Paradise Within

*A Conversation* focuses on the meta-cognitive dilemma of how to translate these grand concepts from *Paradise Lost* into visual art. Some of the images enable us to explore from diverse vantage points, observe, and consider these ideas as if watching a drama. When limiting his visual language to line alone, Webb is able to get to the essence of many Miltonic concepts without the visual distinctions and meanings that tone and colour bring. He has dealt with each book as a separate entity in making the 179 artworks: 12 linocuts, 40 paintings, and 127 drawings, of which 102 drawings are 75 × 229 cm and 25 are 53 × 76 cm. The reliance on line enables reader-viewers to focus more fully on Milton's ideas. After all, as Webb has stated, pure line often can, by itself, suggest tone and colour: only in his treatment of Heaven is the full expression of such tone and colour required, where he opens the window to a fuller reality.

### A Conversation with the Artist

Given Webb's use of visual art as conversation and his belief that the art of the question was Milton's great gift as a thinker and poet, the co-editors of *Milton Across Borders and Media*, Islam Issa (II) and Angelica Duran (AD), decided to use a conversational format to engage with the artist (RKW) and his artwork. The conversation is enriched by illuminations and unfettered by the citations welcome in the first sections of this chapter. This section is absent of footnotes, but all texts informing this conversation appear in the Works Cited.

<sup>11</sup> For the full series, see Webb, Richard Kenton Webb.

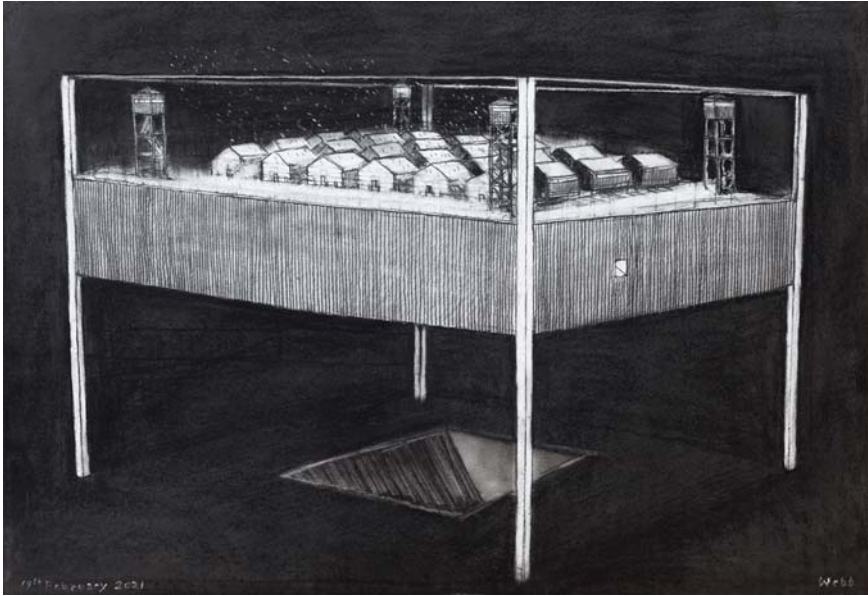


Fig. 17.1. Richard Kenton Webb, 'Lies', charcoal and chalk on paper, 53 cm × 76 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2021). Courtesy of the artist.

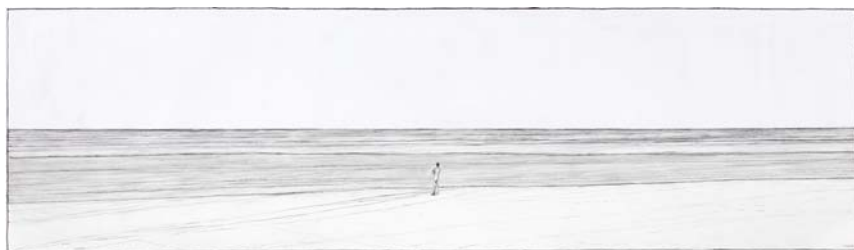
II and AD: Despite being an epic which, by definition, deals with matters large in scope, *Paradise Lost* and some of its key themes and questions have resonated very intimately with individuals for centuries. As this volume shows, this has encouraged a range of translations and adaptations that most often stem from the text itself. What does the movement from written word to visual art reveal about Milton's poetry and the sibling arts more generally? And how is *Paradise Lost* an enduring work of art that has so enduringly spoken to and mirrored the individual lives of those receiving it?

RKW: Without question this epic is a conversation, and even a mirror, for all of us. One of the poem's key themes in the conversation is hope. When it comes to genre, painting, drawing, and printmaking take the form of many genres that are in conversation with the written word. But painting is an independent and distinct language. In the age of technology, it is a refreshing, counter-culture activity: simply dirt on canvas, with a long history across every age and culture. It also references an exciting range of discourses from around the world. It takes years to become literate in the language of paint. Painting is subversive, difficult, and slow; it is a mute rather than written language, even though, like poetry, it can embody our humanity. Drawing and painting cannot be possessed; like poetry, both begin with wonder and awe. Just like Milton's spoken words, painting can change our perception, enabling us to see the world afresh, as well as to open a window onto the invisible. Here is blind Milton inspiring us with the spoken word and

inspiring visual responses to these words. In her *Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Luce Irigaray writes of men and women, '[w]onder maintains their autonomy within their statutory difference, keeping a space of freedom and attraction between them, a possibility of separation and alliance'. These words have been central to my understanding of books 7 and 8 with regards more generally to the concept of creation and creativity. This applies to society and education today. Many of us have found the joy of developing the capacity to celebrate difference and diversity: no single interpretation or discipline should be allowed to reduce, possess, or control another. I apply this same standpoint to colour as pigment, that is paint—not light. In doing so, I am dismissing the hierarchy of colour into primary, secondary, and tertiary, by being in wonder of each individual pigment. Otherwise, I would meet and use only the secondary colours of orange, green, and violet as mixtures or hybrids. Milton had to explain his standpoint, too, in the paragraph 'The Verse' added to the epic in 1668; Lewalski summarizes his blank verse as an aggressive challenge to both the literary and political contexts.

Like Milton, many of us have at some stage experienced cultural and institutional prejudice and bullying, some version of Milton's feeling 'church-outed'. At some points, we may feel isolated and victimized. At such times, I have drawn on the strength of my own inner world and on Milton's vision. Milton kindles hope within me, and I've been able to process many of my experiences related to artistic collaborations, pedagogy, philosophy, practice, and reputation through my work by expressing my trust in the beauty of love, friendship, and a faithful creator. In the six drawings of Adam alone and the six drawings of Eve alone, I am trying to express the isolating space between the two—which could have lasted for years—before they again meet their creator and each other, although from very different vantage points from before, born from experience, as Blake so clearly saw (see Figure 17.2). The twelve drawings extend this important period as they each wrestle with understanding their identity, finding a partner, embracing the uncertainty and the need for the complementary other, which comes within the isolation.

Despite the isolation, Milton—blind and in hiding—weaves courage out of tragedy and horror. His appalling experiences during the English Civil Wars and



**Fig. 17.2.** Richard Kenton Webb, 'Adam Alone', charcoal and chalk on paper, 76 cm × 230 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2019). Courtesy of the artist.

his bewilderment at the abuse of power pervade his verbal representation of the human condition and the problem of good and evil. It is truly remarkable that Adam and Eve overcome their individual isolation, and find love, friendship, and a faithful creator.

I felt such a contrast of feelings and experiences in two pictorial metaphors: when drawing Adam and Eve descending into Hell compared to later drawing them sailing away in a boat. This contrast—how hopelessness can indeed change into hopefulness—recalls R. D. Laing's *The Politics of Experience and the Birds of Paradise* and explains why Milton's epic can become a way of life: 'Even facts become fictions without adequate ways of seeing "the facts"'. We do not need theories so much as the experience that is the source of the theory. We are not satisfied with faith, in the sense of an implausible hypothesis irrationally held: we demand to experience "the evidence"'. These drawings emerged at a time when my efforts to find supportive communities that respect and honour innovative and individual artistry were fulfilled; the Sunny Art Centre in London awarded me the Sunny Prize 2020 based in part on my submission of 'Wreck' (see Figure 17.4). I feel as though we are the evidence that Laing means, because everything can turn around for us when we finally escape the 'wheel of fire', to draw William Shakespeare's *King Lear* into the conversation of the spectrum of human obstacles and pains (see Figure 17.3).

'Wreck' captures the spectrum and came out of a critical point with professional rivalry and undermining that left me feeling angry. I made this visual equivalent as I tried to deal with the situation, and out came this image which enabled me to enter an isolated but safe space. I later realized that I'd also represented a way out. The pictorial metaphor, the boat (me), was not sinking. It had just run aground and would soon float away to safe water, out of harm's way. So, yes, Milton's writing is so relevant, alive, and real to this new day.

II and AD: Sometimes art does not have a direct correspondence, then, but this painting does for you and for others. As you have explained, 'Wreck' intermixes



Fig. 17.3. Richard Kenton Webb, 'The Wheel of Fire', charcoal and chalk on paper, 76 cm × 230 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2020). Courtesy of the artist.





Fig. 17.4. Richard Kenton Webb, 'Wreck', oil on board, 62 cm × 85.5 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2017). Courtesy of the artist.

pain and hope. *Paradise Lost* also intermixes elements specific to its medium of art, including of genre and mode: the sonnet, pastoral, the 'tragic' (*PL* 9.6). How does your use of different media translate this intermixing, incorporating the fluidity of Milton's epic practice? In terms of your medium of visual art, you have chosen to use line predominantly in a work that reflects importantly on the contrasts and intermixing of light and dark.

RKW: The poem is a light and dark exploration of good and evil, which I see and represent as a colour contrast, rather than the extreme contrast of black and white. Life is not black and white, it is much greyer, where boundaries are not always clear-cut (see Figure 17.5). I am a colourist and I have been investigating colour as a language since 1998. Between 2000 and 2005, I made 44 paintings called *A Colour Grammar*. I then made 22 sculptures called *Colour Forms* to amplify my exploration. Then in 2007, I decided to investigate each colour, starting with *Red* (2007–11), *Orange* (2010–12), *Warm/Cold Contrast* (2012–13), *Yellow* (2014), and *Light/Dark Contrast* (2012–21). With *A Conversation* in 2021, I interpreted the Hell of book 1 in twelve linocuts of just black line on white paper. I composed them in a way that would invite reader-viewers to imagine Hell. The idea of Hell that informs this composition could not result in the dark, heavy tonal contrast of Martin, since I was choosing to represent an everyday openness in which each

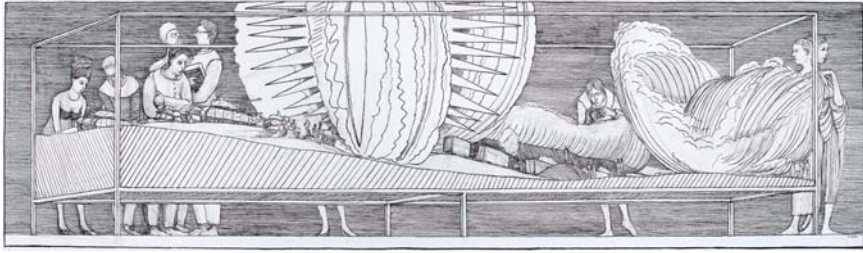


Fig. 17.5. Richard Kenton Webb, 'Fate and Providence,' charcoal and chalk on paper, 76 cm × 230 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2020). Courtesy of the artist.

individual chooses how to perceive the world. Further, I reserved colour for the eternal space of Heaven in book 3. Therefore, using line for books 1 to 10 reflects a reduced language in which we can imagine colour for ourselves because it is neither tone nor colour. After the Fall, that choice is lost, so I use extreme tone. So, colour is used only in book 3 and for the last three paintings of book 10. Thereafter, I use only tone in books 11 and 12—the only books that use tone.

I did not want to use tone or colour for any of the settings other than Heaven. I wanted viewers to imagine or hallucinate the colour, as I do for all the other books. Line alone is a shorthand that enables me to express and imagine ideas that are distanced from how we see the natural world. Book 3 is an example of how a light/dark contrast can be interpreted. The thirty-seven colour paintings for this book render Heaven as outside of time. Everywhere else, I use the limitation of line to discuss the light/dark contrast of *Paradise Lost*. I came to the book as a colourist trying to understand colour as a language, sometimes even hallucinating colour onto line and tone. Essentially, line is the scaffolding for colour.

II and AD: We would like to pick up on the idea behind 'scaffolding'. Milton's multidimensional concepts and philosophies come to fruition across an expansively sized epic poem and expansively articulated landscape. Does this mean that visual artists need to have a grand vision or a way of presenting a larger receptive space for their audience? For instance, you use the vitrine or diorama device in 'Lies', 'Fate and Providence', and 'Creativity' (see Figures 17.1, 17.5, and 17.6).

RKW: The vitrine or diorama became the perfect device to imagine difficult and complex concepts like Hell, Creation, integrity, Chaos, difference, and hope. With the idea captured in a vitrine, we can walk around it, as we would an object in a museum or as we would consider a philosophical question. It is now a reality to inspect, point at, and discuss. In *Playing and Reality*, Winnicott talks about our inner and outer worlds meeting in a third area that he called 'The Potential Space' or the 'Transitional Object', 'a me, not-me'. In this new space, an alchemy takes



Fig. 17.6. Richard Kenton Webb, 'Creativity', charcoal on paper, 152 cm × 152 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2015). Courtesy of the artist.

place where the artist, the materials, and the idea unite to become one. We can see this at 'play', to use Winnicott's vocabulary in the work titled 'Creativity', which represents a transitional object. 'Creativity' is my most complete painting about the act of creating: a black space is contained where something will come out of nothing.

For visual artists, pigment is either inert, and therefore lifeless and detached, or something that is part of the imagination and an extension of ideas and thoughts that fuse together to make a painting. When we're in the presence of a painting, part of the artist's imagination remains in the artwork. Blake, who was also fond of *Paradise Lost*, talks about matter as 'all alive'. But, as Kathleen Raine rightly argues, Blake 'is not personifying a particle of dust that is really lifeless: that is what he means by allegory. Copiers of "nature" would doubtless see it so, for [Blake's character] Urizen has his artists as well as his scientists. But Blake affirms that these particles are not only alive, but, because they have their existence within the human imagination, are also human'. The vitrine or diorama is about creating a visual and

mental construction for a discourse with Milton's ideas, whether they are something wonderful or something dangerous. This is where I choose to be what Søren Kierkegaard calls 'being present to myself'. I can wrestle with this idea in such a space; visualization allows me to exorcise and give myself—and others—hope.

II and AD: You regard something coming out of nothing—*ex nihilo*—as the most complete painting. This reminds us that Milton famously envisioned a tragedy for the story of the human Fall, as reflected in his working copies (the Trinity Manuscript) and as articulated at the beginning of book 9 of *Paradise Lost* when he feels compelled to 'change' the epic's 'notes to tragic' (PL 9.5–6). Theatre—in large part due to metatheatre—involves different types of visual and mental engagements to both the epic poem and its visual renditions. Can you say more about introducing the specifically theatrical aspects of the stage you use in relation to Milton's books 9 and 10 to discuss the Fall, as in 'The Gates of Hell—Entrance of the Demon King' and 'Satan, the Selfhood' (see Figures 17.7 and 17.8)?

RKW: Books 9 and 10 had been hanging over me for ten years, getting closer and closer, like a cloud on the horizon. How would I deal with something so familiar and yet strange as the Fall of Adam and Eve? How could I make it relevant and alive? How could it have meaning for me as I interpret it afresh for the twenty-first century? Once again, I had to reach back to reach forward. In 1985, I went to Bill Bryden's adaptation of *The Mysteries* by Tony Harrison at the Lyceum Theatre in London. I saw the play *Doomsday*. Prior to this, I had made some drawings from some of the reviews, of a medieval pageant coming to life inside a theatre, with the audience becoming part of the play. I subsequently made a large painting, *Mystery Play* (1985), about this extraordinary evening—the 90 × 80 cm oil on cotton was shown at The Arts Centre, Waterloo, London, and is now in a private collection.

The more I re-read books 9 and 10, the more I saw the human Fall in terms of a theatre like the one I had experienced at the Lyceum. I wanted a play within a play, referencing the mystery plays with the characters Adam and Eve, creating a

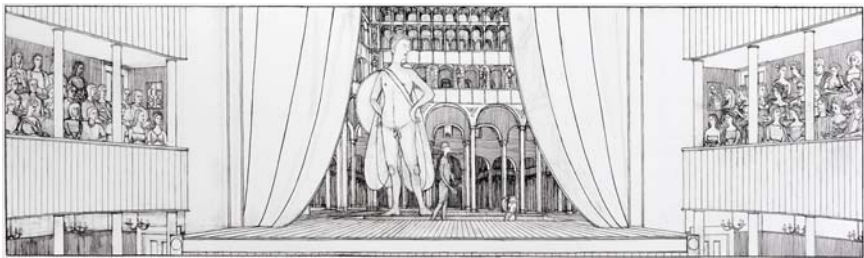


Fig. 17.7. Richard Kenton Webb, 'The Gates of Hell—Entrance of the Demon King', charcoal and chalk on paper, 76 cm × 230 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2020). Courtesy of the artist.

sense of fear as people began to experience the First Judgement. It seemed totally appropriate to use a theatre to interpret Adam's and Eve's crises, the tragic performance of the abuse of power. The landscape demanded and evoked the desolation of *King Lear*. This was where the world of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* seemed to be played out, diffusing from the primary parties onto communities—in Milton's case, the whole of humankind—regardless of the cost, reality, or truth.

At an individual level, we live, like the characters Adam and Eve, in a performance, where anything can happen. The vehicle of the theatre gave me the distance to become a protagonist and create a contrary subplot for Adam and Eve to find their way out of their Fall, echoing, so to speak, the exit reflected in 'Wreck'. I also decided to invite Blake into this discussion, with his great masterpiece, *The Book of Job*. These late engravings hold all of Blake's philosophy and theology. My conversation with Milton now included a contribution from Blake within the theatre's space, a finite place, where the eternal space of the imagination is slowly sealed off into 'the selfhood of Satan', as Raine calls it (see Figures 17.8 and 17.9). The underworld of Hell is now illuminated through the trap doors below the theatrical stage, as I had experienced in Tony Harrison's mystery play, mentioned earlier.

II and AD: Picking up on what you call Blake's *contribution* and as we end this conversation, our final question is, why do you talk of your work as *a conversation* with Milton and not as *an illustration*?

RKW: My conversation with Milton's *Paradise Lost* is an imaginative exploration and confrontation with a poem by a fellow poet. Artists can be visual poets. First, I read the poem with Martin's illustrations and then I listened to the audio narration by Anton Lesser. Much contemporary Fine Art practice illustrates a concept through media, performance, photography, film, sculpture, installation, and some forms of painting, drawing, and print, but the discourses of painting sit outside some of these mainstream approaches, with different languages and histories going back to Rock Art. In the Insular Gospel tradition of the seventh to twelfth centuries,

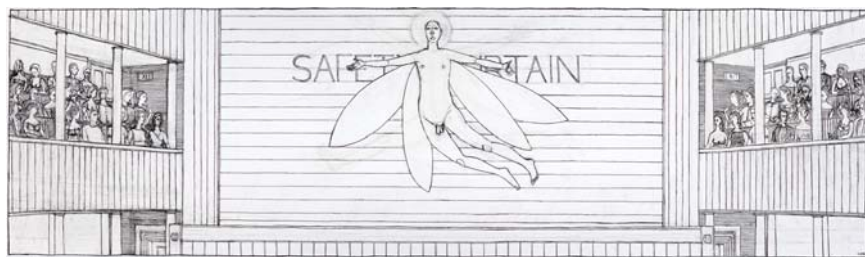


Fig. 17.8. Richard Kenton Webb, 'Satan, the Selfhood', charcoal and chalk on paper, 76 cm × 230 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2020). Courtesy of the artist.

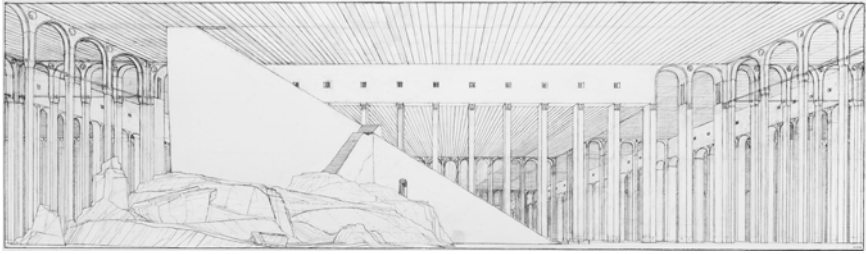


Fig. 17.9. Richard Kenton Webb, 'Death', charcoal and chalk on paper, 76 cm × 230 cm, from *A Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (2020). Courtesy of the artist.

the Northern sensibilities had a different relationship between word and image from the Mediterranean tradition. In his *Vision and Image in Early Christian England*, George Henderson demonstrates that, especially in the Insular Gospel tradition in the British Isles and Ireland, with the doctrine of the Incarnation—the 'Word made flesh'—the visual material is not illustration but rather a glossing commentary so that individual literate, sensitive readers and viewers are expected to savour, understand, and wonder at what is being considered. Of the five nations—Britons, Celts, Picts, Saxons, and Scots—the Celts did not have a written language. This led to a pool of cultures, styles, motifs, and conventions, some abstract and others figurative, using Latin as their joint written language. They therefore saw or used written language as something 'other', the 'Word made flesh'. They were not illustrating it: they were *illuminating* it, making complex equivalents for deeply theological and philosophical concepts.

I find this history deeply important and acknowledge that its residue is still alive culturally, with a bias towards abstract pattern and towards making the invisible visible. This Northern thinking of illumination, as a deep form of illustration, is where I see my conversation with Milton as a glossing exercise. For the last ten years, Milton has been a companion like Virgil to Dante guiding me through a narrative of my own life. I started this collaboration with an imagined drawing of Milton the Blind Poet considering the problem of evil. I ended my journey with a portrait of myself, acting as a companion piece to the long journey about good, evil, and everything in between that we had taken together. Milton is a great English poet who gives hope, which in itself is a creative act for these difficult times.

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PART V

AUDITORY MEDIA



## The Milton and Music Problem

*Seth Herbst*

For a poet who loved music and made it a central theme in his verse, John Milton has not enjoyed a particularly robust musical afterlife. While the list of Shakespeare-inspired music in *A Shakespeare Music Catalogue* runs to over 2,000 pages, a list of music inspired by Milton wouldn't fill more than a few.<sup>1</sup> What to make of this Milton and music problem? The little scholarship on Milton's relation to music has been largely confined to the poet's own thinking about music, often with regard to its political and theological implications, as well as Milton's relation to contemporary debates about the nature of music.<sup>2</sup> Passing over Milton's afterlife in music, however, is a missed opportunity. While there may be relatively few musical adaptations of Milton's works, those that do exist are often exceptionally fruitful sites of transformation and interpretation. Where William Shakespeare's *oeuvre* has proven relatively amenable to musical adaptation, Milton's, by contrast, has proven deeply resistant. As a consequence, the few composers bold enough to adapt Milton's works into music often achieve particularly innovative results: music fraught with the verbal textures of Miltonic verse yet resolutely musical in form. In this chapter, I explore through close formal analysis the nature of the resistance of Milton's verse to musical adaptation—a resistance I argue is quite deliberate on Milton's part—as well as what we can learn both about Milton and about music from a particularly imaginative musical rendering of Milton's verse: Krzysztof Penderecki's twentieth-century opera of *Paradise Lost*.

<sup>1</sup> For key musical pieces based on Milton, see Stephen Buhler's chapter in the present volume, 'Quoting Milton in Musical Appropriations'. For an overview of some more obscure musical adaptations, see Morris, 'Not Without Song'. For a comprehensive list of the works of music based on or inspired by Shakespeare through 1991, see the first three of five volumes of Gooch and Thatcher, *A Shakespeare Music Catalogue*.

<sup>2</sup> For Milton's representation of music in his poetry, see Larson, 'Blest Pair of Sirens'; Minear, *Reverberating Song in Shakespeare and Milton*; and Herbst, 'Milton and Music' and 'Sound as Matter'. For Milton, music, and theology, see Ainsworth, 'Rapturous Milton and the Communal Harmony of Faith' and *Milton, Music and Literary Interpretation*. For Milton and contemporary debates about music, see Buhler, 'Counterpoint and Controversy'. For incorporating contemporary science and the acoustics of sound, see Cox, 'How Cam'st Thou Speakable of Mute'.

## Dividing the God: Milton on Poetry and Music

Why is Milton so rarely adapted into music? The most straightforward answer is genre: Milton's principal achievement lies in epic, a genre that, through its sheer size and scope, resists ready translation into opera or other large-scale musical forms. This resistance is not unrelated to the failure of *Paradise Lost* to make its way into film: both film and opera are plot-based genres expected to occupy an audience for no more than a few hours—what Shakespeare, referring to other works, calls the 'two hours' traffic of our stage'.<sup>3</sup> But Milton's other works, too, have been mostly neglected by composers.<sup>4</sup> Something else is at work, beyond genre. I propose that it is Miltonic poetic style itself that poses special challenges for musical adaptations, that Milton himself deliberately conceived his poetic style, above all his epic style, as deliberately literary, even anti-musical.<sup>5</sup>

One might suppose that the music-loving Milton would have been distressed by his impoverished afterlife in music. In his early lyric, 'At a Solemn Music', he celebrates the potential for poetic text to be combined with musical melody:

Blest pair of sirens, pledges of heaven's joy,  
Sphere-borne harmonious sisters, Voice, and Verse,  
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ [. . .]  
(*'At a Solemn Music'* 1–3)<sup>6</sup>

Conceiving both music ('Voice') and poetry ('Verse') as 'sounds', the poet recognizes a natural affinity between the two arts that makes their union desirable. In his Latin lyric *Ad patrem*, Milton's appeal to his composer father to recognize the worth of a poetic vocation, the poet-speaker goes even further, arguing that poetry and music are not merely sibling arts but two complementary halves:

*Ipsae volens Phoebus se dispertire duobus,  
Altera dona mihi, dedit altera dona parenti,  
Dividuumque Deum genitorque puerque tenemus.*

<sup>3</sup> Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, eds. Greenblatt et al., Prologue, l.12. See also Jonathan R. Olson's chapter in the present volume, 'Miltonic Tempters in Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street*'; and Brown, *Milton on Film*.

<sup>4</sup> For the few instances of Milton's lyric poetry having more reliably drawn composers' interest, see Stephen Buhler's chapter in the present volume, 'Quoting Milton in Musical Appropriations.'

<sup>5</sup> Erin Minear has suggested that Shakespeare incorporates musical effects into his poetry, while Milton eventually comes to reject such effects (Minear, *Reverberating Song in Shakespeare and Milton*, 1–2). My conviction is that Shakespeare's verse can be readily adapted into music, while Milton's cannot.

<sup>6</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of Milton's poetry other than *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Carey, and cited parenthetically in the text.

[Phoebus, wishing to share himself between the two of us, gave one lot of gifts to me and the other to my father, with the result that father and son have each one half of a god.]

(*Ad patrem* 64–6)

Although Milton and his father have received separate poetic and musical talents, their artistic sensibilities flow from a unified divine origin: Apollo, patron god of both poetry and music. On the evidence of 'At a Solemn Music' and *Ad patrem*, Milton might well come across as an unabashed advocate for the fusion of poetry and music into a single artistic form. But the 'divided god' is divided, at least for Milton and his father.<sup>7</sup> Even as these poems extoll the marriage of voice and verse, they insist on the aesthetic distinction between the two arts.

