The First Milton Lecture Series:

READINGS IN AND FROM BRAZIL

Editors

Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá

Miriam Piedade Mansur Andrade

Geraldo Magela Cáffaro

The First Milton Lecture Series:

READINGS IN AND FROM BRAZIL

Copyright © 2022 by Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá, Miriam Piedade Mansur Andrade, Geraldo Magela Cáffaro.

Todos os direitos reservados. Este livro ou qualquer parte dele não pode ser reproduzido ou utilizado em qualquer forma sem a permissão do editor expressa por escrito, exceto para o uso de breves citações em resenha de livro ou revista acadêmica.

Projeto Gráfico e diagramação: Sérgio Luz/CS Cultural

M662.Y-f The First Milton Lecture Series : Readings in and from Brazil / Editors: Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá, Miriam Piedade Mansur Andrade, Geraldo Magela Cáffaro. – Belo Horizonte: Faculdade de Letras da UFMG, 2022.
480 p.

Inclui bibliografias.

ISBN: 978-65-87237-53-4 (digital)

1. Milton, John, 1608-1674. – Paradise Lost – Crítica e interpretação. 2. Ficção inglesa – História e crítica. I. Sá, Luiz Fernando Ferreira. II. Andrade, Miriam Piedade Mansur. III. Cáffaro, Geraldo Magela. IV. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. Faculdade de Letras. IV. Título.

CDD : 821.3

Ficha catalográfica elaborada pelo Bibliotecário Israel Jose da Silva – CRB/6-2128

The First Milton Lecture Series:

READINGS IN AND FROM BRAZIL

Editors

Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá

Miriam Piedade Mansur Andrade

Geraldo Magela Cáffaro

FALE/UFMG

BELO HORIZONTE

2022

Table of Contents

Foreword and Acknowledgements 6

Introduction 7

Part I: READINGS IN BRAZIL

Latter-day Milton: The Influence of *Paradise Lost*
on Mormonism and Seventh-day Adventism 11
JOHN ROGERS

Milton's Litotes: the Case of "nothing loath" 26
NICHOLAS VON MALTZAHN

Milton, Freedom, and Seventeenth-Century Intellectual History 45
STEPHEN M FALLON

Young Milton 74
JOHN K HALE

The People of *Paradise Lost* *92*
JOHN K HALE

Part II: READINGS FROM BRAZIL

Inaugurating Monsters in Milton, Derrida, and Borges 114
LUIZ FERNANDO FERREIRA SÁ

The Erring Destiny of John Milton's Texts
in 19th Century North-American Literature 136
MIRIAM PIEDADE MANSUR ANDRADE

Frames, Fancy, and Error in "Rappaccini's Daughter" and *Paradise Lost* *156*
GERALDO MAGELA CÁFFARO

List of Contributors 171

Foreword and Acknowledgements

The First Milton Lecture Series in Brazil was a great success in 2015, and every Milton scholar and Milton student gathered in Belo Horizonte–some one hundred people from different countries–enjoyed the moments spent together, the pleasant weather, and the intellectual and cultural fares.

We acknowledge with gratitude the sponsorship provided by CAPES, PÓS-LIT/CAPES/PROEX, FAPEMIG, CENEX/FALE/UFMG, and FALE/ UFMG.

We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to our colleagues at FALE/ UFMG, Faculty of Letters at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, especially Professor Graciela Inés Ravetti de Gómez, for all the help and assistance before and during the event in 2015.

Our special thanks to Professors Myriam Correa de Araujo Avila, the then Coordinator of POS-LIT, Rodrigo Antonio de Paiva Duarte, the then Pro-rector of Graduate Programs – PRPG/UFMG, and Sueli Maria Coelho, the dean of the Faculty of Letters (2021-2025), for assisting us with the crucial details.

We thank you all, lecturers, students, fellow professors, and sponsors, for having made *The First Milton Lecture Series in Brazil* such a successful event.

The Editors

Introduction

A collection of essays on John Milton and *Paradise Lost*, this volume brings together the work of scholars from Canada, Brazil, North America, and New Zealand, whose contributions represent a tribute to the variety of approaches that his writings have elicited. In an area of intense scholarly activity on so many fronts, this volume provides an opportunity for a pertinent and productive dialogue within Milton scholarship. Why this is the case will become clear in the following exposition of the volume's division and of how the essays in the collection are assigned their place.

The essays range in their concerns, from young Milton to his major work, *Paradise Lost*, and accord great attention as well as importance to the afterlives of the epic poem in literature in general. The readings in and from Brazil suggest an act of motion in these texts and offer different perspectives on Milton's universe. The first essay opens the debate on Milton's far-reaching impact, more specifically on the presence of *Paradise Lost* in Mormonism and Seventh-Day Adventism. This debate gains more arguments in the analysis of Milton's erring destiny in the work of 19th-century North-American writers, and in the study of the frames, fancies, and errors of *Paradise Lost* in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter." The essays cover different views and contribute to the establishment of dialogues with regard to Milton's work and other literary and religious texts.

Another move highlighted in this volume comes from Milton's appropriation of a recursive strategy in his use of litotes. Double negative forms analyzed in Milton's epic poem demonstrate his ability to deal with ideas that are ambiguous and demand various possible meanings. The exercise of reading and interpreting differently the signs, especially in relation to Milton's figurative elements, is reinforced in the portrayal of the Miltonic complicated monsters, which are

recreated critically with the help of Derridean and Borgean monstrosity. Still on the move, freedom and 17th-century intellectual history are interspersed with the poet's *oeuvre*, where freedom extends beyond the individual act and reaches the political body. This intellectual legacy is added to the trajectories of the young Milton and the people of *Paradise Lost*.

This volume should assume an importance not only for Milton studies but also for criticism in general. Made up of sympathetic readings of Milton's works, this volume implies a full awareness of the contexts and intertexts through which Milton's *oeuvre* is delineated. These contexts and intertexts range from associations with other literary works to political, historical, biographical, ideological, and other realms.

Whatever limina that bear upon the text, a literary work is imbued with its own values and its own meanings, but those values and meanings are made robust when one takes into consideration the *milieu* in which a text exists and the means by which the reader is able to gain a sense of its intertextual connections. From the vantage point of such a theoretical paradigm, the essays that follow have been assembled both to explore Milton, his works and his *milieu*, and to reflect upon the literary intertexts that give renewed life to a 17th-century English author and intellectual.

John Milton is an intellectual and a political writer, among many other things, and the literary excellence of his *oeuvre* has been acknowledged universally. In Brazil, it would not be different. Milton has been read and referenced by many Brazilian writers and his legacy is present in the works of Claudio Manoel da Costa, Junqueira Freire, Alvares de Azevedo, Sousândrade and Machado de Assis, to cite just a few. Thus, Milton's (re)visionary writings traveled across the European boundaries and reached the Americas, not only the "Anglo-America's" heirs, but the Brazilian readers as well. New territories in Milton studies came to be mapped and the readings in and from Brazil are the result of essays that traverse temporal, geographical, and traditional frameworks.

This volume demonstrates invigorating researches that involve how Milton's texts have been received, translated, interpreted through their literary,

philosophical, and theological relevance and in a continuous interchange of ideas and concepts. Multi-national publications about Milton are valuable as they enhance the critical fortune dedicated to the English author and contribute to the internationalization of the Institutions that host them. In this sense, this volume constitutes one more contribution to the multi-national trajectories of Milton's *oeuvre*. *The First Milton Lecture Series: Readings in and from Brazil* reinforces the importance of scholarly receptions and represents the participation of FALE/UFMG in the internationalization of Milton studies.

O Lutador, a local printing company, published the collected lectures in 2016. The books were distributed in a limited way to the participants of the event, to some members of the UFMG, and to a few Institutions. This e-book version will surely open the possibility for more readers to have access to the essays collected in this edition. Not only were *The First Milton Lecture Series* and the accompanying printed version of the lectures a great success in 2015/2016, in 2022, this e-book will make the study of John Milton in and from Brazil available to readers worldwide.

The Editors

Part I

Readings in Brazil

Paradise Lost on Mormonism and Seventh-day Adventism

John Rogers

No single literary writer has had a greater impact than John Milton on the theologies of two of America's most important homegrown religions: Mormonism and Seventh-Day Adventism. As is well known, a pre-theological Mormonism would emerge in 1830 with the publication of *The Book of Mormon*, which offered an elaborate account of Jesus' hitherto unknown appearance in America, as well as the origin of the continent's Native Americans. *The Book of Mormon* was a hit, and successfully attracted converts to the new religion from the beginning. It was not until 1840, four years before the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith was assassinated, that the rapidly growing religion assumed the burden of inventing a theology: it developed its own version of the traditional Christian concerns of the Creation, Fall, and Redemption. The central influence on the new religious theology was Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As I will discuss later in this paper, the central influence on the theology of Seventh-Day Adventism was also *Paradise Lost*.

Before I go on, I must address an important question. Did the seriously under-educated founders of those two religions, Joseph Smith and Ellen White, really read *Paradise Lost*? And why turn to the *British* poet for the backbone of these two quintessentially *American* religions? Let me first describe some of the cultural resonance that *Paradise Lost* would come to assume in the

nineteenth-century United States. As we have learned from the many scholars of the reception of Milton in the U.S., some of the grander set-piece speeches in Milton's epic, and some of its melting lyrical songs and hymns, would find themselves anthologized in just about every collection of English poetry that students in Britain were asked to read. Young men, throughout the eighteenth century, were instructed to develop their own oratorical skills, in imitation of some of the great speeches in *Paradise Lost*. And it was broadly assumed that just about any passage of Milton's great epic could be used as a tool with which to inculcate literary mastery, rhetorical prowess, and of course high-toned morality into any unsuspecting student reader.

For some time, the cultural situation in the U.S. was not that different from the situation back in England. Milton had died in London in 1674, not having ever made it to the America he pretty much always dismissed as a cultural wasteland. But by the eighteenth century the poetry of Milton had saturated the literary culture of middle-class and upper middle-class America as surely as it had saturated that of the home country. Milton's poetry had pride of place in the literary instruction of America's higher academies of learning. It was easy for the most pious Americans to see Milton as a fellow puritan, and there was a special appreciation in the colonies for Milton's low-church sensibility. England had a national church, governed, at least in title, by the monarch. And many in the colonies, as is well-known, were deeply invested in pursuing religious inquiry and forms of worship that existed entirely outside anything officially sanctioned by the state. Congregationalists and Quakers and Baptists and, to a lesser extent, Presbyterians, flourished in early America, and it was easy for them to see in the iconoclastic puritan Milton a spokesman for their own rejection of the Church of England, and a spokesman for their own conviction that every believer must be permitted to determine (or at least confirm) his beliefs on his own.

Milton would only become more important during the years of the American Revolution. Milton had, in the mid seventeenth century, railed against Britain's Stuart monarchy, and wrote some stunning and virulent treatises advocating the execution of King Charles the First. And so for the late eighteenth-century

readers in revolutionary America, Milton could easily seem more American than British. He gave voice more gloriously than anyone before him to the American dream of freedom from tyranny. (Some of the regicide treatises, and also *Areopagitica*, were reprinted in the America of the revolutionary period – they were intensely relevant, some 100 years after they were written, to the political situation in the U.S. Interestingly, just a few years later, many of those same Miltonic treatises would be translated into French, and circulated as propaganda during the French Revolution).

Milton had a second life as a revolutionary in the United States. And for many of the U.S. readers of Milton, the fact that Milton seemed so much more relevant in the U.S. than he did in England, suggested in a weird way that Milton was more American than English. There are in fact many testimonies in both the eighteenth and nineteenth century America that Milton is our poet – the quintessential American poet; or that no poet actually writing in America understands us, our goals and aspirations, as Milton does. The Romantic poets in England were certainly drawn to the revolutionary Milton. But they were not more enthusiastic about him than America's founding fathers, writing in the same period. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were positively soaked in Milton, having studied in some depth the arguments in his fiery political prose treatises, as well of course the undying poetry of *Paradise Lost*.

By the second or third decade of the nineteenth century, Milton was falling out of favor among polite, cultivated readers. The poetry seemed increasingly old-fashioned, and the liberatory, revolutionary political spirit seemed at that point too familiar, or possibly even tiresome. The big ideological lessons of Milton had already been absorbed into the bloodstream of the educated classes in the U.S., and cultural historians who have examined the archives show us that fewer mainstream preachers quoting Milton, fewer schools teaching Milton as a model of refined oratory, and fewer texts extolling the value of Milton's learning or Milton's oratory or gorgeous poetry. He resumed his place in the early nineteenth-century U.S. as a canonical English poet, but his posthumous career as the great *American* poet began to come to an end. The United States now had

her own poets, Longfellow, Whittier, and Bryant, as Sensabaugh compellingly argues, who took his place.

Well, that is the story about Milton in America we are most familiar with. It is true, as Sensabaugh demonstrates, that the educated elite were not as driven as they had been a few decades earlier to think of Milton as the American poet. But the same cannot be said with a different class of readers in the nineteenth century. (More or less simple, minimally literate, barely educated working-class readers have up to this point escaped consideration as part of the story of Milton's reception in America.) But it is just such a class of minimally literate, deeply religious, and highly motivated readers of Milton that is my subject today. Who were they? And where were they from? American cultural historians have written a great deal about the explosive cultural developments in what is known as the "Burnedover District" of Western New York, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Preachers from all over New England were drawn to Western New York, the development of whose Erie Canal was a huge public works project that attracted laborers from all around for a number of decades. The religious enthusiasm of this section of the American Northeast, with its powerful energies of millenarianism, were explosive. Historians have amply described the innumerable Methodist and Baptist circuit riders crossing Western New York on horseback and jazzing up the faithful; as well as the tens of thousands of people passionately awaiting the second coming of Christ, which failed to occur at the hour predicted by the farmer prophet William Miller in October of 1844. The central figures of the new protestant sects that were cropping up on a regular basis were certainly literate. They had been taught to read the Bible, but they were by no means members of an educated elite, having never been trained, like the more cultivated American described by George Sensabaugh, to model their oratory and their polite verses on the learned poetry and prose of John Milton. These were hardworking men and women who lived in the majority of American households that owned, in many cases, no more than two books, those books being the Bible, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. And more to the point, these were hardworking men and women who in all likelihood immersed themselves

in the poetry and prose of those two books, without always observing the generic distinctions among them that we of course take for granted. It goes without saying that they read the Bible literally, believing it to be the inspired word of God. And I think it is possible that they accorded a nearly scriptural status to the fictional works of seventeenth-century puritan literature as well – the other book on the family bookshelf. The educated readers of Milton on both sides of the Atlantic understood of course, as we do, that Milton's treatment of the subject of the fall of the rebel angels, and the fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise, is a self-conscious work of poetry; that it is a cultural artifact that knows itself to be a more or less *fictional, literary* treatment of a few chapters of the Bible, one that achieves its extraordinary power by superadding to the biblical story the compelling narrative outlines and rhetorical energy of the great classical epics of Homer and Virgil.

Like Homer and Virgil before him, Milton invokes his muse at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*. And he tells us that the poem we are reading was dictated to him by that muse, a mysterious but by no means powerless inspirational source drawn from the Christian heaven. *We* read Milton, much as Milton's learned eighteenth-century readers in England read him, as self-consciously employing a literary commonplace, as self-consciously impressing us with his inventive mastery over the generic moves of the classical tradition. But that is not, I feel certain, how thousands of less sophisticated American readers in the nineteenth century read Milton. (We are no longer speaking of the likes of George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson – men who had the benefit of an elite education, who understand Milton to be a literary genius residing on the Olympian heights of canonical literary authority. Such readers likely constituted a very small percentage of the population of early nineteenth century America.) I am speaking rather of readers who were understandably ignorant of Homer, Virgil, or any of the classical poets with whom Milton engages over the course of his poem; these are readers with almost no exposure to the world of literature outside of the Bible, and who may well have read *Paradise Lost* as *gospel*, taking the poet in his self-consciously literary postures at his word. When Milton's epic

speaker tells the reader that it is the Heavenly Muse, and not the mere mortal John Milton, who is *really* the origin of the poem, a shocking number of his nineteenth-century American readers may well have taken him literally.

How did these minimally literate nineteenth-century U.S. readers read *Paradise Lost*? As we know, *Paradise Lost* has always been an intensely challenging work of literature. But the *Paradise Lost* these Americans were reading was likely not the poem we are familiar with, in scholarly editions. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there were, in print, abridged versions of *Paradise Lost*; versions of the poem rewritten in prose; there was even a *Paradise Lost* for the very young, which instructed parents how to explain the story that Milton was telling to their children.) These were all versions of Milton's poem designed not to communicate the complex, learned, artistry of Milton's neo-classical epic.

Milton's allusions, the similes, his complicated syntax had all been stripped away from the popular nineteenth-century versions of *Paradise Lost*, renditions of Milton's poem designed to convey the story, the plot, of *Paradise Lost*. It is this widespread credulous reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost* – Milton as popular culture and popular religious culture – that explains his influence on Mormonism and Seventh-Day Adventism.

Let me introduce one more historical fact before I describe what I see as the Miltonic core of the two great nineteenth century American religions. What most more or less simple readers of Milton were familiar with was, of course, *Paradise Lost*. But something happened, in 1823, that would eventually draw America's attention to another, no less consequential, aspect of Milton's literary output. In London's Public Record Office, in 1823, a librarian found the long-lost manuscript, written in Latin, of a theological treatise written by Milton, but never published in the poet's lifetime. *De doctrina christiana*, or *On Christian Doctrine*, was Milton's elaborate, painstakingly crafted systematic theology, in which he delivered his own, very idiosyncratic take, on every major feature of Christian doctrine. Milton wisely never published it, because he knew the consequences of making public the denial of the existence of the Christian Trinity. To deny the trinity – the coequal, coeternal union of the three persons

of the godhead, father son and holy spirit – was a capital crime through the end of the seventeenth century not just in Britain but in every country on the continent as well. Milton was motivated to keep his views private. Well, the MS was found in 1823, and by 1825, it had been translated into English, and thousands of copies of these shocking expressions of heresy were sold to an outraged English reading public. Milton's poetry having an even more ardent readership in the U.S., and the English translation of Milton's heretical musings was published in Boston in the following year. And the news in America about Milton's heresies was huge. Every major literary or general interest periodical, and most major newspapers, on both sides of the Atlantic, rushed to cover the exposure of the dangerous views privately embraced by the great poet.

By 1827, I feel sure, it would have been very difficult not to know that the great poet of *Paradise Lost* was really a heretic who had secretly espoused some of the most outlandish ideas about Christianity ever voiced by a respectable, stalwart participant on the cultural scene.

So what was it that we learn from the secret treatise that Milton truly believed? In denying the existence of the Trinity, Milton explains that the Son of God Is not actually God himself; he is a creature – literally God's *son*. We learn too that Milton stood apart from most other theologians in rejecting the idea that God created the universe out of nothing: Milton's God created the universe, including man, out of a pre-existing matter, the matter that was nothing other than the body of God itself. Milton also took a stand on his age's Sabbatarian controversies: the vast majority of Christians took it as gospel that they were to worship not on the seventh day, Saturday, but on the first day, Sunday – Christianity releases us from the Jewish bondage to the Mosaic law of Saturday worship. Milton insisted in that treatise that the choice of Sunday was absolutely arbitrary, and should not be seen as binding on anyone.

Additionally we learn that the great poet of *Paradise Lost* secretly believed in the permissibility of polygamy, or plural marriage (the practicing of having more than one wife). Milton, in the treatise, would argue soberly that polygamy had never been officially outlawed, after the age of the great polygamist patriarchs,

including Abraham and Jacob. A right to polygamy was, and for Milton still is a gift God bestows on the best of men.

Seventh-day worship, and the recovered truth of polygamy's ongoing favor in the eyes of God: the heretical Milton made available to American readers in 1826 can be seen to have embraced, some 150 years earlier, precisely those aberrant theological views that would form themselves at the core of the great nineteenth-century sects of Mormonism and Seventh-Day Adventism. It is my certain belief that the minimally educated founders of those religions, Joseph Smith of the Latter Day Saints and Ellen Gould White of Seventh-Day Adventism, were avid, literal, and deeply credulous readers of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which they took to be not a literary masterpiece, but an inspired, quasi-sacred text. And that, in the wake of the 1826 revelation of Milton's extraordinary heresies, which was headline news in both England and America, Joseph Smith and Ellen White found in their beloved *Paradise Lost* a divine benediction on their own early sectarian hunches and convictions. (Milton's newly discovered Christian Doctrine could serve as a key to reading *Paradise Lost*, where all of Milton's heresies could now be seen as apparent). And I would like to go even further. I think it is more than possible that these two, the founders of Mormonism and Seventh Day Adventism, did not find in Milton *just* a simple *validation* of their own beliefs. They might well have come to embrace certain views in submission to the inspiration of Milton himself.

We might be able to write off some of these parallels as coincidences. Or we could reasonably say that there were many conduits of transmission by which some of the most exuberant of the marginal religious ideas generated in seventeenth century England made their way to the United States of the nineteenth century. What we cannot write off, though; and what we cannot be dismissive about, are those specific moments of theological *narrative* in which Joseph Smith and Ellen Gould White mirror back wholly idiosyncratic aspects of Milton's imaginative poem, *Paradise Lost*.

The indebtedness of Joseph Smith to *Paradise Lost* is very specific. No one other than Milton imagines the Christian atonement as a scene in which God

the Father publicly laments the fact that his future creation, man, will sin. God explains the problem to the angels in heaven, and asks for a volunteer – is there anyone who will give himself as a sacrifice to help save my new creature man? "All the heavenly choir stood mute," Milton tells us. The angels in heaven are silent, – until, finally, the Son of God graciously and mercifully offers himself in man's stead. Smith, whose relation to the atonement is far more complex than Milton's, reverts to just this scene in *Paradise Lost.* But with breathtaking genius, Smith turns Milton's scene of the heavenly council in Book Three inside out, or upside down.

It was in 1840 that Smith undertook to rewrite the first six chapters of Genesis, claiming to have found and then translated the original scripture by which he could restore "many important points touching the salvation of men, [that] had been taken from the Bible, or [were] lost before it was compiled." In this new version of Genesis, retitled the *Book of Moses*, Smith interrupts his story of the creation and fall of Adam and Eve to reveal the details of an ancient council in heaven clearly modeled on the dialogue of the Father and the Son in Book Three of *Paradise Lost*. In Smith's extraordinary rewriting of Milton's account of the redemption of man, it is not one but two heavenly beings who volunteer themselves on man's behalf. The first volunteer is none other than the angel Satan himself:

> The Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying, That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying – Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.

It is not until the next verse that we learn of the competing offer of the true Son of God, when God tells Moses, in Smith's rendering of the restored scriptural text, "behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me – Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2).

What Joseph Smith is doing here with the original story as told in *Paradise Lost* is remarkable. What the Son of God tells the Father in Smith's version is

directly related to dialogue in *Paradise Lost*. Smith's Son of God wants simply to perform the will of God: "Father, thy will be done," he says. And his obedience reflects what Milton writes of the Son at the heavenly counsel: "as a sacrifice / Glad to be offered, he attends the will /Of his great Father" (3.269-71). In this respect, Joseph Smith can be seen to follow Milton fairly dutifully. The Mormon prophet attends the will of the great poet Milton. But let us consider now what Smith does with the presentation of the offer by Satan that *precedes* that of the Son. "Behold, here am I, send me," the yet unfallen Satan says. And he follows his ostentatious offer of himself with a heroic boast that he will be able to redeem *all* mankind: "not one soul shall be lost." The Mormon Satan will see to it that *everyone* is saved. And there is an amazing way in which the Mormon Satan, like the Mormon Son, is indebted to Milton's account of the Son of God in *Paradise Lost*. In a passage that has troubled readers of Milton since the eighteenth century, the Son of God in *Paradise Lost* can himself seem boastfully heroic, or swaggering. "Behold me then, me for him, life for life," the Son tells the Father. And the Son follows this offer with an imagined heroic narrative of redemption that bears almost no relation to what we know actually happens. Famously, Milton's Son of God has no idea that he is going to be crucified. He confidently imagines the future not as humiliating but triumphant. "Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave, / His [Death's] prey . . . . I shall rise Victorious, and subdue / My vanquisher" (3.247-51). In this same speech, the Son boasts that he will bring all his redeemed to heaven, suggesting, as Empson noted, that his ascension to Heaven three days after his death will be the end of Christian history, the final resting point at which Christ and all the redeemed would be in Heaven, and life on earth would be no more.