'At a Solemn Music' and *Ad patrem* also confine themselves to theory rather than practice. What is missing from these poems is a sense of how, practically speaking, to marry voice and verse. 'At a Solemn Music' seems to imply that existing verse can simply be matched to existing music. Milton, son of a distinguished amateur composer, knew better.<sup>8</sup> A poem and a piece of music have various formal dimensions that must align to create a viable joint setting. At the very least, if a singer is to be able to sing words clearly, the syllables of the poetic text and the notes of the musical melody must match precisely. The essential principle, obvious but crucial: no syllable can be sung without at least a single note of music to sing.<sup>9</sup> What follows is an important artistic reality: in the post-medieval tradition of Western music, text-based vocal music typically originates with either an existing text or existing music, for which the missing element is then created. Traditionally, the more sophisticated and prestigious musical settings have been the work of composers who begin with an existing text as the basis for their vocal music.

Milton certainly held this view. The poet's acute practical sense of songwriting emerges in Milton's commendatory sonnet 'To Mr H. Lawes, on his *Airs*', which praises the musical craft of his friend and collaborator, Henry Lawes. Milton offers a composer's guide to setting poetry to music. The composer's art, Milton argues, is rooted in making musical melody match precisely the poetic metre of the chosen text.<sup>10</sup> A good song begins with good scansion of the poem that is its foundation, so the composer must be adept in poetic prosody to avoid scanning a poem ineptly, 'With Midas' ears' ('Sonnet XIII' 4). In fashioning a musical setting responsive to the 'accent' of the poem, the composer should combine a clear enunciation of the text with distinctly musical virtues: alluring melodiousness and regular rhythm,

<sup>7</sup> Among many worthy translations of *Ad patrem*, David Slavitt renders '*Dividuumque Deum*' as 'the divided god' (line 28, Milton, *Milton's Latin Poems*, trans. Slavitt, 56).

<sup>8</sup> For an account of Milton's musical background, see Harper, 'One Equal Music'.

<sup>9</sup> By contrast, a single syllable of text might be stretched over multiple notes—an effect called a *melisma*.

<sup>10</sup> For a reading of Milton's emphasis in this sonnet on translating poetic prosody into musical song, see Davidson, 'Milton on the Music of Henry Lawes'.

that is, a ‘tuneful and well-measured song’ (‘Sonnet XIII’ 3, 1). Milton does not pretend the task is an easy one: most composers in ‘the throng’ lack the ‘skill’ to ‘scan’ verse and then ‘span’ it with melody; they fail to ‘humour’, or ‘adapt or accommodate’, music to the English tongue (‘Sonnet XIII’ 5, 3, 2, 8).<sup>11</sup> Milton recognizes, then, that the chief challenge for a composer is formal: matching musical melody and rhythm to pre-existing textual syllables. This compositional challenge implies a crucial question: is some verse more challenging to humour, to accommodate musically, than other verse? And by contrast, is some verse more apt to ‘lend her wing’ to song (‘Sonnet XIII’ 9)? While Milton is not forthcoming in this sonnet about how such musically sympathetic verse might look or sound, we can look elsewhere for a Miltonic manual in the art of writing text ready to take flight in musical melody.

### Milton’s Songs

Milton wrote ten song texts for two dramatic productions: three songs for the short masque *Arcades* and seven songs for *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634*. These song texts together constitute an implicit manifesto on how to write poetry for a musical setting. The Spirit’s final song from *A Masque* offers a representative example of the simplified poetic style that Milton employs for his song texts:

But now my task is smoothly done,  
I can fly, or I can run  
Quickly to the green earth’s end,  
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,  
And from thence can soar as soon  
To the corners of the moon.  
Mortals that would follow me,  
Love Virtue, she alone is free,  
She can teach ye how to climb  
Higher than the sphery chime;  
Or if Virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

(*A Masque* 1011–22)<sup>12</sup>

By contrast with Milton’s style in lyric poetry and in the dialogue elsewhere in *A Masque*, this song text is simplified in several important respects. Following Milton’s injunction to the composer in the Lawes sonnet, we can begin by scanning

<sup>11</sup> OED, ‘humour’, v. 1.b.

<sup>12</sup> Lawes’s song setting in Cunningham, Appendix E, 594, makes several minor alterations to the text as it appears in the 1645 *Poems*.

metre, or what Milton calls 'accent'. As is not uncommon in songs of the period, Milton here primarily employs catalectic trochaic tetrameter, a truncated measure in which the final expected syllable is left off:<sup>13</sup>

| / ~ | / ~ | / ~ | / ~ [~]  
Or if Virtue feeble were [. . .]

Several factors make this metre attractive to composers. First, the even number of strong stresses maps easily into two frequently employed musical metres: common metre, which counts four beats to a bar, and cut metre, which counts two beats to a bar. Second, the relatively short line allows composers to give, quite literally, more breathing room to a singer. Text generally takes longer to be sung than to be spoken; shorter lines of poetry lend themselves to more manageable musical phrases for singers. (Occasional long lines can be employed to telling effect: in 'Sweet Echo' in *A Masque*, for instance, Milton varies trimeter and tetrameter lines with pentameter lines and even a closing hexameter.) Third, the strong rhythmic profile of a catalectic trochaic metre—with strong stresses outnumbering weak—is less likely to be mis-scanned, even by a composer with 'Midas' ears. This emphatic metric scheme has the advantage of sounding musical even when read as opposed to sung: a traditional metre of nursery rhymes such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star', catalectic trochaic tetrameter reads with an incantatory lilt.

Even more distinctive than the musically sympathetic metre is the straightforward syntax. Most lines present a self-contained thought, a phrase that begins at the beginning of the line and ends at the end: 'Love Virtue, she alone is free.' Those lines that do not present a self-contained thought complete their thought in a two-line pairing: 'I can fly, or I can run | Quickly to the green earth's end.' Enjambment is used in only three out of twelve lines. When it does occur, the combination of end rhyme and catalectic metre serves to blunt its force: even technically enjambed lines come to a stop at the close, with a hard stress on a rhyme, rather than rushing to the following line. As a rule, texts intended for musical setting tend to avoid strong enjambment. The reason is that musical phrases typically align with poetic lines. Especially in strophic settings—that is, music with verses that repeat the same musical material—if one line of poetry flows into the next, the musical phrase will nonetheless stop at the end of the poetic line, inserting an unnatural delay when the sense of the text should continue without pause.<sup>14</sup> The result of Milton's straightforward syntax and minimal enjambment is what we might term linear style: a clear sense of each line as a unit, with a steady progression from one line to the next, without the complex patterns of grammatical

<sup>13</sup> Shakespeare uses this metre in Ariel's song from *The Tempest*, 'Full fathom five thy father lies' (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 1.2.395–401).

<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to Master Sergeant Michael Reifenberg of the West Point Band for alerting me to the general inadvisability of employing enjambment in song lyrics.

subordination that require recursive reading. More than a particular metre, this linear style, as readily comprehensible aurally as on the page, characterizes Milton's song texts.

Linear style offers a marked contrast with Milton's highly enjambed, syntactically involuted style elsewhere in *A Masque*. Take, for example, a single sentence from Comus's seduction of the Lady:

Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,  
But must be current, and the good thereof  
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,  
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself [. . .]  
(*A Masque* 738–41)

The first line combines two thoughts; the second line starts a new thought midway through, after the caesura, and enjams heavily into the third line to complete the thought; the three closing words of the second line refer both back to 'Beauty' and forward to the 'bliss' of the next line, which itself is modified by the final line. The sentence is densely involuted, at once backward- and forward-turning. It is typical Miltonic style—but not in his songs.

Milton's linear song style is indeed well-suited to musical setting. Since Henry Lawes's setting of the Spirit's closing song survives, we can stand at the composer's workbench to appreciate how the text is translated into music (see Figure 18.1). Lawes justifies Milton's praise of his scansion and ability to 'span' the poetic text with music that closely follows poetic prosody.<sup>15</sup> In response to the four-beat trochaic lines, Lawes writes his song in cut time, two beats to a bar. The composer translates strong stresses in Milton's poem into strong musical stresses by placing them on the first and strongest beat, known as the downbeat, or the still strong second beat, relegating unstressed syllables to the weaker upbeat. Yet Lawes also introduces variety into his phrasing: he begins Milton's second line on a weak upbeat and compresses the line into a single measure—the first phrase extends to two measures—with fast dotted rhythms. The effect is not merely one of pleasing musical variety. Lawes also enacts the line's meaning: 'I can flye or I can run', sings the Spirit, and the music simulates that rapid motion through its accelerated dotted-rhythm phrasing. In similar fashion, Lawes elongates the fourth line, 'where the Bowde welkin slow doth bend', with a daringly extended duration of the mid-phrase word 'bowed', to evoke the extended curve of the sky. These tiny acts of musical mimesis are known as text-painting: the imitation of a word or phrase, as when the word 'hill' is sung on a musical line that rises then falls. The experienced composer rarely misses opportunities for text-painting. And the musically

<sup>15</sup> For an account of Lawes's rendering of poetic prosody in his songwriting, including close attention to another of the Spirit's songs in *A Masque*, see Davidson, 'Milton on the Music of Henry Lawes'.





Fig. 18.1. Henry Lawes and John Milton, musical excerpt, from a modern transcription by John Cunningham of 'Now my taske is smoothly done'. © Barbara Kiefer Lewalski and Estelle Haan 2012. Reproduced with permission of Oxford Publishing Limited through PLSclear.

experienced poet will often offer invitations for text-painting: words emphasizing quickness or slowness, curves, risings, fallings. Milton graciously obliges.

After 'accent', what of the syntax and lineation of Milton's poetry—its verbal and formal structure? In the first seven measures, the composer generally treats each of the first four lines of Milton's poetry as musical phrases. The musical phrasal syntax thus 'honors', as Milton says in the Lawes sonnet, the textual syntax. Lawes indicates the ends of musical phrases by extending the duration of the final word of the poetic line. After the final word of the first phrase, 'now my taske is smoothly done', he also inserts a rest, or notated silence. There is one exception: Lawes runs Milton's third line into his fourth line, combining them into a single musical phrase: 'Quicklye to the Earthes green End, where the Bowde welkin slow doth bend'.<sup>16</sup> The run-on effect neatly accomplishes two goals. First, Lawes elucidates Milton's syntax, making clear that 'where' refers back to the immediately preceding word, 'End'. Second, by conjoining Milton's second and third lines into a single ongoing musical phrase, Lawes evokes the Spirit's ongoing motion towards the horizon—another elegant instance of text-painting. In his compositional decisions, Lawes thus achieves both clarity of textual declamation and felicity of musical treatment. This treatment of the musical phrasing, at once faithful to the poetic text and subtly inventive, is made possible by Milton's deliberate linear style.

<sup>16</sup> The text of the 1645 *Poems* reads 'the green earth's end'; but both the Trinity and Bridgewater Manuscripts, like Lawes's songbook, have 'the earth's green end' (Milton, *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Carey, 233, l.1013n). Similarly, the opening line in the 1645 *Poems* reads 'But now', whereas in Trinity, Bridgewater, and Lawes, the line begins with 'Now'.

## Milton's Anti-musical Epic Style

In *A Masque*, Milton's linear song style presents a striking contrast to the enjambed and syntactically complex verse elsewhere in the drama. Milton's poetic style in *A Masque* would attain a far greater formal and syntactic complexity in the 'grand style' Milton forged for his magnum opus, *Paradise Lost*. Indeed, Milton's epic style undoes precisely the characteristics that make his poetic text in the song lyrics so amenable to musical setting.<sup>17</sup> In his defiant headnote on 'The Verse', added to the second printing of the first edition, Milton himself points to enjambment and complex, extended syntax as the crowning features of his epic poetic style:

Not without cause therefore some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of it self, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings [. . .]

(*PL* 'The Verse')<sup>18</sup>

In this context, the term 'musical' refers to the sonic quality of poetry, in distinction to its sense—a stock idea running from Classical culture through the critical work of T. S. Eliot and Christopher Ricks. Rather than describing poetry as literally musical, Milton specifies that the pleasure of poetic sound should derive not from rhyme, but instead from correct metre, varied syntax, and enjambment. Milton is quite accurate in pointing out the signal features of his epic style. Compare the linear style of the Spirit's 'But now my task is smoothly done' with a representative sample of the epic style of *Paradise Lost*, as Satan is ejected from Heaven:

Him the almighty power  
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky  
With hideous ruin and combustion down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamant chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy the omnipotent to arms.

(*PL* 1.44–9)

<sup>17</sup> From a long and mostly exhilarating discussion of Milton's epic style, see Ricks, *Milton's Grand Style*. For a concise yet imaginative introduction to Miltonic verse style in *Paradise Lost*, see Creaser, 'The Line in *Paradise Lost*'. For a detailed treatment of the stylistic reception history of *Paradise Lost*, see Leonard, *Faithful Labourers*.

<sup>18</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Fowler, and cited parenthetically in the text.

It is hard to imagine how a composer might go about setting this passage to music. Iambic pentameter is by no means impracticable as a metre for musical setting—Milton uses it to good effect, for example, in ‘Sweet Echo’—but the problem here is that the strong stresses in Milton’s propulsive blank verse are so decisive as to resist the kind of musical rhythmic adjustments that we saw Lawes deftly employ in the Spirit’s song. Even worse for musical purposes, strong enjambment connects these five pentameter lines together into a lengthy, uninterrupted multi-line cluster. The lines press so insistently from one to the next that there is no clear point at which a composer might conclude a musical phrase. Indeed, Milton’s mimetic effects rely on the on-rush from one line to the next, as when the syntax sweeps over the line, ‘down | To bottomless perdition,’ mimicking the plunge of Satan’s flaming body into the abyss. To dwell on or pause after ‘down,’ as a composer might wish to do at the end of a musical phrase, would be to deny the crucial feature of the poetic text, as its sense is ‘drawn out from one verse into another.’

The syntactic structure of the sentence, moreover, is highly involuted in a way that a musical setting would struggle to accommodate. Milton’s inverted sentence begins with its object, ‘Him,’ which is followed by its subject, ‘the almighty power’; the subordinate clause, ‘Who durst defy the omnipotent to arms,’ is maximally displaced from its antecedent, ‘Him.’ Again, the formal effect is mimetic: the subordinate clause plunges to the very bottom of the sentence, just as Satan plunges to the bottom of Hell. But this effect, so distinctive on the page or even when read aloud, becomes highly problematic for musical treatment, which takes longer than reading or speaking. By the time the singer arrives at the final clause, it would be hard to recall the opening of the sentence, impossible to hear the intended mimetic effect.

Milton’s deliberate effects in this passage rely on a paradoxical fusion of propulsive forward momentum and recursive reading. In that, it is representative of the general style of the epic as a whole. This is not to deny meaningful stylistic variety in *Paradise Lost*. Still, Milton never slackens the inexorable metronomic power of his blank verse, and nowhere does he simplify the syntax to the lucid clarity of his song lyrics. In short, where the linear style of his songs congenially invites musical setting, the epic style of *Paradise Lost* precisely reverses the poetic features that promote the composer’s art. Together with the question of genre—the epic’s massive size and complex narrative structure—this anti-musical style has, I suggest, made composers reluctant to take on the challenge of adapting Milton’s masterpiece into music. In its very stylistic DNA, this is a poem bred to be not musical, but literary.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Genre alone has not prevented composers from adapting epic into opera. Some early and baroque composers based operas on shorter episodes from epics. Famous examples include Claudio Monteverdi’s *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* (1639) and Henry Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* (1689). Ludovico Ariosto’s romance *Orlando furioso* (1516) spawned many adaptations from composers such as Antonio Vivaldi, George Frideric Handel, Jean-Baptiste Lully, and Franz Joseph Haydn. See Anderson, *Ariosto, Opera, and the 17th Century*.

### Speaking Music: Fry and Penderecki's *Paradise Lost*

On first encounter, Krzysztof Penderecki's opera *Paradise Lost* (1978) hardly seems designed to coax Milton's epic style into music. To experience this opera is to be plunged into a world of anguished bewilderment. The scale of the work is vast, its idiom forbidding. Indeed, the opera has been performed only a handful of times since its premiere in 1978. Milton's epic poem does not flinch from the ugliness of the human experience, but Penderecki's opera is steeped in it, his blend of the magisterial and the tormented emblematic of this composer. Among the most prominent composers of the second half of the twentieth century, Penderecki (1933–2020) made his name with music of aggressive dissonance, not least the 'Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima' (1960), a sustained shriek of pain dedicated to those killed and injured in the world's first atomic bombing that transforms orchestral instruments into some combination of factory machines and raw, radiation-blasted vocal cords.<sup>20</sup>

Profoundly interested in questions of Christian faith, Penderecki anchored his creative output in works either religious or concerned with religion, as in his well-known, relatively early *St Luke Passion* (1966), a choral work following in the tradition of J. S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *St John Passion*. Although Penderecki produced a sizeable body of music throughout his nearly fifty-year career, he wrote only four operas. In his *sacra rappresentazione* [sacred representation], *Paradise Lost*, a commission for the Chicago Lyric Opera, Penderecki furthered his engagement with Christian themes while taking on a literary source of challenging complexity. Strikingly, Penderecki opted for an opera in English—never the most popular language for opera—signalling a close connection with Milton's original poem. While Penderecki had written his own German libretto for a previous opera, *The Devils of Loudon* (1968–9), the poet Christopher Fry (1907–2005) was enlisted to adapt Milton.<sup>21</sup>

The first challenge for Fry was generic: how to slim down a twelve-book epic into a relatively manageable opera of around three hours.<sup>22</sup> Fry simplifies Milton's epic plot into a more straightforward chronological progression. Set in two acts of roughly equal length, the opera begins, shockingly, after the human Fall—which occurs in book 9 of Milton's epic—with Adam and Eve quarrelling as a prologue to the action. But once the action flashes back to the arrival of the fallen angels in Hell, the plot unfolds chronologically in an adjusted version of Milton's epic narrative

<sup>20</sup> For the composer's own recording of this seminal work, see Penderecki, 'Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima', cond. Penderecki.

<sup>21</sup> Fry's libretto also exists in a later German translation by Hans Wollschläger. See Stanwood, '“Paradise Lost”: Epic and Opera'. A catalogue of Penderecki's works, including dates of composition and performances, is available on Schott Music's composer website.

<sup>22</sup> The epic takes around twelve hours to read aloud; see John Hale's chapter in the present volume, 'Milton Marathons'.

that begins with the creation of humankind and Satan's journey to Earth, proceeds to show Adam and Eve meeting and marrying, and then marches rapidly through to the human Fall. The biggest alteration to Milton's plot is the compression of the archangel Raphael's encounter with Adam and Eve from three-and-a-half books to a mere eighteen lines of angelic warning. Fry and Penderecki omit the War in Heaven and move the opera swiftly towards the Fall of Adam and Eve, which occurs early in Act 2. The opera concludes, as does Milton's epic, with the couple's expulsion from Paradise.

This plot compression is effective. But the more radical challenge lies at the level of the poetic line. What is the librettist to do with Milton's profoundly unsingable poetry? Fry elected to retain Milton's language as the basis for his libretto and to cut out full lines as well as phrases, splicing material together from separate passages, and slimming what remains into a more musically sympathetic text. Fry's art as a librettist illuminates once again what is defiantly anti-musical in Milton's text. Milton's and Fry's respective treatments of Satan's first glimpse of Adam and Eve offer a representative example. Milton's Satan soliloquizes,

Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two  
 Imparadised in one another's arms  
 The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill  
 Of bliss on bliss, while I to hell am thrust,  
 Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,  
 Among our other torments not the least,  
 Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines [. . .]  
(PL 4.505–11)

Fry adapts Milton's strict iambic pentameter into flexible free verse:

SATAN O sight tormenting! They  
 Imparadised in one another's arms,  
 While I to Hell am thrust  
 With neither joy nor love.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout the libretto, Fry allows himself anything from a single-syllable line to the full ten of Milton's original pentameters; while the line lengths do not occur in any pattern, their characteristic iambic pulse makes this a metrically structured free verse. In his rendering of Satan's outcry, Fry employs three six-syllable trimeter lines and a single ten-syllable pentameter line. That pentameter line is in fact

<sup>23</sup> Fry, *Paradise Lost*, 10. © 1978 SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz—Germany. Reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

Milton's. As he does throughout the opera, Fry here retains verbatim a striking original line, 'Imparadised in one another's arms', which takes on special weight in the libretto as the only ten-syllable line in the context of otherwise six-syllable lines. While he preserves this Miltonic line, Fry otherwise linearizes Milton's enjambed and involuted syntax, removing appositives and modifiers that are inessential to the main thrust of the passage. Doing so allows him to align thoughts with lines: Fry shifts Milton's mid-line 'while I to hell am thrust' over to the left margin so that it begins (and ends) the line. Yet there is an odd hiccup that disrupts this carefully developed linear style. Fry places 'They'—a compression of Milton's 'Thus these two'—alone at the end of a line, so that it enjambes quite heavily into the following line. Indeed, Fry's enjambment—as a single word balances precariously at the edge of a line—is even more striking than Milton's. Fry might easily have added 'They' to the beginning of the next line, but evidently, he felt compelled to leave untouched Milton's original line. The structure of the Miltonic line thus disrupts Fry's effort to achieve the linear style conducive to musical setting. In this way, the libretto draws our attention back to the distinguishing formal qualities of Milton's relentlessly enjambed epic style.

While the words may be a valuable trace of Milton's epic style, Fry's heavy enjambment poses a musical problem for Penderecki. The composer responds by essentially ignoring Fry's lineation. Rather than realizing Fry's lines as separate musical phrases, Penderecki instead makes 'O sight tormenting' a short musical phrase, then places 'They' in the same musical phrase as 'imparadised in one another's arms'. This decision essentially nullifies any sense of Fry's enjambment—or Milton's original enjambment (see Figure 18.2). Yet even as he overrides Fry's lineation, Penderecki shows his fine ability to 'span' English metre, as Milton had exhorted, 'with just note and accent' ('Sonnet XIII' 2, 3). Penderecki's musical idiom in this opera is metrically complex. In just this short example, he employs a shifting mixed metre, with measures of music that alternate between six, five, and four beats. Even so, Penderecki painstakingly matches each foot in Fry's lines to a



Fig. 18.2. Krzysztof Penderecki and Christopher Fry, musical excerpt, from *Paradise Lost* (1978). © 1978 SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz—Germany. Reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Krzysztof Penderecki PARADISE LOST. Libretto by Christopher Fry. Original text by John Milton. Copyright © 1978 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany. All Rights Reserved. Used by arrangement with European American Music Distributors Company, sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

single quarter-note beat. Strong poetic stresses are aligned with downbeats, so that the singer, despite the potentially bewildering shifting rhythms, can declaim the text in a clear, regular, speech-like style. Penderecki also subtly capitalizes on the opportunities for text-painting in Fry's libretto. The most striking instance occurs when Penderecki thrusts the musical line down over an octave as Satan sings 'I to Hell am thrust.' In contrast to the smooth, stepwise melody of the previous phrase, the jumping intervals evoke the plunge to Hell and allow the singer to convey Satan's bitter anger.

Penderecki sets Satan's anguished rumination over an extraordinary orchestral sound: a bed of interlocking tritones. The tritone is an augmented fourth, traditionally understood as the most dissonant interval in Western music, and famously known in the medieval period as the *diabolus in musica* [the devil in music].<sup>25</sup> Satan's melodic line, too, describes a rising tritone on the word 'While' as he turns from describing Adam and Eve 'Imparadised in one another's arms' to evoking his contrasting unhappy state. Meanwhile, the strings begin a hesitant descending chromatic scale in a complex polyrhythm that promotes the continuity of Satan's vocal line even as it clashes with that line in its rhythm and harmony. Penderecki is using the orchestra to offset the risk posed by Fry's second enjambment in this passage: 'While I to Hell am thrust | with neither joy nor love.' Here, the composer honours Fry's lineation in Satan's singing by inserting a brief, eighth-note pause between 'thrust' and 'with'; but the enjambed verbal syntax should in fact continue without pause. The continuous orchestral melody underneath Satan's singing sutures over the gap in the vocal line. In this fine-grained interplay among libretto, singer, and orchestra, we see something of Fry and Penderecki's minutely disciplined effort to wrest Milton's resistant text into responsive music.<sup>26</sup>

This representative example is a small case study of a large-scale opera. There is much more to be done: to explore, for example, how Penderecki handles text for multiple singers singing simultaneously. But I want to close by emphasizing the extraordinary degree to which Milton's epic style defies musical treatment. Fry's libretto and Penderecki's score bear traces of Milton's anti-musical text: Fry's unmusical enjambments and Penderecki's bold yet delicate efforts to accommodate those enjambments in the interplay between singer and orchestra. A more intense trace of Milton's anti-musical text can be found in a character Fry and Penderecki invented for the opera: its narrator, who is the figure of the poet Milton himself.

<sup>25</sup> For the tritone as one of the essential harmonic building blocks of Penderecki's harmony in *Paradise Lost*, see Chłopicka, 'Paradise Lost', 45; and Murphy, 'In the Beginning of Penderecki's *Paradise Lost*', 239.

<sup>26</sup> Almost fifty years since the opera's premiere, there is no commercial recording of it. A complete performance on YouTube is billed as being the 1978 world premiere performance, but it has not been possible to confirm its authenticity. See Penderecki, *Paradise Lost*, performed by the Chicago Lyric Opera (n. d.).

The opera opens with a brief instrumental prelude: a muttered growling in the low strings, *pianissimo*, gradually grows louder and rises in a probing chromatic figure to a *fortissimo* climax. And then, over a sustained pedal point at the lowest reach of the orchestra, we hear the voice of the narrator, the operatic character ‘Milton’:

Hail, holy Light!  
Before the Sun, before the Heavens thou wert.  
May I express thee?  
But thou revistest not these eyes  
That roll in vain to find thy piercing ray.<sup>27</sup>

One surprise is that this opening address is drawn not from the opening of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, but from the invocation to light in book 3 (ll. 1–55). But the far greater surprise is that rather than singing, the character Milton *speaks*. The original lines from Milton’s poem are not so resistant to musical setting as other passages in the epic. Even so, Fry condenses and linearizes them, making them as amenable to music as possible. Yet despite Fry’s efforts, Penderecki simply refuses to set them into music; they are spoken poetry.

This is not an isolated instance in the opera. Recall Milton’s heavily enjambed description of Satan’s descent into Hell in music: ‘Him the almighty power | Hurl’d headlong flaming from the ethereal sky’. Fry retains these lines—which, as I have shown, strongly resist musical adaptation—almost exactly. And Penderecki again refuses to set them in music: the opera’s narrator, Milton, speaks them.

What the composer does is affirm the profound anti-musicality of Milton’s epic style. For Penderecki, it is at once an act of artistic humility and a brilliant aesthetic reading of his intransigent source. As Milton’s poetry is pronounced on stage by ‘Milton’ himself, Penderecki opens a special, protected space within the sound-world of the opera to make audible the resistant poetic material from which he strove to make musical sound. To be sure, Penderecki does not altogether cede the stage to poetry: the orchestra offers a steady bed of sound beneath the spoken verse, a reminder that we are in the opera house, that this is indeed music. Yet at these moments of spoken poetry, when Penderecki seems almost to give up on making music from Milton’s text, the opera hovers between music and poetry. Few composers in the three-and-a-half centuries since *Paradise Lost* was published have possessed the combination of humility, originality, and sheer dogged will to wrest Milton’s epic into music. Penderecki managed it. His opera testifies to the enduring nature of the challenge.

<sup>27</sup> Fry, *Paradise Lost*, 5. © 1978 SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz—Germany. Reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.



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## Quoting Milton in Musical Appropriations

Stephen M. Buhler

Christy Desmet gestures towards new ethical considerations of the act of artistic appropriation that bears on the musical appropriations of the literary works of John Milton. In her vitally important essay, ‘Recognizing Shakespeare, Rethinking Fidelity’, Desmet posits the concept of fealty—rather than fidelity.<sup>1</sup> Fealty, which is to say a personal commitment to respecting a work’s initial purposes, even if challenging or equivocal, offers a foundation for adding ethics as a factor in assessing and understanding appropriative works. Her essay is a necessary counterbalance to Douglas Lanier’s ‘Shakespearean Rhizomatics: Adaptation, Ethics, Value’, which appears in the same edited collection, *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation*.<sup>2</sup> Lanier builds on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari for something close to a descriptive rather than prescriptive approach towards appropriation.<sup>3</sup> Desmet is just as concerned as Lanier with challenging the traditional view of fidelity to the source as a primary responsibility, but also offers an ethical alternative that considers questions of responsibility: an emphasis on both the adaptors’ and the audiences’ senses of obligation to the source material. Mere repetition of language that appears in the source text may serve to avoid much of a work’s richness and complexity; removed from its original contexts and rhetorical purposes, the work becomes inert. Desmet notes that freer renditions may involve greater attentiveness to the source material. Evaluating appropriative works, Desmet concludes, should look beyond ‘a technical standard of formal fidelity’ to ‘an acceptance of responsibility for the bond that binds disparate narratives conceptually and emotionally’.<sup>4</sup>

Desmet’s model of responsibility accruing to both adaptors and audiences generally serves as a rationale for assessing the validity of appropriative works. It also functions admirably when applied to a readily recognizable author such as William Shakespeare. One of Desmet’s most vivid examples is Geoffrey Wright’s 2006 cinematic adaptation of *Macbeth*, with its productively fraught allegiances to

This chapter is dedicated to the memory of Carla Rosenquist-Buhler (1948–2022), who could ‘allay the murmurs of the wind [...] appease the sullen seas | and calme the fury of the mind’.

<sup>1</sup> Desmet, ‘Recognizing Shakespeare, Rethinking Fidelity’.

<sup>2</sup> Lanier, ‘Shakespearean Rhizomatics: Adaptation, Ethics, Value’.

<sup>3</sup> For this theoretical foundation, see Deleuze and Guattari, ‘Introduction: Rhizome’.

<sup>4</sup> Desmet, ‘Recognizing Shakespeare, Rethinking Fidelity’, 55.

both Shakespeare and film history.<sup>5</sup> Establishing fealty, however, as a guiding principle or a norm for both the act of appropriation and its recognition by audiences can raise complications in the case of less well-known authors—or, with Milton, an author once widely known.

This chapter concentrates on musical appropriations of Miltonic materials and the degree of affinity shown to their sources. I explore compositions that deploy textual echoes of and direct quotations from Milton's works but that fail the test of fealty. I argue that the lack is calculated and explore examples of musical quotation that 'conceptually and emotionally', to use Desmet's terms, resonate more harmoniously with their Miltonic materials. All the examples involve the formal challenges of musical composition and often engage with—or avoid—the political and religious implications of those forms.

Composers have adapted Milton's works either in their entirety—more or less—or at least as independent pieces for centuries.<sup>6</sup> Some have invoked Milton's name through selecting bits and pieces of his language—and, along the way, repurposing his works either by refutation of their original ideas or by extension of those ideas' implications. These composers have appropriated short passages from his poetry in strategic ways, sometimes combining his words with those of other authors, including themselves.<sup>7</sup> This chapter sketches a history of various methods employed in quoting Milton in musical adaptations.

Some of the tension that regularly emerges between Milton and his musical adaptors is inspired by the author's own attitudes towards music. Milton, himself the son of a gifted composer, John Milton the Elder, embodied the long and vexed relationship that music and poetry have enjoyed. In his early Latin poem *Ad patrem*, he suggests that music was the more valuable when it maintained a deferential pose towards language (see especially lines 50–5). Early modern developments in the roles and functions of composer and poet intensified certain stress points, either a song's music or its words. Alternatively, composers more regularly viewed a verbal text as merely a point of departure; the less bound by the words, the more impressive the musical achievement. The tensions between these conceptions of the relationship between music and text can be seen clearly in the interrelated careers of composer Henry Lawes (1595–1662) and Milton. Here, I focus on 'A Pastoral Elegie', a pivotal musical composition by Lawes, whose career had been distinguished by his alert and, generally, deferential settings of texts by several of the most celebrated poets of his time, including Cavalier poets like

<sup>5</sup> Desmet, 'Recognizing Shakespeare, Rethinking Fidelity', 51.

<sup>6</sup> For the paucity of musical adaptations, see Seth Herbst's chapter in the present volume, 'The Milton and Music Problem'.

<sup>7</sup> Examples of musical fealty toward Milton, verging on fidelity, include C. Hubert H. Parry's 'Blest Pair of Sirens', based on 'At a Solemn Musick', and John Blackwood McEwen's *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

Robert Herrick and Edmund Waller. In this work, Lawes moves decisively from deferring to an author's text to asserting primacy over it, through not only the musical interpretation of the words but also the use of selected passages against a text's original purposes; the author from whom he appropriates is Milton.

The story of this kind of musical response to Milton begins well before the poet composed his major works; it begins even before the death of Charles I in 1649, the establishment of the Commonwealth, and Milton's emergence on the European stage as an apologist for both of those events. In 1648, Henry Lawes oversaw the publication of *Choice Psalmes Put into Musick for Three Voices*, which brought together several sacred compositions by his late brother William Lawes. Published as separate part-books, *Choice Psalmes* includes a series of musical tributes to William, who had died in 1645 on the Royalist side during a battle at Chester. A handful of luminaries of the court-centred musical community in England contributed to the memorial: John Wilson, future Oxford Professor of Music; John Taylor of the Royal Viols and Voices; John Cobb, Gentleman of the Chapel Royal (like Henry); Simon Ives; John Jenkins; and John Hilton the Younger. The entire project can be read—and indeed sung—as a tribute to Charles I, whose portrait appears as the frontispiece.

It is extraordinary, then, that this publication first presented to the world Milton's tribute to Henry, the sonnet Milton published in 1645 as 'To My Friend, Mr. Henry Lawes, on His Airs'. The title 'Airs' focuses on the songs that Henry composed featuring a single melodic line, the better to maintain the lyric's intelligibility. Milton celebrates his 'Friend' as

Harry, whose tuneful and well measur'd Song  
First taught our English Music how to span  
Words with just note and accent, not to scan  
With *Midas'* Ears, committing short and long [. . .]  
(*'To My Friend'* 1–4)<sup>8</sup>

The praise highlights Henry's musical service to the English language generally, making him worthy to be 'writ the man | That with smooth air couldst humor best our tongue', voiced at the end of the opening octave's single sentence (*'To My Friend'* 7–8). The metrical stress on 'writ' emphasizes the fealty shown by Lawes to poetry, as represented especially in the expansion into mythology and Italian literature, along with possible glances at Henry's high church leanings in the references to 'Priest' and 'Purgatory', in the sestet (*'To My Friend'* 10, 14).

There is a comparable relationship at work in the song in Milton's pastoral elegy *Lycidas* that seems to the speaker more than due to his departed friend,

<sup>8</sup> This and all quotations of Milton's works are from Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Hughes, and cited parenthetically in the text.

although 'song' in that poem is entirely subsumed under poetry (*Lycidas* 36). Milton had benefitted from Lawes's approach in the songs that Lawes wrote for *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*. The musical tribute to William that Henry contributes to *Choice Psalmes*, however, breaks away from the self-imposed constraints of the monodic air that so impressed Milton; there is a refusal to continue the terms of fealty once observed to poetry in general and to Milton's text—as with *A Mask*—in particular. Henry instead offers 'A Pastoral Elegie' not as an air for single voice, but rather written for three voices as the full title states, embracing vocal polyphony and applying it to textual materials that include ideas and phrases appropriated from Milton's own *Lycidas*. The circumstances of Lawes's publication parallel those of the 1638 memorial volume *Iusta Edouardo King naufrago*, in which *Lycidas* first appeared; however, it is the 1645 context that Milton provided for his pastoral elegy which receives special attention and implicit commentary in *Choice Psalmes*.

In 1645, Milton had taken the meditative *Lycidas* on vocation and consolation—among many other themes—and highlighted its political significance. *Poems of Mr. John Milton* introduces the famous headnote to *Lycidas* that not only places this poem in the time of its occasion, the death of Edward King in 1637, but also applies the poem to subsequent events: the poet, we are told in the newly added headnote, 'foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height'. The author reads the 'Pilot of Galilean lake' passage prophetically—both as a critique of immediate circumstances and as a glimpse into the future (*Lycidas* headnote, 109). The passage contrasts the promise of King's incomplete but devout career as churchman with the lifelong greed found to be animating most of the 'hirelings', as Milton increasingly calls them in later years, of the Church of England.<sup>9</sup>

Just as *Poems of Mr. John Milton* is a deliberate work of self-presentation, calling attention to the poet's place in several literary traditions and in the contemporary political landscape, so too is *Choice Psalmes*. Some of Lawes's self-definition is strictly musical. His contributions here mark a shift in compositional style away from the monody that attracted praise from Milton and other poets.<sup>10</sup> Instead, most of Henry's works here embrace a polyphonic approach more generally identified with William. Some of the self-definition is textual. Even as he aligns himself aesthetically, culturally, and politically with his late brother, Henry distances himself even further from his sometime artistic collaborator Milton by using some of the poet's language from *Lycidas* for political purposes very different from Milton's own.

<sup>9</sup> One of Milton's last political pamphlets is entitled *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings Out of the Church* (1658). See Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Hughes, 856–79.

<sup>10</sup> For such poets' appreciation of Lawes, see Trudell, 'Milton and the Cavaliers'.

The verbal text for Henry Lawes's 'A Pastoral Elegie' can strike even sympathetic readers as conventional in the extreme. Present-day musicologist and lutenist Elizabeth Kenny, who contributed to a recording of the piece, sums up her assessment of the composition by asserting that it 'is perhaps the best refutation of the idea that Henry Lawes was only as good as his texts. As a poem it is heartfelt but easily forgotten. As music it says it all'.<sup>11</sup> The poem, regularly attributed to Henry himself, has not been particularly valued; most commentators would agree with Kenny that the lament gains most of its affective power through its musical setting. I would argue, however, that much of the song's power for early audiences comes from its reworkings of *Lycidas*, its focused verbal echoes and strategic inversions of Milton's text and implicit polemics. The deftness of Henry Lawes's allusions and appropriations throughout the piece's rich text thus merits sufficient quotation:

Cease, O cease, ye jolly shepherds  
 cease your merry layes;  
 Pipe no more, in medowes green,  
 crown'd with Ivie and with Bayes:  
 let your flockes no more be seen  
 on the verdant hillocks spread;  
 but tune your oaten reeds with saddest notes to mourn:  
 for gentle *Willy*, your lov'd *Lawes* is dead.  
 Weep Shepherd Swaines,  
 for him that was the glory of your plaines:  
 He could allay the murmurs of the wind;  
 He could appease the sullen seas  
 and calme the fury of the mind;  
 But now (alas) in silent urne he lyes;  
 hid from us, and never must returne.<sup>12</sup>

There are several conventional overlaps between this text and Milton's *Lycidas*: along with a supple variety in metrical effects, 'meadows green' replace Milton's more specific 'Hazel Copses green'; 'Ivie and [...] Bayes' replace Milton's 'Laurels', 'Myrtles', and 'Ivy never sere'; flocks on 'verdant hillocks' replace Milton's 'high Lawns'; 'oaten reeds' replace Milton's 'Oaten Flute' or wonderfully terse 'Oat' when the pastoral mood/mode returns after Apollo's counsel (*Lycidas* 42, 1–2, 25, 33, 88). Even more pointedly, instead of 'your lov'd *Lycidas*', we here have 'your lov'd *Lawes*' (*Lycidas* 51). Henry's 'Elegie' concludes with William's remains lying in a 'silent urne' that calls for a musical response; Milton's elegy early on imagines

<sup>11</sup> Lawes and Lawes, *Songs*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Lawes, *Choice Psalmes*, fol. Cc 1 r-v; also in Wainwright, *Divers Elegies*, 11–13.

the speaker in his own 'destin'd Urn' hoping for the verbal tribute of 'lucky words' (*Lycidas* 20).<sup>13</sup> Further, in *Lycidas*, the shepherds are eventually told to 'weep no more' (*Lycidas* 165); here, they are told repeatedly to weep. Henry presents his brother as an Orphic figure in whose absence the wind and seas remain in turmoil; Milton's conjectures about the death of Edward King—the absent presence behind the poem's use of the conventional pastoral figure *Lycidas*—imagine that 'The Air was calm' and the brine was level (*Lycidas* 98). Since the line about 'the murmurs of the wind' is sung by only one of the three voices, Henry here acknowledges that William, the present absence marked by the fraternal and homespun diminutive 'Willy', could, when he wished, exercise musical command over the single melodic line, or Air—as the solo songs he contributed to several court masques and stage plays.

Henry's most effective manoeuvres in appropriation involve specific echoes of 'never must returne' and 'no more be seen' from the 'heavy change' passage in *Lycidas*:

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
Now thou art gone, and never must return! [. . .]  
The Willows and the Hazel Copses green  
Shall now no more be seen,  
Fanning thir joyous Leaves to thy soft layes.

(*Lycidas* 37–8, 42–4)

'[N]o more be seen' describes changes in nature—or in perceptions of nature—precipitated by the loss of *Lycidas* from the pastoral landscape. In contrast, the composer uses the phrase to advocate that his fellow musicians remove their 'flockes' from that landscape: there is a suggestion that music itself should be sequestered, hidden, not only in response to William's death but also to the Parliamentary ascendancy.

The song's direct borrowing from 'no more be seen' is reinforced with the description of William as 'hid from us'. Most moving of all is the sheer repetition of 'never must returne' and, in the bass voice, also a Lear-like 'never'.<sup>14</sup> The passage begins with decorous call and response in the major mode, moves into complex minor-key sonorities, and then resolves with quiet acceptance on a major chord—recalling the conclusion of many a high church anthem. Henry's settings of poetic texts were valued in part because they generally avoid taking the musical licence of repeating words or phrases for aural embellishment. It cannot be coincidental that

<sup>13</sup> For the shift of emphasis from vocality to writing in *Lycidas* in relation to other expressive forms, see Angelica Duran's chapter in the present volume, 'Seeing, Hearing, and Feeling Milton's Works with and as Prosthetic Sign Systems'.

<sup>14</sup> William Shakespeare, *King Lear* 5.3.309, in Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. Evans.



Milton himself invokes the power of repetition in the verse paragraph in *Lycidas* from which Henry draws so movingly: 'now thou art gone, | Now thou art gone'.

For Milton, at least in retrospect, Edward King represents a lost final opportunity for reconciliation of the political and religious schisms increasingly evident across Britain. If King had lived and if more of the ordained clergy were like him, the mysterious operation of the 'two-handed engine' would be unnecessary (*Lycidas* 130). Now, however, sides must be chosen and action taken. For Henry Lawes, the death of his brother William was, if anything, even more definitive. Along with the political and religious differences, there were cultural distinctions to be made. Henry's earlier approaches to the setting of texts privileged the single voice and the intelligible word, which naturally appealed to poets of all political persuasions, but especially to those who, like Milton, had Reformist sympathies. In the wake of his brother's death, Henry takes on his brother's compositional practices of intricate polyphony, assuming not a 'Mantle blue', a colour by then associated with militant Protestantism, but one instead of purple: like William, he would embody, as well as create, the King's music and the Royalist aesthetic (*Lycidas* 192).

Finally, in its identification of William with the Royalist cause, *Choice Psalmes* participates in a wider political strategy. In *Hesperides*, Robert Herrick pays tribute to William's musical talents and implicitly presents their loss as a further sign of the 'Bad Season' precipitated by the Parliamentary ascendancy—'The Bad Season Makes the Poet Sad' is one of Herrick's commentaries on the political situation.<sup>15</sup> In his epitaph for William, Thomas Jordan presents his death as a rallying cry for the royal and loyal: 'Concord is conquer'd', he declares, since 'Will. Lawes was slain by such whose wills were laws.'<sup>16</sup> Henry's tributes to William—the song and the volume—also constitute relatively early exercises in Royalist martyrology—anticipating by mere months what would be made of the death of their great patron, King Charles I, in a work like *Eikon basilike* (1649). Milton's own career was, in turn, transformed by his attempts, in *Eikonoklastes* (1649) and elsewhere, to turn a political text against itself—as Henry Lawes had already done to *Lycidas* in 'A Pastoral Elegie'.

### Miltonic Appropriation and Fealty after Lawes

Other composers whose works also involve selective and strategic quotations from Milton demonstrate keen awareness of the kind of cultural authority his poetry can bring to different themes explored in each work. They bring Milton to bear on matters of political sovereignty, theology, gender politics, and

<sup>15</sup> Herrick, 'The Bad Season Makes the Poet Sad'. For the major role of the Reformist insistence on textual intelligibility, at least for music during religious services in the culture wars of seventeenth-century England, see Buhler, 'Counterpoint and Controversy', esp. 22–5.

<sup>16</sup> Jordan, *The Muses Melody in a Consort of Poetry*, fol. 8v.

artistic identity. Each composer makes a choice between Milton's apparent messages in the source texts and the forms he employed in communicating those messages.

George Frideric Handel's *The Occasional Oratorio* was written and first performed in hopeful anticipation of the defeat of the Young Pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie, in 1746. In this composition, Milton's words share the stage with those of Edmund Spenser, of frequent Handel collaborator Thomas Morrell, and of others. Strikingly, this deployment of Miltonic text into music with an overt political agenda is from no fewer than eight verse paraphrases of the Psalms—primarily from the group Milton wrote in 1648, Psalms 80–88—and the selections reflect the range of approaches Milton adopted over several decades. The compiler of texts for Handel's *The Occasional Oratorio* was most likely the librettist for Handel's earlier oratorio, sometimes staged as an opera, *Samson*: Newburgh Hamilton.<sup>17</sup> Selections from only one of these paraphrases appears in *The Occasional Oratorio*.

In addition, letters from some of Handel's other collaborators suggest that Hamilton was involved, and one letter makes him solely responsible for the 1746 oratorio's text. William 'Hermes' Harris, who initiated the borrowing from Milton that culminated in Charles Jennens's libretto for *L'Allegro, il Penseroso, ed il Moderato*, reports on a rehearsal of the work, notes the scriptural source of much of the words, and judges the piece 'extremely worthy' of Handel and his talents. In contrast, Jennens was outraged by *The Occasional Oratorio* in both conception and execution. In a letter to his friend Edward Holdsworth, he dismisses it as 'nonsense and impertinence': "Tis a triumph for a Victory not yet gain'd", he observes, since the Duke of Cumberland had not succeeded in subduing the Young Pretender's rebel forces. Just as vexing to Jennens was the text's 'inconceivable jumble of Milton & Spenser, a Chaos extracted from Order by the most absurd of all Blockheads.'<sup>18</sup> The identity of the chief blockhead is made clear in a letter written after the oratorio's first, highly successful performances. Holdsworth apparently admired the work. Jennens strongly disagreed as to its quality:

You are mistaken as to the Occasional Oratorio, which is most of it transcrib'd from Milton & Spenser, but chiefly from Milton, who in his Version of some of the Psalms wrote so like Sternhold & Hopkins that there is not a pin to choose betwixt 'em. But there are people in the world who fancy everything which has Milton's name to it. I believe Hamilton has done little more than tack the passages together, which he has done with his usual judgement & cook'd up an Oratorio of Shreds and patches.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Gooch, 'Handel, Milton, and Spenser', 2. See also Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 192.

<sup>18</sup> Gooch, 'Handel, Milton, and Spenser', 3, dated 3 February 1746.

<sup>19</sup> Handel, *The Occasional*, 3, dated 3 March 1746.

The language that Jennens uses offers indications that he understood very well what Hamilton was doing with Milton; he simply objected to Hamilton's literary and political tactics.

The echo from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that concludes the critique makes a political point, as well as an aesthetic one. Young Hamlet considers his uncle Claudius to be 'A king of shreds and patches,' nothing more than a clownish burlesque of a monarch, akin to the Vice figure's frequent assumption of motley robes in morality plays and interludes.<sup>20</sup> *The Occasional Oratorio* is a work dedicated to the praise and survival of the Hanoverian monarchy, in opposition to the Young Pretender's efforts to return the British crown to the Stuart dynasty by force. As Ruth Smith has observed, Jennens was one of his era's preeminent nonjurors, English citizens who refused to take the oath acknowledging the Protestant succession as determined by Parliament and abjuring loyalty to the Stuart line. While keeping clear of overt Jacobite activity, Jennens could let his sympathies be known by private means: his seal featured, significantly enough, the head of Charles I and he had the names of the Hanover royals crossed out in the prayer books used at the chapel in his country house at Gopsall.<sup>21</sup> Clearly to Jennens, George II was a mock-king, usurping the place of Britain's divine-right monarchs, propped up by the shreds and patches of constitutional compromise with Parliament. The occasion of *The Occasional Oratorio*, the hoped-for victory over Bonnie Prince Charlie, would be at the least distasteful to Jennens. Making matters worse was praise of the work from individuals, such as Holdsworth, who shared Jennens's principles. Making matters worse still was the direct involvement of someone who benefitted directly from the patronage of other nonjurors and even of outright Jacobites: Newburgh Hamilton.

The 'usual judgement' that Jennens disdains was first demonstrated by Hamilton's extensive use of the 1648 Psalm paraphrases in the libretto for Handel's *Samson*. The political import of these Psalms is evident in the parallels readily drawn between the plight of the Israelites and the threats faced by the Parliamentarians before the decisive capture of Charles I. It is also evident in the verse form—the Common Metre of the Sternhold-Hopkins tradition—that Milton maintains throughout the sequence of Psalms 80–88 in his paraphrases of 1648. The soldiers of Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army were noted for going into battle while singing Sternhold-Hopkins Psalms; Milton's paraphrases proclaim his political sympathies by their form, as well as their suggestive additions. Jennens was apparently less than pleased with Hamilton's appropriations from such militantly (it must be said) anti-Stuart verse.

In *The Occasional Oratorio*, however, only one of the 1648 paraphrases is excerpted: Psalm 81, the first eight lines of which appear in a rousing bass aria and

<sup>20</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 3.4.101, in Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. Evans.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 191.

resounding chorus, preparatory to Part Two's conclusion, with its borrowing from Milton's youthful paraphrase, written at age 15, of Psalm 136. Most appropriately for a musical celebration, the lines ask that

To God, our strength, sing loud and clear,  
Sing loud to God our King!  
To Jacob's God, that all may hear,  
Loud acclamations ring!  
Prepare the hymn, prepare the song,  
The timbrel hither bring,  
The cheerful psaltry bring along,  
And harp with pleasant string.<sup>22</sup>

The passage preserves Milton's language almost precisely—'a Hymn' in Milton's second stanza and line becomes 'the hymn', here. Perhaps anticipating Jennens's objections, Handel's musical setting defuses—or dissipates—much of the militancy. Handel repeats phrases, with melodic developments justifying each repetition; he draws out syllables in ways completely counter to the deferential approach that Milton found so admirable in the earlier works of Henry Lawes. The difference is made clear early on in the passage; the expansive treatment afforded to 'Sing loud to God our King' delightedly breaks the metric bonds of Sternhold-Hopkins. Bryan Gooch has commented insightfully on the sensitivity with which Handel responds to Milton's language throughout the composition, suggesting, in effect, that Handel could operate in the tradition of the early Henry.<sup>23</sup> The language is honoured, gloriously, through Handel's alert and ingenious reinforcements of the text's celebratory message, and does so without undue recourse to text painting, musical imitation of the words' literal meanings. Handel even preserves textual intelligibility. Still, as Milton's chosen form becomes imperceptible, some of the political force of his text is lost.

Milton had broken away from Common Metre in his paraphrases of Psalms 1–8. Written, or at least dated, during the first days of the Nominated Parliament, these psalms enjoy considerable flexibility in metre and line length. The difference between the military uncertainty of 1648 and the revolutionary ardour of 1653 is reflected in the confident experiments of the later group.<sup>24</sup> One of the later psalms, however, hearkens back to Common Metre. Here are the opening lines of Milton's Psalm 5:

Jehovah, to my words give ear,  
My meditation weigh,

<sup>22</sup> Handel, *The Occasional Oratorio*, 17.

<sup>23</sup> Gooch, 'Handel, Milton, and Spenser', 9, 11.

<sup>24</sup> Buhler, 'Counterpoint and Controversy', 34.

The voice of my complaining hear,  
 My King and God, for unto thee I pray.  
 ('Psalm V' 1–4)

Milton repeats this pattern of iambic tetrameter, trimeter, tetrameter, and pentameter throughout the paraphrase: each quatrain begins with Sternhold-Hopkins metre but ends in English heroic verse. Hamilton preserves the form, even as he alters or rearranges some of the words:

Jehovah, to my words give ear,  
 My meditations weigh!  
 The voice of my complaining hear,  
 To thee alone, my God and King, I pray.<sup>25</sup>

When Handel sets this text, early in Part One of *The Occasional Oratorio*, the metre is to a considerable extent obscured by repetition, one of the compositional practices that the Reformist tradition, exemplified by the Sternhold-Hopkins metrical psalms, bitterly opposed. What an audience actually hears is this:

Jehovah! Jehovah! To my words give ear, to my words give ear,  
 My meditations weigh,  
 Jehovah! Jehovah! My meditations weigh!  
 The voice of my complaining hear,  
 To thee alone, my God and King, to Thee I pray.  
 To thee alone, my God and King, I pray.  
 The voice of my complaining hear,  
 To thee alone, my God and King, to Thee I pray.  
 To thee alone, my God and King, I pray.  
 To thee alone, my God and King, I pray.

Most of Milton's verse translations from the Psalms were written during times of civil war or in the wake of a series of Northern Rebellions that anticipated those of the next century. Handel and Hamilton could not help but see their applicability to the threat represented by the Young Pretender. Their work's absorption of Reformist and, later, Nonconformist hymnody into Hanoverian symphony parallels its appropriation of the Good Old Cause's most resonant voice by music written in support of the constitutional monarchy. *The Occasional Oratorio* attempts to strike a golden, Augustan mean between Protectorate and Personal Rule. In Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso, ed il Moderato*, Jennens supplies verses extolling such an ideal for individual temperament and the body politic. In turn, Handel fully

<sup>25</sup> Handel, *The Occasional Oratorio*, 11.

participates in the Jennens project of the *Il Moderato* passage. This is not entirely un-Milonic, however. We should recall that even as late as 1648, as Milton penned his Common Metre paraphrases, several adherents of the Good Old Cause still held out hope for the unlikely compromise of Charles I agreeing to be a constitutional monarch. Even so, Gooch is right to note that, in all probability, 'Milton would have found himself discomfited to have his words used in such a royalist piece.'<sup>26</sup> One might also wonder how Milton would have reacted to the use of his 'At a Solemn Music'—the text for C. Hubert Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens*—as part of a royal wedding ceremony in 2011.

Two hundred years later, Milton again finds himself in diverse company, provided by Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Hodie!*, a Christmas cantata written during 1953 and 1954 and first performed in the latter year. Like *The Occasional Oratorio*, the piece combines texts from different writers: in this case, the list includes George Herbert, William Drummond, and rather remarkably, Thomas Hardy. As the composer and Ursula Vaughan Williams, his wife, searched for texts both familiar and less known that were appropriate for a Christmas cantata, they came across passages from the Bible and the breviary, several anonymous carols, a hymn by Miles Coverdale (translating Martin Luther), Renaissance verse by George Herbert and William Drummond, and a gorgeously ambivalent poem by Thomas Hardy. The theological ambivalence of Hardy's 'The Oxen' is bracing, but largely soothed and resolved in favour of belief when placed in the devout context Vaughan Williams has designed for it.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, profoundly ambivalent passages in Milton lose most of their uncertainty, thanks to their musical setting, placement, and canny editing.