We have to admit that the Son's speech in Book Three makes for one of the poem's strangest scenes. Milton wants it to seem strange, as he needs a Son of God who can redeem us through heroic virtue rather than passive suffering. But Joseph Smith has found this controversial bit of Milton's representation of the Son troubling, and he attributes everything he does not like about Milton's Son to the Satan of his own version of the story. As God explains in Smith's *Book*

of Moses, Satan "sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him" (Moses 4:3). It is this action of Satan's, and only this action, that constitutes his rebellion against God and the philosophical war in heaven that ensues. "By the power of mine Only Begotten," Smith's God explains to Moses, "I caused that he should be cast down" (*Moses* 4:3). It is at this point in the Mormon scripture that we learn that Satan becomes the "devil, the father of all lies," and that he seeks to manipulate the serpent into tempting Eve.

It was the year of Joseph Smith's death, 1844, when Ellen White had, at the age of seventeen, her first prophetic vision. The anticipated end of the world had not occurred in October of that year, as she and thousands others had been led to believe by the charismatic farmer-prophet William Miller, and she saw in the sky a sign that encouraged her to continue to anticipate the Second Advent of Christ. In 1847, she was moved by revelation to insist that the Sabbath should be observed not on Sunday, but on the seventh day of the week, Saturday. In 1858, she received another vision from heaven, a prophecy, as she called it, of "the Great Controversy." It was the extraordinary and detailed unfolding of the Great Controversy between Satan and Christ that White committed to paper, and published, and which quickly established itself as the central, divinely inspired text at the heart of the movement that would soon be given its present name of Seventh-Day Adventism.

What was the vision of the Great Controversy that Ellen White received from heaven in 1858? As Ian Bickford and others have described, it was nothing less than the entire very complicated plot of *Paradise Lost*, transmuted from the beautiful blank verse of Milton's poem into the clear, unambiguous sentences of White's unimaginative prose. The unnamed angel who delivered to White her prophetic vision in 1858 might have been none other than the heavenly muse who inspired Milton two hundred years earlier to write *Paradise Lost*, though in working with White, the muse, we have to assume, thought better of interlarding the key points of the story with anything that smacked of a learned reference to Homer or Virgil. White's prophecy begins at the first moment, in terms of the chronology of the plot, of Milton's poem, the Father's chilling announcement

to the assembled angels in heaven that he will be promoting to an exalted state the hitherto unknown, untested, inexperienced being that the Father is now offensively referring to as the *only* Son of God (5.600-15).

So begins the first chapter of White's first, 1858 transcription of the angelic revelation of the "Great Controversy:

> The Lord has shown me that Satan was once an honored angel in heaven, next to Jesus Christ. His countenance was mild, expressive of happiness like the other angels. His forehead was high and broad, and showed great intelligence. His form was perfect. He had a noble, majestic bearing. And I saw that when God said to his Son, Let us make man in our image, Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man. He was filled with envy, jealousy and hatred. He wished to be the highest in heaven, next to God, and receive the highest honors. Until this time all heaven was in order, harmony, and perfectly subject to the government of God.

The narrative proceeds, as we expect, with the envious Satan scheming to "rebel against the order and will of God" by "insinuating against the government of God, ambitious to exalt himself, and unwilling to submit to the authority of Jesus." Ellen White focuses obsessively on just this scene taken from Book 5 of Milton's epic. For her, the Exaltation of the Son, the arbitrary commandment to all the angels in Heaven to obey the Son functions as the great original of the most important of God's arbitrary commandments on earth, the fourth of the Ten Commandments that Moses delivers to Israel: the order to keep the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week – Saturday – holy. In *Paradise Lost*, God explains in Book 5, any angel who disobeys the order to honor the Son of God as if he *were* God will be "Cast out from God and blessed vision, fall[ing] / Into utter darkness" (5.613-14). And this will be exactly what Ellen White does with the fourth commandment, as she will insist that those who disobey the order to observe the Sabbath, and worship on Sunday instead, will be damned.

Had Ellen White read, by 1858, when she published her first transcription of the unnamed angel's revelation of Satan's fall, the familiar, 1674 edition of *Paradise Lost*? My guess is no. While White's story obviously has an origin in Milton's telling of the events leading up to the War in Heaven, the version of

the story revealed to her in 1858 shares only a handful of specific verbal from Milton's actual poem. White delivers the story of Satan in the chronological order of the narrative as she understands it, and in removing Milton's flashback structure and ironing out the linear narrative she follows much more closely Eliza Weaver Bradburn's *Story of Paradise Lost, for Children*, published in 1826, the year before White was born. It is not too farfetched to suggest that the story White experienced as an angelic revelation in 1858 was really the recovered memory of Eliza Weaver Bradburn's abridgment, which White could easily, many years before, have read, or have had read to her, at home or at the Methodist church at which her family worshipped.

Milton's Satan was as important for White as he was for Joseph Smith, though in some obviously different ways. For White, it was the villain Satan who in the sacred narrative embodies the hypocrisy of the so-called "free" republican union of the United States. According to Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhard in their study *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, it is Satan who inspires and empowers all of the political state's attempts to compel us to violate the most sacred of all God's commandments, the fourth, which enjoins us to observe the Sabbath.

The U.S. government, for White and for many Adventists, is the satanic enemy. The U.S. government boasts about freedom, but in reality seeks to take our freedoms away, especially, it is widely believed, our freedom to worship, if we choose, on the seventh day of the week: state and community "blue laws" are seen by many Adventists as evidence of a governmental attempt to mandate church attendance on Sundays, and thus are also read as signs that the end days are near. In the troubled times before Christ's second coming, it is often believed, Seventh-day Adventists will have been ordered by the State to cease their practice of Saturday worship. And Ellen White suggests that all Adventists will be obliged to assume the role of Milton's Abdiel, resisting the scorn heaped on them by their enemies, bravely professing the minority position of the loyal angels.

White's angelically revealed accounts of the fall of Satan and the fall of man became more and more Miltonic with each expanded edition (White claimed

that the specific revisions to the original version had also been directed by her inspiring angel). And, as can be expected, she and the Adventist Church she helped to found were dogged by more and more questions, which were always answered with the stiff denial that White had never read *Paradise Lost*. After her death, the Ellen White Estate produced further explanations for the apparent similarities, including this account, reproduced by Ian Bickford: "Most likely there were times when Mrs. White read an impressive passage in a book and later the Lord called her attention to the same truth while in vision, applying that truth to a specific need in her own life or the life of the church." Her status as a prophet, it is explained, is tied to "the authority and truth of her messages – not their originality." The Great Controversy of White's literary originality has surfaced every few decades since her death. But there is no sign that Seventh-Day Adventism has in any way suffered from the doubts cast on Mrs. White's veracity. And why would it? Ardent readers of Milton have not been troubled by Milton's debts to Homer and Virgil. Milton asserted in *Paradise Lost* that he was inspired by God to write his Christian epic, a work whose borrowings from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* were many and on the surface. Why should the Adventists care that the angel who inspired Ellen White was moved in a related fashion to inspire her appropriation of an ample portion of *Paradise Lost*?

What does all of this mean? Allow me here in closing to follow Joseph Smith and Ellen White in their claim to prophetic inspiration. I prophesy that if Milton continues to be read through the end of the twenty-first century, and into the twenty-second, it will likely be on the strength of the powerful theologies of the Adventists and the Latter-Day Saints, in whom the spirit of Milton, and some of the key plot points of Milton's epic, clearly reside. It happens every year that college and university students find themselves, after reading Milton, seeking courses in the great books – the epics, for example, Homer and Virgil – because they want to understand those works from which Milton has borrowed. Perhaps students a few generations from now will find themselves seeking courses in *Milton*, out of a related concern to acquaint themselves with the text that reverberates

beneath the religious writing within which they have grown up. It may seem now that Milton, who may have more passionate and committed readers in the U.S. than he has in his native Britain, is, as Sensabaugh had suggested, an honorary American. But the two most Miltonic contemporary religious movements have more adherents outside the U.S. than they do in their native land. And it seems reasonable that we can envision a time in which Milton does not fit neatly into either national category, whether American or British. The bard's work may well be viewed, like the Bible, as the common property of all; and *Paradise Lost* could well be seen as the greatest and most influential work of "world literature." Some of us might think that this vision of the future a tragic one: it posits a world in which *Paradise Lost* is read only for the *plot*, as it was by Joseph Smith and Ellen White. It would not be Milton's beautiful blank verse, or his sinuous syntax, or his remarkable array of allusions to the classical tradition that would be revered in this prospective future. If it is only the plot that matters, *Paradise Lost* could be translated into the simple-to-understand prose of any language. Perhaps the old eighteenth-century prose translation of *Paradise Lost*, or the more recent one written by Dennis Danielson, would serve as a guide to future editions of Milton's masterwork. And that would be because it is not *Paradise Lost* as a poem, or a work of literature, that would be the foremost concern in the dystopian future I can envision. It would be *Paradise Lost* as a source of information, the potentially true information of otherwise unsung events in a pre-terrestrial Heaven – Satan's rivalry with the Son of God, the subsequent war in heaven – that would mark it off as a sacred, or quasi-sacred, text. And whether we like it or not, if such a future were actually to come to pass, we could say unequivocally that Milton was right when, as a young man, he predicted that he would someday write a great work that "aftertimes will not willingly let die." The tens of millions of Mormons and Adventists throughout the world may well see to it that *Paradise Lost* lives forever.

Milton's litotes: the case of "nothing loath"

Nicholas von Maltzahn

One of Milton's most characteristic figures of speech is litotes, that form of understatement where the negation of a negative works to convey the affirmative. Conspicuous as litotes proves across his works – the trope often surfaces in *Paradise Lost*, and in his prose as well – it has gone strangely unsung in modern critical valuations of Milton's style. The omission is curious because litotes is a key feature in what has long been termed "Milton's grand style", or Milton's way, in the early critic Joseph Addison's phrase, "of raising the language, and giving it a poetical turn" (Addison 77 [Spectator, 285]).

More generally, litotes is a familiar form of meiosis, or understatement, where we express the affirmative by negating its contrary. In its simplest English form, it arises in a phrase such as "I was not unhappy…" (when understatement reveals the speaker instead to be happy enough, or even glad), or "I was not unwilling…" (which conveys that the speaker was ready to do something, even eager to do it). This "not un-" formation is often met with in English and in Milton's works. The range of resulting meanings can be wide, as is so often the case with understatement or irony, since the author's implication invites the participation of the reader in inference, in a way that complicates representation.

Another version of litotes moves away from the "not un-" formation to a wider application of the adverb "not" to other verbs or adjectives, but still in the spirit of

negating a negation to achieve understatement. For example, to use the common English phrase "not bad" can convey a range of meaning from something being acceptable to something being very good indeed, with context, spoken inflection, or our knowledge of the speaker important to judging quite how much the phrase works in the affirmative. This more often appears with words of constraint or limitation.

With litotes in Milton's writings, we may further observe the loss of negative concord (where double or multiple negations still convey the negative) in Early-Modern English, a widespread loss by his date and one unlikely to have taken "place as a result of prescriptive, normative or stylistic influences" (Kallel 136). In today's Standard English, the use of negative concord has been entirely lost. By contrast, in Middle English the double negative construction, rather than contradicting the negation in the direction of affirmation, had instead intensified the negation, as in Portuguese or in Spanish. Such negative concord is syntactically correct, or even required by those languages. So some forms of litotes readily available to Milton and in modern standard English are more difficult to generate in Portuguese or Spanish. To take a much-cited example of litotes from Book I of *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes the torment of the fallen angels on the fiery lake with a double negative: "Nor did they not perceive the evil plight / In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel" (*PL*, 1:335-6) – meaning, of course, that they did perceive their quandary, and did feel those agonies. A Spanish translation works around these English constructions more elaborately – "No era que no comprehendiesen la desastrosa condicion en que se encontraban, ni que no sintiesen sus horribiles tormentos" – with the translator also sensitive to the remarkable facility of the English language to compound words with the negative prefixes "un" and "dis", which have such litotic potential (Milton, *El Paraiso Perdido* xii, 17). That Milton so avoids negative concord is consistent with the late sixteenth-century completion of that change away from the Middle-English usage (Kallel 8), but he seems to have been peculiarly alert to the opportunities for litotes that linguistic change now afforded.

In his many litotes, Milton uses both the obvious "not un-" formation and subtler versions where negation of negations serves instead to affirm something.

The phrase in my title may count among the subtler versions of litotes. "Nothing loath" is how the narrator describes Eve when she is very eager to have sex with Adam when he lustfully proposes it right after the Fall (*Paradise Lost*, Book 9). This differs from the "not un-" formation in that Milton here negates a word that is negative even though it is not just formed with a privative prefix. "Nothing loath", like "not unwilling", evokes Eve's eagerness by negating its contrary: she is now very far from unwilling or "loath" to couple with Adam.

I

Litotes in *Paradise Lost* has met with strangely little critical attention, despite its prevalence and interpretive complexities. Let me venture a reason for the neglect. One of the great critical arguments about Milton, one that became especially fierce again in the twentieth century, turned on the artificiality of Milton's poetic diction. At issue was his Latinate style, which might come to be faulted. This complaint against *Paradise Lost* goes back almost to the time of its first publication, but about a hundred years ago, it gathered renewed force. To draw again on Joseph Addison: that influential early eighteenth-century critic praises as a Latinism (if without specifying litotes) our example, the highly artificial "Nor did they not perceive the evil plight / In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel" (*PL*, 1:335-6) – this will be the example from *Paradise Lost* that many later critics also adduce. Addison observes that litotes may be counted among the "several other foreign modes of speech, which this poet has naturalized to give his verse the greater sound, and throw it out of prose" (Addison 78). But even as Addison admired how "singular" these make Milton, he already voiced the concern that his style "is in some places too much stiffened and obscured" by such usages (79). In the 1800s, at the height of Milton's reputation, such reservations were mostly set aside. We might expect a Victorian classicist, one James Prendeville, to delight in Milton's "use of the double negative to express a full affirmative," which Prendeville identified as "a pure and a beautiful Graecism," adding with reference to Virgil that "The best

Latin poets adopted it" too (Prendeville, *PL* 1:335-6n; Leonard 1:113-114). The double negative might then seem an obvious and attractive feature of Milton's poetry, as where one such critic observes: "After the pomp and glow of learned allusion, the second chief technical note of Milton's style is his partiality for a Latin use of the relative pronoun and the double negative, and for scholarly Latin turns and constructions generally" (Forman 2:128). That Milton's double negatives were of classical derivation seemed both obvious and praiseworthy to the German Miltonist Max Schlicht in 1873, and to the English Miltonist W.J. Courthope in 1903 (Schlicht 21; Leonard 1:170).

But in the 1920s the complaint about Milton's artificially Latinate style met with influential restatement by no less a figure than T. S. Eliot. Eliot complained about "a foreign idiom" as contributing to the hollow rhetoric of Milton's epic, or its "heavy conversation," "the deterioration … to which he subjected the language" (Eliot, Milton 12, 36-37; Eliot, Selected Essays 321). It may have been the legacy of a high style to the hollow rhetoric of contemporaries such as Rudyard Kipling that raised Eliot's ire; literary Modernism defined itself against a nineteenth-century rhetoric that was viewed as damnably implicated in imperial pretensions and as damnably exposed in the horrors of World War I. That grand rhetoric had deep humanist roots and was highly coloured by classical example, but the cultural and social capital of a classical education was sorely tested when war could seem to make a mock of such education [Bildung] and the political language it had supported. It took about 40 years before the renewed defence of Milton's grand style issued in a fresh spate of criticism that has done much to show us how subtle and moving Milton's epic diction proves to be (Ricks).

Even so, this successful defence of Milton's language has yet much to be extended to his frequent use of litotes or other more Latinate features of his poetics. In part, their Baroque operation has not met with much regard in a period where critics still prefer what is perceived as less artificial literature or eloquence. In the case of litotes, moreover, we have here to deal also with George Orwell's later and famous complaint against the "not un-" formation as often too laborious and artificial. In Orwell's influential "Politics and the

English Language," his first example of the absurd overuse of litotes is found in a critic (Harold Laski) writing about Milton in the archest style (Orwell 4:128). So it has been no small matter to reclaim Milton against such suspicions of his elaborate diction and syntax. Even Milton's shrewdest defenders are eager to show that such usages "have since become standard English," as John Leonard has it – though this still begs the question how standard the usage was in Milton's day – or are "actually perfectly good English" in the first place (Leonard 170). So such critics may seek to overcome, or overlook, the Latinate diction that used to seem a distinctive and acceptable feature of Milton's work. As a result, they have not much dwelt on his litotes. But if we are less in thrall to such a nativist defence of the Englishness of English, and view more hybrid idiom more kindly, we should be capable of a less defensive posture, one friendlier to that most characteristic feature of Miltonic diction: litotes.

So I would venture that litotes should be seen as a major category of Milton's use of "ancient idiom", as the shrewd critic Jonathan Richardson had admired it in the 1700s, but that applied to purposes distinctively his own. Richardson himself revealingly resorted to litotes in observing Milton's distinctive style: "Nor is it not seen in his Controversial Prose Works; *Paradise Lost* wants it not…" Our task as critics is to discern those purposes where Milton deploys litotes, so we see it not as an idle ornament, but instead understand ourselves as "Surrounded with Sense" (Richardson, in Darbishire 313-315). Years ago, I had a student ask, impatiently, of Milton's litotes, "Why doesn't Milton just come right out with it?" At the time I thought that was a dull reaction to the poet's sophistication, but now it seems to me just the question we should put to Milton's litotes wherever we meet with them.

For my claim is that Milton uses litotes to great effect. They become a signature of his epic. They work to strengthen his narrative presence in his work; in this respect, they may be compared with his invocations or his elaborate epic similes as a stylistic means of promoting the author's voice. But the many litotes also project the author's vision: they do substantial work in gesturing at

the sublime of the scenes and persons he evokes. By using this indirect means of expression, he augments their epic grandeur.

To describe this historically: with Milton, I shall argue, we have a brilliant example where the attention to the culture of antiquity – in this case, especially the Latin use of double negatives – yields a vivid Baroque result. Here it may be said of Milton what the art-historian Anthony Blunt said of the great Baroque architect Borromini: what seem "at first sight freaks of fantasy were in fact variations based on an almost ruthlessly logical method" (Blunt 9). The debt to classical norms yields a far from classical result. In Latin, "The double Negative is often stronger than the opposite Positive" (Gildersleeve 197, with examples from Horace and Virgil), with the further distinction in strength between the indefinite affirmative (nonnihil [something], nonnemo [someone], nonnulli [some] etc.) and the general affirmative (nihil non [everything], nemo non [everyone], nulli non [all], etc.). Milton could not be more highly aware on this point. He was a very fully trained humanist educator, who taught Latin and Greek and had himself written a Latin grammar and also a logic textbook; his Latinity had triumphed in his Latin defences of the nation on behalf of the English commonwealth. His competences converge in his discussion of the logic behind such usage in his *Artis Logicae* (1672) (139-41; CPW 8:336-7). And Milton proves a masterly innovator with the trope as it might be deployed in English.

There is a further historical point to make about Milton's use of the litotes generated through double negation: this is that he may well have contributed to the specification of grammatical correctness on this point that arrived in the 1700s. The most influential eighteenth-century codifier of this point of English grammar was Robert Lowth, a bishop in the Church of England and sometime Professor of Poetry at Oxford. A keen student of Milton's works, Lowth sought to refine and polish the English language through "advances in Grammatical accuracy", as he saw them, which advances included strict prescriptions about the use of double negatives, and much else besides (Lowth 1763, especially a3r, 15, 116-117, 160). Famously this grammarian stipulates that "Two Negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an Affirmative" (Lowth 139). In such rule-driven

grammar, Lowth was convinced that even "the best authors" might not be sufficient guides to "an accurate style" (Lowth a6r). But with reference to double negatives Lowth upholds Milton over Shakespeare, with a strong sense of change over time: negative concord Lowth views as a thing of the past, "a relique of the antient style abounding with the Negatives, which is now grown wholly obsolete" (Lowth 139-40, for the obsolete usage he quotes from Chaucer's description of Knight in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, as so many have since).

But the effects of Milton's litotes can prove more striking still because of the tension litotes generate between self-presentation and the sublime. To describe this phenomenologically: we experience in Milton's litotes some extra instability, as the complexity of the figure of speech asks us to keep Milton's voice – the author's presence – and his vision in mind at one and the same time, or "oscillation" as it has been termed (Teskey 338). When we at once look to the creator and to the creation, we experience an excitement characteristic of the Baroque. On one hand, we register the vividness of artistry in the work of representation; on the other, we respond to the vividness of what is represented. This double response to artistic virtuosity – as at once its own subject, but also as a tour de force in representation – is fundamental to the Baroque sublime.

II

The Miltonic expression "nothing loath" gained wide currency by the early nineteenth century and remained in lasting use. Indeed the phrase may still arise in some circles, if those likely now populated mostly by Miltonists or by speakers given to arch or archaizing literary language. Its more familiar counterpart, the phrase "not unwilling," has become much more common still. The success of this litotes seems no accident. The thickening assonance of "nothing loath" already recommends it. (However the phrase may have sounded in Milton's mouth, as I read it the voiceless dental fricative of "nothing" [the linguists' theta] here yields to the voiced dental fricative of "loath" [ð]. Milton may have been the more sensitive on this point owing to his tutor's preoccupation with the distinction

[Gill 9 and passim].) But it is the widening of the vowel from "nothing" to "loath" – from the closed vowel "uh" to the open vowel "oh" – that seems most to convey a sense of widening assent on Eve's part, here to Adam's sexual ardour after the Fall, in which she joins. Here Eve is more than "not unwilling". She is eagerly "nothing loath."

Litotes in this application proves of peculiar interest. First, Milton had used the negation of a negative comparably to describe paradisal sexual union already in the bower scene of Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*. Both Adam and Eve are there presented through negations of negatives that perform instead as positive for both: "nor turned I ween / Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites / Mysterious of connubial love refused" (*PL*, 4:741-3). In that innocent setting, the trope conveys Eve's attraction to Adam, though that "Yielded with coy submission, modest pride, / And sweet reluctant amorous delay" (*PL*, 4:310-311). Milton's extraordinary skill in presenting the mutuality of prelapsarian union appears in the litotes-like handling of paradisal sexuality that then follows. The very figure of speech used in describing her evokes what the poet has characterized as Eve's "sweet reluctant amorous delay" (*PL*, 4:311). Moreover the parallel shaping of "nor… nor" evokes the mutuality in their shared turning toward each other, even as the narration keeps some distance.