Milton first appears in *Hodie!* in the piece's third section, simply entitled 'Song.' Vaughan Williams borrows stanzas 1, 4, and 5 from the hymn section of *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* and employs the conclusion of another stanza to weave the passages together and substantively change their meaning. Milton's first stanza in 'The Hymn' finishes with a deliberate reference to unredeemed nature: 'It was no season then for her | To wanton with the Sun, her lusty Paramour' (*On the Morning* 35–6). Vaughan Williams, however, jumps to the last lines of the third stanza, which depicts 'meek-ey'd Peace' as an aspect of the higher Venus, with this result (*On the Morning* 46):

It was the Winter wild,  
While the Heav'n-born child,  
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;  
Nature in awe to him

<sup>26</sup> Gooch, 'Handel, Milton, and Spenser', 4.

<sup>27</sup> Intriguingly, Richard Vaughan Williams shared Hardy's agnosticism: see U. Vaughan Williams, *RVW: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 29.



figure for the word 'harmony', which Milton describes as 'ninefold', suggestive of a diapason that encompasses a full octave and its repeated major tone; the tenor voices span that range. Another variation introduces some text painting with appropriately murky counterpoint for the 'dark foundations' and 'welt'ring waves'.<sup>30</sup> Even with these changes, the Miltonic verse and metrical structures are audible, not obscured.

The reversal in the order of stanzas might enact stanza 14's vision—and fear—that 'Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold', since what Milton resists, Vaughan Williams often embraces (*On the Morning* 135). This impulse becomes clear with the composer's treatment of stanza 15, which follows close to Milton's 1673 text for the ode:

Yea, truth and justice then  
Will down return to men,  
Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,  
Mercy will sit between,  
Throned in celestial sheen,  
With radiant feet the tissued cloud down steering;  
And heaven, as at some festival,  
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.<sup>31</sup>

An even more memorable passage than this should follow, but does not do so: 'But wisest Fate says no, | This must not yet be so' (*On the Morning* 149–50). In Milton, the millennial vision is an alluring distraction from the course of sacred history. The poem continues by beginning the hard work of salvation by the expulsion and, at times, deft recuperation of the false gods and mistaken notions of divinity. In contrast, the millennial vision for Vaughan Williams is achieved every Christmas: so the rest, as Hamlet says, 'is silence'.<sup>32</sup> Just as the proudly agnostic Hardy would have been puzzled by the new resonances provided for his words by Vaughan Williams, Milton would have been at the very least bemused by seeing passages from his carefully entitled *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*—most assuredly not a Christ's Mass poem—brought into 'order serviceable' in a Christmas cantata. As Wendy Furman-Adams has noted, the conclusion of *Hodie!* edits and arranges Milton's words in ways that effectively subverts—or, to use Milton's own term in the ode, 'prevent[s]'—his poem's message (*On the Morning* 244, 24).<sup>33</sup> In this composition, Vaughan Williams follows a twentieth-century

<sup>30</sup> R. Vaughan Williams, *Hodie! A Christmas Cantata*, 93, 95–6.

<sup>31</sup> R. Vaughan Williams, *Hodie! A Christmas Cantata*, 96–100. For Milton's respective lines, see *On the Morning* 141–8.

<sup>32</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 5.2.395, in Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. Evans.

<sup>33</sup> Furman-Adams, 'Milton's Nativity Inside- (and Right-side-) Out'. For 'prevent', see Buhler, 'Preventing Wizards'.



conception of Milton as a successful champion of Christian orthodoxy.<sup>34</sup> For readers like William Empson, Milton's supposed orthodox theology was an irredeemable Fall—for readers, not for Milton. For readers such as C. S. Lewis, among many others, and for the purposes of Ralph and Ursula Vaughan Williams in *Hodie!*, this was one of Milton's glories.<sup>35</sup>

Two twenty-first-century examples of selective quotation and repurposing demonstrate how selections from Milton add further depth to already rich verbal or musical texts. The film score by Jocelyn Pook for Michael Radford's film of *The Merchant of Venice* (2004) introduces words from other writers to Shakespeare's play, such as a Renaissance ballad by Luys de Narváez, along with lyrics borrowed from a poem by Edgar Allan Poe. The most important text set to music appears in the song 'With Wand'ring Steps', drawn from the conclusion of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The song provides an aural backdrop to the play's return to Belmont after Shylock's defeat. After Portia, disguised as Balthasar the jurist, receives Bassanio's ring, the camera focuses on the ring itself. There is an immediate cut to Belmont at night, awash with torchlight. The modern strings that accompany the end of the previous scene now provide backing for lute, viols, and countertenor Andreas Scholl in a reworking of one of Milton's most famous passages, Adam and Eve's exit from Eden:

The World was all before them, where to choose  
Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:  
They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,  
Through Eden took thir solitary way.

(PL 12.646–9)

As soon as the singer vocalizes the word 'Eden', Bassanio, Antonio, and Gratiano arrive. Portia is given an additional word, 'Peace!'; telling the musicians to stop. The song returns, however, at the film's conclusion.

After the results of the lawsuit are reported to Portia, the camera focuses on Jessica's troubled reaction; rather subtly, we see, for the first time, that her mother's ring is still on her finger. The resolution of the ring plot is bathed in blue, the predawn gloom only slightly offset by candles. Although Lorenzo is cheered by learning of Shylock's enforced deed of gift to him and his bride, other characters—even Launcelot Gobbo—are abashed at the news. After the true identities of the judge and the clerk are made clear, the two newest couples take their leave and the Miltonic song is reprised, this time in full. The song now includes the words about 'thir solitary way', as we are shown Antonio left alone, Shylock shut out of the synagogue due to his compulsory conversion, and his daughter Jessica standing

<sup>34</sup> For Milton interpreted as champion of Christian orthodoxy or certainty, see Peter C. Herman's chapter in the present volume, 'Milton in the Age of Twitter'.

<sup>35</sup> Empson, *Milton's God*, 269–77; Lewis, *Preface to 'Paradise Lost'*.

alone by the water in hazy sunlight, glancing down at what is now unmistakably 'Leah's turquoise'.<sup>36</sup> Again, the camera highlights the physical sign of betrothal and pledged fidelity. The audience is invited to join Shylock and Jessica and Antonio in sharing a sense of paradise lost. The song contributes to the film's at best muted view of all the marriages, including that of Portia and Bassanio, that follow comedic convention: Belmont itself has fallen from a once-Edenic state.

The well-established band Mumford & Sons also evokes a network of Falls in two songs that draw upon not only *Paradise Lost* but also a previous, sometimes unrecognized, borrowing from Milton's epic poem. 'Picture You' and 'Darkness Visible' function as companion pieces, as closely related as Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. The first song knowingly pushes back against the group's image as purveyors of uplifting post-pop. The song's speaker acknowledges a constant fight against depression, echoing William Styron's use of 'darkness visible' as a metaphor for the condition in the title of his memoir (*PL* 1.63). The corrective is a vision—physical or memorial—of the person to whom the lyrics are addressed. When the darkness draws near, all is a 'gathering storm'. But when the speaker can 'picture you', the same forces that once threatened seem benign.<sup>37</sup>

Abruptly, all hope (to echo Dante) is abandoned as 'Picture You' segues into the dire soundscape of the second song, 'Darkness Visible'. Emerging from the depths of the aural remix, a heavily filtered voice places the famous phrase in its Miltonic context, Satan's state of shock at finding himself in Hell:

there to dwell  
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to Arms.  
Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night  
[...] rolling in the fiery Gulf  
Confounded though immortal: But his doom  
Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought  
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes  
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay  
Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:  
At once as far as Angels' ken he views  
The dismal Situation waste and wild,  
A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round [. . .]  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
That comes to all; but torture without end

<sup>36</sup> William Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 3.1.121, in Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. Evans.

<sup>37</sup> 'Picture You', in Mumford & Sons, *Delta*.

Still urges [...]

As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames

No light, but rather darkness visible [...]

(*PL* 1.47–50, 52–61, 65–8, 62–3)

Deft editing of the Miltonic text shifts the focus from the particulars of Satan's situation and allows the passage to serve as a more general comment on emotional suffering and to imply the impact of depression. The poetry hardly registers as verse, as an affectless voice recites the lines with distinct pauses at major punctuation. Two lines from the middle of the passage now provide a devastating conclusion, intensified by what sonically occurs—or, rather, what doesn't occur—which is silence. The music stops completely, so the words 'darkness visible' hang in the air before the music crashes down, louder than before. A descending pattern of chordings that would not be out of place in the most lush of cinematic soundtracks repeats insistently, mirroring a lethargic turmoil with no escape.

Even as Handel's, Pook's, and Mumford & Sons' appropriations go beyond the original meanings at work in Milton's texts, those meanings remain accessible. It is true that their literary forms are obscured and therefore the political implications of those forms, whether Common Metre or the 'English Heroic Verse without Rime' with which 'ancient liberty' can be 'recover'd' (*PL* 'The Verse'). Such resonances, however, are not easy to sustain in strikingly different historical and cultural contexts. The quotational practices of these composers operate with a sense of ethical obligation, unlike those adopted by Henry Lawes and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Milton also was a shrewd appropriator: witness his deployment of Common Metre and blank verse, borrowed from hymns and drama. His relationship to Shakespeare was profoundly appropriative as he constructed his own poetic identity in *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Mask*.<sup>38</sup> These literary and musical artists take conscious liberties with their sources. A crucial point of distinction among them is whether they maintain a sense of ethical responsibility towards their sources and inspirations.

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<sup>38</sup> Minear, *Reverberating Song in Shakespeare and Milton*, 200–5; Stevens, *Imagination and the Presence of Shakespeare in 'Paradise Lost'*, esp. 202–10.

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# Miltonic Tempters in Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street*

Jonathan R. Olson

Temptation was a perennial concern for John Milton: he examined it in masque, epic, tragedy, and lyric. Indeed, his four longest poems—*A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1637), *Paradise Lost* (1667), *Paradise Regained* (1671), and *Samson Agonistes* (1671)—are centred on temptations and their consequences, with generous coverage of both tempter and tempted. The US filmmaker Martin Scorsese's interest in the subject of temptation is likewise longstanding. Across an *oeuvre* of twenty-six features directed over six decades, his characters face temptations of diverse kinds in films permeated with religion and those less overtly religious. Scorsese's two most explicitly Christian films are devoted entirely to representing the experience and investigating the meaning of being tempted: *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) and *Silence* (2016), adapted from the novels by, respectively, Nikos Kazantzakis (Greek, 1955; English translation, 1960) and Shūsaku Endō (Japanese, 1966; English translation, 1969).

Accordingly, a discussion of Milton and Scorsese might be expected to focus on how, in both *Last Temptation* and *Paradise Regained*, Satan adopts a human guise, tempts Jesus in a dream, and tempts Jesus sexually (PR 1.314–56; 2.260–84; 2.350–61).<sup>1</sup> Or to focus on how Father Rodrigues's quest in seventeenth-century Japan to understand the meaning of Father Ferreira's reported apostacy in *Silence* reflects the history of contested interpretations of Adam's choice in *Paradise Lost*. *Last Temptation* and *Silence*, then, offer numerous opportunities to compare fruitfully

I am grateful to the organizers and delegates of the eleventh International Milton Symposium at the University of Exeter, where I presented an early version of this work. I thank especially Eric C. Brown, Margaret Kean, and Gregory M. Colón Semenza for their comments on 22 July 2015, and Angelica Duran and Islam Issa for their generosity as editors and readers.

<sup>1</sup> All citations and quotations of Milton's poetry are from Milton, *Poems*, eds. Carey and Fowler, and cited parenthetically in the text. Bruce Babington and Peter William Evans note that Milton anticipated Kazantzakis and Scorsese in raising the possibility of a sexual temptation of Jesus. They claim that, although the option is debated by the devils, Satan rejects the strategy as futile (Babington and Evans, *Biblical Epics*, 155). Claude J. Summers, however, demonstrates that Satan only pretends to dismiss Belial's proposal and does incorporate sexual lures into his banquet temptation (Summers, '(Homo)Sexual Temptation', 50).

the work of two storytellers in different media who attend equally to the physical and spiritual dimensions of human action. In contrast to those films' evident piety, Scorsese's profane *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) might at first glance seem out of sync with Milton's sympathies. While *Last Temptation* and *Silence* might be the likeliest routes for exploring Scorsese's treatment of temptation and its echoes of Milton, this chapter explicates how *The Wolf of Wall Street* combines, in one character, Comus and his unruly retinue in *A Maske*, the dramatic arc and temptation techniques of Satan in *Paradise Lost*, the substance of Satan's temptations in *Paradise Regained*, and a thematic resonance across Milton's prose.

One of the pertinent contexts of *The Wolf of Wall Street* is Scorsese's other films, particularly those from *It's Not Just You, Murray!* (1964) to *I Heard You Paint Houses* (2019, marketed as *The Irishman*) that are narrated subjectively by their main characters. Examining *The Wolf of Wall Street*'s relationship to such contexts would be productive, but this chapter must focus on the film's Miltonic images. Scorsese has described earlier films—such as *Casino* (1995), which begins *in media res* with a title sequence of its protagonist falling through hellish flames—in terms of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>2</sup> By the measure of his films' evocations of Miltonic material, *The Wolf of Wall Street* seems to surpass its predecessors. This chapter attends to how *The Wolf of Wall Street* verbally echoes certain motifs in Milton's poetry and prose, and pays particular attention to the film's use of images that reproduce effects of Milton's poetry, which combine to form a constellation of Miltonic imagery in the film.

### Comus in *The Wolf of Wall Street*

*The Wolf of Wall Street* was adapted by screenwriter Terence Winter from the 2007 memoir of Jordan Belfort, a former stockbroker whose off-exchange penny-stock brokerage house in Long Island, New York, operated pump-and-dump stock fraud schemes from 1989 until 1996. The historical Belfort was convicted of securities fraud and money laundering in 1999, served twenty-two months of a four-year sentence, and subsequently became a motivational speaker. The three-hour film's fleet pace, edited with typical *élan* by Thelma Schoonmaker, is propelled by musical cues from more than four dozen blues, rock, and television theme songs, and steered by the relentless narration of Belfort, played by Leonardo DiCaprio, ostentatiously recounting the profuse drugs, prostitution, and financial crimes in which he and his companions engaged. The film launches without the formality of opening credits; even its title does not appear on screen until after the final shot. This deferred title is the culmination of a motif, which begins with the first frame, of visually and verbally identifying Belfort and his entourage with beasts. The motif

<sup>2</sup> Christie, 'Martin Scorsese's Testament', 11; D'Alessandro, 'Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese'.

of Belfort's bestial crew and the montages of Dionysian revelry correspond to Comus's perpetuation of the most distinctive practices of, respectively, his mother Circe and his father Bacchus.

Milton invents the union of Circe and Bacchus and defines both parents by classical episodes in which they metamorphosed men into animals. This penchant, common to Bacchus, who 'the Tuscan mariners transformed' before he landed on Circe's island, and Circe, 'Whose charmed cup | Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape, | And downward fell into a grovelling swine', is inherited by their son Comus, who 'Excels his mother at her mighty art' (*Maske* 48, 51–53, 63). When parched travellers accept Comus's offer to quench their thirst, his potion changes their heads 'Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear, | Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat'. His expressed goal is to 'ere long | Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed | About my mother Circe'. The beneficent Attendant Spirit tells the Lady's brothers that 'night by night | He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl | Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey' (*Maske* 70–1, 151–3, 531–3). Like Comus, Belfort collects a herd of brokers that the film, Belfort, the brokers themselves, and others associate with numerous animals.

The first image of the film is a lion in profile that quickly metamorphoses into a logo for a 'Stratton Oakmont, Inc.' This logo is followed immediately by a baritone voice (Edward Herrmann) that describes Wall Street in bestial terms with images to match: 'The world of investing can be a jungle. Bulls. Bears. Danger at every turn.'<sup>3</sup> This pastiche of the 1958 television advertisement of the mutual fund investment manager Dreyfus Fund Inc continues with a lion regally padding through the offices of a brokerage firm as the voice continues: 'That's why we at Stratton Oakmont pride ourselves on being the best. Trained professionals, to guide you through the financial wilderness. Stratton Oakmont. Stability. Integrity. Pride.'<sup>4</sup> Suddenly, the advert's façade of 'trained professionals' is supplanted by the reality of the Stratton Oakmont offices, whose brokers are abusing dwarfs for cash bets. The irony of the lion strolling across Stratton Oakmont's floor is also clarified: the jungle is not only out there but in here, where predators roam the offices. Stratton Oakmont's brokers are a pride in the leonine sense, even as—while their claims to 'Stability' and 'Integrity' are demonstrably false—their 'Pride' acquires its vicious sense and, soon, its sexual sense.

When Belfort identifies his first four employees, he gives them nicknames, half of which are bestial: Sea Otter and Rug Rat.<sup>5</sup> Besides being identified as animals by their ringleader, the brokers themselves bring a menagerie of pets to their workplace: one broker has a pet snake around his neck and another keeps a fishbowl. After Belfort's business partner Donnie (Jonah Hill) eats the broker's goldfish to

<sup>3</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:00:44–52; this and all film citations include hour, minute, and second.

<sup>4</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:00:53–0:01:10.

<sup>5</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:30:24–36.

punish him, Belfort remarks that his firm was ‘a real wolf pit, which is exactly how I liked it.’<sup>6</sup> Yet another broker leads by hand a chimpanzee dressed in khaki trousers and a shirt, identifying the chimp with the brokers themselves. This human costume on only the body of an animal inverts Comus’s ‘rout of monsters’ portrayed by animal costumes on only the heads of human actors, specified in Milton’s stage directions as ‘headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening’ (*Maske* 92–3). Three-quarters of the way through the film, the opening advert’s alignment of Stratton Oakmont with a jungle manifests as Belfort leads his brokers in a chant that devolves into total disorder. As the brokers jump on desks, Donnie vocalizes a crow’s ‘Caw caw caw’ into a microphone.<sup>7</sup> The firm’s distressed accountant, Belfort’s father (Rob Reiner), wrestles the mic away from Donnie and, put in mind of the 1950s television show, shouts above the cacophony, ‘What is this, “Ramar of the Jungle”?’<sup>8</sup>

The most notorious aspect of *The Wolf of Wall Street* is its representation of Belfort and his companions’ bacchanalian excesses. In panning-shot montages of these events, the film often shifts to slow motion not to ennoble or lend gravitas or grandiosity to the brokers, but rather to reveal their nature: fleshly, appetitive, bestial. These shots are *tableaux vivants* of indulgence without financial restraint, and the slow motion renders the figures grotesques. Belfort characterizes his bachelor party explicitly in terms of Comus’s father Bacchus: ‘The flight there alone was a bacchanal. One last blowout for the gods before I settled down for good.’<sup>9</sup> Essentially performing Comus’s duties as the god of revelry, Belfort not only indulges himself but also facilitates the dissipation of others, formally organizing a ‘weekly act of debauchery’ for all of his brokers.<sup>10</sup> When trading closes at 4:00 p.m., Belfort conjures onto the office floor, as if out of thin air, an underwear-clad marching band, tuxedoed servers of champagne, and dancers surrounding the desks of the brokers, all of whom, as the Lady describes Comus’s crew, produce a ‘sound | Of riot, and ill-managed merriment’, inspire ‘wanton dance’, and cause a ‘tumult of loud mirth’ (*Maske* 170–12, 175, 201). The only thing that compels Belfort to silence his rowdy retinue is when their contemptuous laughter is in danger of being overheard by an investor on the phone, like Comus urging his crew to be quiet and hide from an approaching victim (*Maske* 145–8).<sup>11</sup>

Venturing beyond *A Maske*, Milton’s devils are prime suspects for comparison with Belfort. Belfort’s claim within the first five minutes of the film that his favourite drug is money might tempt us to compare him to Mammon from *Paradise Lost*. But Belfort’s greed for money is just one manifestation of his general

<sup>6</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1.19.08–10.

<sup>7</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 2.17.06.

<sup>8</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 2.17.08.

<sup>9</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1.07.32–6.

<sup>10</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0.37.20.

<sup>11</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0.34.48, 0.35.27, 0.35.42.



cupidity. His most defining characteristic is his insatiable pursuit, facilitated by money, of multiple vices to excess. In terms of devils, the more apt comparison to Belfort is Belial, 'the dissolutes spirit that fell, | The sensualest', who appears in both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* (PR 2.150–1). In the latter, Satan reveals that it was Belial who waylaid Semele and fathered Bacchus, but 'Jupiter' whom Belial scapegoated for it (PR 2.182–91). Thus, Milton's Comus is the grandson not of Zeus but of Belial, and Comus's true ancestry runs strong in Belfort.

In addition to his Belian characteristics, Belfort's story follows that of another devil in Pandemonium. When *The Wolf of Wall Street* was released, a handful of reviewers drew comparisons directly, if only in passing, between Belfort and Milton's Satan.<sup>12</sup> The rest of this chapter will follow several strands that tie Belfort to Satan.

### Satanic Beasts in *The Wolf of Wall Street*

Although no title is given until after the final shot, the source for the film's title emerges in the course of the narrative. The phrase 'The Wolf of Wall Street' first appears in the film as the title of a *Forbes* magazine article exposing Belfort and his brokerage firm.<sup>13</sup> Initially, Belfort is outraged by the label, but after his friends adopt the epithet in reference to him, Belfort accepts it as a nickname. Historically, *Forbes* did not label him a wolf; the title derives from Belfort himself. In his memoir, the historical Belfort claims that it was his 'favorite' nickname because 'I was the ultimate wolf in sheep's clothing' and titles his first chapter 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing'.<sup>14</sup> His title for the book, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, is self-aggrandizing because Belfort's firm was never on Wall Street nor even in Manhattan. Scorsese retains that title for his film, in part, because it is formally an adaptation of Belfort's memoir. But the title also functions to appropriate the epithet as a critique of Belfort. Scorsese's film furthermore develops the label into a motif of bestial forms and behaviour sustained throughout the film that mimic those of Milton's Satan.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes Satan in terms of a variety of animals long before Satan occupies the body of a serpent for his temptation of Eve. Upon his first entrance to Eden, Satan is likened to a cormorant, a lion, a tiger, and a toad (PL 4.196, 4.402, 4.403, 4.800). After possessing and quitting the serpent in Eden and returning to Hell, Satan and his companions are all metamorphosed into

<sup>12</sup> Pandola, 'Martin Scorsese's *Wolf*'; Hune-Brown, 'Wolf'; Goodman, 'Wolf', 4; Goodman, *Some-where Over the Rainbow*, 97.

<sup>13</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:40:17. The film shows a mockup of the 1991 article by Roula Khalaf, 'Steaks, Stocks—What's the Difference', whose subheading and body text match the historical article but whose title and byline are changed to 'The Wolf of Wall Street' and—consistent with the pseudonyms given every character other than Belfort and Bo Dietl—'By Aliyah Farran'.

<sup>14</sup> Belfort, *Wolf*, 21, 15.

serpents against their wills (*PL* 9.187–8, 10.333 10.511–21, 10.540–5). It is a commonplace of Milton criticism that the sequence of bestial shapes adopted by Satan constitutes a degrading regression, the inglorious trajectory of Satan's initial fall continuing in his own form. Like Milton's Satan, Belfort imitates beasts physically throughout *The Wolf of Wall Street*. The film's introductory image of Belfort is a frozen frame of him mid-motion, face contorted, arms outstretched, and fingers extended like an attacking predator (see Figure 20.1). Later, Belfort's first hit of crack causes a physical transformation to overcome him. He is so exhilarated that he grabs his companion and screams: 'Let's run like we're fucking lions and tigers and bears!'<sup>15</sup> On the day of the initial public offering of Steve Madden, Ltd, Belfort gives the first of two speeches at all-hands meetings in the film. Midway through his speech, he hunches over, lowers his head, thrusts out his chin, and bares his bottom teeth, producing what competes for the most bestial shape he takes in the film (see Figure 20.2).<sup>16</sup>

One of the film's major set pieces is Belfort's degeneration into a writhing mass without use of his limbs.<sup>17</sup> Like Satan returned to Hell in *Paradise Lost*, Belfort crawls on his belly, hisses instead of speaks, and eats dust (*PL* 10.511–72, 10.Argument). As the twelve-minute bravura sequence begins, Belfort and Donnie mistake the delayed efficacy of fifteen-year-old Quaalude pills for a loss of potency. Impatient, they double their dose, then quadruple it. When the overdose finally takes effect, they lose the use of their limbs and control of their speech. Belfort is reduced to squirming like Satan 'on his belly prone, | Reluctant, but in vain', and his speech becomes slurred so severely that neither his private investigator, Bo Dietl (played by himself), nor his second wife, Naomi



Fig. 20.1. The introductory image of Belfort (Leonardo DiCaprio), from *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), dir. Martin Scorsese.

<sup>15</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:27:15.

<sup>16</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1:22:58–1:23:01.

<sup>17</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1:54:48–2:07:24.



Fig. 20.2. Belfort (Leonardo DiCaprio) during an all-hands meeting, from *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), dir. Martin Scorsese.



Fig. 20.3. Belfort (Leonardo DiCaprio) crawling on his belly, from *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), dir. Martin Scorsese.

(Margot Robbie), can understand his words (*PL* 10.514–15). Without recourse to his limbs, Belfort travels like a snake using concertina motion in an elaborately choreographed scene that employs techniques of slapstick comedy even as it stresses the extent of Belfort's degradation (see Figure 20.3). The sequence enters the realm of mock-epic as Belfort, staring down a flight of six steps that appear to him as sixteen impossible steps, descends the stairs by throwing himself 'headlong' (*PL* 6.864). He then contorts his body further in order to wrangle open the door of his Lamborghini Countach, a model named after the multi-purpose Piedmontese exclamation *contacc* that means literally 'contagion'.<sup>18</sup> As if

<sup>18</sup> Marcello Gandini, qtd. in Lamborghini, 'Not Just Bulls', and the entry 'Contacc' in Gribaudo, *Dissionari piemontèis*, 229. I am grateful to Christoph Höller for photographing, on my behalf, pages from the copy of *Dissionari piemontèis* in the Universitätsbibliothek Regensburg, Germany.

punning on the devils' metamorphoses into 'the dire form | Caught by contagion', the door handle of the Countach catches Belfort's foot as its scissor door rises (*PL* 10.543–4).<sup>19</sup>

When Belfort attempts to communicate with Donnie, who had taken a fifth pill independently, their mutual unintelligibility echoes Satan's interaction with his companions in Pandemonium: 'he would have spoke, | But hiss for hiss returned [...] for now were all transformed | Alike' (*PL* 10.517–20). The mock-heroic tone continues as Belfort and Donnie attempt to battle physically. Belfort threatens to kill Donnie but, when Donnie begins to choke on food, Belfort decides to save Donnie's life instead. Inconveniently, Belfort is still incapacitated. Inspired by an animated film of E. C. Segar's character Popeye eating spinach to escape a tight spot, Belfort's solution for rousing himself from his sedate condition is to snort cocaine.<sup>20</sup> The cocaine in powder form—the source of its nickname *dust*—that Belfort desperately ingests while physically compromised corresponds to the 'dust and bitter ashes' eaten by Satan while in serpentine form (*PL* 10.Argument; see also 10.566).<sup>21</sup> Thus, Satan and Belfort alike suffer the judgement that 'Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go, | And dust shalt eat' (*PL* 10.177–8).

Yet a further Miltonic degradation remains in store for Belfort. For years Belfort uses other people as 'ratholes': holders of phony accounts in which to hide his illegally gained money.<sup>22</sup> This sense of 'rathole' necessarily implies that Belfort is the 'rat' concealing his wealth, but he never identifies himself as a rat explicitly. Before the film ends, however, he chooses to become a rat in another sense. FBI agents leverage their case against Belfort, which could lead to twenty years in prison, and propose that he cooperate with them to build cases against his co-conspirators. Belfort is indignant at their insistence that he wear a wire to do so: 'What does that mean? You want me to rat, is that it?' The FBI agent counters, 'No, I want you to cooperate', to which Belfort insists: 'No, you want me to rat'. Suddenly, another agent (Kyle Chandler) who has been investigating Belfort for the majority of the film, interjects: 'Yes, we want you to rat. That's fucking exactly what we want you to do: to rat.'<sup>23</sup> The frankness silences Belfort immediately. With the equivocation between cooperating and ratting disclaimed, Belfort's dudgeon evaporates and he surrenders to his new status as a rat. His identification in the film with lion, tiger, bear, serpent, and rat echo Satan's comparable regress.

<sup>19</sup> This scene follows the historical Belfort's description of the episode in his memoir in several particulars, but the filmmakers change the type of car—exchanging the memoir's white Mercedes-Benz (Belfort, *Wolf*, 291, 295) for the film's white Lamborghini—and add Belfort's struggle to open the car's door and crawl into it.

<sup>20</sup> Bill Tytla's film *Popeye Meets Hercules* (1948) humorously depicts 'the first Olympic games', whose express priority echoes the satirical prototype of 'th'Olympian Games' in Hell (*PL* 2.530).

<sup>21</sup> 'Dust' and seven other code words for cocaine that incorporate the word 'dust' are identified in DEA, 'Drug Slang Code Words', 2–3.

<sup>22</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1:05:15; 1:26:34; 1:45:00–08; 1:45:38.

<sup>23</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 2:36:24–35.

In the film's last scene, Belfort has been released from prison and appears physically the most like a wolf, his final bestial form. After the cut to black, the title of the film appears for the first time, reclaiming the critical intent of the film's *Forbes* headline. In this lupine form, Belfort's hair is slicked back for the first time, evoking Robert De Niro's slicked-back hair as one of Scorsese's other wolves. In Scorsese's 1991 remake of *Cape Fear*, De Niro's Max Cady begins his temptation of his enemy's fifteen-year-old daughter, Dani (Juliette Lewis), with the remark, 'Maybe I'm the Big Bad Wolf'. Belfort's briefly red Ferrari Testarossa also aligns with Cady's red Ford Mustang. As a red Ferrari speeds towards the camera, Belfort corrects the image, 'No, no, no, no, no, my Ferrari was white, like Don Johnson in "Miami Vice", not red', and the car becomes white instantly.<sup>24</sup> Despite this revisionist paint job, the car is still a *Testarossa* [red head], the television-cop white paint only disguising its bloody red nature.<sup>25</sup> In *Cape Fear*, Cady's self-identification as the Big Bad Wolf relocates to verbal dialogue what had been only scene description in the screenplay of the 1962 *Cape Fear* directed by J. Lee Thompson and starring Robert Mitchum as Max Cady.<sup>26</sup> In an expansive essay on Scorsese's *Cape Fear* and its intertextual allusions and evocations, Lesley Stern epitomizes that 'De Niro in *Cape Fear* [1991] "plays" Mitchum in *Cape Fear* [1962] who plays Mitchum in *Night of the Hunter*'.<sup>27</sup> In Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (1955), Mitchum plays yet another wolf in sheep's clothing, Rev. Harry Powell, whose duplicity is announced as the subject of the film during its opening sequence in which Lillian Gish's character recites to children Jesus' words: 'Beware the false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves'.<sup>28</sup>

Milton was preoccupied by such false prophets and duplicitous churchmen, insincere 'shifters' who find lucrative opportunities in the church to enrich themselves. *Lycidas* provides an early instance of Milton's complaint, when St Peter describes victimized church members as sheep neglected and abused by untrained shepherds:

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,  
But swoll'n with wind, and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:

<sup>24</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:02:02.

<sup>25</sup> Insofar as Belfort is also identified with his other white car, the Piedmontese-named Lamborghini Countach, he recalls 'the bloody Piedmontese' who slayed God's 'sheep' in 1655 (Milton, 'Sonnet XV: On the late Massacre in Piedmont', 6–7).

<sup>26</sup> Hammond, 'Melmoth', 109, cited by Stern, *Scorsese Connection*, 188 and 249 n27.

<sup>27</sup> Stern, *Scorsese Connection*, 167–221, 198. As De Niro's Cady is a product of multiple roles played by Mitchum (who, in a cameo role in Scorsese's *Cape Fear*, beholds his successor through a two-way mirror), De Caprio's Belfort descends from multiple roles played by De Niro in Scorsese's films. Scorsese recounts that it was De Niro, after playing DiCaprio's stepfather in Michael Caton-Jones's *This Boy's Life* (1993), who recommended DiCaprio to him initially (see Schickel, *Conversations*, 318–9, and Kelly, *Martin Scorsese*, xxi). In their first work together for a Scorsese feature, *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023), their characters are again related as De Niro plays DiCaprio's uncle.

<sup>28</sup> Laughton, *Night of the Hunter*, 0:02:27–36, quoting the King James Version's Matthew 7:15.

Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw  
Daily devours apace [. . .].

(*Lycidas* 125–9)

In this conceit, the wolf is an external threat from which the inept shepherds cannot protect their charges.<sup>29</sup> Later, Milton uses a similar conceit but with an adjustment: he identifies the irresponsible shepherds as wolves themselves. The shift occurs mid-sentence in *De Doctrina Christiana* [*Of Christian Doctrine*], in which he writes that they ‘*de grege in gregem per causas ferè levissimas toties desultant atque fugitant, non tam luporum metu quàm ipsimet lupi*’ / ‘keep jumping and flitting about from flock to flock for almost the flimsiest of reasons, not so much through fear of wolves as because they themselves [are] wolves.’<sup>30</sup> This update brings the conceit into alignment with the biblical Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus warns his followers about wolves in sheep’s clothing. Milton typically reserves the words ‘wolf’ and ‘wolves’ specifically to characterize such clergy as he does in *Of Reformation* (1641), *The Reason of Church-Government* (1641), and four times in *Eikonoklastes* (1650). Milton concludes his 1652 sonnet to Cromwell with the plea: ‘Help us to save free conscience from the paw | Of hireling wolves whose Gospel is their maw’ (‘To the Lord General’, 13–14).

The foregoing examples evince the degree to which such lupine ‘hirelings’ were a major theme for Milton; they eventually became the subject of his pamphlet *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings Out of the Church* (1659). In his potted history of the earliest grifters to afflict the church, Milton considered Judas Iscariot ‘the first hireling’ and Simon Magus the second. Then, ‘Not long after, as the apostle foretold, hirelings like wolves came in by herds, Acts 20. 29.’<sup>31</sup> In *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), Milton quotes Jesus’ metaphor of ‘ravening wolves’ and combines it with the apostolic warning that ‘your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.’<sup>32</sup> Thus, Milton advises divines to be ‘good Pastors’ and to quit ‘rambling from Benefice to Benefice, like ravenous Wolves seeking where they may devour the biggest.’<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, by applying the diabolical trope of ‘seeking where they may devour’ instead to the ‘false prophets’ that Jesus labelled wolves, and by substituting ‘roaring lion’ with ‘ravenous Wolves’, Milton makes ‘ravenous wolf’ also a

<sup>29</sup> ‘Swoln with wind’ derives ultimately from Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso* 29.107, but Milton would also have seen the Dantean trope in the form ‘so the stock of Christ to be fed not with the foode of the Gospel, but with winde’ in John Foxe’s *Ecclesiastical History*, and it had become recurrent in English Protestant polemic by the 1630s (Havely, *Dante’s British Public*, 58–67).

<sup>30</sup> Milton, *Complete Works*, 836 and 837.

<sup>31</sup> Milton, *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Matthew 7:15; 1 Peter 5:8.

<sup>33</sup> Milton, *Tenure*, 41.

Satanic label. This Miltonic metamorphosis from lion to wolf is recapitulated in Scorsese's film, which begins with a lion and ends with a wolf.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton again collocates 'hirelings' with 'wolves,' and both with Satan. Immediately after Satan 'At one slight bound high over leaped all bound | Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within | Lights on his feet,' Milton begins a remarkable double-simile that compares wolves and thieves to Satan and hirelings (*PL* 4.181–3):

As when a prowling wolf,  
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,  
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve  
In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,  
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold:  
Or as a thief bent to unhoard the cash  
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,  
Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,  
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;  
So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold:  
So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.

(*PL* 4.183–93)

Thus Milton draws a direct line from Satan to those who abused faith in church history and do so in his own day.<sup>34</sup>

Milton characterizes hirelings as wolves again in his posthumously published *The History of Britain* (1670), but this time enlarges his vocabulary of invectives. In the course of paraphrasing *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae* [*On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*] by Gildas, Milton writes that the clergy in the middle of the sixth century were 'suttle Prowlers, Pastors in Name, but indeed Wolves.'<sup>35</sup> 'Prowler,' which in the seventeenth century also carried connotations of 'imposter' and 'cheat,' is a new addition to such complaints, and Milton might have been inspired by John Bale's description of 'Bysshops and stoute sturdye Canons of cathedral churches, and other petie prowlers.'<sup>36</sup> In the same paragraph of *History of Britain*, Milton's description of sixth-century clergy continues: they were 'in worldly matters, practis'd and cunning Shifters; in that only art and symony, great Clercs and Maisters, bearing thir heads high, but thir thoughts abject and low.'<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Milton's many other references to wolves, beyond his characterization of hirelings, are surveyed in Edwards, 'Milton's Reformed Animals,' 277–87.

<sup>35</sup> Milton, *History of Britain*, 129.

<sup>36</sup> Bale, *Epistle Exhortatorye*, fol. ii<sup>v</sup>; OED, 'prowler,' n.

<sup>37</sup> Milton, *History of Britain*, 130.

Milton uses the word 'shifter' here in the sense of 'one who resorts to petty shifts or tricks, or who practises artifice; an idle, thriftless fellow; a trickster, cozenor, etc.'<sup>38</sup> For Milton, then, wolves, thieves, Satan, hirelings, prowlers, and shifters all share much in common. The last line of Milton's double-simile in *Paradise Lost* invites us to extend the simile of the wolf and Satan to abusers of faith in our own day.

One such abuser of faith is the 'confidence man' who does not steal, but swindles people who give him their confidence and their money. A hundred years ago, Edward H. Smith spelled out the sequence of 'elements which constitute the full-blown technic of confidence gaming' in *Confessions of a Confidence Man: A Handbook for Suckers* (1923).<sup>39</sup> These six steps are 'Foundation Work', the 'Approach', the 'Build-up', the 'Pay-off or Convincer', 'The Hurrah', and 'The In-and-In'.<sup>40</sup> In a plenary lecture in 2015, John Leonard detailed with characteristic insight how Satan's temptation of Eve in book 9 of *Paradise Lost* matches Smith's step-by-step instructions for how to pull off a confidence trick.<sup>41</sup> As Leonard puts it simply, 'Satan is a conman'—and Belfort is another.<sup>42</sup> Belfort even ends the first sales call witnessed in the film by telling his victim, 'Thank you for your vote of confidence'.<sup>43</sup> Shortly after this scene, Belfort's first wife, Teresa (Cristin Milioti), experiences a pang of conscience that inspires him not to share such a pang but to found Stratton Oakmont with a special strategy. She asks her husband, 'Wouldn't you feel better if you sold that stuff to rich people who can, like, afford to lose a lot of money?' Belfort replies, 'Of course, honey, but rich people don't buy penny stocks'. Why not? 'Because they're too smart, that's why not'.<sup>44</sup> Pondering this inequity, Belfort contemplates the potential if he could only teach his brokers to sell penny stocks to people with 'real money'.<sup>45</sup> Belfort's brainchild is to lure members of the 'wealthiest one per cent' with blue-chip stocks and, when they are pleased with the on-paper return on their investment, leverage that trust to reinvest their earnings (and more) immediately into a penny stock that earns fifty per cent commission for the broker.<sup>46</sup>

Belfort's calculating use of an initial reward to earn a victim's confidence is the fourth stage in Smith's sequence of a long con: the 'Pay-off or Convincer'. Smith even cites as an example 'stock swindles' in which the on-paper-only 'dividends sent to stockholders to encourage larger investments are the pay-off'.<sup>47</sup> In his new

<sup>38</sup> OED, 'shifter', n. 3.a; Milton's use here is also one of the examples quoted in this entry.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Confessions*, 35.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, *Confessions*, 35–6.

<sup>41</sup> The substance of Leonard's lecture for the eleventh International Milton Symposium on 22 July 2015 at the University of Exeter appears in Leonard, *Value of Milton*, 98–103.

<sup>42</sup> Leonard, *Value of Milton*, 98.

<sup>43</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:21:16.

<sup>44</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:31:28–47.

<sup>45</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:32:02.

<sup>46</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:32:14, 0:33:07–24.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, *Confessions*, 36.



venture, Belfort trains his team of brokers with a script to use in phone calls with potential investors. The script navigates the broker through what are effectively all six of Smith's steps distilled into a single telephone conversation.<sup>48</sup> These investors then become the victims of Stratton Oakmont's illegal pump-and-dump schemes.

Investors are not Belfort's only victims, however. One of the conspicuous features of *The Wolf of Wall Street* is that we see Belfort tempt an investor over the phone only twice. The second time is primarily a demonstration to train his brokers. In the rest of the film, Belfort tempts primarily his brokers to be like him, like Satan tempting Eve to 'Look on me' (*PL* 9.687). Belfort tells his father that he depends on envy to motivate his employees: 'I need them to want to live like me. You get it? To live like me.'<sup>49</sup> In the persona of the serpent, Satan presents himself not as an angel reduced to a crawling beast but as a beast raised to human capacity—'That ye should be as gods, since I as man, | Internal man, is but proportion meet, | I of brute human, ye of human gods' (*PL* 9.710–12)—and compares his current with his former station:

Look on me,  
Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,  
And life more perfect have attained than fate  
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.

(*PL* 9.687–90)

Satan's supposed experience of ascending to a higher station is echoed by Belfort's insistence to his brokers that 'There is no nobility in poverty. I have been a rich man and I have been a poor man, and I choose rich every fucking time.'<sup>50</sup> He throws a gold wristwatch, 'Fair to the eye', into the crowd, and his brokers clamour to touch it, like the 'Ruddy and gold' fruit of Milton's tree (*PL* 9.777, 9.578). Neil Forsyth observes that Satan 'conspicuously leaves the whole plot to work itself out once he has convinced Eve to eat.'<sup>51</sup> Like Satan, who tempts Eve effectively in order to deputize her to tempt Adam, Belfort tempts his crew specifically in order that they will tempt others.

The function of money as a means to other ends is not only pertinent to Belfort's own cupidity; it is also integral to his method of tempting both investors and his own brokers. When Belfort introduces money as his favourite drug, he immediately reframes wealth as a good for altruistic purposes: 'See, money doesn't just buy you a better life [. . .] it also makes you a better person. You can give generously to the church or political party of your choice. You can save the fucking spotted

<sup>48</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:32:20–0:36:55. The historical Jordan Belfort sells on his website a digital copy of this script for USD\$149, discounted from '\$298' (Belfort, 'Stratton-Oakmont').

<sup>49</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:49:51–4.

<sup>50</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1:23:06–16.

<sup>51</sup> Forsyth, 'Milton's Erotic Dramas', 192.

owl with money'.<sup>52</sup> The film never depicts Belfort donating money to ecclesiastical, political, or environmental institutions, which throws into relief this particular defence of wealth's virtue. Likewise, in *Paradise Regained*, Satan tempts Jesus with riches also on the basis of its capacity to garner influence and political power: 'Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms; [. . .] if at great things thou wouldst arrive, | Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap' (*PR* 2.422, 2.426–7). How does Jesus expect to gain and maintain his kingdom without money? When Belfort inspires his brokers, he again frames money as the solution to other problems: 'I want you to deal with your problems by becoming rich. All you have to do today is pick up that phone and speak the words that I have taught you. And I will make you richer than the most powerful CEO in the United States of fucking America.'<sup>53</sup> The small price for achieving such godlike wealth is repeating a specific series of words that Belfort, like Satan, has supplied.

### Heaven and Hell in *The Wolf of Wall Street*

Besides his bestial shapes and the methods and substance of his temptations, Belfort's resemblances to Satan extend to his locations. Like Satan's dramatic arc, Belfort's can be traced partially through the film's allusions to Heaven and Hell. Belfort introduces this semantic field into the vocabulary of the film early and explicitly. Towards the close of his self-introduction, Belfort states, 'But of all the drugs under God's blue heaven, there's one that's my absolute favourite'.<sup>54</sup> Snorting a line of cocaine through a rolled-up bank note, he clarifies that he is referring not to the cocaine, but—as he unrolls the note and reveals it to be a hundred-dollar bill only to discard it in a waste bin—to the money. After this passing reference to Heaven, subsequent verbal and visual allusions identify specific locations with either Heaven or Hell.

After Belfort introduces the film's audience to himself and his lifestyle, he narrates, 'I always wanted to be rich. So let me go back'.<sup>55</sup> He relates his first day of work for a Wall Street brokerage, L. F. Rothschild, during which he is invited to a liquid lunch at an exclusive restaurant that towers over the city from a high elevation. In this celestial location Belfort's boss (Matthew McConaughey) initiates him, at twenty-two years old, into the secrets of the broker business. The next scene takes place six months later, when Belfort has become 'a licensed broker at last, ready to make my fortune'.<sup>56</sup> Belfort calls it 'My first day as a future Master

<sup>52</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:04:53–0:05:06.

<sup>53</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1:24:47–1:25:05.

<sup>54</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:04:27.

<sup>55</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:05:13. These two sentences adapt the first line of voiceover narration—'As far back as I can remember I always wanted to be a gangster'—in Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990), whose narratological and editorial techniques are imitated and innovated in *Wolf*.

<sup>56</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:14:20.

of the Universe' while a superimposed title reveals the ominous date: 'October 19 1987'.<sup>57</sup> Belfort elaborates that on this 'Black Monday' the market experienced 'the biggest plummet since the crash of '29' and, instead of becoming a Master of the Universe, he fell along with it: 'Wall Street had swallowed me up and shit me right back out again.'<sup>58</sup> Though vulgarly expressed, Belfort employs the same metaphor with which Raphael describes Satan's evacuation from 'Disburdened heaven' (*PL* 6.878). Emily Stelzer observes that Milton's adjective 'puns on the Latinate synonym *exonerate* (from *L. onus*, burden), which in early modern England could refer to the relieving of the bowels.'<sup>59</sup>

When Belfort rouses himself from this fall, the contrast with his former station could not be starker. Inquiring about a job advertisement for stockbrokers in Long Island, he finds himself in a suburban strip mall on the humblest scale and, facing the decrepit façade of a single-level building, 'views | The dismal situation waste and wild' (*PL* 1.59–60). Venturing inside The Investor's Center, which he finds devoid of Rothschild's digital stock ticker screens and Quotrons, Belfort is gloomy about his prospects until he discovers unrealized potential in these otherwise doleful environs. In contrast to the one per cent commission he would earn on blue-chip stocks, the penny stocks sold here garner fifty per cent commission for the broker. Applying the sales techniques he had learned on Wall Street, Belfort stuns his new co-workers with his first sale over the telephone: an unprecedented forty thousand shares of a ten-cent stock. Belfort characterizes it as a Promethean triumph: 'The other guys looked at me like I'd just discovered fire'.<sup>60</sup> While the titanic facet of the simile is implicit, the flagrant element, which also underscores Belfort's newly 'fit habitation fraught with fire', is explicit (*PL* 6.876).

Further references to Heaven and Hell recur in the film, each equivocal, each reinforcing the premise that Belfort, like Satan, 'Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven' (*PL* 1.255). Near the middle of the film, immediately following his extravagant second wedding and purchases of a yacht and of a mansion with its own tennis court and guards, he summarizes that 'It was heaven on earth'.<sup>61</sup> Though he is still excluded from Manhattan in general and Wall Street in particular, he has nonetheless made the Hell of Long Island—where both his home and workplace are now located—a Heaven. Yet, because 'within him hell | He brings', his Heaven is illusive and elusive (*PL* 4.20–1): as soon as Belfort characterizes his lifestyle as 'heaven on earth', Naomi disrupts the illusion by throwing ice water on his face and accusing him of infidelity.<sup>62</sup> Later, when Belfort travels to Switzerland seeking a

<sup>57</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:14:25.

<sup>58</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:14:47–0:15:51.

<sup>59</sup> Stelzer, *Gluttony and Gratitude*, 118, revising a passage that appeared originally in Speller, 'For Knowledge Is as Food', 3. See also Lehnhof, 'Scatology and the Sacred', 432, and, for adjacent digestive metaphors, Lieb, *Dialectics of Creation*, 28–30.

<sup>60</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 0:21:32.

<sup>61</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1:11:31.

<sup>62</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1:11:36.

haven for the cash from his illegal activities, his prospective banker (Jean Dujardin) assures him that 'From a financial standpoint, you are now in heaven.'<sup>63</sup> This statement appears to be reinforced by the commanding view of Geneva through the large window behind Belfort's seat. This panorama from a high elevation rhymes with the film's first image of Heaven, the restaurant in Manhattan, and Belfort might think that he has reattained his lofty station. However, the camera angle showing the view behind Belfort alternates with a reverse shot of the banker and, behind him, of a huge aquarium whose dimensions correspond to the film frame. The shots of the banker thus produce a visual effect that is both claustrophobic and submarine, and every shot of the banker, from medium to close-up, frames his head as if it were already within the aquarium. This subterranean *mise en scène* thus exposes the banker's false claim to celestial heights beyond the reach of human law enforcement. Precisely when Belfort becomes hooked by the banker's assurances, another close-up on Belfort's face frames his own head within the distant Lake Geneva. As the parties stand to shake hands on their deal, they are shown for the first time in the background through the aquarium in the foreground, now together below the surface. Belfort even approaches the aquarium, lowering his head to meet the eyeline of a passing fish. Indeed, Belfort's eventual arrest results directly from this banker giving up Belfort's name to the FBI. Whether in Long Island or Geneva, whenever Belfort or the banker purport to have carved out a heavenly enclave, water in some form swiftly purges the pretence.

When Belfort finally is punished for his fraud, at the end of the film, he describes the prison where he is to serve his term as 'some hellhole in Nevada I'd never even heard of', resembling the devils' prior ignorance of Hell in contrast to their anticipation of God's new creation (*PL* 2.345–53).<sup>64</sup> The historical Belfort served his sentence in Taft, California, 178 miles from Nevada, but 'some hellhole in California' would not have evoked the requisite desolation supplied readily by the desert connotations of 'Nevada'. The film's Belfort is sentenced to three years—another literary elision, since the historical Belfort was sentenced to four years of which he served fewer than two—and, as he is bussed in custody to prison, he comments: 'When we arrived at the prison, I was absolutely terrified. But I needn't have been. You see, for a brief fleeting moment, I'd forgotten I was rich. And I lived in a place where everything was for sale.'<sup>65</sup> As he says this, a tennis ball, in close-up, rolls into the frame of a low-angle shot that rises to show Belfort on a tennis court, then floats away to reveal that, like he did on Long Island, Belfort has again attempted to make his new environment, albeit within prison walls, comfortable for himself. He ought to feel at home; just like his mansion, his new home also features a tennis court and guards.

<sup>63</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 1:43:57.

<sup>64</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 2:48:58.

<sup>65</sup> Scorsese, *Wolf*, 2:50:43–2:51:01.

In a film whose running time is eight seconds short of three hours, Belfort's prison sentence is represented by a single shot whose duration is thirty-one seconds. Midway through this shot we hear the voice—and in the next shot we see the face—of the historical Jordan Belfort, out of prison, in a cameo role, introducing the film's Belfort at a salesmanship seminar in Auckland, New Zealand.<sup>66</sup> Belfort no longer sells stocks but his techniques of selling: his product is temptation itself. As Satan does in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* and as Comus does in *A Maske*, both the cinematic Belfort and the historical Belfort outlive their imprisonment to tempt another day.

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<sup>66</sup> Scorsese was reportedly 'displeased with' the necessity of this cameo (Kenny, *Made Men*, 281).

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## Seeing, Hearing, and Feeling Milton's Works with and as Prosthetic Sign Systems

Angelica Duran

Translations call to the fore different responses from, on the one hand, monolingual or mono-media audiences and, on the other, multilingual or multimedia audiences. The former can access a work originally created in another language or sign system only in translation or one medium; the latter can access both the original and translation or multimedia versions.<sup>1</sup> Some audiences may traverse sign systems, voluntarily or out of necessity, depending on the circuit of human agents and communities: someone may act as a prosthesis and orally, textually, or haptically—that is, through touch and movement—translate a literary work and someone else may act, in turn, as an amanuensis and create an interlingual or intermedial translation. *Prosthesis* suggests a valued addition, from its original meaning, ‘ancient Greek πρόσθεσις’; *amanuensis* suggests the bodily, with its root of *manus*, hand.<sup>2</sup>

My aim in this chapter is to demonstrate the pertinence of these terms to the artistic translations of the literary works of John Milton (1606–1674) by keying in on languages and media designed to facilitate access for readers with physical and cognitive disabilities. Biography and legend figure Milton’s slow-onset blindness, which became complete in 1654, and gout among the myriad ‘physical and mental differences in pre-modernity’ and as disability today.<sup>3</sup> Milton’s composition and publication processes have drawn the attention of many general readers, scholars, and artists—although he made use of amanuenses before

I am thankful to Crom Saunders, Jamaal B. Sheats, and Richard Kenton Webb for sharing their artworks and insights with me; librarian Laura Williams of the Indiana State Library and the Purdue Critical Disability Studies community for help with my research; Islam Issa for alerting me to Jamaal Sheats’s work; Essaka Joshua and Stephen Fallon for discussing with me some intersections of Critical Disability Studies and Milton studies; and Islam Issa, Beverley Sherry, and Pasquale Toscano for commenting on earlier versions of this chapter. I dedicate this chapter to Jessica Huber and Rachel Einwohner.

<sup>1</sup> See Hale, *Milton’s Languages*.

<sup>2</sup> *OED*, ‘Prosthesis’, n. 1.2. See Lidell and Scott, πρόσ-θεσις.

<sup>3</sup> Brady, “Disabled” Milton, 161, For Milton’s gout and a description of some symptoms and treatments, see Block, ‘Milton’s Gout’. For the hierarchy of responses to different types of disabilities, see Paul K. Longmore, “Heaven’s Special Child”: The Making of Poster Children, in Davis, *The Disability Studies Reader*, 34–41; see also Wendell, ‘Unhealthy Disabled’, 165.

his blindness for different reasons. Most germane in terms of prosthetic, as valued addition, is Milton's copying of 'a draft of "Lycidas" into a part of what is now known as the Trinity Manuscript' in November 1637 before he sent off a copy from his family home in Horton to Cambridge so that, in turn, the poem could be transformed into printed copies; and his tapping into a 'support network that allowed him to study and to write' his later masterpieces, including *Paradise Lost*.<sup>4</sup>

The remembrance and representation of the embodiments of Milton and other artists in popular culture and in scholarly and artistic arenas call us to consider all constituents of interpretive communities to best understand the composition, circulation, and meanings of literary works, regardless of our own individual facility with or dependence on various media to access them. What can all readers gain from attending to intermedial translation particularly accessible to disabled audiences?<sup>5</sup> Activating Critical Disability Studies (CDS) enables us to pursue promising *points of entry*—to use the title of one of the artworks to be discussed—into Milton's texts.<sup>6</sup> Some audiences do not generally consider certain multimedia and sign systems to be prosthetic, even though they clearly enhance access for all audiences, including those with cognitive and physical disabilities. Such media include those discussed in other chapters in this volume: book illustrations, digital works that can be manipulated, and marathon readings.<sup>7</sup> The multimedia forms of Milton's works demonstrate the continuity among different forms of translations and sign systems and thus dismantle the sharp distinction between text and paratext, centralized general readers and peripheral readers, (again) including those with cognitive and physical disabilities.