Litotes was known in the rhetorical handbooks for its reserve. Milton seems to have warmed to its usefulness in describing erotic union, with all the play that sexuality may entail between reserve and loss of all reserve. For when in Book 9 he turns to evoking the operation of lust in the newly fallen Adam and Eve, he repeats the trick. As Adam "gan Eve to dalliance move," bidding her "so well refreshed, now let us play", he encourages Eve by confessing himself inflamed "With ardour," with his excitement meant to excite hers (*PL*, 9:1016, 1027, 1032). His is not just a verbal performance of desire, since Adam litotically "forbore not glance or toy / Of amorous intent" (Milton is of course no friend to "toy" or "toys," which the Son of God so disdains in *Paradise Regained* , and which are here further trivialized by their connotation of "amorous sport," *PL*, 9:1034-1035; *PR*, 2:177, 223; 4:328; compare Milton's "Il Penseroso" lines 1 and 4, and "Masque" line 501; and Oxford

English Dictionary sv. toy, I.1). The litotes "forbore not" suggests Milton's half looking away from his hero's disgrace. The narrative voice proves very active in at once naming and distracting from an ardent Adam's actions.

That ardour is also Eve's, of course, with Adam's seduction "well understood / Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire" (*PL*, 9:1035-1036). This is where she is "nothing loath." Adam's impetuous agency is signalled through the series of active verbs. But he is pushing on an open door. Whether anyone has ever found it ambiguous I doubt, but the phrase "nothing loath," were it not then redundant, could syntactically still apply to him when "Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank, / Thick overhead with verdant roof embowered / He led her nothing loath…" (*PL*, 9:1037-1039). But the phrase only makes sense as an evocation of Eve's utter reciprocity in this scene of desire. "Led her nothing loath": the delightful reciprocation of their earlier union – in Book 8 also, Adam recalls how he first "followed her … obsequious majesty…. To the nuptial bower / I led her blushing" (*PL*, 8:508-511) – is alliteratively recalled. But after the Fall there is no delay or time taken to get back to the blissful bower; "any shady bank will do" (*PL*, ed. Fowler, 9:1038n; on Adam's seizing her hand, see also Dobranski 277-286, Teskey 477).

When Adam "Forebore not" and Eve is "nothing loath," Milton again uses the redoubled negation of negatives to describe a sexual scene. Why use litotes thus in *Paradise Lost*? For guidance, we can turn to a rhetorical handbook contemporary with *Paradise Lost*, John Smith's *The Mysterie of Rhetorique Unveil'd* (1665), which explains that "Litotes" may be further defined as "smalnesse, or extenuation" (citing its etymology as from the Greek word litos, for little or fine; but also present is Cicero's extenuatio [*De Oratore* 3:202]). In sum, litotes is "a figure when lesse is said then signified: hereby sometimes a word is put down with a sign of negation, when as much is signified as if we had spoken affirmatively; if not more, &c." (Smith a4r). The same handbook further specifies that litotes is used when "the oratour or speaker for modesties sake seems to extenuate that which he expresses" (60), with the author then repeating that "such like forms of speaking are used for modesties sake" (61). "Less is said than signified … for

modesties sake:" the handbook confirms our sense of what Milton undertakes in the litotes we have considered.

Moreover, we can distinguish further between Milton's applications of litotes to pre- and postlapsarian scenes of desire. In the first case (the bower scene), the value of litotes lies in its capacity to convey what we cannot know about the purity of prelapsarian relations – "that serene and blissfull condition [marriage] was in at the beginning," as Milton puts it in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (*CPW*, 2:240). The modesty of litotes here operates from below, as we may think of it. We are to fear how our sinful minds cannot help but diminish into erotic spectacle the better pleasures of the unfallen Adam and Eve. (Dryden's State of Innocence affords a ready example of such a libertine reduction of Milton's paradise [von Maltzahn 42-46].) This is modesty of one kind: a decent reluctance to impose our fallen vantage on the unfallen.

In the second case (the fallen sex of Adam and Eve that follows their crime), litotes may well operate from above. Milton censoriously stands in judgement on the fallen pair, rather as he will later with Michael's instruction of Adam in Books 11 and 12. So litotes now marks a refusal to be degraded with Adam and Eve as they consummate their lusts. This is modesty of another kind: a decent reluctance to enter too fully into the squalor of vice. In the former case of Book 4 the scene of desire fulfilled seems very much in the world of epic: we are asked to wonder at human intimacy in its perfect state, with the modesty of litotes helping to measure the space of that wonder at the comparison between Adam and Eve's fulfilment of human potentials and our more straitened existence. In the latter case of Book 9, we are moving from epic to romance, and even to satire. Now the modesty of litotes argues not our prurience but the capacity of a "fit audience though few" to distinguish between love and lust.

Milton's self-awareness on this point is suggested by his return to the litotes "nothing loath" late in Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, or rather to phrases that recall it and redeem it. These modulate the trope unerringly. The first of the two phrases comes at the climax of Michael's instruction of Adam, when Adam has avowed

his fuller understanding of the way to salvation, and professes himself "Taught this by his example whom I now / Acknowledge my redeemer ever blest" (*PL*, 12:572-3). Michael has already been given the litotic instruction to "Dismiss them not disconsolate" (11:113) and he now responds by encouraging Adam in all the Christian virtues, especially "love, / By name to come called Charity, the soul / Of all the rest" (12:584-5). The result, Michael assures Adam, is that "then wilt thou not be loath /To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess / A paradise within thee, happier far" (12:585-7). "… not be loath / To leave… :" here the modesty of litotes is pitched perfectly. For Michael now to claim more forthrightly that Adam will be happy to have left Paradise might be too insensitive to Adam and Eve's experience of loss, however now consoled by the promise of the Redeemer. Yet Michael's negation of the negative still amounts to affirmation. Such willing is what will be – "then wilt thou not be loath / To leave…" – and that consolation is theirs to inhabit ever more fully if they will.

For her part, Eve revisits the earlier "nothing loath" in a comparable litotes when now prepared to leave Paradise. Informed and consoled by the dreams God has supplied during her sleep in Adam and Michael's absence, she can at their bower greet the returning Adam with news of her own readiness to depart the Garden that had been so dear to her. "In me is no delay," she assures him, in what amounts to a negation of a negation disclosing instead her change of heart (PL, 12:615). No longer a lingerer, she will not hold back and she will not hold Adam back; she evinces a becoming lack of hesitation. The phrase arises within a compelling declaration of love, and this is now in the close a higher ardour again, one nearer the fullness of Eve's unfallen love as expressed in Book 4 (especially "My author and disposer … is sweet" [PL, 4:635-656]). The element of delay in litotes, however, gestures at the complexity of her "no delay;" indeed, it has been observed that "Milton uses it [litotes] strongly in XI-XII as a model of the balance between hope and despair that men must now live in" (Broadbent 140). The trope models some of the work that spiritual growth requires, however divinely assisted, even when the unworthiness of regret has been largely overcome. From the impetuous "nothing loath" to the redemptive "not be loath" and "no

delay," Milton's verbal subtlety here seems to draw on his long anxieties about preparedness, eagerness and patience. How sufficient, what appetite, whether hesitation: his lasting concerns about poetry and salvation animate the shrewd language he deploys to evoke assent on the parts also of Adam and Eve. The difficult questions of the will Milton's epic poses and aims to answer seem to find local expression in litotes, which often expresses psychological complexity.

That complexity in litotes can also draw on the dialectical thrust that often characterizes this rhetorical move in *Paradise Lost*, which consists with Milton's use of litotes in his other poetry and in prose controversy especially. It is obvious in the representation of prelapsarian sex in Book 4 of *Paradise Lost* that Milton feels embattled owing to religious traditions that degrade sexuality as instead a consequence of the Fall. That point contributes to the decorum of his venturing "nor turned I ween / Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites / Mysterious of connubial love refused" (*PL*, 4:741-3). This litotes in Book 4 has an argumentative aspect, as Milton here contests "Whatever hypocrites austerely talk / Of purity and place and innocence" (*PL*, 4:744-745). The dispute whether sexual intercourse antedated the Fall plainly informs the series of litotes we have had in view. Elsewhere in *Paradise Lost* we meet with a like use of litotes on contentious points. Take, for example, the surprising litotes we meet with after the first day of Creation in Book 7 of *Paradise Lost*: "Thus was the first day even and morn; / Nor passed uncelebrated, nor unsung / By the celestial choirs…" (*PL*, 7:252254). Why deploy litotes here? Again it emerges that Milton has an argument underway, now with those who would on pious grounds forbid music in religious celebration. The argument finds fuller expression at the end of the six days of Creation, where Milton more aggressively ventures that the first sabbath "was not in silence holy kept" but instead "the harp / Had work and rested not" with much more music of voice and of instrument besides, with the full angelic song then recorded by Milton. In case we miss the point, he concludes that passage late in Book 7 with direct insistence "So sung they, and the empyrean rung, / With alleluias: thus was Sabbath kept" (*PL*, 7:593, 633-34). The very presence of litotes can alert us to the argumentative disposition of what is being described.

Moreover, when Milton sees his very poetics as engaged in argument with others' offerings, he very often deploys litotes to promote his ethos and to justify his literary choices. Thus we meet with the trope in his Latin comment on publishing the testimonials to him that frame his *Poemata* (1645) – "negare non potest" (3), he cannot deny the honor of such tribute to him – or more conspicuously still in his bravura proliferation of litotes, used seven times, in what is no long preface to *Samson Agonistes* (1670/1). This is at once modesty and argument, at once extenuation and insistence. His poems, as well as his prose, are arguing all the while, both in what their narratives propose, and in their very poetics. Litotes will often signal the disputation animating Milton's imaginative achievements.

III

Milton's argumentative handling of litotes further emerges where related literary works afford three comparable instances of "nothing loath," a distinctive phrase that does not otherwise arise until Milton's influence makes it prevalent. One of them I would venture was Milton's source for the phrase, and two of them plainly derive from Milton's usage. The three take us away from epic into the world of romance, but do very different work in each case. The first may well be Milton's source for the phrase, if he needed one, because it is found in "our old Poet Gower" for whom Milton had some regard (*CPW*, 1:946-7). In *Confessio Amantis* Gower uses the phrase to convey Jason's attraction to Medea, drawing loosely on Ovid: "And sche, which was him nothing loth, / Welcomede him into that lond, / And softe tok him be the hond…" (Gower 5:3372). Milton, if he did have this source somewhere in mind, went a step further when instead applying it to Eve, where the "nothing loath" does still better work to evoke Eve's awakening to lust. His more heavily inflected use, where erotic irony combines with some condemnation, marks an advance on Gower's more modest understatement.

The other two authors plainly have Milton very much in mind. The first is Pope. In his translation of the *Odyssey*, Pope does what he does very often also in his *Iliad*, which is to use Miltonic phrasing as if to gesture at Milton's

having drawn so much on Homer in the first place, sometimes exactly applying Milton's adoptions of Homer to Pope's translation of the same passages. This is no small genius at work. In Pope's translation of the eighth book of The *Odyssey*, such Miltonisms come thick and fast. Milton's "nothing loath" Pope applies to Homer's evocation of divine sexual relations in the adulterous love of Mars (Ares) and Venus (Aphrodite, or the Cytherean) (Pope, Odyssey 8:337). Those are being sung by the blind bard Demodocus, something a stand-in for Milton, in the entertainments at the palace of the Phaeacians' king Alkinous. In deference to Odysseus's woe, the song has altered from the tale of Troy to that of Ares and Aphrodite fulfilling their lusts in Hephaistos's apparent absence, only to be trapped by him in his cunning net. So Ares (Mars) addresses the eager Aphrodite (Venus): "Come, my belov'd! and taste the soft delights; / Come, to repose the genial bed invites… / Then, nothing loth, the enamour'd fair he led, / And sunk transported on the conscious bed. / Down rush'd the toils, enwrapping as they lay / The careles lovers in their wanton play…" (Pope, *Odyssey* 8:333-40).

Pope is alert to moral concerns that had been raised about Demodocus's song of a divine adultery. He may have seen Adam and Eve's hasty postlapsarian intercourse as recalling the Homeric passage; in any case, Milton's phrasing there plainly gave Pope a means of reasserting some moral control amid the "ignorant, debauch'd Phaeacians" (Pope, *Odyssey* 8:headnote). For he was peculiarly impressed with this passage in *Paradise Lost*, as shows in Pope's translation of as well as his admiring comment on the fourteenth *Iliad*, where Zeus and Hera seduce each other: "That which seems in Homer an impious Fiction," Pope observes, "becomes a moral Lesson in Milton, since he makes that lascivious Rage of the Passions the immediate Effect of the Sin of our first Parents after the Fall" (Pope, *Iliad* 14:395n). In this first borrowing of Milton's "nothing loath," Pope retains a much fuller sense of its moral inflection than may be found in most later adoptions of the phrase.

The loss of moral inflection – or perhaps some recollection of it only in libertine fashion to discount it – shows in the next author, John Cleland, where the phrase arises in his *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (Fanny Hill). Cleland,

it has long been observed uses Milton's "nothing loth" to describe the sexual willingness of a woman who is participating in something like an academy of love, or perhaps just desire, in a "utopian community" (Cleland 151; Wilding; Shawcross 146-7; Erickson 88-89, 103). Cleland's quotation marks to set off the phrase further signal his use of the allusion as a literary sophistication of the scene; here Milton helps enhance what Peter Sabor has styled the "delicately periphrastic prose" of Fanny Hill. The episode evokes an Arcadian erotic retreat, to which all the female parties escape as refugees from a more violent world of sexual exploitation. Instead of the privations without, within the scene we meet with a fantasy of sexual fulfilment, amplified by an escape also from poverty into wealth. Cleland plainly picks up on the erotic potentials of the phrase "nothing loath," that sense of Eve's widening assent, that it is after the Fall not only the earth whose entrails tremble (*PL* 9:1000). In other contexts, the phrase "nothing loath" may offer a verbal performance of struggle (or tension) between modesty and adventure, fear and desire. In Cleland, the modesty or fear are soon forgotten, the struggle may be over before it has even begun. And this is not his only rewriting of Milton in Fanny Hill, where Eve's narcissism in Book IV of *Paradise Lost* and seduction by Satan in Book IX find adaptation for erotic ends.

After Cleland, the phrase "nothing loath" enters into libertine fiction in a number of works, whose titles may tell you as much as you need to know. Already in 1752, we meet with it in *The Adventures of a Valet* (1:232), then also in the later *Memoirs and Adventures of a Flea* (1:159). It appears in comparable evocations of seduction in *Liberal Opinions* (Pratt 4:261) as well as The Old Maid (Skinn 1:143), *The Life and Memoirs of the Late Miss Ann Catley* (Ambross 10), and the *Sternean Koran* (Griffith 6:32), and likewise in more sentimental works (*Fashionable Infidelity* 1:6; *MacNally* 84; *American Wanderer* 21). But Milton had anticipated, if in a more hostile spirit, how this rhetorical ornament serves to represent an awakening to lust. In libertine tradition, it makes more delicious the intersection of pudeur and desire. Milton had not soon been incorporated into that tradition, so the question remains how far his influence extends over the allusion in successive uses, or whether it becomes an erotic trope less shadowed by his example.

Other self-conscious uses of the phrase "nothing loath" proliferate in the anti-clerical, sexual, and especially political satire of the later eighteenth century. Milton presides here first of all but perhaps also Cleland too thereafter. With writers of the stature of the Miltonist Richard Baron (2:16), the deist John Jortin (4), and the radical poet Charles Churchill (2:120, 130), we know to parse their uses of the phrase as intelligently engaged with its Miltonic original. With other borrowers of the phrase, we can be less sure, as the phrase wanders from the realm of sentiment into the realm of satire, especially in the 1780s, more particularly by way of evoking a lust for peculation in high office. Sometimes the connection to Milton is more obvious (*The Beauties of Administration* 5; *Ode to Mr. Lewis Hendrie* 17); sometimes not (*The Bull-Finch* 86; *Festival of Humour* 26). The phrase often remains in quotation marks or italics even where the Miltonic recollection is weak (Sadler 1:169; Follies of Oxford 5), as if a piece of heightened diction capable of wide application not least to lesser themes, with some mockery implied. Nor is its recollection of Latin example wholly forgotten, as when a late eighteenth-century translator uses "nothing loath" to convey Horace's "nec ... spernit" ("nor scorn": *Odes* 1.1.19-21; *Wakefield* 49).

The fortunes of "nothing loath" prove a revealing example of how the high style finds its way into low uses. But the generic progression here, from epic to romance (novel) to satire is one that Milton seems already to have had in view in his deployment of the phrase to describe Eve's lust after the Fall in *Paradise Lost*, Book 9. Moreover, Milton's skilful management of litotes in his epic proves one of its most characteristic features. Litotes remains a signature of the arguments being conducted within his "great argument" (*PL*, 1:24). No previous English writer had made so much this trope. Milton's influence was such as assured its place in subsequent high style, or in derivations from it. His use of litotes is singularly supple and intelligent. By cunningly negating negations, Milton assists the work of imagination in affirmation, with that work fundamental to our reading of *Paradise Lost*.

Works Cited

Addison, Joseph. *Critical Essays from The Spectator*. Ed. Donald F. Bond. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970. Print.

The Adventures of a Valet. 2 vols. London, 1752.

Ambross, Miss (E). *The Life and Memoirs of the Late Miss Ann Catley, the Celebrated Actress*. London: 1789.

The American Wanderer, Through Various Parts of Europe. London:1783.

Baron, Richard. *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*. 2 vols. London, 1752.

The Beauties of Administration, A Poem. London, 1782.

Broadbent, John. *Paradise Lost, Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972. Print.

The Bull-Finch. Being a Choice Collection… London: [1750?].

Churchill, Charles. *Poetical Works*. 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1779.

Cicero. *De Oratore* [*On the Orator*]. Trans. E.W. Sutton and H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1942. Print.

Cleland, John. *Fanny Hill or Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*. Ed. Peter Wagner. London: Penguin, 1985. Print.

Darbishire, Helen, ed. *Early Lives of Milton*. London: Constable, 1932. Print.

Dobranski, Stephen. "Seizures, Free Will, and Hand-holding in *Paradise Lost*." *Milton, Rights and Liberties*. Ed. Christophe Tournu and Neil Forsyth. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007. 277-91. Print.

Eliot, T.S. *Selected Essays*. 3rd ed. London: Faber, 1951. Print.

---. *Milton: Two Studies*. London: Faber, 1968. Print.

Erickson, Robert A. "Cleland's Gospel of 'Extasy'." *New Contexts for EighteenthCentury Fiction*. Ed. Christopher D. Johnson. Lanham, MD: U of Delaware P, 2011. 87-108.

Pope, Alexander. *The Iliad*. Ed. Maynard Mack. 2 vols. London: Methuen, *Fashionable Infidelity, or the Triumph of Patience*. 3 vols. London: 1789.

The Festival of Humour; or, Banquet of Wit. London: 1800.

The Follies of Oxford: Or Cursory Sketches on a University Education. London: 1785.

Forman, Harry Buxton, ed. *The Complete Works of John Keats*. 2 vols. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1895.

Gildersleeve, Basil Lanneau. *A Latin Grammar*. New York: University Publishing Company, 1870.

Gill, Alexander. *Logonomia Anglica*. 2nd ed. London, 1621.

Gower, John. *Confessio Amantis*. Ed. Russell Peck. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1980. [Medieval Academy Reprint] Print.

[Griffith, Richard.] *The Koran: or, the Life, Character, and Sentiments, of Tria Juncta in Uno, M.N.A. or Master of No Arts*. In *The Works of Laurence Sterne*. 7 vols. London: 1783.

Horace. *The Odes and Epodes*. Trans. C.E. Bennett. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1914. Print.

Jortin, John. *An Hymn to Harmony*. London, 1729.

Kallel, Amel. *The Loss of Negative Concord in Standard English*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011. Print.

Leonard, John. *Faithful Labourers*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.

MacNally, Leonard. *Sentimental Excursions to Windsor and Other Places*. London, 1782.

Memoirs and Adventures of a Flea. 2 vols. London, 1785.

Milton, John. *Poemata*. London: 1645.

---. *Complete Prose Works* [*CPW*]. Gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe. 8 vols. New Haven: Yale UP, 1953-1982. Print.

---. *Complete Shorter Poems*. Ed. John Carey. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1997. Print.

Milton, John. *El Paraiso Perdido*. Trans. Anibale Galindo. Ghent, 1868.

---. *Paradise Lost* [*PL*]. Ed. Alastair Fowler. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1998. Print.

An Ode to Mr. Lewis Hendrie. London: 1783.

Orwell, George. *Collected Essays*. 4 vols. London: Secker & Warburg, 1968. Print.

1967. [Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, vols. VII-VIII] Print.

---. *The Odyssey*. Ed. Maynard Mack. 2 vols. London: Methuen, 1967. [Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, vols. IX-X] Print.

Pratt, Samuel Jackson [Courtney Melmoth]. *Liberal Opinions, or the History of Benignus*. 2nd ed. 4 vols. London, 1783.

Prendeville, James, ed. *Milton's Paradise Lost with Copious Notes*. London: 1840.

Ricks, Christopher. *Milton's Grand Style*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1963. Print.

Sabor, Peter. "John Cleland (*bap*. 1710, *d*. 1789)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

Sadler, Robert. *Wanley Penson; or, the Melancholy Man*. 3 vols. London: 1791.

Shawcross, John T. *The Development of Milton's Thought*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 2007. Print.

Skinn, Ann Melinda. *The Old Maid*. 3 vols. Dublin: 1771.

Smith, John. *The Mysterie of Rhetorique Unveil'd*. London, 1665.

Teskey, Gordon. *The Poetry of John Milton*. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 2015. Print.

von Maltzahn, Nicholas. "Dryden's Milton and the Theatre of Imagination." *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*. Ed. Paul Hammond and David Hopkins. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.

Wakefield, Gilbert. *Poetical Translations from the Ancients*. London:1795.

Wilding, Michael. "*Paradise Lost* and *Fanny Hill*." *Milton Quarterly* 6:2 (May 1972): 14-15.

Milton, Freedom, and Seventeenth-century Intellectual History[1]

Stephen M. Fallon

Love Virtue, she alone is free.
(*A Masque* 1018)[2]

All necessity must be removed from our freedom, nor even must that shadowy and external necessity based on immutability or prescience be admitted to the discussion.
(Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana* I.3) (OCW VIII.i: 61)

I formed them free, and free they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves.
(*Paradise Lost* 3.124-25)

1 This essay is based on an essay first published in *A Companion to Milton*, ed. Thomas N. Corns (London: Blackwell, 2016).

2 All of Milton's poetry is cited from the 2007 Modern Library Edition of The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton.

His widowe assures me that Mr. Hobbs was not one of his acquaintance: that her husband did not like him at all: but he would grant him to be a man of great parts, a learned man. Their interests & tenets did run counter to each other.

John Aubrey (*Darbishire* 7)

In responding to seventeenth-century intellectual currents, John Milton's great guiding principle, in religion, anthropology, politics, and natural philosophy, is freedom. First and foremost, he is a defender of the freedom of the will. The theodicy, or justification of God that comprises the argument of *Paradise Lost* depends on Milton's success in writing a narrative in which Adam and Eve (and we their descendants) are free, an extraordinarily high bar given the requirements of realist narrative, in which actions must be plausibly motivated. The challenge is that, the more clearly motivated the actions are, the less free they will seem. When Eve and Adam eat the fruit, we must be convinced that the choices are motivated, and thus believable, without being determined. In philosophical terms, the motivations must be sufficient but not necessary causes of their falls. Freedom is thus a theological imperative, connected I will suggest not only with an libertarian doctrine of salvation at odds with the Calvinist predestinarian thought dominant in Milton's time, but also with a view of the Son of God that most in the seventeenth century would consider not merely misguided but deeply and dangerously heretical. A concern with freedom lies also at the heart of Milton's philosophical speculation. His animist materialism provides a congenial home for free will, as Milton argues that life and freedom belong to matter rather than to incorporeal substance. His metaphysical model opposes Platonist and Cartesian dualisms and Hobbesian mechanist materialism, and it resembles strains of thought emerging in seventeenth-century medicine and alchemy. This interrelated complex of theological and natural philosophical or scientific ideas in Milton makes him, I will argue, an early adopter of a set of ideas characterizing Isaac Newton and his circle at the end of the century. And in Milton if not in the Newton circle the emphasis on freedom extends also to

political thought. The irksome authority of kings is a symptom of the fall, which can be overturned by individuals who are not self-enslaved by their passions. The theological and the political imperatives of freedom are linked, as is clear in Milton's republican book of 1649, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*: "No man who knows ought," Milton writes, "can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were borne free, being the image and resemblance of God himself" (*OCW* VI: 155). Freedom of the will, the free motion of matter, and the political liberty of upright individuals are closely interwoven in Milton's mind.