As the twenty-first century progresses, prosthetic sign systems expressly designed for audience members with disabilities are manifold and promise to increase. For example, braille was standardized in the 1830s and is now available in digital files that can be converted to talking books and embossed texts; and American Sign Language (ASL) has given rise to the direct-touch sign systems Pro-Tactile ASL and Black ASL.<sup>8</sup> This chapter concentrates on a limited suite of intermedial—and, with ASL, inter-language—translations of Milton's poetry designed for audiences with auditory, cognitive, motor, and visual disabilities, but

<sup>4</sup> Campbell and Corns, *John Milton*, 98, 322. For the genre of 'The Blind Milton Dictating' in visual art, see Duran, 'John Milton and Disabilities Studies in Literature Courses'.

<sup>5</sup> For all humans as temporarily able-bodied and the refrain 'everyone is disabled', thus the 'collective affinity' that all audiences can experience, see Hall, 'Critical Disability Theory'.

<sup>6</sup> For a brief overview of Critical Disability Studies, see Reaume, 'Understanding Critical Disability Studies'.

<sup>7</sup> The chapters in the present volume on those topics are Camille Adnot's 'From Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Blake's *Milton*', David Currell's 'Milton for Students: Towards a Teaching and Learning Archive', Wendy Furman-Adams's 'Artists Illuminating Milton's Gendered Instant of Creation', and John Hale's 'Milton Marathons'.

<sup>8</sup> For Talking Books, see National Library Service for Blind and Print Disabled, 'That All May Read'. For Pro-Tactile ASL, see Fidrocki, 'Q&A'. For Black ASL, see Talking Black in America.



that are also valuable to general audiences.<sup>9</sup> These are two digital recordings of Milton's pastoral elegy *Lycidas* and two braille versions of *Paradise Lost*. I approach these works with care towards those for whom the respective sign systems and media are the sole modes with which they might access these works, those who use them in tandem with others, and those who bear witness to them with respect if unfamiliarity. These Miltonic works, drawn from a limited region (the US) and time-period (the twenty-first century) of initial creation, can heighten our awareness of the accommodations that all audiences require to access all works of literature with care, respect, and pleasure.

### ***Lycidas*: Occasional Poem, Occasional Spoken and Visual Art, Occasional ASL Art**

It is worth bringing to the fore, first, the most conspicuous elements of *Lycidas* that are prosthetic and that amplify the matter of the bodily in the root of *amanuensis* and of the collaborative in the practices of amanuenses in order to fully appreciate how they are on display in the two digital recordings to be discussed. *Lycidas* is an occasional poem first published in a collection of thirty-six poems, *Iusta Edouardo King naufrago ab amicis moerentibus, amoris & Μνείας Χαρὶν* [Obsequies in Memory of Edward King Drowned by Shipwreck, in Token of Love and Remembrance, by his Grieving Friends] (1638) commemorating the death at age twenty-five of Edward King, Milton's 'learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637', according to the headnote added to the republication of *Lycidas* in the *Poems of Mr. John Milton* (1645).<sup>10</sup> Milton figures King's textual avatar, the shepherd Lycidas, as embodied in life and death. In life, 'he knew | Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme'; that is, he possessed uncommon vocal ability and verbal talent. In death, Lycidas remains a 'He' who 'must not float upon his wat'ry bier | Unwept, and welter', not a body disengaged from a soul (*Lycidas* 10–14).<sup>11</sup> *Lycidas* refers to varieties of *differently abled* bodies, to use a salient CDS term, as with the very temporarily disabled body of 'Orpheus', silenced through death by gruesome dismemberment, and the super-abilities of the temporarily-embodied god-man Jesus, 'him that walked the waves' (*Lycidas* 58, 173).<sup>12</sup> In the new experiential realm, the dead Lycidas possesses 'oozy locks' and 'eyes' that may be wiped from tears by heavenly 'saints'. He also enjoys abilities beyond the typical human's: auditory ones so that he can hear 'the unexpressive nuptial song' and

<sup>9</sup> For American Sign Language as a language, see National Institute on Deafness and Other Communicative Disorders, and Liddell, *Grammar, Gesture, and Meaning in American Sign Language*.

<sup>10</sup> *Iusta Edouardo King naufrago*

<sup>11</sup> This and all subsequent quotations of Milton's poetry are from Milton, *Complete Poems*, ed. Leonard, and cited parenthetically in the text. For Milton's concern about spiritual and bodily unity and purity, see 'Milton's Lament', in Welch, *The Renaissance Epic and the Oral Past*, 140–71, esp. 156–7.

<sup>12</sup> For *differently abled*, and *postconventionality*, see Shildrick, 'Critical Disability Studies'.

a mobility that enables him as the 'Genius of the shore' to aid those who 'wander in that perilous flood' (*Lycidas* 175, 181, 178, 176, 183, 185). The alliteration of 'walked the waves' and 'wander' affiliates Lycidas and Jesus. These kinaesthetic images echo an earlier, calmer maritime biblical image in *Lycidas*, of Jesus in his recruitment of the first four apostles, including Peter, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. The light but powerful implication is that the dead Lycidas is thus able to be a good shepherd for those on Earth, which, earlier in the poem, the 'pilot of the Galilean lake', Peter, had lamented was in such great 'need' (*Lycidas* 109, 122).<sup>13</sup>

Permeable embodiment, or incarnation, is further manifested in the concluding stanza. In the *ottava rima*, readers learn that the song constituted of the poem's first 185 written lines represents the oral creation of 'the uncouth swain' who has a body to sing, touch, and rise to set out to 'fresh woods and pastures new' (*Lycidas* 186, 193). This mobility affiliates the swain with the wandering Jesus and Lycidas within the economy of the poem. It also points to bodily limitations: the swain's body is not 'good'—that is, does not possess 'adequate' qualities—to walk with unprotected feet, but rather requires 'sandals' (*Lycidas* 187).<sup>14</sup> This detail reinforces one of the multiple meanings of 'uncouth', unknowing, which is as germane to religious studies as to CDS. The swain, like all humans, does not know how to 'represent God without an accommodation to human capacities', despite high poetic abilities.<sup>15</sup> It also gestures towards the uncouth singer as a good shepherd, like Lycidas and the twelve apostles whose bare and sandalled feet are featured in such biblical pericopes as Jesus' washing of their feet, commemorated on Maundy Thursday.<sup>16</sup>

The *ottava rima* demonstrates, further, that the swain has retained the vocal capacities shared with Lycidas when they would sing for 'old Damoetas', as well as appropriate affective responses: sorrow for a friend's death and a desire to comfort fellow mourners (*Lycidas* 36). But, what of the fact that '*this monody*' takes the swain all day to sing, from the 'still Morn' to when the sun 'was dropped into the western bay' (*Lycidas* headnote, 187, 191)? Has the song been impeded by practical matters such as tending to the flock or affective matters like an inability to emotionally shoulder through the elegy? Has the swain purposely paused the vocal song to intersperse instrumental music made with the 'various quills' that the swain has 'touched' (*Lycidas* 188)? Or is the swain's oral production simply slow, exhibiting dysarthria or any of the many physical conditions that render even the most

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 4:18–22. Some biblical figures with disabilities that affect their mobility are Samson, whose eyes are 'put out' (Judges 16:21), and Paul, whose 'thorn in the flesh' might be a physical ailment (2 Corinthians 12:7).

<sup>14</sup> OED, 'Good', *adj.* I.1.

<sup>15</sup> Blackburn, 'Lycidas: Eternity as Metaphor', 85. See also 'couth', *adj.* and *n.* I' and 'uncouth', *adj.* and *n.*, OED.

<sup>16</sup> John 13. See also Luke 9. As his own reader, older Milton, who had developed gout by the time he republished *Lycidas* in his *Poems &c.* (1674), might have read this kinaesthetic image-set with not only humanistic acumen but also experiential depth.

moving speakers 'slow of speech, and of a slow tongue'?<sup>17</sup> Its trimeters, tetrameters, and pentameters perhaps constitute a 'lame metre' that is appropriate for this pastoral elegy as a structural inscription of varied and variable capacities among those living and dead, even if inappropriate for the 'heroic verse' of *Paradise Lost* (PL 'The Verse').<sup>18</sup>

High artistic abilities are certainly on display in the roughly twelve-minute, digital recording of *Lycidas* that premiered at the April 2021 Annual Meeting of the Milton Society of America (MSA; est. 1948), conducted virtually for the first time in the MSA's history due to the COVID pandemic. The production process was as multimedial as the product, refracting and expanding upon Milton's original creative act, the occasion of *Lycidas*, and its publication in the collaborative *Justa Edouardo King naufrago*. The recording was a digital proxy for the oral, haptic, face-to-face event regularly held during the dessert-and-coffee period of the much beloved MSA Annual Dinner held in tandem with its Annual Meeting. The 2021 recording was also occasioned by collective grief. As the MSA President stated during the Annual Meeting,

[t]he MSA started featuring an artistic moment for its annual meeting starting in 2015, when it featured opera singers serenading those at the Vancouver gathering with a few favorite pieces. From 2016 to 2020, the MSA commissioned a poet to write a new poem and read it in person [. . .]. The COVID-19 pandemic so clearly warranted an elegy for this year's meeting. But Milton, after all, had penned *Lycidas*, what John Berryman had his narrative avatar call 'the greatest poem in English' in his short story 'Wash Far Away'. So, for this annual meeting, instead of commissioning a poem, the MSA Executive Committee commissioned Richard Kenton Webb to create visual artworks for each of the eleven stanzas of *Lycidas* and invited eleven MSA Honored Scholars to read and audio-record each stanza.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 4:10, referring to Moses. See 'Dysarthria', in Mayo Clinic. In 1947, Parry Michael calls it 'improbable that Milton is telling us that he did in fact *compose* the poem in a day'; in 1972, A. S. P. Woodhouse and Douglas Bush aver that 'Milton's *having written* the poem in a single day' is an 'absurd suggestion' (*Variorum*, 731). Both indicate that such a reading of the day-long chronology is long-standing. The Trinity Manuscript indicates a recursive written composition beyond a single day, as to be expected, following an unknown period of intellectual composition. A focus on the poetic persona instead of the author per se warrants the reader response and research questions proposed in this chapter.

<sup>18</sup> Mazzio, *The Inarticulate Renaissance*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Duran, 'Sweet Societies', 113. For the audiovisual recording, see the '2021 MSA Annual Meeting Program' in Milton Society of America. The MSA presents the annual Honored Scholar Award for major and sustained publications and other contributions to Milton scholarship. Even though the MSA Executive Committee gives no directives beyond 'in relation to Milton and his works' for the commissioned work, two poets composed sonnets featuring disability: 'When I Consider How My Light Is Spent' (2017) by Tyehimba Jess and 'The Poet, Applying for Medicaid on Behalf of her Husband' (2020) by Daisy Fried. For the in-person oral delivery by Tyehimba Jess and its digital afterlife, see Duran, 'Epilogue: Milton in the Digital Waves', 245–7.

Each of the eleven slides are multimedia, then, including an Honored Scholar's audio-recording, the written text of the respective stanza, and one black-and-white visual artwork.<sup>20</sup>

Its multimedial nature contributes to its beauty as much as its accessibility. The written text functions somewhat like closed captioning (CC) that translates audio-information into written text for audiences with cognitive and hearing impairments and into a target audience's primary language. Of course, the long written texts taking up half of the left or right side of the slides in the recording are distinct from the short, shifting CCs, near the bottom of the screen. Further, the uniformly black-and-white visual artwork provides consistency throughout the multisensory delivery.<sup>21</sup>

In production and product, the recording evinces many pastoral elements. Some Honored Scholars required assistance to audio-record and the digital publication is an aggregate, the result of a community with shared but varied skills as a *desideratum* rather than concession, as CDS values and aims to show. Each MSA Honored Scholar speaks *a solas*, alone like the uncouth swain. The aggregate gives some sense of the multiple speakers showcased in the poem itself: the pastoral speaker for the most part but also 'Phoebus', a ventriloquized Neptune, 'sage Hippotades', 'Camus, reverend sire' perhaps delayed due to slow mobility associated with age, and the 'pilot of the Galilean lake' Peter perhaps delayed by choice (*Lycidas* 77, 90, 96, 103, 109). Further, the medium of digitized recording generates the variable audiences represented in the poem: 'Alpheus', the 'Sicilian Muse', 'dolphins', 'woeful shepherds', 'Lycidas', the implied poet of the *ottava rima*, and all of the poem's readers (*Lycidas* 132, 133, 164, 165, 182). Thus, the digital recording heightens our appreciation of aurality and the keen significance of each community member, a central motif in pastoral as much as CDS.

The digital recording also highlights the interplay of multimedia, aurality, and writing represented in *Lycidas*. The poem opens with a focus on writing with the 'forced fingers rude' and the hand implicit in the writing of the 'lucky words' that the pastoral singer imagines and hopes may 'favour my destined urn'. Then, the focus shifts to voice, musical production, and hearing, including 'ears' (*Lycidas* 4, 20, 77). In 'Disability Studies and Electronic Networking', Ellen Liberti Blasiotti, John Westbrook, and Iawao Kobayashi rightly touch upon the historical spectrum that we find in the content and original production of *Lycidas*, which served as a proxy, much like the 2021 MSA digital recording: 'Modern information dissemination began when the oral storytelling tradition converted to the written word, which was, in fact, the "original independent data-transfer medium".<sup>22</sup> Milton created his written poem from afar, then sent in the written form to members

<sup>20</sup> For Richard Kenton Webb on his visual artwork of *Paradise Lost*, see the chapter in the present volume, 'An Artist's Response to the Synergies of Drawing and Painting *Paradise Lost*'.

<sup>21</sup> See 'Color Blindness', in Mayo Clinic.

<sup>22</sup> Liberti Blasiotti, Westbrook, and Kobayashi, 'Disability Studies and Electronic Networking'.

of Cambridge who compiled *Justa Edouardo King naufrago*. The written art in the 1638 volume are proxies for a face-to-face funeral, shifting the consolation often garnered in such gatherings and accruing beyond a single funereal event for the King family and King's friends, across centuries to readers of *Lycidas*.

The combination of Milton's written art and the spoken art in the 2021 recording was certainly poignant for its original virtual audience, including the author of this chapter. The speakers were colleagues, mentors, and idols that the attendees knew from written works, university classrooms, and scholarly conferences, community gatherings so resonant of the pastoral fiction of 'singing contests and its figures of herdsmen as master-singers'.<sup>23</sup> The audio-recordings fix these individuals at a specific life-stage, as does the poem commemorating the never-ageing Lycidas/Edward King. The MSA Honored Scholars' mature stage of life is consequent upon achieving a sufficient bulk of worthy contributions to Milton studies and is readily observed, since most hearing individuals can detect the changes in vocal production change throughout human life.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, our awareness of mature-stage voices lends poignancy to this spoken-art testament to an individual, Edward King, and all who have not reached that stage.

The pastoral questions that emerge when considering *Lycidas* in this context are, how have and do readers engage with this wandering poem, as the closing poem of *Justa Edouardo King naufrago*, then in Milton's 1645 then 1674 *Poems*, then in countless anthologies thereafter? In silence or vocally? *A solas* or with others? For what reason? And most germane to this chapter, how do the agents and media affect these engagements?<sup>25</sup> The sense of community created in and by the 2021 MSA digital recording instantiates Hans Umbrecht's explanation of how 'the presence of things can be "amalgamated" in language', by those who experience 'language, above all spoken language, as a physical reality'. The experience of language touching 'our bodies in their entirety' leads us to appreciate 'any kind of language that is capable of triggering aesthetic experience'. This language can be in various media—written, oral, audio-recorded, or other—and based on preference or necessity, such as Milton writing 'far away' from Cambridge or colleagues replacing face-to-face gatherings with virtual ones due to a pandemic (*Lycidas* 155).<sup>26</sup> I take this summation of some of the features of the 2021 MSA digital recording as a touchstone to discuss the 2020 digital recording in ASL with CC of the first stanza of *Lycidas* (1–14) by ASL artist Crom Saunders.

For one of my Fall 2020 undergraduate courses—hybrid due to the COVID pandemic—I assigned my students to engage with the written text of *Lycidas* and the audio-recordings that some of the MSA Honored Scholars had completed

<sup>23</sup> Alpers, 'The Lives of *Lycidas*', 102.

<sup>24</sup> Stathopoulos, Huber, and Sussman, 'Changes in Acoustic Characteristics of the Voice across the Life Span'.

<sup>25</sup> For the fundamental role of pastoral questions, see Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?*.

<sup>26</sup> Umbrecht, 'Presence Achieved', 320.

ahead of schedule. I also sought to commission an ASL recording, since ASL is taught as a second language at my home institution. The personal motive—my and others’ confrontation with mass deaths, suffering, and fears due to the pandemic—directly accounts for the timing, or occasion, of my request, conceived of and issued after twenty years of teaching Milton’s pastoral elegy. Both motives account for my persistence in seeking an ASL practitioner with the specialized skill of translating poetry—no easy task.<sup>27</sup>

The ASL recording foregrounds the timeframe represented in *Lycidas*, the astonishing feeling so often felt in times of crisis that ‘The time is out of joint’.<sup>28</sup> The oral delivery of the first stanza of *Lycidas* by the MSA Honored Scholar John Hale lasts 41 seconds, while Saunders’s ASL delivery lasts 115 seconds. Saunders notes that his ‘pacing had two purposes: clarity’ and his sense of a speaker who ‘is in a stage of grief, so expressing thoughts carefully and slowly, perhaps holding back more emotion. If I were to sign this as a narrative, at my normal rate of signing speed, it would likely be equal to, or even shorter than the spoken version.’<sup>29</sup> Further, the kinaesthetic, that is haptic, dynamism of Saunders’s eyes, face, upper torso, arms, and hands also clarifies the affective intensity of the poem’s start *in medias res*: ‘Yet one more, O ye laurels, and once more | Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere, | I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude’ (*Lycidas* 1–3; see Figure 21.1). Many students in my 2020 course stated that both Hale’s and Saunders’s recordings prompted them to appreciate the deep pathos starting from



Fig. 21.1. Crom Saunders, ASL rendering of the first lines of John Milton’s *Lycidas*, visual recording with closed captioning (CC) (2020). Courtesy of Crom Saunders.

<sup>27</sup> See Saunders, *Crom*.

<sup>28</sup> Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 1.4.188.

<sup>29</sup> Saunders, Emails to author.

the first line, in contrast to the crescendo of emotions they derived from their silent readings *a solas*, but that the bodily expressiveness of the latter did so much more.

The 2020 ASL recording also effectively translates elements that have elicited the perennial question about the chief presence in *Lycidas*: the commemorated Lycidas or the commemorator, be it the uncouth swain or Milton.<sup>30</sup> By necessity, Saunders slowed down the poem's pacing in signing each letter of Lycidas's name upon its first of three uses in three successive lines, a repetition that places striking attention on Lycidas (*Lycidas* 8–10).<sup>31</sup> For the two subsequent uses, Saunders employed the standard ASL strategy of choosing an 'arbitrary' but considered sign name for Lycidas, akin to Milton's renaming of Edward King as Lycidas.<sup>32</sup> Saunders chose a sign name 'that evokes a laurel crown, or a crown made of plants, leaves at least. [. . .] I could have fingerspelled Lycidas's name each time, but that also felt out of character with the speaker—someone who feels grief for Lycidas's passing would know him well enough to have a more intimate register, ergo a sign name.'<sup>33</sup>

Finally, Saunders's recording highlights the fact that embodied ability does not determine personal or community agency. Whether Saunders learned ASL as a primary language or as a second language, his mastery of the ASL artistry needed to render poetry is additional, prosthetic. CDS persistently seeks to counter social and practical biases and obstacles by including and advertising past, current, and future differently abled individuals. Saunders's recording does so by evincing the interpretive gain in ASL bilingualism, confirming H-Direksen Bauman and Joseph Murray's assessment about the 'insights that may be gleaned from deaf people'—and, I would add, their allies—'whose highly visual, spatial, and kinetic structures of thought and language shed light into the blind-spots of hearing ways of knowing.'<sup>34</sup>

### ***Paradise Lost in Braille***

As much as the enhanced spoken art and ASL artistry in digital media draw out elements of the pastoral mode in *Lycidas*, braille draws out characteristics vital in the epic genre, as demonstrated in two braille versions of *Paradise Lost*: the entire epic in a ten-volume material set based on the version edited by Roy Flannagan (2000) and the beginning of the epic in 'Structure 3', a multimedial artwork with enlarged braille by Nashville artist Jamaal B. Sheats, MFA (2020).

<sup>30</sup> For the chief presences of the commemorated and commemorator, see Alpers, 'The Lives of *Lycidas*', esp. 96–100.

<sup>31</sup> Saunders, *Lycidas*, 0:54.

<sup>32</sup> Saunders, Emails to author. For the use of sign names, see Parogni, 'What Matters in a Sign Name?'

<sup>33</sup> Saunders, Emails to author.

<sup>34</sup> H-Direksen L. Bauman and Joseph J. Murray, 'Deaf Studies in the 21st Century: "Deaf-Gain" and the Future of Human Diversity', 246, in Davis, *The Disability Studies Reader*, 246–60.

Braille addresses in another way than does any digital recording of ASL with CC the human '[l]onging to recover an existential closeness to the material dimension of things' which 'may well be a reaction to our contemporary everyday, an everyday that has increasingly turned into one of predominantly (if not only) virtual realities' in the twenty-first century.<sup>35</sup> Given its tactile and kinaesthetic nature, braille adds an illocutionary force to reading.<sup>36</sup> This media is available limitedly, so that, as in the case of the rare books made of papyrus that Umbrecht instances, 'the medium [...] produces the presence effect' and thus invites added attention.<sup>37</sup> Further, 'disability aesthetics', as Tobin Siebers terms them, emphasize the interactive 'presence of different bodies and minds in the tradition of aesthetic representation', including, as this chapter emphasizes, of audiences and active providers, including presses and libraries.<sup>38</sup>

Registered and unregistered users of the US National Library Service must take deliberate preparatory steps in order to access free braille books. The scarcity of braille books and the media as directly co-extensive with the human body combine to intensify the 'reading event', as I experienced from my engagement as a novice, multimodal reader of braille with the ten-volume 2000 braille *Paradise Lost* at the Indiana State Library.<sup>39</sup> All of volume 1 and part of volume 2 are comprised of an editorial introduction and the opening paratexts of Flannagan's transcription of the 1674 edition of *Paradise Lost*: Samuel Barrow's Latin poem '*In Paradisum amissam*', Andrew Marvell's English poem 'On Mr. Milton's "*Paradise Lost*"', and '*The Verse*'. Readers must wait until page 115 of volume 2 before touching the opening poetic line 'Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit' (*PL* 1.1).

A CDS approach draws attention to a nexus of matters of accommodation represented in epic as the genre most concerned with the grandest elements of the human condition, including the human-deific relationship. The invocation to book 3 of *Paradise Lost* is a key instance of epic accommodation that demonstrates David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's claim that 'the disabled body occupies a cross-roads in the age-old literary debate about the relationship of form to content'.<sup>40</sup> Milton's epic narrator ponders that debate in terms of the poetic and embodied forms capable of expressing an adequate version of Heaven. The epic narrator's embodied form includes blind 'eyes' that 'roll in vain' as well as mobility—again, that 'wander'; tactile 'feel[ing]'; and a ready 'mind' (*PL* 3.23, 27, 22, 52). Embodied differences are also central to Sin's, Eve's, Raphael's, Adam's, and Michael's

<sup>35</sup> Umbrecht, 'Presence Achieved', 326.

<sup>36</sup> For illocutionary force, see Green, 'Speech Acts'. See also Boshoff, 'Aesthetics of Touch'.

<sup>37</sup> Umbrecht, 'Presence Achieved', 324.

<sup>38</sup> Siebers, 'Disability Aesthetics', 542.

<sup>39</sup> By 'multimodal reader', I mean that I read braille with my eyes and fingers at the same time. Written print in this edition is limited to the identifying information on the book covers and the copyright page, title page, and table of contents in volume 1.

<sup>40</sup> David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, 'Narrative Prosthesis', 226, 229, in Davis, *The Disability Studies*, 222–35.



accounts to their specific audiences (*PL* 2.721–814, 4.440–504, 5.506–8.197, 8.203–560, 11.334–12.587). Sin's embodiment clearly constitutes part of her story at the Gates of Hell to her attentive auditor, her father and erstwhile sexual partner Satan. She is 'a formidable shape [. . .] woman to the waist, and fair, | But ended foul in many a scaly fold | Voluminous and vast, a serpent armed | With mortal sting: about her middle round | A cry of Hell-hounds never ceasing barked'. She can thus end her story about the change of appearance and sound that has rendered her unrecognizable to Satan by concisely showing-and-telling: 'with fear and pain | Distorted, all my nether shape *thus* grew | Transformed' (*PL* 2.649–54, 2.783–5, emphasis mine).

Spaces, embodiment, and attentiveness are certainly significant in reading braille, which requires the book's immobility and a deft hand-mobility to glide over rather than press the raised braille cells. Further, braille readers rely on book producers to format the braille cells into an exact standardized size and to select the one edition that will make it into any library, in contrast to the multiple editions in written text and in multiple fonts on many library shelves. For its content, the braille edition I accessed uses the Flannagan edition designed for 'graduate and undergraduate students' as its base text.<sup>41</sup> For its form, it uses contracted braille rather than the uncontracted braille used by beginners, such as children, the newly blind, and infrequent users.<sup>42</sup> Marshall McLuhan rightly notes, using embodied language, that 'it is only too typical that the "content" of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium'. McLuhan's recognition that the medium shapes and controls 'the scale and form of human association and action' is certainly substantiated in the materiality of braille books, especially the small size of braille cells and the rigidity, stability, and large size of the braille surface—the 12×12-inch pages of the 2020 braille *Paradise Lost* is typical of braille books I have accessed in the US.<sup>43</sup>

The unity and importance of content and form is also substantiated in 'Structure 3' of Jamaal Sheats's three-part installation *Point of Entry*. 'Structure 3' is a stunning 7×5-foot copper repoussé with two metal sliding door hangers at the top and what Sheats calls 'etched graffiti' of 'supersized braille' throughout. The five columns created by variously sized copper plates include the Argument and most of the first 86 lines of book 1 of *Paradise Lost*, interrupted by 'paradise lost | by | john milton' in even larger braille in the centre plate (see Figure 21.2).<sup>44</sup>

Inclusively, 'Structure 3' summons the visual and tactile abilities of its audience, both blind and sighted. It thus correlates with Milton's multisensory imagery in all

<sup>41</sup> Milton, *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Flannagan, vii.

<sup>42</sup> For contracted braille, see American Foundation for the Blind, 'What Is Braille?'. Another scholarly braille *Paradise Lost* is the 13-volume edition (2001). A multimedia version of the epic is the 6-volume interline edition (1938). A translated braille edition is the 3-volume *El Paraíso perdido* (1965), based on the Spanish translation by Dionisio Sanjuan (1868).

<sup>43</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> WGNS, 'Alumni Artists Curate New Dual Exhibits'. Repoussé is a technique by which an image is hammered into the reverse side of a sheet of metal to create a relief on the front.