Theology and Freedom

As *Paradise Lost* begins, Milton asks for divine muse's assistance so that he "may assert eternal providence, / And justify the ways of God to men" (I. 25-26). The assertion of eternal providence is obligatory in religious works of Milton's time, but the assertion that he can and will justify God's ways is deeply provocative. Theodicy, or the defense of divine justice, was suspect from the Calvinist perspective dominant among early modern English Protestants. Calvinists held that the justice of God's actions is not subject to the scrutiny of limited human reason. Where, to paraphrase the Book of Job, was Milton when God laid the foundations of the earth? Can Milton draw out Leviathan with a hook (Job 38: 4, 41: 1)? Calvin, quoting Romans 9: 20 (O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?), sternly comments that "such depth underlies God's judgments that all men's minds would be swallowed up if they tried to penetrate it … Monstrous indeed is the madness of men, who desire thus to subject the immeasurable to the puny measure of their own reason" (Calvin III. xxiii. 4, 2:952). Milton *did* attempt to measure God's justice with human reason. Milton's attempt in *Paradise Lost* to understand and defend God's justice is a direct affront to Calvinist sensibilities.

The anti-Calvinist stance on theodicy is characteristic of Milton in two ways, which taken together are paradoxical. First, it minimizes a gap between

divine and human reason that most saw as nearly infinite. Milton's epic repeatedly collapses hierarchical distinctions and figurative distances, between heaven and earth, between angelic (and even divine) beings and human beings, and – more fitfully – between man and woman. Second, the stance foregrounds Milton's singularity, his assertive and unique self: "what in *me* is dark / Illumine;" "That … / *I* may assert" (my emphasis). Milton, as many have observed, assumes the mantle of prophet, a status shared with several figures in his epic – notably Abdiel, Enoch, Elijah – who stand out from the miscellaneous crowd. Milton the collapser of hierarchical distances confronts Milton the exceptional human being. The poet, in a paradox that also characterizes his career as a political theorist, is a leveler, an equalizer of hierarchies, who needs to think of himself as uncommon, as gifted and blessed above his peers, as separate from the "herd" or "rabble" (Fallon, *Peculiar Grace*).

Milton's theology of salvation also opposes Calvin's. Calvin taught, as did Augustine in some moods twelve centuries earlier, that God gratuitously and arbitrarily chooses to predestine fallen individuals either to salvation or to damnation. Calvinist predestinarian doctrine excludes the freedom central to Milton's thought. Calvin's God saves by an irresistible grace that is unmerited by those to whom it is granted. Only those elect individuals given such grace can be saved, and they are inevitably saved. Emphasizing divine omnipotence, Calvinists insisted that God alone determines who is saved, and that his choices are not guided or constrained by the choices of creatures. They defended the justice of this doctrine by pointing to the fact that all deserve damnation, and by the more sweeping voluntarist positions 1) that God's choices cannot and should not be measured against any prior or external standard of justice, because God's choices define justice, and 2) that God's choices cannot be caused or restricted by his creatures' choices. According to the *supralapsarian* branch of Calvinism, even the Fall itself is predestined and necessary; according to the other, *infralapsarian*, branch, Adam and Eve were free until they forfeited their (and their descendants') freedom by choosing to disobey.

Milton's defense of God counters the arbitrariness of the Calvinist model. Grace sufficient for salvation, Milton maintains, is offered to all, not merely to a predestined elect, and it is resistible. One's salvation or damnation depends on whether one freely accepts or rejects universally offered grace. Even fallen creatures are, with the help of grace, free to choose, to accept or to reject grace, to obey or disobey, and thus to stand or fall (see figure 1).

Calvin	Milton/Arminius
Total depravity	Total Depravity
Unconditional Election	Conditional Election
Limited Atonement	Unlimited Atonement
Irresistible grace	Resistible grace
Perseverance	Non-perseverance (i.e., freedom to backslide)

Figure 1

In *Paradise Lost* Milton grasps authority for his anti-Calvinist theodicy by placing it in the mouth of God in a pair of speeches early in Book III (lines 80–134, 168–216). The Father, declaring the importance of free will not "despoiled" by the kind of necessity implicit in Calvinist predestination (III. 109), says that "reason also is choice," echoing Milton's own words in the *Areopagitica* (1644): "when God gave [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing" (2:527). The Father, after announcing that Satan will succeed in tempting Adam and Eve, insists that the responsibility lies with the human couple, not with him:

so will fall,
He and his faithless progeny: whose fault?
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
All he could have; I made him just and right, Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all the ethereal powers
And spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;

> Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell. (III. 95-102) The Father goes on to claim that his foreknowledge of sin has no effect on creatures' freedom to obey or disobey:
>
> if I foreknew,
>
> Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault, Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
>
> . . . .
>
> I formed them free, and free they must remain,
> Till they enthrall themselves. (III. 117–25)

These lines refer to the fall of the angels, but, as the context makes clear, they refer by extension to the fall of the human race. The statement fits Milton's understanding of the human condition, both before the Fall and after the gift of prevenient grace to fallen human beings. Note especially the last lines, "free they must remain, / Till they enthrall themselves," an idea that will centrally inform Milton's politics, which I will address in this essay's final section.

Is the Father, as some have claimed, nervously defensive? One answer, proposed by Stanley Fish, is that the defensive tone is the fallen, fallible reader's projection onto God's dispassionate statement of fact (62). But Fish's ingenious argument, explicitly grounded on a Calvinist aesthetic, imports an inappropriate Calvinist perspective, according to which God's actions are essentially above defense and rational evaluation. A more appropriate context is the theology of James Arminius, who recognizes that, given the omnipotence of God and the presence of evil, it is crucial, if one is to establish God's justice, to acquit God of malicious manipulation of hapless creatures. Arminius attacks the Calvinist view of predestination, according to which God (1) ordains the fall of the human race and (2) chooses to deprive many, prior to any choices on their parts, of the grace without which they cannot avoid sin. Arminius writes that the Calvinist doctrine of predestination 'is injurious to the glory of God' and entails the conclusion that "God is the author of sin" (*Declaration of Sentiments* I: 228). Arminius' argument is congruent on every point with that of the mature Milton. Milton in *De Doctrina* rejects offhandedly the argument that God ordains the fall of the race: "And indeed all admit that man had the power not to fall"

(*OCW* VIII.i: 77), and, like Arminius, he draws the logical conclusion of God's culpability from Calvin's doctrine of absolute predestination:

> if God decreed absolutely that some should be reprobated— which we do not read in scripture—then, arising from the line of thought of those who lay down that reprobation as an absolute decree, he also decreed the means without which he cannot carry out that decree of his; but the means is sin alone. (*OCW* VIII.1:99-101)

The Calvinist, as I have suggested, would object not only to Milton's (or Arminius's) logic but also to the use of logic itself to test divine justice in the first place. Both Milton and Arminius insist that divine foreknowledge has no effect on human freedom. The Father's insistence in *Paradise Lost* that no hint of fate or foreknowledge causes the Fall echoes the Milton of *De Doctrina Christiana*, who insists that "all necessity must be removed from our freedom, nor even must that shadowy and external necessity based on immutability or prescience be admitted to the discussion" (*OCW* VIII.i: 61).

If Fish's argument, with its condemnation of anything but a passive acceptance of divine claims, does not allow for any significant questioning of divine justice, a reading by an influential scholar of the preceding generation, William Empson, is problematic for the opposite reason. In his book *Milton's God*, Empson argues that God is defensive because he is guilty. He manipulates his creatures shamelessly and then sadistically tortures them for the actions that he makes inevitable (115–16, 204–10). Fish does not allow for meaningful theodicy – God is simply assumed *a priori* to be just and above defense; Empson's view is no less closed to theodicy, for in his version Milton's God is evil, and thus indefensible.

In asserting the freedom of Adam and Eve, Milton's God resolutely denies the supralapsarian doctrine that he ordained the fall of humanity. In his next speech, he contradicts the Calvinist view of absolute predestination (i.e. predestination regardless of foreseen merit) after the Fall. For Milton, as for Arminius, individuals, though heirs to what he calls in Book IX the "mortal sin / Original" (1003–4), are not condemned arbitrarily, without reference to their own free choices. Milton, or Milton's God, carefully distinguishes between the

divine grace that alone can save sinners, and the individual's responsibility to choose to accept that freely offered grace:

> Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will,
> Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
> Freely vouchsafed; once more I will renew
> His lapsèd powers, though forfeit and enthralled
> By sin to foul exorbitant desires;
> Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
> On even ground against his mortal foe. (III. 173-79)

Through the Father, Milton endorses human freedom without making the Pelagian claim that fallen human beings can choose to believe and obey without divine help. The power behind faith is God's, but by virtue of universally offered, sufficient grace human beings are free, as they are not in the Calvinist model, to accept or reject belief and thus to be saved or not. The fine balance is evident in the formula "saved who will, / Yet not of will in him, but grace in me."

In Milton's epic both the unbridgeable gap between divine and created reason and the limitation of creaturely freedom characteristic of Calvinism are features of hell. The speeches of Satan and his followers are marked by incomprehension and contradiction, as they wander wide of the truth in their efforts to understand and improve their hopeless situation. The very environment of hell is compounded of confusion; the visual murkiness – "darkness visible" (I. 63) – signals an intellectual murkiness. Immense distance separates the devils from their former home: "As far removed from God and light of heaven / As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole" (I. 73–4). Intellectually they flail and flounder toward an infernal version of the Calvinist doctrine of absolute predestination, blaming God for their choices, and suggesting that the system was rigged. For the devils, God, like the Calvinist deity as viewed by Milton, is the author of sin, who set up a system leading inevitably to a fall. When Satan, in a lucid moment – which occurs, significantly, outside hell – accepts responsibility for his free rebellion (IV. 66–7), he quickly veers from this unpalatable recognition to the absurd motto "Evil be thou my good" (IV. 110).

The devils' predicament is painfully evident in the Council in Hell in the second book, where it becomes obvious that no solution is open to them. Mammon's and Belial's counsels are arguably the best available given the circumstances. If, as the Father announces in Book III, there is no chance of redemption, why not seek ways to find some semblance of good in hell (as Mammon urges) or to appease God and thus partially assuage his wrath (as Belial urges)? But for the fallen angels as for their leader, which way they fly, intellectually as well as morally and physically, is hell. After the Council, the fallen angels break up, some to pursue epic games, some to sing, some to the dismal task of exploring the infernal world, and some to puzzle out providence and divine justice:

> Others apart sat on a hill retired,
> In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
> Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
> Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
> And found no end, in wandering mazes lost. (II. 557-61)

In the chiastic or cross structure of lines 559–60—foreknowledge, will, fate: fate, will, foreknowledge—free will disappears into the tight knot it shares with fixed fate and absolute foreknowledge. Milton portrays the puniness of reason confronted with such questions as an infernal punishment. The immense distance that Calvin sees between divine and human reason is in *Paradise Lost* a function not of an inescapably fallen nature but of the obstinate ignorance of the devils.

Milton closes the gap between the divine and the human in another way. Freedom in Milton goes all the way up. Unlike rationalist contemporaries such as the Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Ralph Cudworth, who believed that God, whose will was obedient to his wisdom, had to create the world because creation is a good, Milton argues in *De Doctrina Christiana* he does not "concede any necessity in God to act, but only that he is necessarily God. Scripture itself witnesses that his decreeing, and likewise whatever action he takes, are absolutely free" (*OCW* VIII.i: 59). His God makes the same claim in *Paradise Lost*, when the Father asserts that his "goodness … is free / To act or not, necessity and chance / Approach not me, and what I will is fate" (VII.

171-73). The will of Milton's God is neither voluntarist, like Calvin's God's, or necessitated, as in the God of rationalist theologians (Fallon, "To Act or Not"). Instead, he has, like his rational creatures, significant freedom, if not to choose between good and evil, to choose among good actions.

The Son's freedom looks even more like ours. Milton's anti-trinitarian understanding of the relation of Father and Son follows precisely what his contemporaries feared and denounced as the Arian heresy: that the one and only true God, eternal and unbegotten, is the Father, who begets the Son in time and who delegates to the Son whatever divine powers he chooses. In *Paradise Lost*, the Son has two distinct roles. On the one hand, he is the one through, in, and by whom the ineffable Father appears, speaks, and acts. In this role, the Son is an expression of the Father, as the Father observes to him in Book III:

> Son who art alone
> My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
> All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
> As my eternal purpose hath decreed. (III. 169-72)

In his second role the Son is his own actor, with his own will not reducible to the Father's. Milton's rejection of the Trinity, and with it the idea that the Son shares the Father's essence (*OCW* VIII.1: 148-53), opens a gap between Father and Son, making possible the Son's possession of an independent will. One must acknowledge this independence to grasp the drama of the Son's volunteering to die in Book III. If the Son were merely the mouthpiece of the Father, if his first role were his only role, the otherwise heroic scene of his offering himself for humankind would be a mockery, a show without substance, something like Satan's stage-managing his own mock-heroic offer in Book 2 to brave the journey through Chaos. It is because the Son exercises his own will rather than simply expressing the Father's that the Father praises him as "By merit more than birthright Son of God" (III. 309). Milton's Son is significantly free.

At 264 lines (III. 80-343), the dialogue that culminates in the Son's offer to die for humankind dwarfs Michael's prophetic 11-line narration of the passion (XII. 411-21). Milton's reticence to elaborate on the Son's death on the cross recalls

the fact that his early poem on "The Passion" is unfinished. He is interested in the Son more as a model of obedience and heroic virtue than as sacrifice.

Commitment to freedom thus drives the theology of *Paradise Lost*. Free agents make choices that govern their fates. The Son volunteers freely, and therefore meritoriously, to redeem fallen humankind. The Father is credited with a freedom more significant than was granted by rationalist theologians and more answerable to standards of goodness than the God of voluntarist theologians. Milton strives mightily to convince readers that his Adam and Eve fell freely, in opposition to supralapsarian theologians, and his God argues that fallen human beings are granted freedom to accept or reject universally offered grace. Milton's devils freely choose to fall, but afterwards, significantly, refuse to acknowledge that freedom and seek to shift responsibility to God. And it is not only rational beings in Milton's universe who are free. Freedom extends from top to bottom, embracing even what we think of as inanimate nature. In the next section of the essay, I will propose that animate and free substance provides the metaphysical setting for the free will of rational creatures, just as Hobbesian mechanist determinism finds a home in a mechanical universe.

Natural Philosophy and Freedom

Paradise Lost is a Lucretian epic as well as a biblical epic. It aspires to emulate and surpass not only Homer's and Vergil's strife and journey epics, but also Lucretius' natural philosophical and atomist epic on the way things are, *De rerum naturae*. One reason clearly is his ambition to contain and surpass his classical and Christian epic predecessors. For another reason we can look again to his insistence on the freedom of the will. Milton in *Paradise Lost* advances an understanding of spirit and matter that can accommodate free will. The mid- and late seventeenth century witnessed vigorous debate about the nature of matter and spirit, with profound implications for belief in God, the soul, and free will. Milton's version of animist materialism, his belief that all is material and alive, is best understood in the context of this debate. A little more than a

century after the poem's composition as acute a critic as Samuel Johnson was puzzled by Milton's handling of matter and spirit:

> Another inconvenience of Milton's design is that it requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not show angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. (Johnson 1: 184)

Johnson complains of the poem's "confusion of spirit and matter" because he assumes that angels must be purely immaterial. The assumption and its consequence are embedded in Johnson's confident assertion that Milton "saw that immateriality supplied no images." One assumption leads to another: that Milton "invested" immaterial angels "with form and matter." Johnson's assumption that angels must be immaterial ignored the metaphysical debate that occupied Milton's contemporaries, pitting against each other Cartesian and Platonist dualists, mechanist materialists such as Hobbes, and vitalists such as Isaac Newton and William Harvey, whom I will discuss below. An anonymous letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in March 1738, while harsher, may have reflected more accurately than Johnson Milton's project; the writer accuses Milton of "corrupting our Notions of spiritual Things, and sensualizing our Ideas of Heaven" (Shawcross 101). In Milton's universe, everything is both material and alive: angels are not immaterial, and what we think of as inanimate matter is animate. As Raphael tells Adam and Eve, angels do not merely make a show of eating, as in the tradition (V. 433–43), but actually eat and digest. The difference between the angelic and human realms is not, as conventionally thought, an unbridgeable gap between the purely incorporeal and the corporeal. Instead, they are "Differing but in degree, of kind the same" (V. 490).

Milton's angels, then, are material not merely for narrative convenience, but because Milton believed they were material creatures. Johnson's orthodox assumptions regarding the immateriality of angels seemed less self-evident in Milton's time. Milton's materialism is an original contribution to a seventeenth-century debate, with profound implications for freedom of the will, and thus for ethics and religion.

The implications for ethics of the seventeenth-century debate over substance are clear in Thomas Hobbes, whose secular Calvinism was as unacceptable to Milton as his political opinions. Hobbes argued that whatever is, is bodily, and that all events, including mental events, are caused by physical motion. He finds the phrase "incorporeal substance" nonsensical and an "abuse of speech" (108, 113, 171). Physical motions in the brain produce (and in a real sense *are*) mental activity; thought is a corporeal "tumult of the mind" (119). Like other mental phenomena, choice is a corporeal motion in the brain determined by prior corporeal motions. To one who claimed that the will is free, Hobbes "should not say he were in an Errour; but that his words were without meaning, that is to say, Absurd" (113).

The illusion of freedom arises, in Hobbes' view, from our inability to trace the long and complex chain of causation, a chain that Hobbes at least nominally links to God:

> because every act of man's will and every desire and inclination proceedeth from some cause, and that from another cause in a continual chain (whose first link is in the hand of God the first of all causes), they proceed from *necessity*. So that to him that could see the connexion of those causes, the *necessity* of all men's voluntary actions would appear manifest. (137)

Hobbes's long chain is another version of the distance between divine and human perspectives that Milton counters in *Paradise Lost*. The omnipotent factor for Hobbes, despite the conventional piety of the passage here quoted, might be less the decisions of a personal God than an unbreakable chain of materialist and mechanist causation.

The revolutionary and regicide Milton would find little comfort in *Leviathan*, as its determinist argument prefaces and underwrites an argument for passive acceptance of sovereign power (a position diametrically opposed to Milton's). Hobbes's determinist argument, moreover, scandalized not only republicans, but also many who saw in it the death of morality (for if our wills are determined, can we be responsible for our choices?). One alternative was offered by René Descartes, who attempted to locate a home for free will in an incorporeal soul. For Descartes the visible, corporeal universe operates, as it does for Hobbes,

mechanically; but incorporeal substance, which included soul and mind, is freed from mechanism. Descartes famously grounded his argument for incorporeal substance in the indubitable experience of an "I" that thinks: "I think, therefore I am." Descartes assigns to that substance self-activity and freedom.

Descartes for a time was promoted by the Cambridge Platonists More and Cudworth, who shared Milton's antipathy to Hobbes (Henry More was a fellow of Christ's, Cambridge, Milton's college). Cudworth's massive attack on mechanism and his articulation of a dualism of active incorporeal substance and inert corporeal substance, the confidently titled *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), emphatically announces on the opening page its intention to defend freedom of the will and belief in God, which he perceived as under attack by the mechanist materialism of Hobbes, the unnamed antagonist haunting Cudworth's book. He writes,

> When I engag'd the Press, I intended onely a Discourse concerning *Liberty* and *Necessity*, or to speak out more plainly, *Against the Fatall Necessity* of all *Actions* and *Events*; which upon whatsoever *Grounds* or *Principles* maintain'd, will (as We Conceive) Serve The *Design of Atheism*, and Undermine *Christianity* and all *Religion*; as taking away all *Guilt* and *Blame*, *Punishments* and *Rewards*, and plainly rendring a *Day of Judgment*, Ridiculous. (Preface A3^{r})

More and Cudworth were initially drawn to Descartes as an advocate of free will, the incorporeal soul and the existence of an incorporeal God, but eventually they concluded that Descartes's dualism and incorporealism were sheep's clothing hiding a fundamental mechanism. They argued that, corporeal substance being essentially dead and inert, *nothing*, including what we think of as merely physical phenomena, could occur in the world without the activity of incorporeal substance. Their own defense of free will was tied to this argument that incorporeal substance lay behind every action in the world, and that apparently mechanical phenomena were traceable to the activity of a low-level, unconscious, but still incorporeal and active substance. Free will was for them the faculty of a high level, conscious incorporeal soul.

More's and Cudworth's arguments committed them to endless defenses of occult phenomena (including the activity of witches) as well as improbable demonstrations of the incorporeal causes of physical events. Their dualism, and thus their defense of free will, were vulnerable in the face of the growing prestige and explanatory power both of the mechanist natural philosophy, either of the Cartesian or Hobbesian stamp, and of the vitalist turn in medicine and chemistry, which looked for active but still material spirits as the cause of phenomena. In this context Milton's philosophical model begins to seem central and relevant to his time and thus to his epic. In the middle books of his epic, Milton, like Descartes and the Cambridge Platonists, advances an alternative to Hobbes's mechanist determinism. But Milton does not subscribe to Descartes's dualistic view of an incorporeal substance circumscribed in God and human souls or minds, nor does he follow the Cambridge Platonists' dualism with its pervasive incorporeal substance causing all events. At a time when the reality of incorporeal substance is under attack, Milton finds a home for freedom in a reconceived, animate and *corporeal* substance.

This conception, like his insistence on freedom of the will, has the effect of minimizing distances and closing formerly unbridgeable divides. Instead of an ontological gulf between body and incorporeal spirit, Milton imagines a continuum of matter, with tenuous matter at one end and gross matter at the other. Things that might seem immaterial—souls, angels—are in fact tenuously material. Our souls are different from our bodies not in kind, but only in degree. Our corporeal bodies and souls can move up or down the continuum depending on one's moral choices. As one chooses the good, one becomes *relatively* less corporeal; conversely, evil coarsens bodies. Raphael employs a plant metaphor to make this plan concrete for Adam:

> O Adam, one almighty is, from whom
> All things proceed, and up to him return,
> If not depraved from good, created all
> Such to perfection, one first matter all,
> Indued with various forms, various degrees
> Of substance, and in things that live, of life;

But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,
As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. (V. 469-79)

With their evocation of Neoplatonist emanation and return, these lines would sound reassuringly familiar to early modern ears. But what follows is audacious and speculative.

So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More airy, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual, give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding, whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive, or intuitive; discourse
Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours, Differing but in degree,
of kind the same. (V. 479-90)

The dynamic of ontological ascent is figured in the schematic portrait of the plant. As one moves from earthy root to stalk to leaves to flowers, one moves towards more delicate and less gross matter. The fruit of the plant becomes our food, whereupon the sublimation towards tenuous matter continues "by gradual scale" in the production of corporeal spirits. Milton modifies the familiar Galenic triadic hierarchy of spirits—the natural, the vital and the animal—by omitting the first and adding 'intellectual' spirits. What we might think of as a divide between the corporeal and the incorporeal vanishes, as these subtle but corporeal spirits "give … life and sense, / Fancy and understanding," from which the soul "receives" reason, and "reason is her being." We have travelled from plant to soul to thought without meeting an ontological gap.

Whatever Samuel Johnson may have assumed about the impossibility of material angels, Milton was not alone in the seventeenth century in rejecting the necessity of incorporeal substance for thinking and for initiating motion.

As Charles Taylor has observed, "The idea that the only two viable alternatives might be Hobbes or Descartes is espoused by many, and is a perfectly comprehensible thesis even to those who passionately reject it. They feel its power, and the need to refute it. Such was not the situation in the 1640s" (21). The middle and later decades of the seventeenth centuries were fertile in arguments, both medical and alchemical, for the life and self-activity of matter. The physicians William Harvey (celebrated for his discovery of the circulation of the blood) and Francis Glisson argued for the intrinsic life of matter. Harvey proposed the blood as the seat of life and activity, opposing both the dualism of Descartes and the mere mechanism of mechanical philosophers such as Hobbes. Glisson, the Regius Professor at Cambridge, offered in 1650s through 1670s a theory of living and energetic matter opposed to Cambridge Platonist claims for the necessity of incorporeal substance for both the presence of life and the initiation of motion (Thomson 2008, 67-72). The so-called "Christian virtuosi" Robert Boyle and Richard Hooke in turn attacked Cudworth and More for multiplying entities, for presuming without experimental demonstration that matter could not itself contain active and vital principles in the absence of incorporeal substance (Henry 355). The virtuosi noted that, given advances in experimental technology that were daily disclosing new truths, it was premature to assume that material active principles could not be observed.

The search for material principles of life and motion preoccupied alchemists in the seventeenth century. We need to distinguish between the charlatan alchemist of the popular imagination, who deluded the gullible (or deluded themselves) with the hope of turning dross into gold, and the alchemist as forerunner of the chemist, who investigated the composition of matter and the combinations and conditions accounting for reactions and permutations. Alchemists followed Francis Bacon's prescription in the *New Organon* I.3 that "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed" (68); they studied the inner constitution of things in order to grasp how to transform and control them. One such alchemist, surprisingly, was Isaac Newton, the founder of modern physics, who poured thousands of hours and

millions of words into his alchemical experiments and manuscripts. He became convinced that the principle of life was contained in matter rather than superadded by union with incorporeal substance. Though most famous for his mechanical laws of motion, Newton viewed those laws as "passive laws" telling only part of the story of the nature of things. He writes in his "Draft Queries on the *Optics*" (Q 23) that matter

> continues in its state of moving or resting unless disturbed. It receives motion proportional to the force impressing it. And resists as much as it is resisted. These are passive laws & to affirm that there are no other is to speak against experience. For we find in our selves a power of moving our bodies by our thought[.] Life & will are active Principles by which we move our bodies, & thence arise other laws of motion unknown to us. ("Queries" fol.619[r])

He adds on the same page "all matter duly formed is attended with signes of life' and on the next that 'We cannot say that all Nature is not alive." Turning to alchemical research to discover the "active principles" of matter, Newton hoped that he might unearth principles that account for the cohesion of things, for their internal development (which he called "vegetation"), and their dissolution or "putrefaction." He spoke of these active principles sometimes as laws and sometimes as tenuously corporeal spirits.

Like Milton, Newton opposed Descartes' separation of corporeal and incorporeal substance. Newton, in his 1684-85 manuscript *De gravitatione et aequipondio fluidorum,* explicitly grounds his opposition on his belief in God, and dismisses Cartesian dualism by way of a *reductio ad absurdum*: "If the distinction of substances between *thinking* and *extended* is legitimate and complete, God does not eminently contain extension within himself and therefore cannot create it; but God and extension will be two substances separately complete, absolute, and having the same significance" (143). The patently false conclusion that God cannot create extension (or extended things) means for Newton that the Descartes' distinction between thinking and extended substances is illegitimate. And for Newton as for Milton, the consequence of this monism is that thought arises in and from matter. He continues in *De gravitatione,*

> if extension is eminently contained in God, or the highest thinking being, certainly the idea of extension will be eminently contained within the idea of thinking, and hence the distinction between these ideas will not be so great but that both may fit the same created substance, that is, but that a body may think, and a thinking being extend [*hoc est corpora cogitare vel res cogitantes extendi*]. (143, 109)

Newton's picture of an animate universe is remarkably close to Milton's. In describing an animate universe in *Paradise Lost,* Milton's Raphael tells Adam and Eve,whatever was created, needs to be sustained and fed; of elements

> The grosser feeds the purer, earth the sea,
> Earth and the sea feed air, the air those fires
> Ethereal, and as lowest first the moon;
> Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
> Vapours not yet into her substance turned.
> Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale
> From her moist continent to higher orbs.
> The sun that light imparts to all, receives
> From all his alimental recompense
> In humid exhalations, and at even
> Sups with the ocean. (V. 414-26)

Paradise Lost is alive with the exhalations and sublimations of an animate earth (III. 585-610; V. 185, 642; VII. 255; X. 694; XI. 741). Newton for his part remarks in his manuscript on "Of Nature's Obvious Laws and Processes of Vegetation" that it is "very agreeable to natures proceedings to make a circulation of all things. Thus this Earth resembles a great animall or rather inanimate vegetable, draws in aethereall breath for its dayly refreshment & vitall ferment & transpires again with gross exhalations" (fol. 3^{v}). The earth transpires vapors that feed the sun, and the sun, as in *Paradise Lost,* breeds metals in the bowels of the earth. In a manuscript letter of Newton's read at a meeting of The Royal Society, Newton writes that a "subtil" fluid arises from the earth and ascends to the atmosphere, and "perhaps may the sun imbibe this spirit copiously, to conserve his shining." One "may also suppose," he adds, "that this spirit affords or carries with it thither the solary fewel and material principle of light" (*Hypothesis* 251). Set next to Newton's speculation, Milton's image of the sun supping with the ocean appears something more than a poetic fancy.

A belief in the life of matter is one of several interrelated beliefs shared by Milton and Newton. Neither believed that life and thought depend on the presence of a separable, incorporeal soul. Both, consequently were mortalists, holding that the material soul dies with and is resurrected with the body. Both were Arians. The Son for Newton was in part the apex of a complex of active principles or causes, a kind of chief alchemical agent. The Son for Milton was an exemplar of the virtuous use of the free will. In his vitalism, his mortalism, and his Arianism, Milton may have been an "early adopter" of a set of ideas characterizing Newton and his followers in the last decades of the century.

In their vision of animate matter, Milton and Newton had company, ranging from the medical vitalists Glisson and Harvey to two fascinating women philosophers, Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, and Anne Finch, Viscountess Conway. In her 1666 *Observations on Experimental Philosophy*, Cavendish ascribed forms of sentience and reason even to apparently inorganic nature: "I do not deny that a stone has reason, or doth partake of the rational soul of nature, as well as man doth, because it is part of the same matter man consists of.... [I]n all probability of truth, there is sense and reason in a mineral, as well as in an animal, and in a vegetable as well as in an element…" (221-23). In her *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy,* Conway asserts the unity of substance and the inter-convertibility of human beings, animals, plants, and stones. Every object is instinct with spirit. She writes that "stones change into metals and one metal into another. . . . [L]et no one say that these are only bare bodies and have no spirit" (34). As in Milton, all is animate; according to Conway, there is no "difference between body and spirit . . . , except that body is the grosser part and spirit the more subtle" (51).

Like Newton, Cavendish, and Conway in their different ways, Milton closes the gap from both sides: souls are material, and phenomena long thought inanimate are alive. This is obvious in Milton's proto-Newtonian picture of the living sun drinking the ocean. He employs a subtle interlace of what we normally think of as the material and the immaterial in his descriptions of Eden, which is

a great organism. He writes, for example, that “The birds their choir apply; airs, vernal airs, / Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune / The trembling leaves” (IV. 264–6). “Airs” are songs, and the birds’ songs animate the wind, the “vernal airs,” which in turn breathe the odors of an animate landscape. Milton’s Eden is an extraordinary place, not only for the arresting beauty of his descriptions (see, for example, IV. 236–63), but for the literal animation of the landscape. Hell, by contrast, is a land of death, less refined, spirituous and pure than any other location, its very grossness and lifelessness an ironic index of the moral significance of animate matter in Milton’s epic.

In repudiating the dualistic separation of soul and body, whether in the ancient Platonic and or the modern Cartesian sense, Milton draws together the animate and the inanimate, the incorporeal and the corporeal, heaven and earth. When Adam asks about the War in Heaven, Raphael explains that some accommodation of different realms, some “likening spiritual to corporal forms, / As may express them best’, will be necessary, but he quickly backtracks: ‘though what if earth / Be but the shadow of heav’n, and things therein / Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?” (V. 573–6).

Closing the distances between corporeal and incorporeal, earth and heaven, serves the same end as the narrowing of the gap between divine and human reason in the early books: Milton’s insistence on significant creaturely freedom and moral autonomy. If Hobbes reduces thought to a mechanical phenomenon, Milton gives to what we usually consider “inanimate” matter attributes we normally associate with mind, will or soul. Belial advises against continued armed opposition to God, because “the ethereal mould [the stuff of heaven] / Incapable of stain would soon expel / Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire / Victorious’ (II. 139–42). After the devils fall from heaven, ‘heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired / Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled” (VI. 878–9). The fallen Adam and Eve must leave Eden, for “Those pure immortal elements that know / No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul, / Eject him tainted now” (XI. 50-52). The reactions of the matter of heaven and earth are moral and metaphysical simultaneously; in this they mirror the choices of the

poem's rational creatures. Moral choices in *Paradise Lost* have implications for one's place along the continuum of the one first matter.

Politics and Freedom

The free, living matter of Milton's poetic universe fits his republican political views just as Hobbes' mechanist, determinist universe underwrites his argument for passive acceptance of sovereign power. Hobbes moves seamlessly from metaphysics and anthropology to politics (Fallon, *Philosophers* 30-41). All that exists is matter in motion, with each motion (including mental motions, which, Hobbes insists, are literal rather than metaphorical) entirely caused by preceding motions. We will what we will with the same necessity and certainty that a billiard ball moves in a certain direction with a certain pace when struck with particular speed and from a particular angle by another billiard ball. In *Leviathan*, as I noted above, Hobbes dismisses the term 'free will,' so vitally important to Milton, as an example of "absurd" or "senseless speech," and he argues for the compatibility of liberty and necessity, with the only real liberty the liberty of a undammed river to flow between its banks, that is to say things are free only to the extent that they are not hindered by external obstacle. As the unit of matter in relation to the larger complex of matter in motion, so the individual is (or more precisely should be) in relation to the sovereign power in the Hobbesian state, which is founded on its subjects mutually contracting with each other to hand over natural rights to the sovereign in return for protection from each other and from external enemies. Hobbes implies that if individuals understand that they hold their opinions by necessity rather than freely, they will have less motivation and less justification to disrupt the political order to champion those opinions. Hobbes argues that the sovereign defines good an evil, and that the idea that not the sovereign but "every private man is Judge of Good and Evill actions" is a "disease of a Common-wealth" (365). The passivity of the sovereign's subject is the political analogue to the philosophical position that matter is moved not by itself but by mechanical forces.

These views are abhorrent to Milton, who values the active, free citizen. In his twenty-ninth chapter, Hobbes numbers among the causes of illicit rebellion and civil war the reading, fostered by the schools and universities, of the histories and political writings of ancient Greek and Roman republicans. Classical republican thought is one of the springs of Milton's own anti-Hobbesian republicanism. Milton admires Cicero, and he quotes Aristotle for support in his main political books, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) and *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660) (*OCW* VI: 157, 507). From Aristotle he takes his definition of "tyrant" as one who rules for his own good and not that of the people as well as his argument that subjects are not required to obey tyrants. In *Eikonoklastes* (1649) he draws on Solon, Lycurgus, and the Roman Senate to support the argument that bringing tyrants to justice is lawful. These are the kinds of dangerous arguments that Hobbes, who believed that it is the sovereign and not the subjects who decide what is good and what evil, castigated the schools for perpetuating.

Milton's belief in the importance of the active, free citizen ultimately led him to oppose not only tyranny but monarchy itself. If in the 1649 *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* Milton draws on the argument of Aristotle that a people is justified in deposing and punishing a tyrant, by 1660 Milton's opposition to monarchy in principle is unambiguous in *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*:

> Certainly then that people must needs be madd or strangely infatuated, that build the chief hope of thir common happiness or safetie on a single person: who if he happen to be good, can do no more then another man, if to be bad, hath in his hands to do more evil without check, then millions of other men. (*OCW* VI: 489)

But even in the *Tenure*, eleven years earlier, we find an argument potentially more threatening to monarchs than that for the right to right to depose tyrants. A people, Milton writes, may "as oft as they shall judge it for the best, either choose him [King or Magistrate] or reject him, retaine him or depose him though no Tyrant, meerly by the liberty and right of free born Men, to be govern'd as seems to them best" (*OCW* VI: 159). Milton, as Quentin Skinner has argued, was

influenced by the neo-Roman conception of liberty—derived from Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus—according to which being subject to the will of another, whether or not that will is oppressive, makes one a slave (Skinner 2002). For Milton, it is not the act of interference that spells the end or limit of liberty, as it does for Hobbes, who sees nothing lamentable in that act of interference, but the mere fact that a monarch may claim the prerogative to interfere. When the majority of the English desired a return to monarchy after the execution of Charles I, Milton castigates them for their preference for slavery over freedom.

In a combination of ideas difficult to grasp from our 21-st century political perspectives, Milton's vision of a free republic has a strong theocratic cast. If for political inspiration Milton looked back to classical antiquity for models of republican virtue and non-monarchic government, he also looked forward in the 1640s to the millennium, the Second Coming of Christ. In *Of Reformation* (1641) he writes eagerly of the soon-to-arrive time "when thou the Eternall and shortly-expected King shalt open the Clouds to judge the several Kingdomes of the World, and … shalt put an end to all Earthly *Tyrannies*" (*CPW* I: 616). In the heady days of the Civil War and early Interregnum he saw England as preparing the way for the Second Coming by establishing the rule of the godly. If the struggles and the failure of the Commonwealth and Protectorate disappointed his hopes for the early arrival of the Second Coming, Milton did not relinquish his hope for godly rule. He proposes in *The Ready and Easy Way* an elaborate and entirely impractical electoral process designed to end in government by the choicest spirits.

In his poetry and prose, Milton labored for the reversal of the process by which human beings have become subject to tyrants, a process that the angel Michael elaborates to Adam early in the final book of *Paradise Lost*:

> Since thy original lapse, true liberty
> Is lost, which always with right reason dwells Twinned,
> and from her hath no dividual being:
> Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,
> Immediately inordinate desires
> And upstart passions catch the government
> From reason, and to servitude reduce
> Man till then free. Therefore since he permits

Within himself unworthy powers to reign
Over free reason, God in judgment just
Subjects him from without to violent lords. (XII. 84-93)

Those who cannot rule themselves deserve to be ruled by tyrants, Milton argues along with Raphael. Significantly for the connection between Milton's metaphysics and politics, Milton three books earlier, just after the Fall of Adam and Eve in Book 9, speaks of unruled passions as internal winds:

high winds worse within
Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent:
For understanding ruled not, and the will
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sov'reign reason claimed
Superior sway. (IX. 1122-31)

In the case of one who believes, as did Milton, that the body and soul are not divisible and separate substances, corporeal and incorporeal, but that the soul is both tenuously corporeal and inseparable from the body, we do not need to think of these internal "high winds" as merely figurative. In Milton's monist world, the border between literal and figurative is permeable.

Political liberty for Milton depends on internal calm and internal liberty, which involves self-mastery, the freedom of one who has mastered himself or herself. In each of his three last great masterpieces, Milton returns to the argument that internal calm and self-mastery are conditions of political liberty. The final books of *Paradise Lost* chronicle the happy and woeful political effects of selfmastery and enslavement to the passions. Samson in *Samson Agonistes* gives voice to this idea when he blames himself, saying, "Servile mind / Rewarded well with servile punishment" (412-13), and he blames his fellow Israelites for bringing about their own oppression by the Philistines:

They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom now they serve;

> But what more oft in nations grown corrupt,
> And by their vices brought to servitude,
> Than to love bondage more than liberty,
> Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty. (*SA* 266-71)

The Son of God in *Paradise Regained* voices the happy alternative, when he claims that the virtuous person is the true king.

> he who reigns within himself, and rules
> Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king; Which every wise and virtuous man attains: And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
> Cities of men or head-strong multitudes,
> Subject himself to anarchy within,
> Or lawless passions in him which he serves. (*PR* 2.466-72)

Milton never shed his indignation that a less virtuous monarch should be able to compel the obedience and actions of a more virtuous subject. Given Michael's (and Milton's) logic, the answer to political oppression is the cultivation of virtue and, ultimately, Christian liberty, which for Milton as for the Christian tradition meant the achievement of a state of mind in which one freely wills the good (as defined by God, not by the sovereign, as Hobbes asserted). For Milton as for the Christian tradition writ large, freedom of the will allows us to choose ourselves between good and evil, and ultimately the truly free will is possessed by the one who, having been freed of the bondage of the will to sin, freely chooses the good. A nation with enough such citizens deserves and will skillfully handle political freedom.

The free political subject must first be free within. This brings us back to the metaphysical foundations of freedom, the area where Milton's opposition to Hobbes is the most pronounced. Milton's living matter, as we saw in the preceding section, is the antithesis of Hobbes' mechanist matter. As Hobbes' determinism is yoked with political absolutism, so vitalist thought in the seventeenth century was, with some notable exceptions, linked to republican thought (Rogers). Self-active matter provided an analogue to the freedom of the active political subject. While they differ in their assumptions and conclusions, Hobbes on the one hand and Milton and Overton on the other are convinced that principles of government are written into the nature of things.

What of Milton's intellectual afterlife? While generations of readers have minutely traced Milton's presence in the English and American literary traditions, there is still work to be done on his intellectual legacy. I have addressed in this essay resonances between the structure of Milton's thought and the ideas of Isaac Newton and his followers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. And it has been demonstrated that the Founding Fathers of the United States knew and were influenced by Milton's works. Most recently, a persuasive argument has been mounted that Milton was a crucial influence on and catalyst of the thought of Immanuel Kant on aesthetics and freedom (Budick 2010). Milton possessed an original and fertile mind, and the supreme achievement of his poetry has gained his ideas influence in the centuries since his death. Ultimately, his defense of freedom and its inescapable relation to the life of things may be his most enduring intellectual legacy.

Works Cited

Arminius, James. *The Writings of James Arminius*. Tr. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall. 3 vols. 1853; rpt. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1956. Print.

Bacon, Sir Francis. *New Organon*. 1620. *The Works of Francis Bacon*. Ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath. Vol. 8. New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1864. Print.

Bible, King James Version. Oxford: The Bible Societies, n.d. Print Budick, Sanford. *Kant and Milton*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010. Print.

Calvin, Jean. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 1556. Ed. John T. McNeill and Tr. Ford Lewis Battles. 2 vols. Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960. Print.

Cavendish, Margaret. *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*. 1666. Ed. Eileen O'Neill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Print.

Conway, Anne. *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. 1692. Tr. and ed. Allison P. Coudert and Taylor Corse. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Print.

Cudworth, Ralph. 1964. *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*. 1678. Facs. rpt. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1964. Print.

Darbishire, Helen. *The Early Lives of Milton*. London: Constable and Co., 1932. Print.

Empson, William. *Milton's God*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1965. Print.

Fallon, Stephen M. *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991. Print.

---. *Milton's Peculiar Grace: Self-representation and Authority*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007. Print.

---. "'To Act or Not': Milton and His Contemporaries on Divine Freedom." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1988): 425-49. Print.

Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost.* 2nd Edition. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997. Print.

Henry, John. "Occult Qualities and the Experimental Philosophy: Active Principles in Pre-Newtonian Matter Theory." *History of Science* 24 (1986): 334-81. Print.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan.* 1651. Ed. C. B. Macpherson. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986. Print.

Johnson, Samuel. *Lives of the English Poets.* 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1905. Print.

Milton, John. *Areopagitica.* 1644. In *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton.* 2:485-570. Print.

---. *Christian Doctrine* (*De Doctrina Christiana*). Ed John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington. Vol. 8. *The Complete Works of John Milton*. Print.

---. *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*. Ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon. New York: Modern Library, 2007. Print.

---. *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. 8 vols. Ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82. Print.

---. *The Complete Works of John Milton.* Ed. Thomas N. Corns, Gordon Campbell, et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008- . Print.

Milton, John. *Of Reformation*. 1641. In *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. 1:517-617. Print.

---. *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*. 1660. Ed N. H. Keeble and Nicholas McDowell. *The Complete Works of John Milton*. 6:476-523. Print.

---. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. 1649. Ed N. H. Keeble and Nicholas McDowell. *The Complete Works of John Milton*. 6:151-185. Print.

Newton, Isaac (1757) "An Hypothesis explaining the Properties of Light." 1675. *The History of the Royal Society*. Ed. Thomas Birch. Vol 3. London, 1757. Print.

---. *De gravitatione et aequipondio fluidorum*. 1684-85. *Unpublished Scientific Papers of Isaac Newton*. Ed. A. R. Hall and M.B. Hall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962. 89-156. Print.

---. "Of natures obvious laws and processes of vegetation." C. 1672. *The Chymistry of Isaac Newton, Indiana University*. Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, Dibner Collection MS. 1031B. Web (http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/newton/mss/norm/ ALCH00081). 9 December 2015.

---. "Queries to the *Optics* (draft version). C. 1705. *The Newton Project, University of Sussex*. Cambridge University Library manuscript 3970.3. Web (http:// www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk/view/texts/normalized/NATP00055). 9 December 2015.

Rogers, John. *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry and Politics in the Age of Milton*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. Print.

Shawcross, John T., ed. *John Milton: The Critical Heritage, Volume 2: 1732-1801*. 1972, rpt. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Skinner, Quentin. "John Milton and the Politics of Slavery." *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*. Ed. G. Parry and J. Raymond. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002. 1-22. Print.

Taylor, Charles. "Philosophy and Its History." *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*. Ed. R. Rorty. J. B. Schneewind, and Q. Skinner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. 17-30. Print.

Thomson, Ann. *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.

Young Milton

[A lecture given at UFMG on Monday 17 August 2015 by John K. Hale]

In the Faithorne portrait which is the frontispiece to his *History of Britain* (1670), the older Milton looks self-assured. Indeed he was! He had a view about everything, and published it without fear of the consequences. Still, as they say, he "*was* young once." The younger Milton was less sure, and not always sure. How did the one become the other? What was it like, to be Milton when young? What was this "self" he became assured of, and how—by what steps— did he become sure of it?

I explain it from four aspects of his growing up. The first two are not given enough prominence in the prevailing accounts, though the second two are self-evidently central. (1) Learning languages, to read and write, and speak them. (2) His university education, which comprised the "Exercises" in scholastic disputation. These required everyone to think, then speak, from opposed standpoints. (3) Milton's unique sense of poetic vocation: always to be a poet, the epic poet who might compose an epic for England like Ariosto for Italy. But this evident vocation meant also (4) to proclaim true religion (as he saw the matter), and likewise to be heard on public, controversial topics.

On (1) he achieved early mastery, with success and acclaim coming easily. On (2) he achieved a similar recognition within his own college, Christ's College, Cambridge. But the recognition was complicated by his own disdain for set Exercises, and misgivings about the career paths to which they led, in the English church and in the law. See (4) in a moment. (3) As a poet, in which language

and for what audiences should he devote his best effort? And (4) could he, and should he, go where his education would naturally have led, into the priesthood of the English national church; the church state, by which King Henry VIII had solved the old problem of church-state relations by merging the two under his own command. Milton disliked bishops, as a mere arm of a repulsive government. He despised the ecclesiastic careerists of his own age, as "hirelings."