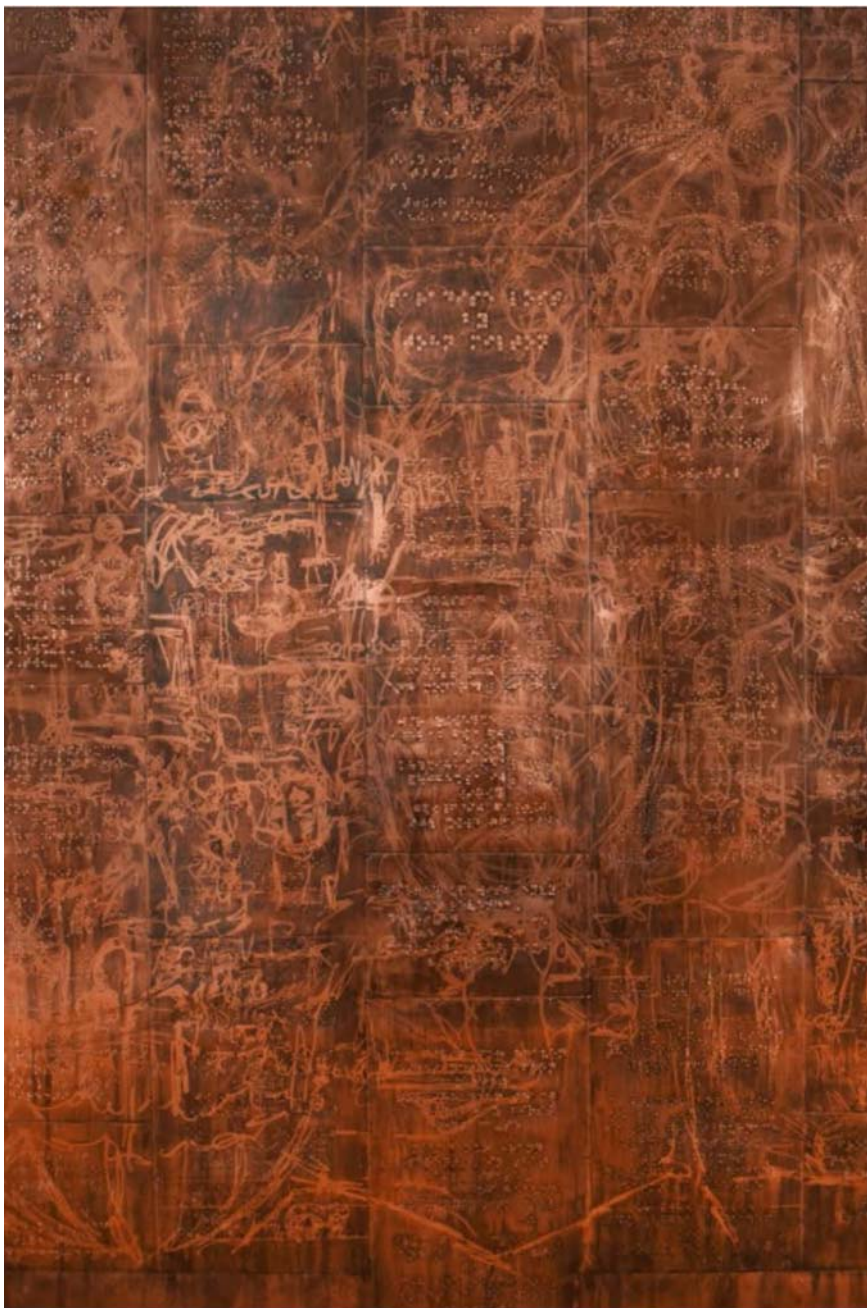


Fig. 21.2. Jamaal B. Sheats, MFA, 'Structure 3' of *Points of Entry* (2011), copper repoussé. Courtesy of Jamaal B. Sheats, MFA.

the invocations of *Paradise Lost*: gustatory ('mortal taste'), visual ('holy Light'), auditory ('at the voice | Of God'), tactile ('feel thy sov'reign vital light'), kinaesthetic ('above th' Olympian hill I soar'), and olfactory ('drawn empyreal air'; *PL* 1.2, 3.1, 3.9–10, 3.23, 7.3, 7.14). The rounded braille cells of 'Structure 3' are spectacular and tactilely pleasant. Visually, they juxtapose with the abstract patina figures that create a contrastive dynamism throughout. On the upper left plate, with the Argument, are the figure of a woman and the cursive word 'Hope'. On the bottom right plate are spikes that resemble a crown, ironically fitting for the content of that plate, the opening dialogue of Satan, the 'Arch-Enemy' (*PL* 1.81).

The visual medium requires effort because the patina interacts with light. Viewing audiences must move to apprehend, or access, the figures in different portions of 'Structure 3'. Tactile apprehension of 'Structure 3' also requires some effort. Unlike written script, which can range in size and still be legible, braille cells must be uniform for moderate- and fast-paced reading. As just one example, the US National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped prescribes the 'distance from center to center of adjacent dots (horizontally or vertically, but not diagonally) in the same cell shall be 0.092 +0.002/–0.001 inches'.<sup>45</sup> Sheats's enlarged braille cells are roughly five times the standard size, the spacing fluctuates, and the dots vary in placement within the cells, partially as a result of the medium of metal rather than paper. Sheats purposefully rendered the braille text this way in order to manifest the difficulty of accessing all art, whether canonical art like *Paradise Lost* or 'Structure 3' itself. Braille-reading audiences cannot read 'Structure 3' at their usual pace but must translate the supersized braille cells, much as can non-braille-reading audiences who might have a braille-to-roman alphabet cheat sheet.<sup>46</sup> Further, the enlargement, rather than diminution, of the braille evokes the great magnitude of this epic, with Hell, Heaven, and Paradise conceptually inaccessible to humans, thus requiring immense accommodations on the part of creators and audiences alike to reach even basic comprehension. Sheats's blind and sighted audiences physically enact some of the strategies they cognitively enact to apprehend as much as possible what Marvell rightly called Milton's 'vast design'.<sup>47</sup>

The copper medium of 'Structure 3' also substantiates the epic heritage of *Paradise Lost* in the early modern period. As Sheats explains, he uses copper to represent modernity because it is a natural metal mined and worked later than other metals, like iron, gold, and silver. This artistic awareness is analogous to poets' awareness of the accruing nature of epic tradition: from Virgil's allusions to Homer's epics, to Milton's to Virgil's and Homer's. Previous exposure to preceding epics enhance poets' ability to nuance their own epic and, in turn, their audiences'

<sup>45</sup> National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, *Specification 800:2014*, 7.

<sup>46</sup> See National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, 'Braille Information'.

<sup>47</sup> Marvell, 'On Mr. Milton's "Paradise Lost"', l. 3.

enjoyment. To draw an example from the very lines etched in ‘Structure 3,’ Milton originally assembled, and subsequent readers have reassembled, the epic heritage constituted through clear allusion to the New Testament’s Gospel of John, ‘In the beginning,’ and Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*, ‘Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme’ (*PL* 1.9, 1.16).<sup>48</sup> These and other allusions have circulated through multilingual and multimedia translations, for example, with the Gospel of John having originally been oral Aramaic and Greek, and Ariosto’s epic alluding to its most direct (Italian) precursor, Matteo Boiardo’s *Orlando innamorato*.<sup>49</sup> Sheats’s metal exhibits the malleability of both Milton’s and his own artistic heritage.

As much as ‘Structure 3’ translates epic magnitude through the dense detail of the patina figures, its large size, and the supersized braille, it concedes to its limitations, as does *Paradise Lost*. Sheats chose the artwork’s size of 7×5-foot because that is the size of warehouse sliding doors, signifying that it, like all art, can but welcome and provoke the beginning of an idea or experience.<sup>50</sup> That alone is a ‘task [. . .] hard,’ to echo the archangel Raphael’s concession to even his angelic abilities in storytelling (*PL* 5.564). Sheats’s deliberate and slow-going process involved preparing the copper repoussé, which not many artists are trained to create; manufacturing his own enlarged braille styluses; then hammering and polishing the braille cells; then joining the copper plates and mounting the whole work for public display.<sup>51</sup> Such deliberation and pacing are perhaps required of all epics but intensified due to what we might call the creation event of *Paradise Lost*, with the blind Milton relying on amanuenses for transcription and editing—distinct from other creative processes we know of, such as the abandon and speed with which the prolific early modern playwright Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio is said to have penned his Spanish plays, Jack Kerouac to have typed the novel *On the Road* (1957), and Bernadette Mayer to have written her modern epic *Midwinter Day* (1978).<sup>52</sup>

In the twenty-first century, artists, readers, and scholars worldwide continue to engage with Milton’s works; and many of those engagements extend directly into arenas of disability. Just three more engagements drawn from the same limited region and time-period of initial creation as the two sets of Miltonic works discussed in this chapter are the production of *Samson Agonistes* (2011) by CripSlam ND and the University of Notre Dame; Sandra Fernandez Rhoads’s fantasy fictions *Mortal Sight* (2020) and *Realms of Light* (2021), in which the protagonist is blinded, temporarily or permanently; and the teaching unit on *Paradise Lost* that middle school language arts teacher Monica Yung deployed in 2021 that includes embossing passages of *Paradise Lost* using braille styluses. Such a state of affairs

<sup>48</sup> John 1:1; Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* 1.2.

<sup>49</sup> Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, 2.30.1.

<sup>50</sup> For this broad sense of translation, see Susan Petrilli, ‘Translating Borges,’ and Anne Cranny-Francis, ‘Translations in Everyday Life,’ in Petrilli, *Translation Translation*, 517–30, 603–14.

<sup>51</sup> Sheats, Interviews.

<sup>52</sup> See ‘John Milton: amanuenses’ in the ‘Index’ of Lewalski, *Life of Milton*, 765.

is in no way unique to Milton's artworks given that, as Clare Barker and Stuart Murray aver, '[d]isability is everywhere in literature'.<sup>53</sup>

My discussion of Milton's *Lycidas* and *Paradise Lost* rendered in media designed for disability access demonstrates Barker and Murray's assessment that our deliberate awareness of this fact can 'help us to understand how the process of writing, reading, or performing a work of literature (or indeed a work of criticism) is an embodied one, encountered differently according to variances in attention, energies, and technologies of reading, speaking, and writing'.<sup>54</sup> It can only be hoped that individuals and communities will continue to foster the circulation of Milton's artistic expressions across borders and media, to invoke this volume's title, since much work remains to be done within and beyond the US. To cite but one recent and relevant set of statistics, '[p]hysically, there are 15 million blind people in the Middle East and South Asia, almost 40 percent of the world's blind population'—eight per cent of which 'the World Health specifies as "avoidable"'.<sup>55</sup> The two sets of case studies featured in this chapter indicate the privileges and stamina needed to produce, to provide access to, to access, and to understand the artistic expressions those who would be the 'fit audience [. . .] though few' that, like Milton's epic narrator, can 'drive far off the barbarous dissonance' or any other obstacle that would impede their access to be so (*PL* 7.31, 32).

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<sup>53</sup> Barker and Murray, 'Introduction: On Reading Disability in Literature', 1.

<sup>54</sup> Barker and Murray, 'Introduction', 1, 5.

<sup>55</sup> Issa, 'Researching Milton in Egypt', 114.

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## Milton Marathons

John Hale

To focus on this volume's title, what are the *borders* or *media* that performing a poem aloud move *across*? Silent- or eye-reading of poetry may seem normal these days, and most lamentably so if pandemics (like COVID in 2020) reduce the reading of poetry further to mere data flashed onto a screen. Long ago, however, and far into recorded time, people read aloud, not silently.<sup>1</sup> As children we may still learn reading orally. The two activities of reading and hearing, with gesture, belong together. Yet to return across that apparent border has become a choice, an option, mostly omitted from discussions of poetry such as John Milton's. Crossing the silent/oral border restores and extends the text's meaning. For certain occasions and their purposes, known beforehand or to be found out by the doing, it is to complete something foundational in epic. Our poet and his *Paradise Lost* derive much of their power to move us from their sound, their rhythm, what Milton called 'musical delight (PL 'The Verse')'.<sup>2</sup> There is indeed a borderland to be visited and explored, and treasures to bring back. All this peculiarly well suits a poem which explains the human condition by a myth of crossing from its foundation and first lapsing.

Marathons, all-day readings of long literary works like *Paradise Lost*, cross this border in a way all of their own, into the medium of voice and hearing. Meditating now on *Paradise Lost* marathons held at the University of Otago, New Zealand, since the 1980s, I first review the meaning and rationale of such marathons, then the heritage of epics in performance, then Milton's unique way of composing, on the way to explaining the origin and development of my own practice. Next, I survey the guidance which Milton himself provides for oral performance, before applying it to questions which practice brings into view. These are both interpretative and practical. They are also to an extent theoretical, in that they explore what

This chapter is dedicated to everyone who joined me in the Otago all-day readings of *Paradise Lost*. I gratefully acknowledge particular help from Robin Hankey for the summary of Homeric epic, also variously from Alison Finnigan, Beverley Sherry, and John Leonard; and with the manuscript from Megan Kitching and Angelica Duran.

<sup>1</sup> As anecdotes about Julius Caesar in the 1st century BCE and St Ambrose in the 4th century CE show. Caesar could not be trusted because when he was reading bystanders could not hear what he was reading.

<sup>2</sup> In 'The Verse', the note Milton added to *Paradise Lost* in 1668, 'true musical delight [...] consists only in apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings' (Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1667).

Aristotle in the *Poetics* said about unity of action, the *synoptic* value of unbroken mimesis, for epic as well as tragedy. The plot [*muthos*] of a serious mimesis, he said, is *eusunoptos* [easily taken in at a glance].<sup>3</sup> In a marathon, peculiarly, you witness the poem's wholeness. The *border* in this case is the *medium* of continuous and complete sounding, and of pacing and voicing: a marathon takes longer than eye-reading, but is complete and sequential, and as carried out with other people leads to a distinctive experiencing and exchange. In local detail, in larger units, and in the whole day's doing, it defamiliarizes. To do these marathons is to discover new things and rediscover old ones.<sup>4</sup>

### What is a Marathon?

An all-day reading-aloud of *Paradise Lost* is a familiar enough event to be taken for granted in some educational quarters. Several universities are reported to do this marathon reading-aloud each year, with the reputed result that students who cannot read the verse effectively at the start of the day can do so by the end; and next year a new cohort does it again. In my own experience of teaching an honours course on our epic, however, I found the impact went beyond this minimum. I found that the ablest readers came from both town and gown (campus), returning for more, yearly. Here was a significant opportunity, a chance to make a marathon more than a regular class-exercise or field trip.

We performed the poem continuously, in a single day without pauses except for Milton's division into books. We did this in the spirit of folk nowadays who elect to undertake a running marathon, some long, unusual, arduous, elective journeying; a task that sets a personal challenge, and is done in company for the companionship, such that (who knows how?) we help each other complete it. It also has something of the relay race about it, as there is latent emulation somewhere inside oneself. It has something too of the time trial, where taking turns at the front improves the whole team's performance, and systematically at that. Within these purposes of completeness and companionship we find out, and seem prepared to find out, things about ourselves incidentally, and more fundamentally about *Paradise Lost*. This chapter shows some of these things in more detail than they usually receive.

Team performance especially produced insights not anticipated or new answers to known questions, as enabled by the structuring and then rehearsing before performance itself. A team leader, for each of the poem's books, in choosing

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 3, at 1451a. The translation comes from Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*. Translations from Greek to English are my own unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>4</sup> For surveys of marathon performances, see Duran, 'Join Thy Voice', and Sherry, 'Paradise Lost "Made Vocal"':

who reads what and how much each, must think about that book, its individuality, its climaxes, its beginning, and its ending. Usually, that meant dividing the lines by assigning characters to persons, with some consequential typecasting. That left some participants with too few lines, others and the epic narrator with too many. Besides conveniently displacing some of the directorial headaches, this highlighted the poem's epic reliance on speech as action, speeches interactive or interior. Again, to achieve something distinctive or worthy, the group can be further helped when, as we did it once or twice, the teams competed for a team prize and for individual awards—the prizes were certificates, since after all we do this eccentric thing for honour's sake (only the award for *Youngest Reader* took tangible, edible form). Our renditions were shielded from becoming excessive or ridiculous by (a) sense of occasion or rarity value and by (b) the datum of emulation, joined into (c) pride in performance, within a team as well as among teams. These became an energizing impulse. Always unbidden a team gave itself a name, then had to live up to it, from which, despite some freaks and clowning, they found themselves alerted, and stirred to further thought. Some were facetious like 'Hell's Belles', or the 'Tender Buttons'. More soberly, a group from Classics called themselves 'The Rhapsodes'. On the whole, the names were there to be lived *up* to.

Such mundane practicalities seldom reach printed analysis: they are not obvious until you take part. I am taking this opportunity to instantiate them so as to draw out their significance. Of fundamental value are the particular insights gained by the listeners into unexpected points of the poem itself. Examples will follow. In principle, too, I claim that marathonizing the poem is not just a ploy to wangle our students' attention to a difficult older poem, but a kind of *agon*—a struggle or contest—that accords with the origins of epic itself. Indeed, reading and hearing Milton's words aloud bring us closer to his very voice, as if at moments felt in our tongues, lungs, and ears. Most certainly to orchestrate successive marathons brings rejuvenation, and a wellspring of findings and further questions for research. Whether in small or larger units of the experience, the great value of this medium for teachers and researchers alike is heuristic.

Now some of these benefits overlap with those of audiobooks or of readings shared across time-zones through virtual media, and further possible variations brought on by the combination of prolonged epidemic with technological advances. It may be timely, then, to dwell on their embedded disadvantages, and on what all-day face-to-face performances can discover for us uniquely. We get ideas in myriad ways, including happy accident, and the stimulus of presence.<sup>5</sup> All-day marathons make one both perform *and* hear, and is done in *company*, for an as yet unparalleled intensity of focus.

<sup>5</sup> For presencing, see Angelica Duran's chapter in the present volume, 'Seeing, Hearing, and Feeling Milton's Works with and as Prosthetic Sign Systems'.

## Traditions of Epic

The experiencing of a marathon matches something originary about oral epic itself, its orality and audience. Epics, across Eurasia, began as oral performances. The Homeric epics were probably not written down until the time of the Athenian Peisistratus (died 527 BCE), after centuries of development by performance. The performers were either bards [*aidoi*], or rhapsodes. Bards sang or chanted to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. Rhapsodes, by contrast, recited or declaimed while holding a long staff. Broadly speaking the era of bards preceded the era of rhapsodes. We hear of bards performing in *The Odyssey*—Phemius at the court of Ithaca in book 1 and Demodocus at the court of the Phaeacians in book 8, as entertainment for the royal family and their guests. Their performances were potentially creative, as they could compose as they sang, using the linguistic techniques of oral poetry. Rhapsodes, once again by contrast, seem to have performed exclusively at religious festivals, from roughly 600 BCE onwards. They competed against each other for prizes, and their recitations were essentially reproductive, from a memorized text. More definitive and influential was the incorporation of the complete form of both Homeric epics in the reorganized Panathenaea festival at Athens in the mid-sixth century BCE. Here it was required that the rhapsodes should perform the epics complete, in a stipulated order of episodes, performing in relays. Our sources claim that this was the first time that the texts of the poems were stabilized and fixed, or, to put it another way, the first time that official texts of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* came into being.<sup>6</sup> Most likely the division into twenty-four books was textual, not oral (the long-held belief being that the Homeric divisions occurred in Alexandria around the 3rd century BCE). References to parts or episodes of each epic before that era instead made use of titles describing blocks of subject-matter, like *Nekuia* for Odysseus's underworld journey in book 9 of *The Odyssey*.

The written text wrought its own effects, both in generating books and in encouraging new written epics, secondary epics. The secondary epics might or might not be read aloud as wholes to listeners. Episodes or excerpts might be read to high-status persons, as Virgil read from *Aeneid* 6 to Augustus and Livia of the premature death of Augustus's nephew Marcellus. The new and abiding change was to composing in books. Virgil's twelve for the *Aeneid* abandon the Homeric alphabetic twenty-four and gain a unity of action for each book. For example, it cannot be accident that book 2 makes a unit of the fall of Troy, or book 4 the death of Dido, or book 6 becomes Virgil's emulative underworld journey, his *Nekuia*.

<sup>6</sup> See Kirk, *The Songs of Homer*, 98–101, 308–15; and Knox, 'Books and Readers in the Greek World', 160–1.

From the *Aeneid*, above all, I see a strengthening of the drive to unity within each individual book of Milton's.<sup>7</sup>

By this route, then, the individual book of an epic as written becomes our own means of navigation and comprehension. It is in and by the books that, so to speak, we know our way round *Paradise Lost*, that we read it and know it; also discuss it. More to the point, the books give to convenors of marathons a prime opportunity to structure the participation.

### Milton Himself as Composer of Epic

These affinities and connections join all the other things which make Milton a conscious continuator of epic traditions. His world in any case practised *recitare*, the reading aloud of one's Latin verse to judicious friends and mentors.<sup>8</sup> What distinguishes *Paradise Lost* among secondary epics was Milton's blindness, complete by 1652, at the age of forty-three.<sup>9</sup> The poem was written down for, not by, the poet. Nor indeed did he ever see it as text. It was conceived by Milton overnight, in 'parcels', then written down in the early morning by an amanuensis, when he asked to be 'milked'.<sup>10</sup> Then it was read back to him, for him to revise—especially to reduce the parcel by half. And so forwards, to the end. Thus, the sound of the words preceded the written form, twice over.<sup>11</sup> Just how Milton absorbed what the Muse said to him on her nightly visitations remains unclear. Whether it was as words or pre-verbally, it was unavoidably in rhythm and long-striding syntax. Then, the first approximations were clarified and purified in the next, literal hearing and revising. Reading aloud by ourselves, therefore, recovers some of the originary creating. It is not exactly an act of piety or respect, though the poem is well worthy, but to put ourselves in position to *absorb* more.

We could only guess where each of Milton's dictated parcels concluded. For the holistic effect, of parcels gathering *towards* a whole, we must reproduce the gathering for Milton, perhaps book by book, but assuredly obeying his overall sense of parts becoming wholes—his compositional assurance carrying over from nightly visitation. The reasoning is intuitive and experimental and—to reiterate—heuristic. We must gain something. We must do our best, in hopes of luck and out of respect and for the sake of discoveries. These new or individual eureka's cannot

<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding that in 1667 *Paradise Lost* had ten books, not twelve. By splitting the longest two books of 1667 (7 and 10) for the 1674 edition, Milton brings his structure closer to Virgil's.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Milton's *Elegia* 6, 'Tu mihi cui recitem iudicis instar eris' [You, when I recite them to you (the verses of the *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*), shall judge their worth] (l. 90; Milton, *Complete Poems*, ed. Leonard, 537, 540). Lucky Tu, Charles Diodati!

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Lewalski, *Life of John Milton*, 278.

<sup>10</sup> Darbishire, *Early Lives of Milton*, 33. See also Duran, 'Join Thy Voice', 269 n9.

<sup>11</sup> See especially Edward Phillips's account in Darbishire, *The Early Lives of Milton*, 73; and the summary by Lewalski, *Life of John Milton*, 448–9.

be foreknown or generalized. The givens of the marathons encourage a hopeful alertness in the convener.

### Convener, Director, Dramaturge

My first encounter with a marathon was for the *Aeneid*, read in its Latin by a group of Classics Department colleagues. We read to each other in someone's office over successive weekday lunchtimes. No lunching was allowed—so no flying crumbs disturbed the flow—nor comments of any kind until the day's book was done. The separating off of Virgil's own twelve units into a daily dosage detracted something, since life in between them made its claims felt. Nonetheless, some wholeness resulted, some sense of completion. Now, this resembled the idiosyncratic propulsion which makes us *run* a marathon. For Milton marathons, a convener must think how to use occasion, and local venue, and likely participants, to an effect which combines as far as may be the momentum of each whole book with the larger momentum of *Paradise Lost* heard and felt as one single whole. What works best?

I experimented. My only twelve-lunchtimes version convinced me that the single *day* would go better, would find out much more. Next, I tried the possible freedom and spontaneity of an unorganized all-day happening. All comers, whenever they came, read from where they sat in a ring, when it became their turn; and read until they wanted to stop. However, happenings tend to be haphazard or happy-go-lucky. Though this might lessen the total time, to perhaps ten hours not eleven or twelve, it might well leave the all-day stayers exhausted or asleep, for in such a happening, there is too much which can *not* happen. There is less space 'To be sustained and fed' (PL 5.415), and for things like conversation, comparison of impact or interpretation both general and particular to occur, before the first impression is overlaid. To cut out meal-breaks would shorten the total time further but at the expense of fatigue and absenteeism, both inimical to the whole purpose, of overview and comprehension.<sup>12</sup>

So, I took to planning, preparing, and distributing books; and commissioning teams, each with a team director, who could rehearse a whole book with the team. This delegating too had risks; of haphazardness again or of mismatching between teams in interpretations and competence; and of the bright ideas which pop up, infectiously, when a group of people meet for a new task. The list is long.

<sup>12</sup> Lunch about mid-day and an early dinner, to allow two longer breaks at thematical times: lunch just before Adam and Eve host the angel Raphael (PL 5.331–50, describing the menu); dinner before Milton has to 'change' his 'notes to tragic' ones for book 9 (PL 9.5–6). This and all subsequent quotations from *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, *Complete Poems*, ed. Leonard, unless otherwise noted, and cited parenthetically in the text.

Counteracting this entropy was the sense of occasion, respect for the masterwork, and a sense of honour or shame, how the end-product might look to peers. I found ways to influence this spirit of emulation, described in a moment, without losing the spirit of the delegating. This was not division of labour as if it was all a chore, but the heuristic spirit of one who, having chosen to continue with an annual series, wants to experiment from one year to the next, and so find out different things—suspected but not yet known—in every such event. Comparison enables this.

Eventually teams competed, with independent judges. Mixtures went best of all: if nine books were taken by teams, the other three were decided by the randomness of seating for whoever was there and wished to read; this would give contrasting trial and satisfactions. Eager beavers could read more, and read what they had not been assigned and had not honed. Collectively, over the day and over successive years, impromptu readings improved; and with them, the satisfactions of discovery by listeners too.

Among my own discoveries I include the volatility of teams and their leaders, a creative tension between the main purpose which I shared with them, namely a rendition more or less worthy of Milton, and the centrifugal itch for independence and embellishment, perhaps in the name of creativity. One group of students wanted to improve book 9 by featuring an apple as a stage prop, a shiny green Granny Smith. Needless to say, though reactions may vary, for me the visible tangible fruit was less compelling than an arm stretching up—as Satan insinuates to Eve—to an unseen symbol of desire, the state of mind or motive, or indeed only the words (*PL* 9.590–1). It felt like sitting on a powder-keg or fooling with electricity, but I let them be, since the declared aim was to find things out, so trial included error. Something new always emerged if a team formed from a thespian origin; livelier, louder, quicker-witted, systemically dynamic albeit often centrifugal or fanciful. People who were in daily work together brought interesting vibes and variations, as when a chief librarian found himself type-cast as God in the librarians' team for book 7.

To keep such energies aimed into the poem, however, I did a seminar the day before my next year's marathon, to sketch the ancestry and purposes of the event: a disguised pep-talk as well as information-session (see the next section of this chapter). By inviting all comers and especially the team leaders to the seminar, I hoped to keep their energies aimed into the words. A certain amount of facetiousness in all of us precluded the dampening effect of a too solemn piety. The powder-keg feeling among the teams once in action was intermittent. Indeed, perhaps it increased my own attention through the next day's doings. All day long, I was paving my text with scribbled ideas and questions, triggered off but not yet thought through. The heuristic benefits of these impetuous jottings became the reason for future marathons as modified by experience.

## Guidance by Milton

It is hard planning for surprises, then, and over-regulation would stifle other people's inventions, released once they get into teams. It would make the event less heuristically valuable for myself. All the more reason, then, to use the guidance that we do have, from the author and the verse itself. For these circumstances of team and emulation, we get our best guidance from Milton's own words; not only the words themselves as printed, but also his words about them in his 1668 'Note on the Verse', used here to convey the tone and show the first punctuations, although I have removed its original italics and added my own for emphasis so as to dwell on the phrasing discussed:

THE Measure is English Heroic Verse without Rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; Rime being no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poem or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but [. . .] a thing of it self, to all judicious eares, triveal, and of *no true musical delight*; which [that is, true musical delight] *consists only in apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another*; not in the *jingling sound of like endings*, a fault avoyded by the learned Ancients both in Poetry and all good Oratory.<sup>13</sup>

Oratory is linked with 'Poetry' because ancients like Longinus appreciated them together as being by nature *sounded*. Rhyme in verse like *homoioleuton* [similar endings] might be taken to excess and prove distracting, as can be readily noticed in unintended rhyming English prose. However, Milton is inclined to overstate the abhorrence of rhyme in the normative Roman Latin verse.<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding the real versatility of the practice of couplets in near-contemporaries like Christopher Marlowe or John Dryden, or of stanza forms in Geoffrey Chaucer and Edmund Spenser, for present purposes we must agree. Milton speaks from the heart, to his actual readership. Not only does he argue well about the blank verse of epic, but his words are normative for his own work, in the same way that no pianist would ignore the expression marks of Ludwig van Beethoven or Frédéric Chopin. It is a veritable *felix culpa* by the publisher that he dared to ask Milton to explain himself in this regard.

Readers of the 'Note' recognize this, and respond, heeding the audibly grumpy tone of 'no true', 'jingling', and later 'neglect'; not to mention the rousing finale, 'troublesom and modern [newfangled, trendy] bondage of Rimeing'.<sup>15</sup> As performers, accordingly, we simply must apply it to pausation (sound-flow) and expression (voice-inflexion), especially the variations which 'draw' out the sense—not merely

<sup>13</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1667, Appendix [n. p.].

<sup>14</sup> See Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry*, 30–2.

<sup>15</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1667, Appendix [n. p.].



each word, but words as grouped, perhaps also breathing. Enjambment rules, weaving its way through the entire poem in response to meaning. Thereby, too, when emphasis and pausing do coincide with the metrical line, their united force is made stronger, like a special effect: we heed, we feel, the resolute iambic pulse of the final clause of book 1, 'the great consult began' (*PL* 1.798).

Enjambment is fundamental. It guides the eyes and steers the voice, to Milton's own emphases, his balances and inflections, sound, and even at times emotion. I will therefore risk spelling out something of what becomes palpable in oral renderings.

The voicing is being guided from the first word of the epic, 'Of', because to initiate by a *preposition* necessitates waiting for the syntax to declare itself. Indeed, it delays the declaring to line 6, 'Sing'. There, we find it has still far to go—not only to line 16, 'prose or rhyme' because the full stop is superseded by the following 'And', as if pausing only to be struck by a new, additional thought in the next line, 'chiefly thou O Spirit'. The poet overrides his own pause, from sheer impetus of thought [*dianoia*]. The punctuation is joining in the guidance. It had weighed in already, after 'disobedience'. The impact is not so much grammatical, to ensure the mind should grasp that 'Of' at the beginning of the line governs 'fruit' at the end of it, but rhetorical, to help us by that first slight pause to feel the force of 'disobedience': the massive four-syllable word after three short ones, 'Of man's first'. The slight pause seals the four words together, unforgettably, helped by the rhythm: three charged consonants together, sibilants in disharmonious trochees. Stress thus falls on the meaning of the act before we meet the 'fruit' which is its symbol and result. I would call this exceedingly clever if that did not seem snooty, cool, and reserved. It is *guiding* us, eye and mind and voice, to such an extent that even 'Of' is a word of power, 'concerning': so much is being done to our minds and ears already by this shaping. It is also the 'Of' which disguises entitling, like the 'De' of Lucretius's *De rerum natura* [*On the Nature of Things*] or Milton's own *De Doctrina Christiana* [*On Christian Doctrine*].

Much virtue, power, in 'Of'! The second line begins with another one, quite different. This one ensures that we read 'Of that forbidden tree' hard upon 'fruit'. Seeing no punctuation after 'fruit', we stride across the line-ending. Instead, we feel a quickening of pulse at 'forbidden', three syllables for a second hefty concept to match and in many ways parallel 'disobedience'—which the meter tells us must be hurriedly done in three syllables not four. The lowly functional 'Of' now enjambes and urges us onwards; on and on and on, to absorb the 26-line opening statement. These are the seven-league boots of epic, this epic. Its pacing has been set, the marathon's style has pulled us into the poet's mind-set. In extended reverie after one early marathon (1992), my journal records the effect of this enjambment on the readers of the first few hundred lines: 'We wanted to aim ahead all the time; *past* the full stops, *past* the paragraph-breaks'. Sharing the words' momentum presents a challenge that energizes us.

Thereupon, Milton pulls us straight into the action, *in medias res* [into the middle of things]: ‘Say first [. . .] say first’, twice, at two different paces within two lines (*PL* 1.27, 1.28). *First* has already become an idea from the very first line of the epic, vibrant and thematic, defamiliarizing the drab organizational *firsts* of makers of lists and speeches. On we hurtle, narrative vibrant with ever-new energy. It takes possession! To reminisce briefly: one year, I was being interviewed on local television to publicize an imminent marathon. The interviewer asked me why I was doing this bizarre thing. I gave reasons pedagogical or utilitarian. I eulogized on Milton and the poem. I sounded somewhat abstract to myself, so instead I switched into quotation, at ‘Say first’. I intended to come back into expository mode but never re-emerged. I read on, and on, until by line 56 I found myself transported, seized by the sound. At ‘round he throws his baleful eyes’, I found myself swinging my head from right to left (*PL* 1.56). And at ‘baleful’ I glared at the unoffending interviewer; involuntarily.

The compulsive enacting continued into the next few lines, although or rather because these are much more iambic. Line 60 is even end-stopped: ‘The dismal situation waste and wild.’ A *state* of pain, it will not change. The sudden steadying of the rhythm confirms duration of pain, and no hope. That is, when the underlying pulse does come through, it too makes an expressive effect, one of a series of varying mental onomatopoeias. All which give delight, to read and to hear; guidance, if you will, but hardly needed if we go with the poetic flow, so to speak. As we do.

If we did not, then the first speech of Satan would compel us to do it, and in so doing to be moved, from horror at Satan’s new world as first perceived, to suffering it with him, indeed in him for the person reading Satan here. With his ‘If thou beest he; but O how fall’n! how changed | From him’, the reader of the broken syntax is being guided by print too; recoverably and audibly, though modern editors update it (*PL* 1.84–5).<sup>16</sup> They tend to do this silently, and rightly reserve comment for the allusions to the fall of Lucifer in the biblical book of Isaiah and the humanly compassionate words of Aeneas to Hector in Virgil’s *Aeneid*: what a brilliant compounding of sources!<sup>17</sup> But indeed also what a challenge the fractured syntax, the incoherence, gives to the performer! We remember how Milton at first designed a tragedy rather than an epic, beginning from a soliloquy by Satan.

For the marathon, then, should one distribute parts or passages? Or ensure that your best thespian is assigned these passionate lines? The challenges continue, yet guidance is there too. Satan bursts into the poem by this fragment of perturbation. It is challenge and help for the performer: it makes listeners, by ears and eyes, explore the turmoil for themselves.

<sup>16</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1667, suggests a more rhetorical than logical pointing, ‘/; But O/’, than does Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Leonard, ‘/; but O/’.

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 14:12; *Aeneid* 2.274–5.

Thus, by line 85 the day's voyage is well and truly launched. Even as the epic trope of *in medias res*, Milton's beginning stands out among congeners. It is a spectacular virtuosity. Readers, warming to the day's endeavouring, must feel the buzz.

This buzz factor sustains our attention. Some, we may know are coming up; some not. I mention one of my own, one of the many. What reader of the invocation to book 3 can help but feel empathy with the epic narrator, and the poet through the heaped-up losses brought by blindness, as the syntax of it goes on and on and on, but then be utterly re-energized at the countervailing conjunction that starts the next clause: 'So much the rather thou celestial Light | Shine inward' (*PL* 3.51–2)? And what listener can help feeling re-directed and re-energized alongside the speaker, and Milton? The example of this extreme of fortitude is how to shake off the blues, whatever yours are. Such inspired moments, and their unforgettable insights, punctuate the whole poem. Book 9 abounds in them, book 10 also, and the ending. Whether as surprise or as expectancy, to come upon them at their appointed place within a complete performance is the perfect union of part with whole. They sustain the undoubted effort and fatigue, the continuing vigilance we must exert if we are to experience the wholeness.

## The Twelve Book

An opposite way by which the poem keeps its hold on attention during performance is by the structuring of the poem into twelve books—by Milton's deployment of the book as unit of sense and experience. The structuring by books sustains us in the rendering of each book. So does the pausing after each. The visible punctuations of the structuring become metaphorical breathing-spaces of the long-distance readers, or moments for absorption and reflection on discovery.

Where one book concludes, before another begins, part is meeting whole. We make a pause, unavoidable to eye and ear; and take a rest for reflection if we wish. It is guidance, but now implicit. Does each book, as it closes, engender or even compel a backward look? To speak for myself convening, I found myself musing in the silence between each ending and opening. I was greedily catching up in note form or scribbles or pavings more of the overspilling perceptions or questionings I had felt *en courant* to that point; for, as with the entire repeated project of marathons, they have first and greatest heuristic benefit for my own response and research. This is ultimately why I do it: for fun, and for discovery. True, too, that the convener checks on how things are going so far, to make any small adjustments, while more vitally comparing this junction of the poem with others, or with the same junction in other marathons; not to mention ideas for the next one and vows to avoid future repeating of mistakes now known. The juncture itself is felt in the performance and the poem alike: how did this closure move into this

next opening? Straight on, as for book 9 into 10 for sense of widening repercussions of the Fall? Steady advance into choosing and devilish plotting in book 1 to 2? Or change of viewpoint and other more abrupt departure, into uncertainty?

### Fatigue and Fortifying

Nonetheless, fatigue is a risk if not a certainty, integral to any marathon. Any marathon participant must endure or overcome it. Its being a race or relay relies on competitors or companions to relieve the fatigue and achieve the goal.

We must reckon with the length or duration which is embedded in the sublimity. In round figures, Milton's poem is about 11,000 lines, to Homer's 16,000 and 12,000 and Virgil's 10,000. The lengthiness is both the hardship and the attraction, the *raison d'être* of wholeness. Dryden and Joseph Addison debated the longueurs as the necessary quiet or transitional or flatter places of epic.<sup>18</sup> Epic cannot be all climax. Nor could we as readers, experiencing it, stay equally excited throughout a day of such continued stimulus as I have found in the opening. What can be done about this?

Milton's publisher may have foreseen some practical difficulty when he asked Milton to add an argument for each book. The long-striding syntax of these often concatenates the events of a book, moving the listed events into plot. Thus, the argument for book 9 comprises only three periodic sentences, of 21 words, then a hefty 91, then a stupendous synoptical 163. Readers at a marathon are well advised to glance at these to keep alert to the whole direction and large effect, as well as to take air or exercise if feeling drowsy. It may be significant, too, that Milton made successive additions to the arguments of books 11 and 12. Being the last books as well as the most expository, and hindsight prophecy to boot, these are the most vulnerable. So, the arguments gave them a helping hand. It was needed. Even C. S. Lewis found the final books an 'untransmuted lump of futurity', so it is not merely first-timers who feel this way.<sup>19</sup>

On any long journey, I find the *third* quarter most tiring. At least Milton precludes this, since it is books 9 and 10 that are the very heart of the poem. Instead, the account of our human future is shown to Adam and Eve just before the Expulsion from Paradise, in veiled terms. It is preparation for exile, guidance to salvation history. It is information and instruction and fortifying. Adam's chain of responses and the angel Michael's commentary on these energize it and lead it onward with complete conviction—all as shown in *The Muse's Method* by Joseph Summers.<sup>20</sup> There's a lot going on, both locally and didactically. Readers must by some means

<sup>18</sup> These 'flats' of epic were recognized as early as Dryden. For other occurrences of this dynamic, see for example Leonard, *Faithful Labourers*, 1.8.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis, *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'*, 129.

<sup>20</sup> Summers, *The Muse's Method*, especially chapter 8, 'The Final Vision', 186–224.

remember, or be reminded, to have this sustaining idea in their own attention. The individual participants who read each prophecy of biblical history or the intervening dialogues between Michael and Adam will be sustained by the need to read alertly, with all the more vigilance perhaps if they sense attrition in the audience. With hindsight, I would now assign the ‘lump’ to the best readers, not leave it to chance, and would urge them to speak more loudly and urgently if or when they sensed torpor impinging around them. Best if the venue has no clock visible.

The crude expedient of omitting books 11 and 12 would of course sacrifice the essential features of marathons, wholeness and continuity. In any event, the ending is nigh, and is magic.

### The Sense of an Ending

At the close of a marathon, an experience too closes. How best to sum up that experience? It is fatigue and triumph combined; and satisfaction; including no doubt self-satisfaction—all these supervene for a mental as for a physical marathon. For *Paradise Lost*, however, distinctive satisfactions are felt. This was—nay, is! with every new reading—the story of humankind, of ourselves. As ‘our grand parents’ leave Paradise behind we feel the force of Milton’s final words, their ‘wand’ring steps and slow’, where the rhythm and sounds and word order mediate sombre closing reflection (*PL* 1.29, 12.648).

‘Through Eden took their solitary way’ (*PL* 12.649). This is crossing a *border*, with a vengeance, our emergence from the long day’s music! In one of the Otago versions, a silence followed. In another, the opposite happened: as the final two lines loomed ahead, one voice then the others spontaneously joined in with the single reader, in witness to something unique, shared. Then we all burst out laughing, in delight and surprise. These opposite responses were both appropriate. One expressed awe at the content, as if silence is food for thought, or even consent. The other confirms delight in the sharing of the marathon, its long music. Both the collective responses attest to the sharing of a unique completeness, in the endurance test accomplished in the name and for the sake of *Paradise Lost* as the human story. ‘One foot in Eden still, [we] stand | And look across the other land.’<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Muir, ‘One Foot in Eden’, ll. 1–2.

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# Epilogue

*Hugh Adlington*

John Milton inspires strong reactions. For Alfred Tennyson, he was a ‘God-gifted organ-voice of England’. For Milton’s contemporary, the staunch royalist William Winstanley, ‘his Memory will always stink’. Neither the passion nor the wild divergence of these views should surprise us: Milton is, and always has been, a profoundly disturbing writer. This is true of his language, his ideas, his very person. Milton’s capacity to energize grammar, syntax, and rhythm delights some yet repels others. His polemicist’s cry of liberty both thrills and appals. Even his physical appearance provokes extreme reactions. In a letter to Milton, the Italian aristocrat and scholar Giambattista Manso lauded ‘your mind, your form, your elegance, appearance and manner’; in stark contrast, the Dutch publisher Adriaan Vlacq, quoting *Aeneid* 3.658, vilified the blind Milton as ‘[a] monster horrible, deformed, huge, and sightless’. But for all its divisiveness, Milton’s power to disturb is a hugely generative force, witnessed, as the present volume shows, by a bewildering array of creative engagements with his writing over three and a half centuries, from John Dryden’s three-act opera *State of Innocence* (1673) to Goth Metal band Cradle of Filth’s concept album *Damnation and a Day* (2003), and countless others besides.

To speak of Milton inspiring responses, however, tells only half the story. Certainly, Milton does inspire, and disturb, but as these chapters show, each artist, musician, poet, or translator discovers powerfully and individually who they are and what they need in Milton’s writing. Love calls out to love, pain to pain. Creative engagement involves not only imitation and emulation but also self-realization. Thus, Gerard Manley Hopkins, anguished and devout, found in Milton’s verse ‘something necessary and eternal’. By contrast, the poet Geoffrey Hill, by nature contentious and defiant, treasured most Milton’s ‘recalcitrant personal public voice’. This is one of the most fascinating things about this collection, as it is of all good reception studies: the revelation that each translator, educator, or adaptor finds some particular thing in their source, in this case Milton’s poetry and prose, that speaks intensely and personally to them, in their historical moment and culture, to their love or pain.

The framing questions asked by the editors of *Milton Across Borders and Media* focus squarely on this meeting of minds: ‘what does the new treatment reveal

about Milton's poetry and poetry at large that may not previously have been as readily visible or legible? What is to be accomplished by bringing *this* author (Milton) into *this* language or *this* media at *this* time? How is Milton accommodated to the new environment and how is the new environment, prospectively or actually, different for having Milton in it?' The latter two questions, positioned at the intersection of Milton studies and cultural studies more broadly, are understandably the primary focus for most of the essays in the volume. Almost every page contains a fresh discovery about Milton's international presence across cultural history, geography, and forms, from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first. The first of the editors' framing questions, however—what these new and varied treatments reveal about Milton's poetry—is more elusive.

Two contributions in particular explore what creative responses reveal about both the new work *and* Milton's original. Katie Mennis's 'Latinizing Milton in the English West Indies' shows with great subtlety how Thomas Power's Latin translation of *Paradise Lost* in the 1690s was informed by Power's residence in the English West Indies. The essay reveals how Milton's translation into Latin in this environment contributes to the colonial enterprise of which Power's settlement was a part. This insight, in turn, prompts renewed reflection and re-interpretation of the theme of colonialism in Milton's own 'imperial venture' in his epic poem. Stephen Kim's 'Encountering Milton in Linmark's *Leche*' achieves something similar from the standpoint of critical race theory. Kim shows how R. Zamora Linmark engages in 'disobedient listening' to rewrite key moments from *Paradise Lost* into his 2011 novel *Leche* about the return of a queer Filipino man to the Philippines after a long absence. The critical dividend of Kim's approach is rich indeed. Through his analysis, we are led to re-consider the racial politics of *Paradise Lost* at the same time as seeing how modern rewritings of Milton contribute to the exposure and critique of such politics in our own day.

Three other chapters also show how fresh treatments or situations for encountering Milton can reveal things about his writing that were not previously obvious. David Currell's experience of teaching Milton in Lebanon leads him to propose a teaching and learning archive. Currell's proposal pushes us to think about the value of global and multimedia treatments of Milton from two equally important perspectives: what Lebanese students learn about Milton's writing, and what we learn about the study of Milton and of Lebanese culture. Both standpoints remind us of the variety of cultural environments in which readers encounter Milton, leading us to return to Milton's poetry and prose freshly attentive to the specifics of our own cultural formation and situation. Angelica Duran's chapter, 'Seeing, Hearing, and Feeling Milton's Works with and as Prosthetic Sign Systems', on accessing Milton's works through audio recordings, visual artwork, sign language, and braille prompts a different but related reflection. It provides the important reminder that our habitual practices of reading, writing, and performing are embodied ones. This in turn makes us more sensitive to the difficulties of access experienced by



the differently abled, the blind Milton not least among them. Lastly, John Hale's experience of participating in communal readings-aloud of *Paradise Lost*, 'Milton Marathons', also prompts a reconsideration of Milton's poetry. Speaking the verse aloud and hearing it spoken brings home to participants particular features of Milton's style, most notably his syntax, word pronunciation, and the drawing out of sense from one line to the next through enjambment. These essays, and others in the volume, demonstrate brilliantly how the experiences of the classroom can enrich and deepen our encounter with Milton, a perspective all too often lost in the artificial division between teaching on the one hand and research on the other.

Reading the chapters in this volume from beginning to end is, to quote Hale, 'to discover new things and rediscover old ones.' Three discoveries or rediscoveries struck me with particular force. The first concerns the nature of Milton's cultural transmission; the second the motivations of those doing the transmitting; and the third the nature of Milton's enduring appeal. My consideration of these topics takes the form of a conversation with ideas and examples explored in the editors' introduction.

Milton's cultural legacy is notable, first and foremost, for its sheer profusion. Extraordinarily rich in their variety, the creative and critical engagements with Milton documented in these pages, as in collections such as *Milton in Translation*, *Milton in Popular Culture*, and *Milton Now*, represent only a tiny sample of the whole. In the face of such abundance, attempts to gauge the importance of any particular instance of a new treatment of Milton, in a different language, genre, or media, or even to theorize in general terms about such treatments, can run into difficulties. It is certainly true, for example, that Eminem's music video *Rap God*, discussed in this volume's introductory chapter, has massive popular reach, way beyond the dreams of most authors or publishers of the printed word. But the snippets or flashes of text from *Paradise Lost* that appear in the music video are just that, flashes that last for mere fractions of a second. They serve the purpose of underscoring the song's theme of deification, but how many of the more than one billion viewers on YouTube since 2013 have cared about, or even discerned, the connection with Milton, other than a small cohort of English literature students pleased to discover the presence of a canonical literary text in a pop cultural context? The same might be said of the music video for Billie Eilish's *All The Good Girls Go To Hell*, with its 227 million views on YouTube from 2019 through 2023. The video's image of Eilish falling from the sky appears to be modelled on Gustave Doré's engraving of Satan falling from Heaven in *Paradise Lost*. But judging by viewers' online comments on the video, it is the biblical account in Isaiah 14:12 of Lucifer's fall from heaven that is registered as a source or allusion, if an allusion is registered at all, not Milton's reworking of that source, nor Doré's illustration of that reworking.

By contrast, as Geart van der Meer shows in 'Milton's *Paradise Lost* in Frisian Translations', Douwe Kalma's blank verse translation of a 241-line fragment of

book 1 of *Paradise Lost*, published in 1918, has miniscule reach. Yet who is to say how deep its cultural impact might be? It may, in part at least, have inspired van der Meer himself to produce a complete blank verse translation of the poem into Frisian. This translation, in turn, is likely to have been read by a larger number of the world's 400,000 Frisian speakers than Kalma's fragment, though how many exactly is impossible to say. How are we to calibrate cultural influence or presence in these two cases? In Eminem's *Rap God*, what matters for the artwork and its countless viewers are the themes of *Paradise Lost*, of gods and monsters, rule and rebellion, which are not, of course, unique to Milton. In the Frisian translations, what matters most is the linguistic and rhetorical beauty of Milton's epic, rendered with loving admiration into the translators' native language. The effort on the part of van der Meer is not simply to retell the plot of *Paradise Lost* in Frisian, but to capture something of the sound and character of Milton's poetic voice in doing so. This important distinction, between the transmission of the generally thematic, on the one hand, and the uniquely authorial, on the other, risks getting lost in reception studies in the excitement of finding words, phrases, and images from Milton cropping up in unexpected places.

The terms used to describe the relationship between original—or 'source', in translation studies—and creative reworking—or 'target'—are legion. Adaptation, appropriation, presence, proximation, remix, tradaptation, translation, and, the term introduced in this volume's introductory chapter, remateriality: these are just some of the names given to this process of cultural transmission, each carrying a subtly different connotation. Many of them are used to advantage in this volume. Useful as these terms are, however, their shared emphasis tends to be on the debt owed by the later version to the earlier. This emphasis influences the way commentators think. Take, for instance, the critical tendency to search in Milton for precedents of the kind of border and media crossings that we find in later adaptations. In their introduction, the editors point to two such examples in Milton: his poetic exploration of the incarnation in *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* and his multi-perspectival representation of Adam and Eve's repentance for their disobedience in *Paradise Lost*. These examples from Milton's writing—one drawn from theology and one from the narrative structure of *Paradise Lost*—are, however, quite different in kind from the translatative process by which artists, authors, or composers rework elements of Milton's texts in different genres, media, or languages. Given this difference, the comparison with 'the Miltonic' is unnecessary: creative reworking across borders and media needs no authorization from its source text. It is an independent creative activity, no matter how proximate or faithful to the original work an adaptation turns out to be.

Discussion of the nature of Milton's cultural transmission, and of critical approaches to it, prompts the question of motivation—the second observation I mention earlier. Why have artists, authors, musicians, and filmmakers drawn on Milton's writing so avidly for so long? Part of the answer lies in the generative

force of Milton's power to disturb, as previously stated. After reading these essays, though, the more intriguing question for me is: what motivates *critics* to chart and analyse creative engagements with Milton with such care, commitment, and obvious pleasure? One self-evidently laudable motive is to provide a fuller, more representative picture of the astonishing range and diversity of such engagements. In that respect, the raft of new material in this volume, and the diversity of contributions and contributors, is hugely welcome. There is a political edge to this, of course. Literary studies, like all disciplinary communities, can be a closed and self-referential world. Volumes like this one, which widen that field of reference and give voice to those previously unheard or even actively disregarded, participate in the honourable project of opening that world up.

But this volume shows how the personal can be political, too. Richard Kenton Webb's stunning artistic *Conversation with John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'*, discussed in 'The Synergies of Drawing and Painting *Paradise Lost*', is a deeply personal response to the poem's exploration of the problem of evil and how that exploration mirrored painful struggles in Webb's own life: 'I discovered through the creation process how profoundly the poet's eventual representation of goodness and hope presents exit strategies to struggles we ourselves may be experiencing.' Webb's intensely felt artistic engagement with Milton is unlike any other in the volume. Nonetheless, many of the more conventionally critical essays also evince personal investments of considerable psychological and emotional depth. It is invidious to pick out particular examples, but the essays where this personal involvement comes through most strongly, and invariably to powerful effect, are the ones that explore engagements with Milton in languages and cultures far removed from his own. In this category I would include Currell on teaching Milton in Lebanon, van der Meer on Milton in Frisian, Turið Sigurðardóttir on *Paradise Lost* in Faroese, Mustafa Kirca, Hasan Baktır, and Murat Ögütçü, with İslam Issa and Angelica Duran on Milton in the Turkish Republic, Amrita Dhar on Milton's influence on nineteenth-century Bengali literature, and Mario Murgia on *Paradise Lost* reworked for younger readers in twentieth-century Hispanoamerica. There is no mystery why the personal commitments in these essays are so readily apparent. In each case the contributor is fired by a double loyalty: to Milton, on the one hand, and to a receiving language and culture with which the contributor is profoundly, personally connected, on the other. In such instances, the differences between creative and critical engagements with Milton converge almost to a vanishing point. And yet I want to suggest that there is something else too fuelling this critical drive to map Milton's ever-branching afterlife across time and space. Something shared by Milton and those inspired by him.

This is my third observation: the nature of Milton's enduring appeal. Faithful labourers of Milton's reception, such as John Shawcross, John Leonard, and others to whom scholars and students owe so much, have amassed detailed evidence of the two principal aspects of Milton's lasting fame. These are poet of the sublime

and champion of liberty. One or other of these attributes galvanizes most of the creative and critical encounters considered in this volume. Over three and half centuries, both attributes have been mediated through Milton's inheritors; William Blake has been especially influential in shaping Milton's reputation in the popular imagination, explored by Camille Adnot in 'From Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Blake's *Milton*'. But there is another way of putting it that helps to explain the urge to track Milton's presence through every intersemiotic twist and turn. Put simply, Milton is the most optimistic poet in the English language. His high estimate of human potential, residing in our capacity to choose between good and evil, is the defining characteristic of all his thought and writing. This optimism communicates itself in multiple ways to innumerable people. A few examples, chosen at random, demonstrate the point. It is interpreted by Webb in this volume as a source of inspiration in difficult times; it encourages critic and teacher Achsah Guibbory to hope that studying *Paradise Lost* in a time of war can make us 'strong enough to face the future [. . .] and dedicate ourselves to reverent life'; it prompted nineteenth-century British manufacturer and statesman Joseph Chamberlain to declare that it was 'Milton's devotional spirit which distinguished him above all other writers'.

Milton is the poet of action and resolution. The endings of all his major works look expectantly to the future, with no remaining interest in lament or dwelling on past sorrows: from *Lycidas*, 'Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new'; from *Paradise Lost*, 'The World was all before them, where to choose | Their place of rest, and Providence their guide'; from *Samson Agonistes*, 'With peace and consolation hath dismissed, | And calm of mind all passion spent'. Messianic, prophetic, visionary—there is no paralysis or defeat, everything has purpose, even affliction and fall. The high-minded idealism that we meet in these lines, and throughout Milton's writing and thought, can be daunting. But it also speaks to our recurring aspirations—against all experience and judgement—to be better, to be changed, to be transformed. Those same aspirations animate the myriad works of translation, adaptation, and creative reworking through the ages. They also fuel the contributions contained in this stimulating volume, extending our understanding of the scope, variety, and nature of these encounters with Milton.

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