In this lecture, then, we travel the four trajectories, to end with the poem where he achieves maturity: *Lycidas*, 1637, age 28.

One: Milton's Languages, to 1640

In two portraits, we see Milton as a boy of 10 and a young man of 18. The boy would have begun Latin by age 10. The portrait is mentioned here simply to indicate his family's affluence: they could afford to commission a portrait, and dress the wee lad in rich fine clothes. Not that this betokens noble birth, but that he is also being educated well, in languages and Protestant religion. The family tradition was rather eagerly Protestant, because Milton's father—John Milton senior—had been disowned by his father (yet another John Milton) when he refused to follow that grandfather back to the Roman religion. Milton *père* was a self-made man, a scrivener and realtor, and an accomplished musician, both performing and composing. He gave the boy John these gifts along with the opportunity to learn languages.[3]

Later on, about 1635, Milton wrote a poem—in Latin—where he gratefully records this great gift of languages from his father. *Ad Patrem*, "To his Father," not only lists them, as Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and classical Hebrew, but expresses some of their glories. Some were the ordinary *pabulum* of a school like St Paul's nearby his home in London. Others, like the Italian and Hebrew,

---

3 The family's religious history is told in all the biographies. An authoritative recent one is by Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton. Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

were “added after persuasion” by Milton senior. Maybe junior needed little persuasion, but the wording invites inspection now. Latin was everywhere in Milton’s London, and the wider world of Europe. It was the medium of instruction and culture, expression and careers. Greek less so: Milton dwells on its even greater expressiveness (the “grand words” of the “magniloquent” Greeks). French then receives one line, Italian two, surely reflecting his sense of greater debt to Italian. The further addition of Hebrew reminds us that tutoring in that language came from a named and notable neighbor, Thomas Young, once the parish minister of the Milton family. Thus was the Old Testament laid open in its original tongue to Milton. Young and his mentoring remained important to Milton, throughout his student years.[4]

So “Young Milton” excelled in languages, at least six of them: first of all English, his mother tongue; then Latin and Greek; then the two modern languages; finally, a third classical language, biblical Hebrew. All this meant access, then learned accomplishment and cultural voluntaries, especially in composing verse. Young Milton wrote verse in four of his languages: English, Latin, Greek, and Italian. What was it like to be him when young? A big first answer is to be found by probing why anyone learns languages; and more than that, in probing why Milton chose to versify so freely in other tongues than English. What did he find in it? What did it give to him?[5]

Writing and especially speaking in another language extends the self, in three main ways: the intrinsic pleasure of plunging in, a pleasure given as well as

---

4 See for example Campbell and Corns, 17 and 23. Young is the recipient of Milton’s first printed letter, and two more letters. The most notable is the verse-letter *Elegia IV*. I discuss them all in “Young Milton in His Letters,” *A Concise Companion to the Study of Manuscripts, Printed Books, and the Production of Early Modern Texts*, ed. Edward Jones. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015, 66-86, cited henceforward as *Jones*.

5 In much of this section, I am drawing on Part One of my book on this subject, John K. Hale, Milton’s Languages. The Impact of Multilingualism on Style (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), henceforth cited as Hale, Milton’s Languages.

found; the impact sought from hearers; and the new expressive power of saying your mind in another tongue. I give some personal examples, before theorizing.

Before coming to Brazil, I had small Spanish and no Portuguese. In situations where two speakers have no language in common, what they do share is nerves and frustration. Then, behold, I learn to say thank you in Portuguese: *obrigado*, and my wife learns to say *obrigada*. Everyone laughs at these elementary ventures, from relief of course, but also because human contact has been enhanced. Great pleasure, in fact. Another personal story. When I first visited Europe with my parents in 1955, we were baffled by the bus system in southern, Italian-speaking Switzerland. Narrow streets, many kinds of bus, and no sense of their direction: how would we get onto the *right* tram? I screwed up my courage, and flogged my memory, to ask of the lady standing with us at the bus stop: *Di quale direzzione viene l'autobus per Domodossola?* "From what direction does the bus for Domodossola come?" This pompous question got the answer. She pointed, to make sure. And we all laughed at the herculean effort. But I still remember the episode: I had found that language worked, it worked for me. I assume Milton found this same joy, in the social efficacy and inward satisfaction of wielding a language for a purpose. This primal impulse is part of being human. Hence the raptures at a baby's first word. We are defined as talking animals.

As for Impression and Expression, the two sides of developed language use, whether spoken and written, I use these terms derived from the sociologist Erving Goffman,[6] to mean respectively the effect designed upon hearers or readers, call it "audience"; and the utterance of a self, including emotion. In his languages he is doing both things. It is the proportioning which varies. Both effects are increased when he composes in verse, be it English or Latin, Greek or Italian. Impression is sought by any exchanging or publishing. But Expression is felt more in verse than in prose, because in embarking on a second or successive

6 See Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1959). Goffman's idea is applied to Milton in *Milton's Languages*, 19-26. See also John K. Hale, "Milton's Self-Presentation in Poems, 1645," Milton Quarterly 25 (1991): 37-48.

language, Milton is making a choice, which must diversify and therefore enlarge the self itself. To put it another way, composing in another language enlarge your social being. You have more scope to persuade, to display, and play. You exaggerate in order to explore. You enjoy the reciprocity of the two mental acts. You re-imagine your voice, and your self.

Two examples will show how inventively Milton does this, and how he relishes seizing his opportunities.

In the poem to his father, where the thanks his father for encouraging him to undertake new languages, and enabling this by paying for the lessons, Milton is doing what he describes; demonstrating to his father, and then to readers of his collected poems, how he has absorbed of the language teaching. He wields a grave Latin, in a verse-form having maximum gravity: not the tinkling elegiac couplet of Ovidian erotic (though he has a go at that elsewhere), but in the hexameter verse-form of Lucretius, or the philosophic Ovid, or above all Virgil. Hexameter is the verse of *gravitas*—in this case, of solemn gratitude. Never doubt the gravity, since whereas this passage is happy and playful, other passages thank his father in a more heartfelt way, for not forcing Milton into an unwelcome profession, like law.[7] A negative debt, but a very real threat to Milton's sense of his true vocation. (I return to this in Part Four.)[8]

More engagingly, when he writes love sonnets, they are in Italian. The language-choice has several aspects to it. Italian epitomizes sonnetry, since it was Italians writing in Italian, especially Petrarch, who first matched sonnet form with love as subject. Milton emulated Italian exemplars (not French or even English ones) in most of his poetic genres: *Lycidas*, climaxing his youth, for

---

7 The lines about the raucous lawyers show active *distaste*.

8 After thanking his father for not forcing him into moneymaking, he says: "You do not drive me into the law, and our country's ill-guarded statutes; you do not condemn my ears to that ridiculous clamour" (*Nec rapis ad leges, male custoditaque gentis/ Iura, nec insulsis damnas clamoribus aures*). Lines 71-72 of *Ad Patrem* ("To His Father"), quoted from *John Milton: The Complete Poems* ed. John Leonard (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1999) 577 and 574 (henceforth cited as "Leonard").

one. The point of view or sense of address involves Italian as entry to personal relationships, since ingeniously one of the sonnets talks *to* his closest friend *about* the lady.[9] The friend is Charles Diodati, whose very name epitomizes his double kindred, Italians exiled for religion. The lady, whether or not she is fictional like many sonnet ladies, has a name and provenance: she is Emilia.[10] What clinches the multilingual playfulness is that Milton praises her, not only for conventional beauty (for instead he proposes a "new idea of loveliness," the bright blackness of her eyes and their lashes). Beyond physical beauty, her graces include her power as a multilingual (matching his own): *parole adorne di lingua più d'una*, "speech that is graced by more than one language."[11] By this witty play, his languages enrich his venture into love.

They lend it particularity and enhance its conviction. Most of all, in the present context, they extend the range of the displayed self, young Milton as a new sort of ardent lover.

Two: The University Exercises

Murray Webb's caricature shows the world of the student Milton, and of students anywhere: he is seen as a would-be Roman, orating in a Gothic surrounding. He inhabits the world of the university "Exercises." Not that the participants wore actual togas and sandals, nor do I know if (for example) Milton's knees were knobbly. But this exercising is what they did, day in and day out. Milton studied and preformed them at Cambridge for eight years, 1625-32. Academics might continue doing these same exercises lifelong. Yet

---

9 See Hale, *Milton's Languages*, 46-49 and 53-55.

10 Explained in the oblique manner of sonnetry by saying her name "honours the grassy Reno valley" (*onora/ L'erbosa val di Reno*). The Reno runs through Emilia, its capital being Bologna. See Sonnet II at Leonard 31 with the note at 642 n. 1.

11 Sonnet IV, 10, Leonard 33-34.

they are little known nowadays. What exactly were they, and how many kinds of exercise did Milton undertake?

Let us begin with the word, *exercises*; in Latin *exercitationes*. The Romans' army was their *exercitus*, the body of those who had "practiced" (*exercere*) war skills, in readiness for the real thing. The university exercises had the same purpose, transferred from swords to words. Practice-combats prepared students to be lawyers, diplomats, theologians, and the other professions which required them to persuade, advocate, refute or defend; in other words, to present some case. By doing it in these stylized university forms, they could do the same speechacts in the real or public arena.

The main set forms consisted of declamations, disputations (and their parodic misapplications) — *declamationes*; *disputationes*; and mixed forms which exploit the first two, like University *praevaricationes*, or college "saltings" (*saltationes*).[12]

Declamations followed the norms of a classical *oratio*, arguing some artificial proposition like "Day is Better than Night," or "Learning is Better than Ignorance" (subjects of Milton's published *Prolusions* I and VII respectively).[13] They set out to be eloquent and ample. Milton seems to have enjoyed doing them, only more so when he could choose a congenial topic. Thus he is not very engrossing when arguing that Day is better than Night (Prolusion I), but very much so when arguing that Learning is better than Ignorance (in VII). He enthuses about almost all of the disciplines of a modern university. Many of them, like the experimental or social sciences, were not taught in his Cambridge yet

---

12 See especially John K. Hale, *Milton's Cambridge Latin: Performing in the Genres 16251632* (MRTS: Tempe, Arizona, 2005), henceforward cited as Hale, *Milton's Cambridge Latin*. Part One (pp. 13-121) examines all the exercises in turn, with Milton's practice of each.

13 "Prolusion" is a vague term. Originally, it meant a "preliminary attempt" or "essay" (as in the OED entry). In Milton's time, it becomes a name for published exercises. In his "Prolusion" VI it names both the whole Latin text (which is half of a bilingual sundered whole) and a section named "prolusio"; see Milton's Cambridge Latin, p. 208. L. In the last year of his life, 1674, seven of Milton's Cambridge University prolusions were published as makeweight with his *Familiar Letters*. A similar shifting vagueness surrounds some musical terms, like "prelude" or "andante."

have become dominant in our own. Prolusion VII gives us his idea of a liberal education, and of enlightenment; and of his own mind wakening and spreading itself, thanks to the requirements of declamation.

It was the *disputations*, however, which dominated university life, from Spain to Sweden or Hungary to Scotland. They were the main requirement of the university (as opposed to college or private) curriculum. Academics went on doing them long after graduation. The learned king, James I, hied across from his obsessive hunting at Newmarket to join in the fun. If you could do them, they *were* fun.[14] Many who could not, hated them; and some (like Milton or Samuel Johnson) who could, still disdained them, as artificial and footling. This was because the topics for combative debate were often worded in an extreme or abstract or trivializing way, and because truly controversial propositions (like, say, that England needed a republic, or that the doctrine of the Trinity is nonsense) were avoided. At the end of a disputation, the moderator would not call for a vote or decide a verdict, but simply call a halt, and they might adjourn for a drink. It was a pillow-fight, or more strictly, training for real combat. At times, it resembled an intellectual bullfight.[15]

The set form of any disputation comprised: thesis, summarized in some neat verses, and examined by a friendly elder, until the appointed Opposer made his set attack on the thesis. Then the proposer had to submit to cross-questioning by the Opposer. These interrogations went on indefinitely, depending on the decision of the referee, always a senior academic representing the University in all this. (The University mace is on view in many of the pictures, symbolizing the University's authority and approval.) Then, anyone present could offer their

---

14 "Fun for whom?" is the question to ask, because they came to be regularly dismissed as futile. But dismissal is facile or anachronistic: see Hale, *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 1517. Contemporaries witness to their being enjoyed, and by audiences of up to a thousand people.

15 The classic account is that of William T. Costello, S.J., *The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958). One of the most entertaining studies of a dry subject which I have ever read.

view, as James very often did. The duration again depended on the moderator's judgment, but more now on the interest aroused by the free-for-all.

The flavour of the grandest disputations (to which up to a thousand people may have listened) is conveyed in Costello's account of the event of a disputation on the question whether animals could reason syllogistically. Not having language, they could not. But, allowed Aristotle, even humans may reason cogently by an enthymeme, argument not expressed in a full three-step syllogism.[16] Cross-examinations followed, until the King (fresh from his hunting that day) recalled what he had seen one of the hounds, debating whether to attack the hunted animal forthwith or to call up the other hounds. It was reasoning, and it could be formulated into verbal or syllogistic form.[17]

The third sort of exercise is the liveliest, though harder to generalize about. Parody and joking about the disputations could lead the appointed jokester anywhere. It did. Undergraduates had their own private version, called a "salting," (*saltatio*). Milton was appointed to do the joking for one in his own college's saltings. It has four parts. Two in Latin, two in English. One is a parodic declamation. The second is ritual insulting of every group in the assembly. Then he switches to English speeches, in prose, and finally to a drama or masque in English verse. He is exercising his wit, doing the speeches eloquently; his imagination, both in soaring and by insulting comparisons; vulgarity, as in toilet jokes; and his dramatic gifts, which are great, conclude the whole thing.

I dwell on these three forms of his intellectual exercising to show him not as a loner but as joining or leading his peer group's activities. The young Milton

---

16 Not the three-step reasoning of the syllogism "All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. *Therefore*, Socrates is mortal," but something compressed into an enthymeme, or a single proposition, maybe "Even Socrates, being human, is mortal."

17 Thus the disputations might sometimes stray into issues of daily life. I watch my own dog, Cocoa, reasoning if not syllogizing. Every morning, she objects to getting into the car. She puts the brakes one, because she just wants to walk straightaway, up our suburban street. But often, after a disagreement, she seems to remember that the car is merely the prelude to walking, somewhere more interesting, like a park or the beach. "Dogs need walks. I am a dog. Ergo I need a walk" is a syllogism, but modifying the minor premise produces the memory of better rewards.

was an insider, at least some of the time. Moreover, the variety of the wit he exerts stayed as part of his public, published personality. The ridiculing and scorn, and their methods like exposing flaws of logic or fact, or reduction *ad absurdum*: these were not only well "exercised" in the three sorts of university exercise together, but became part of his weaponry once he began to write on public topics in the 1640s. The exercises explain a lot. Indeed, even though he professed distaste in later life for the exercises, they suggest how the young playful insider Milton *became* the loud controversialist of his forties. They dominate his *Defences* as spokesman for the Commonwealth government, in Latin, for Europe to read, of the 1650s. For worse as well as better: some of his rebuttals are obtuse or *ad hominem*, rather than wonders of true logic and wisdom.

What the exercises taught him, what they released in him, was a power to see opposing views, and to express them with an equal clarity. This is not indecisiveness, or width of sympathy, nor even neutrality. Rather, it resembles a lawyer's willingness to take either side of a lawsuit if paid, or a political spokesman to say opposite things at different times (if not at the same time!) But the exercises made it combative, competitive, and—just like adversarial games, such as fencing or chess—a kind of play, enjoyable while in the heat of the moment of the contest.

All this appears beautifully imagined in the Companion Pieces, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. As Tillyard long ago observed, their theme is a kind of Quaestio: is it better to be an extravert or an introvert?[18] That is a pointless yet energizing question. Everyone is a bit of both; the exact proportioning varies; and (in the poems anyway) both lives are shown to be delightful. Milton's poems insist on their manifold pleasures, only ostensibly contrary. For instance, one speaker denounces Melancholy, the other extols it. The parallel wordings sharpen the contradiction. The Allegro begins: "Hence *loathed* Melancholy." Penseroso begins: "Hail *divinest* Melancholy" [emphases mine]. The Allegro man concludes: "Mirth with *thee*, I mean to live." The Penseroso concludes "I with *thee* [Melancholy]

18 See Hale, *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 5, 70, and 138.

will choose to live." Both have a good point to make. And though Penseroso, coming second, gets the last word literally, Allegro makes his points with equal energy.[19] But then again, the Allegro is in character when energetic rather than meditative. The debate continues. It must.

So Milton sharpens and shapes their contrast by his art, which grows thereby. He is expressing both of the supposed incompatibles. I would argue that the exercises empowered him, to a genial tolerance of diversity, by requiring the entertaining of *both* of a life's possibilities. And "entertaining" is the right word, because it suggests both a person's "opening oneself to a guest idea" and the idea's "amusing or diverting people."

Three: Poetic Vocation

In general, and unsurprisingly, Milton always knew he had a vocation as a poet. The earliest latent or implicit evidence comes at age 15, when he versifies Psalm 114 and adds epic flourishes to it.[20] The desire becomes plainer at age 26, when he translates that psalm again, but now into Homer's type of Greek. The choice of tongue and exemplar both epitomize the aspiration to epic.[21] And in his statement of aspirations in *Reason of Church-Government* (1641) he undertakes to emulate the Italian, in other words vernacular, epic of Ariosto or Tasso. There is a clear constancy in his *general* desire to compete in the highest of all the poetic genres.

It was the particulars of this calling which gave him trouble. As the saying goes, "The devil is in the detail." What sort of poem would make his name, and

---

19 The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* records them in equal proportion.

20 "A Paraphrase on Psalm 114… done by the author at fifteen years old,"Leonard, 9. The spare, un-adjectival diction of the original Hebrew ("The mountains skipped like rams") is now expanded into "The high, huge-bellied mountains skipped like rams/ Among their ewes." He is again adding Homerical epithets when "The sea saw it and fled" becomes "That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled,/ And sought to hide his froth-becurléd head."

21 Psalm CXIV, Leonard, 579.

in what poetic genre? (Perhaps not Homeric pastiche after all, perhaps not even epic?) In which of his languages would he compose it? And on what subject, topic, or theme? I review the three difficulties in that order, though naturally they interconnect. Note that this gifted youngster does find *some* things difficult. Talent gives choice, but the range of choice gives trouble in his younger years.

As to genre, or rather medium, epic was almost the inevitable choice. Homer was first and greatest of poets for the Greeks themselves. Yet Aristotle had found tragedy even more expressive and comprehensive than epic (*Poetics*, ch. 26). Around 1640, if not at other times, Milton's own thinking oscillated between the two: the sketches of his Adam-story in the Trinity Manuscript show a drama, not a poem. Indeed, the first known portion of the eventual epic poem is Satan's address to the sun, composed as the opening of a *drama*.[22] Nonetheless, it is an epic poem which eventuated in 1667, albeit after some thirty years of gestation.

Another uncertainty was delaying his enterprise, the choice of language. In his world, English was spoken by a small nation, away at the north-west edge of European culture. Creativity was inhibited by its cold wet climate, or so Milton said people said. Latin, equally available to Milton, was spoken as the medium of intellectual exchange across Europe and the Atlantic: an epic poem in Latin would be read by more people, and all of his intellectual peers. Accordingly, he at first envisaged Latin. Paradoxically, however, his triumphant visit to Italy, with its warm welcoming of his poems in Latin, convinced him to write in his mother tongue instead, for his own nation. Yet he was not choosing perversely, because the great Italian emulators of Virgil (Dante, Ariosto, Tasso) had likewise opted for their own vernacular; as did Camoens with Portuguese in his *Lusiads*. This was the, or a, standard answer to the Questione della Lingua ("the question of language-choice").

More troublesome altogether was the decision on a subject. For a while, till 1640, his epic would be focused on Arthur, the patriotic prototype of a British

22 Hale, *Milton's Languages*, 62: "Aubrey's Life of Milton dates it [the address to the Sun] to 'about 15 or 16 years before ever his poem [Paradise Lost] was thought of,'" so the middle or early1640s.

hero, famed throughout Europe as the "matter of Britayne," and continued in recent English by Milton's own early poetic model, Spenser, in the *Faerie Queene* (1590-8, unfinished). In one poem of his Italian journey he smacks his lips at the thought of how with Arthur "I shall smash the Saxon shield-wall," "*frangam Saxonicas …phalanges*."[23] In another soon after, he repeats the choice of subject, although now he insists it must be composed in English for the English. What made him change his subject—so drastically that by 1640 or so he is listing well over a hundred possible replacement subjects, as if Arthur is the one subject which will now *not* suffice?

Two reasons tend to be offered. First, Arthur was a myth, not a truth; mere falsities invented by monkish chroniclers. Secondly, the Arthur story had been "pre-empted and contaminated by slavish writers in support of the Stuart monarchy." Anything would improve on that, even now praising those Saxons![24]

These, then, are the uncertainties, the eddies and swirls and revulsions, of his poetic vocation. Some involve a sense of what is fittest: medium and choice of language. Both pairs of candidates are very fit, but which of each is the most fit? The choice of subject went deeper, and took longer to resolve. The pages of the Trinity MS show this taking place.[25] For our own enquiry, the very large array and variety of the evidence shows the young and youngish Milton undergoing considerable uncertainty. (Not to mention that the political upheaval of the twenty-year Interregnum delayed him still further.) The plain fact is that Milton found his way to his epic subject only slowly. And yet reasonably so, in view of the centrality of poetic calling: this one was the defining choice of his whole life and posthumous reputation.

Now since these are the uncertainties of his thirties and forties, we should not feel surprise at the tokens of indecisiveness in his twenties. In this decade, 1628-

---

23 "Mansus," line 84, Leonard, 588 and 585.

24 Hale, *Milton's Languages*, 62.

25 Four successive drafts of a possible tragedy bring him to "Adam Unparadiz'd," whose plot as sketched is still a long way from that of *Paradise Lost*.

1638, he expresses a sense of the slowness of his own development, or "belatedness." It is on view in his allusions to vocation in the other sense, of choice of career.

Four: Career-Uncertainty

At age 23, he did not know his path. He knew only what it would *not* be, and only that it must fit his vague sense of a God-sent calling commensurate with his unusual talents. The extent and style of this uncertainty are memorably seen in his struggles to express them in a letter to some older friend, someone whom he respects but whose persuasions he feels obliged to resist.[26] He and the friend disagree about his calling to the service of God. Even though he had just graduated from the eight years of study which were designed and expected to lead to ordination as a priest of the Church of England, he had reservations about it. What were these? Why did they preclude ordination? Was it mainly things about that church, or things in his own mind?

He indeed came to detest the directions being taken in the Church of England; the initiatives imposed on it by Archbishop Laud, the careerism and impure motives of the ordinands; the ever-closer connection under King Charles I of the monarch as head of state and of the church to the church's worship and liturgy. Freedom of worship was reduced and enforced by Laud.[27] He and his bishops (coming to be abominated by the likes of Milton as prelacy) were already an arm of royal administration: Laud was tightening prelatic control of the details

---

26 The draft letter (in two untitled drafts) is usually referred to as the "Letter to a Friend," where the quotation marks or square brackets indicate that the title is not the author's but editorial, given for convenience or reference. It can be read in *John Milton. Poems. Reproduced in Facsimile from the Manuscript in Trinity College, Cambridge, with a Transcript* [made by W. A. Wright in 1899] Menston; Scholar Press, 1970. I have discussed aspects of the letter in *Jones*, 76-83.

27 Laud was a great regulator and enforcer. How worship should be conducted, down to matters of placing and seating, was to be the same in all parishes. Parishes which did not do what he told them were regulated by emissaries (snoops) sent by Laud to each parish. Any complaint about non-compliance was followed up (informers). Snoops and informers were naturally as unpopular as the enforcers themselves.

of worship, in every parish of England. *Lycidas* will express Milton's revulsion powerfully. He felt himself "church-outed" by "the prelates," the bishops under Laud. By age 29 would not serve an impure church: he must keep himself pure for something else, something better, but what? At age 23, graduated, he does not know his direction, whether or not he had begun to feel his later revulsion.[28]

However, to return to the letter he wrote to that older friend, he is uncertain within himself too, and that is the side of the young Milton which interests me most. In his other manuscripts, he seldom dithers over a draft, or re-drafts, as he does in this letter. He is being seen at his most uncertain, on a deep life-matter. He writes a draft, then changes it and adds, then cancels. So he pushes the letter away, to offer a sonnet instead. Then he does it all again, on a second page, replete with cancellations, changes and additions, until as before the sonnet is offered instead.

So what does the *sonnet* say, and how does it say the same thing for him but differently?[29] At age 23 or so, he feels his life is a "late spring": he is developing terribly slowly. He looks at himself in a mirror: he *looks* mature enough, but the "semblance" only "deceives." He lacks "inward ripeness." My "inward ripeness doth much less appear," most of all by comparison with other people who are travelling faster. The "ripeness" which he lacks he sees inhering [*endueth*] in some other people: "some more timely-happy spirits endueth."[30] The same sense of being belated, unripe, unsure, waiting for he knows not what certainty, pervades the prose letter. It is an unenviable state of mind, which I too well remember. The glance at other people, too, expresses pain: comparison with equals who are faring better in their life-choices, moving more quickly and surely. The unripeness is leading to the depressing question, What's wrong with *me*?

---

28 The evidence is conflicting. Opinions vary. This adds point and weight to the obscurely expressed misgivings in the "Letter to a Friend".

29 Sonnet VII, "How soon hath time…," Leonard, 35-36.

30 "Timely" means both "seasonable" and "ripening early," according to Leonard's note, Leonard, 644, n. 8.

This is Milton at his lowest ebb. It makes him more human, as well as showing him among his equals, suddenly seen at a disadvantage. Well, the sonnet has travelled only through its eight lines. The following six climb laboriously back up, not to complete confidence, let alone clarity; but they do climb up. Their tortuous syntax reaffirms that, though not ripe, he is ready, and waiting for whatever the Lord will finally ask of him; that fate "Toward which time leads me, and the will of heaven." Nothing essential has changed, and the passing of time counts for little compared with eternity: "All is, if I have grace to make it so,/ As ever in my great task-master's eye." Time passing is swallowed up in "as ever."

Once this crisis had passed—passed in the sense that he did *not* bow to the persuasions of his elders and family—Milton resisted the family's suggestion of an alternative career, in law. He seems to have had no trouble spurning law: "You my father do not force me to enter the legal profession [*non rapis ad legem*]… You do not condemn my ears to that absurd clamour." He may be thinking of fusty arguments about the decrepit body of the English common law. Milton finds against all that with a fine rapid dismissiveness. The present tense suggests a continued discussion, which has reached agreement. Irksome as it may be to have a son who knows only the careers he does *not* want, peace and friendship prevail between father and son.

The long crisis is recalled, with a splendid new vehemence and negative certainty, in *Lycidas* (1637).[31] This poem goes over the same ground differently. The "dread voice," of no less a personage than Saint Peter, agrees with Milton's view of the careerist clergy, denouncing them as "false shepherds" of the sheep, "blind mouths," ignorant and greedy. It travels more ground, too, since even Milton's poetic vocation is placed in question. If death can come unexpectedly to "slit the thin-spun life," what price *poetic* hopes? "Alas, what boots it [= what *use* is it?] with uncessant care/ To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,/ And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?" (64-66). Milton, here, must find an answer. Part of it is still, to wait and be ready when the time does come. Part is the

31 Leonard, 41-46.

intrinsic worth of poetry. Somehow, mysteriously, the poem itself creates a new confidence: he (the Milton-surrogate) "twitched his mantle blue/ Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new." The confidence is felt for example in the strange verb, "Twitched:" a flick of the wrist, getting the folds out of the way as he moves away somewhere, purposeful and assured now what it is.[32] Not that we are told what it is, but that *he* now knows. Equally hidden from us is the grammar: is the swain speaking, as he has been doing throughout until this final paragraph, or some observing eye? At any rate, Time no longer oppresses. Nor are we relying on a pious "ever." There is a "tomorrow," after this long "day" of lamentation and meditation; and he is readied for "fresh," known actions on that morrow. Given the forceful rebuttals in Saint Peter's name ("the pilot of the Galilean lake,"109) the task will put the two vocations together. He will help to purge the Anglican temples, and it will be by writing; for *Lycidas* has done exactly that. Not at the dangerous age of 23, but at the even more dangerous age of 29.

Conclusions

To return to the opening enquiry: What was it like to be Milton when young? How did the young Milton become the magisterial one of the Faithorne portrait?

We have seen, first, how Milton's multilingualism gave him roles to play. It opened up worlds of thought and expression to him. It gave him choice, though the rich range of his choices may at times complicate things for him.

Secondly, the exercises required him to recognize and express opposite sides of a question; to approach a theme comically as much as seriously; to suspend judgment, to entertain and enjoy difference.

---

32 A homely, shepherd's word, like the "scrannel" pipes of the false shepherds (line-ref for both). Scrannel // scrawny, and has a thin or scraping sound. Painful to hear, like an out-of-tune violin? A new *energy* is being felt in the words, and typifies how Milton's assurance grows within the poem.

Thirdly, although his poetic vocation was strong and constant, it took a huge time to clarify itself, into the English epic about Adam's loss of Paradise: "long choosing, and beginning late" (IX. 26).[33]

Finally, this sense of being "late" or "unripe" did not overwhelm him, but still the evidence shows a life-crisis in his twenties. The talented, privileged young manhood of Milton did not exempt him from stress. It gave the stress a peculiar form. The nation's own crisis, before as well as after 1640, resolved Milton's. First, it showed him how to contribute to the removal of monarchy and its oppressive machinery. Then, late on, after 1660, in his fifties, the failure of revolution impelled him to compose his life's great work, *Paradise Lost*; both as a mark of the nation's great refusal, and the expression of his own life's hard-won fidelity. "That one talent, which is death to hide" did not remain hidden. Rather, its expression used all his experience, not least the diverse experiences of his youth which I have been emphasizing.

33 Milton's epic voice is considered again in the sequel to the present essay, "The People of *Paradise Lost*."

The People of Paradise Lost

[Second lecture at UFMG, on Tuesday 18 August by John K. Hale]

After examining "Young Milton" in my first talk, this sequel offers a view of *Paradise Lost*, the poem which most perpetuates his name today. It is a sidelong and miscellaneous view, because the "people" of my title are not the handful of his poem's main characters, but people of differing importance to the poem, and are distinctive orders of being. One is Milton himself as heard in the poem, through his commentary on the progress of his narrative; what has been called the "Epic Voice."[34] Several more are people who exist outside the story of the Fall, whether in the Bible or in myth or in history, or Milton's own world, or who belong in the tradition of epic poetry. All enlarge the meaning at points during Milton's storytelling. Then come people who had something to do with the poem's lifetime publication, helping it or hindering. After Milton's death in 1674, I sample the host of scholars and others who have explored the poem since Milton died—"faithful labourers" in the vineyard.[35] All so far start new trains of thought or modify preconceptions. And the last people of my title are readers who perform the poem aloud. I value these performers and their performances

34 See further Anne Ferry, *Milton's Epic Voice: The Narrator in Paradise Lost* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

35 See John Leonard, *Faithful Labourers: A Reception-History of Paradise Lost*, 1669-1670, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

as highly as anything said about the poem. One and all, they re-energize the poem for those willing to listen and to join in.

I termed this view of the poem "sidelong," because these selected people do not stand out. They tend, rather, to be ignored or minimized when we try to comprehend the poem. I claim, nonetheless, that they propel us in a fresh way back into the central things. They lead us to ask good questions, with exactness. I believe that the whole is felt within each part.

The Epic Voice

Milton's own voice within his poem cannot be missed, yet is it not the medium, rather than the subject? Do we not experience the poem through the voice, rather than for its own sake? No. At carefully chosen moments Milton talks about himself, as a person or as narrator, or as both; that is, moving between his two kinds of voice; the self-effacing third-person narrator and the first-person experiencing author. He talks about himself talking, and his own choice of voicing. It is these rare moments which make Milton one of my "people" who, though seen sidelong, tell us much about his purpose for the epic.

Here are six moments of intervention, times when the poet speaks in his own voice; the sixth being the most startling. The poem has four overt epic invocations, by the poet about his poem. They launch Books I, III, VII, and IX. (I return to that in Book III shortly, and the wider question of placement later.) My fifth is the point, late in Book Four, where he intervenes to hail the prelapsarian bliss of love before the Fall: "Hail, wedded love, mysterious law…" (IV. 750). The interjection is movingly positioned, because Satan's guile is already encircling that love (IV. 358-92 and IV. 800, "squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve").

The sixth makes conscious to us the importance to Milton of finding the *right* voice, to tell his story and give the causes of human woe. "O for that warning voice, which he who saw/ Th' Apocalypse, heard cry in Heav'n aloud…" (IV. 1-2). A complicated, counterfactual voice: "O… that now,/ While time was, our first parents had been warned… and 'scaped/ Haply so 'scaped…" The reader's

mind boils with conflicting postulates, held together by impossible wishes: one voice wishes it had another voice, as if the voice could have influenced Adam and Eve, more than all the voices they did receive!

This strange voice of Milton's interrupts, and technically endangers, the narrative. It flouts the suspension of disbelief. Now a theorist, or a purist practitioner like Henry James, might deplore Milton's intrusion within his own fiction, let alone suggesting a different outcome for its plot. No matter! The epic voice is guiding our response, like but unlike James or Tolstoy in fictions which set the benchmark for prose. Milton knows best, that the intrusion will heighten a listener's emotion in a way without parallel; not forgetting, for Milton never forgets, that this tale is our own tale, the tale of mankind. Well might he turn back from his fiction into our own reality, to sharpen our sense of that something which penetrates or permeates human life so as to spoil it.

Moses

The first human being Milton mentions, at line 7, does not receive his name. As often happens in epic, a known individual must be recognized by the reader from allusive description, because by this means the poet inveigles the reader into an active role. Moses is "that shepherd" whom the "heavenly Muse… on the secret top/ Of Oreb or of Sinai, didst inspire," and who "taught the chosen seed,/ In the beginning how the heavens and earth/ Rose out of chaos." Milton casually assumes a shared knowledge of the Pentateuch, believed to have been composed by Moses. *Oreb* (Horeb) refers us to the early revelation of God to Moses as a literal "shepherd," of Jethro's sheep (Exodus 3); *Sinai* brings in later, grander revelations to Moses as pastor and prophet, receiving the Law on Horeb (Deuteronomy 4. 10) or its lower part, Mount Sinai—the exact place matters less, be it Horeb "or" Sinai, than the repeating of the visitation. Milton is also a prototype of Messiah for Milton in the poem, as mediator and deliverer and law-giver—when Moses parts the Red Sea (I. 304-13), or saves Israel in Egypt

(I. 338, "Amram's son"), or more fully in the cataloguing of salvation-history (XII. 169-309).

To assemble the allusions to Moses may reduce him to dry bones of biblical glossing, but Milton makes the bones live, adducing familiar stories, to remind believing readers of them. *Not* spelling out his name shows the familiarity, the common ground of belief.[36]

Homer

Then, while still launching his poem, Milton moves from biblical to pagan sources. The "Aonian" mount (line 15) is Helicon, sacred to the Greek Muses. His "song…intends to soar/ *Above*" it, that is, to surpass the archetypal epic of Homer. Book One abounds in Homeric figures of thought and speech, like extended similes or the epic catalogue. Homer, surpassed or not, helps Milton to fly high. And finally Milton makes his debt overt, in the second epic invocation, at III. 35. The positioning of Homer by name maximizes his debt and his emulation.

This, for me, is the poem's most moving personal passage, in which Milton speaks most directly about himself, and becomes indeed one of the people of his own poem. To achieve this, he compares himself with Homer. "[I do not] forget/ Those other two equalled with me in fate,/ So were I [= if only I may be] equalled with them in renown,/ Blind Thamyris and *blind Maeonides*,/ And Tiresias and Phineus prophets old/" (III. 32-36, my emphasis). Maeonides, "son of Maion," identifies Homer for us. As with Moses, it is done indirectly and allusively, yet not obscurely: in a Greek culture where you had only a single given name, the patronymic or clan-name was a normal addition or substitute. And when Milton implants Homer in a list of no fewer than four blind Greek poetprophets, am I merely fanciful in finding that Homer's name stands out—by his guaranteed

---

36 Fowler ad loc. [John Carey and Alastair Fowler, *The Poems of John Milton* (London: Longmans, 1968) 458-59]. Used because slightly fuller on the primary sources than the 1998 second edn.]

merit within an epic invocation, talking about itself, and by the repeating of "blind," and the doubled long syllables, "Blind Mae-"?

Galileo

Paradise Lost draws upon several sorts of experience. After biblical, pagan, and personal experience, with Galileo the poet uses contemporary experience. Galileo is the only contemporary whom Milton mentions in the poem, but he appears no fewer than three times.

Galileo comes twice within the extended multiple simile lavished on Satan's first physical movement: "… the superior fiend/ Was moving" and his shield "Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb/ Through optic glass the Tuscan artist [scientist] views/ At evening from the top of Fesole,/ Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe" (I. 283-90). The allusion is renewed in a more subdued form at 302 where the lost angels are likened to the fallen leaves of "Vallombrosa, where th' E trurian shades/ High overarched embow'r." "Etrurian" is the older name of "Tuscan". These are not just any dump of leaves, they are from "Vallombrosa" whose name means "shaded valley" in Italian. Italian, Galileo, and his telescope, by which he sees far out into space, come into Milton's mind together, to characterize how Satan gets moving.

How much more of Galileo's life and personality should a reader search for, once Milton has started off this train of thought? Opinions will vary. For instance, is the moon "spotty" as a descriptive detail—what you see a lot more of through an "optic glass"? Or does spotty mean "infected," by the Fall? Does the "shady vale" point to Psalm 23, the "valley of the shadow of death"? We do tend to become over-attached to our own ideas. Yet how can a poem, and a reading, have too much meaning?

At all events, Galileo meant something varied and extensive to Milton, from his experience of meeting him on his Italian travels, 1638-39. *Areopagitica* records that he "visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition." And after the present allusion, the poem comes back, twice, to Galileo. At III.

588 Satan lands at “a spot like which perhaps/ Astronomer in the sun’s lucent orb/ Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.” The astronomer’s instrument of seeing brings Galileo unavoidably back into mind, with connotations of the new forms of enquiry. More explicitly and yet still doubtingly, to describe the mission of Gabriel (whose sight is clearer than Satan’s), we read: “As when by night the glass/ Of Galileo, less assured, observes/ Imagined lands and regions in the moon” (V. 261-63). Although Galileo could see far into space, how far, and how clearly, he could see remain worth asking. In the same utterances Milton expresses both wonderment and teleological questioning. To inveigle and tease his readers Milton invokes his personal knowledge of Galileo, so as to hint at the potential for conflict between scientific and religious knowledge. As Galileo well knew. A reader can infer some further identification of the blind poet under house arrest with the blind imprisoned scientist; immobilized but not tamed, for everywhere he speaks of freedom Milton is voicing a cryptic *Eppur si muove*, (*And yet it does move*), the words said to have been murmured by Galileo after being made to recant his heliocentric views. Galileo, a blind exile in his own country, was a role-model and hero for Milton.[37]

Charlemagne

My next historical personage differs radically from Galileo: not contemporary; a rare medieval; and above all, his allusion is not common knowledge, but incorrect, or at any rate unhistorical. It remains a stirring allusion, which enhances Milton’s local point. But the question of its truth-status remains for the present unanswered.

> Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
> When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell
> By Fontarabbia. (I. 585-57)

37 Fowler (1998) notes: “Milton ‘canonized’ Galileo as a martyr to intellectual freedom” (78), where “martyr” means “witness” as much as “victim.”

A last stand, by the great king and his peers (paladins), is fought on the borders of Christendom against the Saracens, so that the military conflict is also a battle of faiths. The beleaguered army saves the day for the faith, at great cost.

Yet to get this effect Milton makes a historical mistake! According to the Chanson de Roland, the great epic poem of France and French, Charlemagne was *not* at the battle. He died at home, aged 72. "There were no versions in which Charlemagne fell," says Alastair Fowler.[38] It was Roland and Oliver who fought the rearguard action. Charles thus gained time to bring his army back, for a decisive defeat of the enemy. (The fight was at Roncesvalles, forty miles away from Fontarabbia.)

Fowler, continuing his note, explains the apparent lapse, not as a mistake at all, but as a cryptic message to Milton's own times, 1667: "Is it pure coincidence that, when the royalist rising of August 1659 failed, Fuenterrabia was where Charles [the Second, then still in exile] went, to seek support from both French and Spanish? M. may have seen a symbolic contrast between this treating with friend and foe, and the uncompromising chivalry of the greater Charles." Fowler does not usually write his notes as rhetorical questions! He is guessing. Against this view, based on a natural feeling that Milton did not, or could not and would not, make such mistakes, I would object that (1) the respective visits to Fontarabbia have completely different purposes, and (2) that the relationship between Charles II's soldiers and the others is merely confusing; and (3) the 1659 rising and Charles II's visit to Spain are obscure by 1667 when the poem appears.

If it is not simply a lapse, does Milton show some willed ignorance of French culture, which he rather disliked? But this is merely another guess.

Can Milton nod? Or nod to good effect, or is that special pleading? Just as my assorted people enlighten our reading of the poem, they may pose good questions to it; which, too, makes them worth examining. This question has not yet had a sufficient answer. It is wide open for someone to propose a better one.

38 Alastair Fowler, ed. *Paradise Lost* (London: Longmans, 1968), 496. In his second edition, 1998, 97, Fowler becomes more definite, without further evidence or reason given.

Camões

The Portuguese poet of the fifteen-book *Lusiads* may have originated Milton's allusions to the contemporary world, and especially ones involving the Portuguese navigators who brought back news of Africa and the East Indies though (not Brazil). Not that Milton knew Portuguese, for he did not need to read Portuguese for knowledge of the *Lusiads*.[39] That poem has been Englished in 1655 by Richard Fanshawe, in time for Milton to know the version.[40] I am including Camoes, for another reason. Milton composed his own poem first in ten Books, then revised it into Twelve. It is an intriguing question in Milton studies, why in 1667 he had not followed Homer (24) and Virgil (12) by using a structural / numerical base of twelve, but why he had first used ten. A good question, which Louis Martz answered from the *Lusiads*' fifteen, a base of fives at least. Naturally, some other works had used a base of five, from the Pentateuch to Davenant's epic of King David, but the arguments are not compelling. So what about Camoens, whom Milton had used in writing about the Portuguese conquests in Book XI?[41] It is certainly salutary to notice the respects in which, even after 1667, Milton was still thinking about his poem and revising it.

Numbers and number-symbolism may not attract most readers seeking to fathom the poem. Still, when Milton changed 10 to 12, he improved two structural features. When the halfway mark comes at the start of Book VII out of twelve Books, we are more plainly halfway than at the start of VII out of ten. Less plainly, the four invocations assume a more interesting symmetry as launching Books I, III, VII, and IX out of twelve than for I, III, VII, and VIII of ten, if we agree with Augustine that a symmetry made from unequal units has

39 There is some evidence that he knew Spanish, but none regarding Portuguese.

40 See Louis L. Martz, *Milton. Poet of Exile* (1980; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 155-68. Martz, following Maurice Bowra, notes thematic resemblances.

41 Martz, 160-61, compares the line "Mombasa, and Quiloa, and Melind" (XI. 399) with Camoens' "De Quiloa, de Mombaca, e de Sofala."

more beauty than one like palindromes or alternations which is simply patterned like knitting out of equal units.

All this is highly speculative.[42] What if the *Lusiads* could be shown for new reasons to have been in Milton's first thoughts? Martz's suggestion chimes with Milton's being a man of his own time, so enthralled by the expansion of the world through discoveries (as the universe was being expanded by astronomy), that even after going blind, he still considered buying maps. At all events, let us register that Milton's original structure of ten Books has not been fully explained. Here, as with the Charlemagne puzzle, Milton studies awaits some new ideas, from a new generation of readers.

Thomas Ellwood

In assessing these people of *Paradise Lost*, we are sometimes reaching back to its origins and inspirations. My next group are all historical persons, known (not conjectured) to have influenced the poem's birth pangs. Thomas Ellwood was its earliest known reader. Samuel Simmonds was its first publisher. Sir Roger L'Estrange was another very early reader of it, as censor, who almost stifled it. Andrew Marvell was a friend and fellow-poet, who records how an initial resistance to the poem, as too risky, became swept away by its sublimity. His praise-poem about this experience helped the second edition to establish it forever as England's classic, English's answer to Virgil. And yet it won a *twofold* readership and fame: alongside the admiring establishment, the poem spoke as

---

42 See John K. Hale, "*Paradise Lost*, A Poem in Twelve Books—or is it Ten?" *Philological Quarterly* 74 (1995), 131-49. The essay is reprinted in John K. Hale, *Milton as Multilingual. Selected Essays, 1982-2004* (Dunedin: Department of English, University of Otago, 2005), 193-209. Martz (in a letter to me) speculated that the switch to 12 was made when in 1665 he had the new idea of a sequel in four books, *Paradise Regained* (discussed here in a moment)—thus coming closer to Virgil's 12 of the *Aeneid* + 4 of the *Georgics*. Indeed, we ought to ask why the title pages made a point of announcing each poem's number of Books? What is this *telling* the first readers, even if the decision is the printer's, not the blind poet's?

an epic of lost liberty to the dispossessed underdogs of post-restoration England, for over a century till 1789.

Thomas Ellwood, then, tells how Milton showed him the full poem in manuscript, in 1665 in Chalfont St Giles. Returning it, Ellwood said, “Thou hast said much here of *Paradise lost*; but what hast thou to say of *Paradise found*? He made me no answer, but sate some time in a Muse. And when afterwards I went to wait on him [back in London] he showed me his Second Poem, called *Paradise Regained*; and in a pleasant tone said to me, *This is owing to you; for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont; which before I had not thought of.*” To think that Milton felt surprise about his poem, and its religious theme! Does not the epic already tell of the human future, history, as hindsight prophecy in Books XI-XII?

Yes and No. It does, from its beginning: “One greater man” in the fifth line, whose obedience restores us after man’s first disobedience. On the other hand, after finishing the poem Milton went on thinking about his poem, in several respects, not only the change of Book-structuring. It had not let him go. Ellwood was on to something.

Samuel Simmons, the Printer of *Paradise Lost*

Simmons combined, as one did in those days, the roles of publisher and bookseller of the poem in 1667. He did not give a street-address on the title-page, nor say exactly where copies may be bought, nor even give his name: “London: Printed, and are to be sold by Peter Parker…Robert Boulter … and Matthias Walker, 1667.” This reticence gave him some legal protection. The book sold quite well, and Simmons reissued it two years later. Moreover, for the reissues he asked Milton to explain the poem for readers, in two respects: to supply Arguments, or plot-summaries, for each Book; and to explain why, at a time when rhyming couplets dominated poetry and stage, “the poem does not rhyme.” Thus, we owe even more to Simmonds, for these materials.

For one thing, the summaries occasionally add something to the words of the poem: like Adam's "resolve" at the crisis of Book IX "through vehemence of love to perish with" Eve." "Vehement" means "carried away" by his love, in other words he is "out of his mind" because of something in his love, which implies aberration, more plainly than the words of the text do.[43] Similarly, Milton added detail to the theological expositions in the Arguments, more than once, as if he wanted to clarify the soteriology, the theology of comfort amid tribulation, of an inner deliverance outweighing present oppression.

The other notable new material prompted by Simmonds is Milton's tetchy defence of blank verse, against "the jingling sound of like endings." Milton's irritation exaggerates. Rhyme need not jingle. Spenser's in his epic does not. Nor does Dante's. Nor does Milton's own in, say, *Lycidas* or *Samson* or his sonnets. The absence of rhyme which he remarks in Greek or Latin poets has little bearing on the topical craze for rhyme in English. But what Milton does valuably proclaim is the run-on lining which blank verse encourages, and rhyme much less so—the mighty, endlessly varying line-length of the poem ("the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another"), its paragraphing, its effect of striding, like riding a bike in its highest gear for a long distance race. By instigating Milton's protest, Simmonds alerts all readers after 1669 to the flow of rhythmic energy by which Milton controls the size and shape of the sense-units, and vice versa.

Sir Roger L'Estrange

L'Estrange as licenser (Censor) objected to I.594-99: "As when the Sun new ris'n/Looks through the Horizontal misty Air/Shorn of his Beams, or from behind the Moon/ In dim Eclipse disastrous twilight sheds/ On half the Nations, and *with fear of change/ Perplexes Monarchs* [my emphasis]." The Penguin editor (p. 304)

43 We need to look elsewhere to see the cognate diagnosis: Adam's at VIII. 526, disclaiming aberration or disproportion ("Nor vehement desire"). His interlocutor, Raphael, seems dubious (561).

comments: “Charles II’s censor objected to these lines—and with reason. An eclipse had provoked *fear of change* on the day of Charles’s birth, 29 May 1630. Some saw it portending that ‘this Prince’s Power should for some time be eclipsed.’” Any talk of *eclipsing* was therefore suspect, on the usual principle that not only attitudes towards some political change, but bare mention of it, should be suppressed, as if mention or allusion might still put the idea into people’s heads.

This shows how Milton, who had escaped execution by a whisker at the same king’s return in 1660, remained a marked man. He was prevented from continuing to write on contentious public topics (as he had been doing, voluminously, since 1640). Even his poems were scrutinized with zeal, for coded sedition. The present passage gives some support to the idea that the Fontarabbia reference, just before it, takes a glance—or a potshot—at Charles II.

Andrew Marvell

Between 1667 and 1674, Milton’s colleague and fellow-poet Andrew Marvell wrote his thoughts about *Paradise Lost*, as a narrative poem about his expectations in starting and how these were modified. The project was so “bold” and “vast” that he feared the poem would “ruin” the sacred subject. Then, as he read, he feared Milton would not keep up the standard, but complicate the theology. He has to ask the poet’s pardon, since all the poem’s “thought” is “fit,” and nothing is unfit. No more will he “misdoubt.” Nor need Milton fear copycats or plagiarists: the poem is inimitable. Marvell passes from misgivings to positives: the work is “devout” and never “profane.” Milton makes “delight and horror” blended “on us seize,” writing with “so much gravity and ease.”

Although Marvell’s terms of praise could be read as generalities, of their own age and taste, the poem is receiving an intelligent, open-minded appraisal, misgivings and all. He names Tiresias, the blind prophet. Then, stooping from this exalted praise to scorn of the pack of fashionable poets, rhymesters, he denounces the craze for rhyme. Milton will not “allure” his readers with “tinkling rhyme,” not he. Marvell endorses Milton’s own 1669 scorn for “the jingling sound

of like endings." It is ironic, then, that Marvell himself is writing in rhyme: "I too transported by the mode offend." (But he writes good, witty rhymes, not jingling things in mere pretty patterns.) No matter! He uses one final and conclusive rhyme to endorse Milton's blank verse, and "sublime" theme. "Thy verse created like thy theme sublime,/ In number, weight, and measure, needs not rhyme." Marvell has been reading what Milton had said about "true musical delight," and echoes it to confirm it. His tribute was printed to help the 1674 edition, an act of judicious friendship.

> Where couldst thou words of such a compass find? Whence furnish such a vast expanse of mind? Just heaven thee, like Tiresias, to requite, Rewards with prophecy the loss of sight.
> Well mightst thou scorn thy readers to allure
> With tinkling rhyme, of thine own sense secure;
> While the Town-Bayes writes all the while and spells, And like a pack-horse tires without his bells. Their fancies like our bushy points appear, The poets tag them; we for fashion wear. I too, transported by the mode, offend, And while I meant to praise thee must commend. Thy verse created like thy theme sublime,
> In number, weight, and measure, needs not rhyme.

I shall return to sublimity, the word on which Marvell's final couplet insists. Sublimity, the *hupsos* or "height" which Longinus' great work expounded, was the concept which most helped the reading public to admire their language's new epic on its own terms, without prejudices regarding the verse medium, politics, or anything else.

Readers after 1674

These four people, who were to Milton a friend, his printer, the censor, and a fellow-poet, read the poem, giving it their rather different readings. How many more people read it, and what sort of reading did they give it? The question produces two answers, in two main groups or kinds of readership. The poem's success with *both* groups should occasion some surprise, because the two groups disliked one another.

One group comprised the court intelligentsia, the other the dispossessed religious dissenters. The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 had ended England's republican interlude: the dissenters lost everything they had fought for, especially freedom of worship. The monarchists exacted a punitive revenge. And that is how, despite some attempts to work out a middle ground, things stayed for over a century—the Church of England in cahoots with the repressive civil power. How come they *both* liked the poem, the brainchild of a very prominent dissenter, who came under consideration for the monarchists' hit-list for execution in 1660?[44]

The answer is twofold. It is such a mighty poem that even political opponents enjoyed and admired it. The many talented poets of the time rejoiced in it: Dryden, Denham, Howard, Sedley, and Marvell of course. For these cultivated readers, notwithstanding the poet's deplorable politics, the poem had given England and English, at one jump, the modern Virgilian epic poem which their culture yearned for. Its sublimity swept away prejudice and distaste. As John Aubrey resoundingly said, "'Tis the *hupsos* I look after" [= It is the sublimity which I crave].[45] I like this response, which lays aside deep-seated and divisive political convictions, to enjoy the masterwork. The vogue for Longinus' wonderful ancient treatise *Peri Hupsous* came at just the right time for *Paradise Lost*. It points out that in poetry as in oratory, the force of imagination overrides, or sweeps away, resistance. Critics' rules, and other forms of sales resistance, are forgotten when a poet's "right Promethean fire" makes us stop in our tracks, and *listen*. More about listening in a moment.

The other readership was also large, but not well known because they were silenced after 1660, by political defeat and the royalists' revenge. Nonetheless, the poem was read by the defeated because it spoke, with a biblical comforting, to their situation. It explained their defeat and consoled their situation: they had erred, like the chosen people of Israel in the Bible, and now were paying for it.

---

44 This sounds melodramatic, but is well attested. See Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 307-13.

45 Aubrey was speaking only of the political sonnets: only think what he would say of the epic. See Oliver Lawson Dick, *Aubrey's Brief Lives Edited from the Original Manuscripts* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 274.

The Lord was angry. Let them endure by being faithful. This hunkering down is not just piety, nor the biblical sufferance of a permanent remnant until the Lord comes: it was encouraged by Milton himself. For one thing, the prophetic books, Eleven and Twelve, foretell it, in biblical wise. More than that, Milton added and added material to his prose Arguments for those Books, as if to provide a fuller strengthening to this kind of reader.[46] So do his two latest poems, paired in 1671: *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes.*

It did comfort them. Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, and especially Methodists of the next century—John Wesley's century—read and re-read, annotated and adapted the poem, for their own situation and needs. *Paradise Lost* is a poem for underdogs.[47] This explains why the radical Romantic William Blake was absolutely obsessed with it.

The twofold absorption in the poem, from high culture and the dispossessed dissenters, is epitomized in the responses to it of Richard Bentley and William Blake, respectively an Anglican classicist and a radical Romantic. These two are opposites, in politics and most things, yet resemble each other in being eccentric or maverick as readers of Milton's poem. Today, too, the people of *Paradise Lost* continue to include heretical readers and readings, as part of the need to respond to it, and usually though not always with some gain for clear sight and good, balanced reading.

Richard Bentley

Bentley postulated that Milton in his blindness could not correct his proofs, and that his publisher fabricated the text because "there was no manuscript." "Bentley was a rogue," concluded one scholar.[48] The plain fact is that Milton

46 On the whole subject, see Neil Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987).

47 Again, see Neil Keeble, *Literary Culture*.

48 See John K. Hale, "Paradise Purified: Dr Bentley's Marginalia for his 1732 Edition of *Paradise Lost*," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 10 (1991): 58-74. Reprinted

could and did correct proofs, by hearing them read back to him: it was the usual way in older publishing-houses! And there was a manuscript, of Book One. It still exists.[49] And Bentley cites it, in his marginal annotations to his working copy of the poem! The publisher who owned it (as proof of copyright) was livid. Why, then, did Bentley persist in emending—presuming to "improve"—Milton's supposedly "unauthorized" text? This brazen bad faith resulted from Bentley's being the foremost editor of Greek and Latin texts in his day, a genuine wonder in the long history of that exalted scholarship; but more still by his needing a wider fame in 1732 because of an impending lawsuit. This only makes his falsehood worse. Why does scholarship still respect him?

It is because, for one thing, Bentley's roguery helped Milton's fame: the topmost scholar thought this *English* poem worthy of the same attention as Homer and Virgil, even when he did not need that attention. But also, as is the way, this wrongheaded genius asked good questions, about the exact sense of Milton's wording, which then received good answers.

A quick example: In Bentley's own copy, you will see him entering "ms" beside a reading he wanted to alter, from "secret top" to "sacred top." So he knew the truth, that Milton had dictated "secret," but yearned or needed to display his knowledge of ancient poets, who had often added the epithet "sacred" to hilltops, from Homer to Virgil to Moses and the many mountaintops of the Bible (where Moses received the Law, or Jesus was transfigured.) It forces us, willy nilly, to think about "secret" and "sacred." Well, when we do think it over, not only did the MS and two printings say "secret." "Secret" is better, because it subsumes "sacred": it gives us more meaning. The summit is "secret" because it is set apart ("secretus")": you cannot see it from ground level; and storm clouds conceal it.[50] The apartness and hiddenness are more vivid, by placing the reader in an imagined spot to see

in John K. Hale, *Milton as Multilingual*, 193-209. The remark about Bentley as a "rogue" is made (appreciatively!) by Helen Darbishire, cited at 190.

49 In the New York Library and Museum, New York.

50 Exodus 19. 16-20, cf. PL XII. 227-29.

what Milton saw, from the angle he wanted. "Sacred," however, although it sounds almost the same as "secret" is flatter: conventionally pagan, and self-evident from the context of Moses receiving the Law from God. It has much less mental energy. All this had to be patiently pointed out by soberer scholars in the wake of Bentley's bombshell. And it deserves to be known and remembered. Let us thank Bentley, yet through gritted teeth. It is not that Milton was a saint, or can do no wrong. But those who tinker with his words should feel some shame.

William Blake

Blake, the poet of Innocence and of Experience was a great artist, and nowhere greater than when illustrating *Paradise Lost*. He was another maverick, albeit from the opposite end of the spectrum from Bentley's, from the side of Romantic rebellion against the stifling hierarchies of his time. 1789 let him loose. His rebellion took many forms. One was his saying this about Milton's poem: "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it."[51] Though this may not have been Blake's final opinion, it resounds still today, as something more than his view of Satan's view. Something; but what?

Could not Milton be "of" the devil's party by understanding it and by fully sympathizing with it? With the experience of staking and losing everything, left "abject and lost"? A true poet would not only empathize, but would gladly dramatize

---

51 Blake took other liberties, even when illustrating the poem he venerated. In the illustration to Book Nine he shows Adam star-gazing while Eve, coiled inside the snake, takes the fatal bite; taking it from one of many accessible fruits. Milton had taken pains to show Adam's fatal day much less abstractedly, in fact yearning for the self-absenting Eve all morning. As for Eve, crucially the sole accessible fruit is placed high up, where only an extended arm can reach it ("thy reach or Adam's…," IX. 591). It is made an act of deliberate choice. Mind and body move voluntarily together to the forbidden action. So Blake's innovations amount to a considerable departure from Milton's plot, motivation, and intention! Blake's boldness is exhilarating, it accords with the more radical re-reading he gives of Milton's allegiance to Satan. That, in the end, is no more than a challenging oxymoron.

feelings not his own. All this he does, in Books One and Two, where he gives the opponents of God centre stage—riskily, but dramatizing by means of the expected epic plunge “into the middest of things.” And whenever he probes Satan’s mind, the poem excels itself. The “fixed” mind which cannot change, relent, forgive and be forgiven, is the heart of the poem, which is *by contrast* about the mutual and costly absolution by Adam and Eve of each other; the making amends. The evil which dogs human life is embedded in Satan, rather than in Milton’s deity—admittedly unpleasantly autocratic because Zeus-like. Milton does not believe he himself is lost, since he is fortified (like Abdiel) by belief in a being greater than himself. For Satan, there can be *no* greater being than himself: that well-known, ultimately infantile, state of mind is why, and how he has become lost.

So Blake’s dictum is provoking thought. But his challenging heterodoxy lives on, and many people approve it. This may be owed to their dislike of Milton’s epic, and (as I just conceded) its Zeus-like portraiture of God the Father in action. But it owes something also to the orthodox Christian God, at least when that God is shown at his most commanding— an imperiousness emphasized more in some parts of the Bible than others. The outstanding disciple of Blake is William Empson, in *Milton’s God*.[52] For Empson that deity is awful, evil, more wicked, than Satan, and given to human sacrifice.[53] No, says Stanley Fish, Milton is tempting us, teasing us into thought-crime: the experience of reading the poem (“Surprised by Sin”) matches the temptation of Eve, then of Adam. No, says Alastair Fowler: you are both overstating... One of my own most mind-opening experiences of reading the poem was following the detail of the argument which Fowler conducts, page by page of his Longman edition, with Empson and with

52 William Empson, *Milton’s God* (1965; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

53 Empson equates the Crucifixion with human sacrifice. Milton would disagree, taking pains to denounce the human sacrifice of Moloch worship, as abominated in the Bible too. He would agree with Paul’s foundational account (probably as in Romans). Empson sees the Son’s sacrifice on mankind’s behalf as a retributory human sacrifice. The debate continues, within or outside Milton’s view, which (though itself heterodox) does not go far enough for Empson.

Fish.[54] These three giants of modern interpretation stand high among all the people of *Paradise Lost*, because of their prolonged and detailed close reading. Such readers take the poem so seriously, that they engage with its attempt to "justify the ways of God to men." Such readers comprise one of the two things which, for me, make the poem live. Now for the other one.

Readers aloud

The other group which keeps the poem so alive consists of ourselves, worldwide, when we read the poem aloud. Performing it, in parts or in its entirety at all-day "marathons," became my own best way of renewal and of discovery, and a powerful teaching tool by way of shared experience. When a group of people read the whole thing in one day, "from morn to dewy eve," they have to keep going! By not turning aside to put the book down in order to argue about it, or look something up, or think a thought out, and by instead obeying its extraordinary momentum, you experience the whole thing, on its own terms, not your own terms. True, this headlong submission to the flow of great verses may merely confirm prior views, by precluding instant meditation or discussion. But more than that, it gives the poem another chance to persuade us, by re-immersing us in its sublimities, which work locally, moment by moment, in hearing it and voicing it. And for people who like to think something out by writing notes to themselves, as I do, on the pages of my text, at the exact point which prompted an idea, the performances produce dozens of jotted new impressions or questions to be followed up later; and so, the mind can change, then or later. A fixed mind does not help much. I admit the notes written down on one passage while hearing the readers moving past into other passages become chaotic, hasty, and unsettled. Good! That still unsettles old views, by prompting fresh impressions.

---

54 Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

In closing, therefore, let me record some ways in which I have performed *Paradise Lost*. Their variety keeps the interest alive.

At first, after enjoying participation in readings of Homer and Virgil (both in their original tongues and in translation), I convened a group who read Milton's poem at the rate of one Book daily. Soon this came to seem halfhearted and (in all senses) partial. With my students, helped by alumni and theatre buffs and folk from broadcasting, but in fact anyone willing, I did the full-blown marathon. To call it a marathon may suggest it is a race, having an endurance component. And it can be something of a race or ordeal towards the close, as body and mind tire. Yet the long day's doings are so definitely an achievement and a complete mental act, that the marathon method remains standard, in places where the poem is read aloud—from Edinburgh to Dunedin, New York to Bangor. Read all about it on my own website, <Milton at Otago>.

Beyond the marathons, I have orchestrated performances of other poems like its strange paired sequels: *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. Still on campus, I staged a shorter version, omitting the four Books of flashback (V-VIII), in favour of a lone piper playing his improvisations on their story. The piper was not of the loud Scottish sort, but a quiet Uillean one; unforgettably meditative. Lately I have used other venues, for biographical selections: for instance, at the local Public Library, moving from the Companion Pieces and *Lycidas* through mid-life sonnets, to show how they too climax in the epic. Most recently, last year, I staged an alumni reunion, at which colleagues and students, present and former, joined forces to perform Book IX.

This is the event which I have excerpted for my talk in Belo Horizonte. I commend it, not as being in any way definitive or exemplary, but as being done in the right spirit—homegrown, locally, and above all sharing the performing (thus giving everyone the chance to hear themselves say immortal words for a change!)

I believe that our poem, performed by willing people, fulfills the ultimate requirement of Aristotle's theory of poetry. His Poetics found that a tragedy had the most perfect *entelecheia* of poetry, defined as that "representation of an action that is worth serious attention, complete in itself, and of some amplitude;

in language enriched by a variety of artistic devices appropriate to the several parts of the play; presented in the form of action, not narration; by means of pity and fear bringing about the purgation of such emotions" (chapter 6).[55] He was speaking of tragedy, but extended his view to Homer's epics. Correspondingly, Milton had first thought of an Adam-tragedy, *Adam Unparadis'd*. Milton's eventual epic, being much shorter in duration than Homer's, came closer to tragedy's; not tragedy's one to three hours, but perhaps ten. The point is this, that *Paradise Lost* comes closer than any other epic to this desired concentration of impact. Milton writes for that very effect, with condensed energy. Marathon readers experience that, uniquely. Long may they continue![56]

55 *Classical Literary Criticism: Aristotle, Horace, Longinus*, trans. T. S. Dorsch (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965) 38-39.

56 Here are some books, essays, and links which take the matter of performance further. Beverley Sherry, "*Paradise Lost* Aloud: Then and Now," *What is the Human? Australian Voices from the Humanities*, ed. L.E. Semler, Bob Hodge, and Philippa Kelly. (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012). Beverley Sherry discusses one of my Otago marathons in "*Paradise Lost* 'Made vocal,'" *Milton Quarterly* 34 (2000): 128-29. John Creaser's major work on our topic is "'Service is Perfect Freedom': Paradox and Prosodic Style in *Paradise Lost*," *Review of English Studies* 58. 235 (2007): 268–315. See also his chapter, "'A Mind of Most Exceptional Energy': Verse Rhythm in *Paradise Lost*," *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 462–479. The widest-ranging work is Derek Attridge's book, *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (London and New York: Longman, 1982). Some of this material along with other material can be sampled in Hugh Richmond's website: google <Milton Revealed>, http://miltonrevealed.berkeley.edu

Part II

Readings from Brazil

Inaugurating monsters in Borges, Derrida, and Milton

Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá

I. Monstrous Imaginations

Peter Connor reviewing *Monstrous Imagination* by Marie-Hélène Huet (1993) starts his comments by asking the same question Huet poses at the beginning of her book. Where do monsters come from, and what do they really look like? This question permeates any inquiry into teratology—the science of monsters. Since beginnings are at stake, and according to Connor and Huet (1993), in the fourth book of *The Generation of Animals*, Aristotle furnishes a broad answer to the question: Anyone who does not take after his parents is really, in a way, a monstrosity. Since ancient times, then, the monstrous has been defined according to the logic of resemblance: the monster represents a departure from the norm and from the Aristotelian tenet that "like produces like." Monsters are thus doubly monstrous: monstrous firstly in that they violate the prevailing theories of generation, and secondly in that any resemblance they might bear to other species is a deceptive or "false resemblance." Connor and Huet (1993) conclude that it might not ultimately be possible to know what monsters "really" look like because in reality they do not resemble anything. Monstrosity is not reducible to appearance only, to its cause, but first and foremost to its effect or consequence.

According to Colin Nazhone Milburn (2003), monsters are the denizens of the borderland and have always represented the extremities of transgression and the limits of the order of things. Milburn (2003) concurs that the monster embodies a means of thinking otherwise, a step beyond man and humanism that reaches for other post-human futures. Monsters disrupt totalizing conceptions of nature and destroy taxonomic logics, at once defining and challenging the limits of the natural. Following Milburn's lead, one may say that monsters are abominable (not for Man; not good for Man) because the conception and the logic of the monstrous are spliced together combining material and semiotic actors, flesh and writing at the same time.[57]

On the one hand, there must be something monstrous with a 17th-century English poet presuming to justify (and mis-readings would have him vindicate) the ways of God to men. There must be something monstrous with (some) readers of *Paradise Lost* siding with Satan and claiming him the hero of the epic poem. On the other hand, there must be something monstrous with a 20th-century Argentine writer presuming to have claims over endless polysemy, and who "has become the man for all seasons and disciplines, a multipurpose postmodernist, a marvelously mobile source of authority for every point of view." (Zamora 2002, p.47) In sum, there must be something monstrous with a writer whose writings have reading at its core and who has always been interested in monsters and monstrosities. This essay demonstrates the extent to which the idea of the monster is central to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Borges's fictional worlds, yielding not only their most important "poetics of disjunction" but also the art of some of their most outstanding fiction, and, in part, the artifice as well.

57 Alternative and illuminating readings of the monster and the monstrous are: Atherton (2002), Bandy (1973), Carrol (1971), Gilmore (2003), Kearney (2003), Yoder & Kreuter (2004). A version in Portuguese of sections I and II was published in *Jacques Derrida: Entreatos de Leitura e Literatura*, 2014.

II. Milton's Complicated Monsters

Moreover, there must be something monstrous in not following the logic of resemblance and in violating taxonomic logics. Treading on the critical path established by Huet, Connor, and Milburn, I propose that by collapsing Eden and rewriting the Fall, John Milton creates the epistemological[58] space necessary for his text. His revisionary logic, however, becomes a mythmaking of its own, a mythopoesis deeply entangled with the imagery of monstrosity.

Monsters appear in literary and political writings to signal both a terrible threat to established orders and a call to arms that demand the unification and protection of authorized values. Symptoms of anxiety and instability, monsters frequently emerge in revolutionary periods as dark and ominous doubles restlessly announcing an explosion of apocalyptic (perhaps even eschatological) energy. The occurrences of the terms monster, monstrous, and monstrosity in *Paradise Lost* are many, and by close reading such occurrences, one may come to comprehend a more general design or notion of monstrosity that would inform the whole poem.[59] The most recurrent and graphic occurrences in Book I of *Paradise Lost* are: lines 196-198 (Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge/As whom the fables name of monstrous size,/Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,/Briareos or Typhon); lines 461-464 (Where he fell flat and shamed his worshipers:/Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man/And downward fish; yet had his temple high / Reared in Azotus). The OED provides us with the following meanings of monster: a legendary animal combining features of animal and human form

58 Peter Dendle asserts "The meaning of the word monster is not stable: by definition, it remains at the boundary of epistemological comfort, even as science progresses and taxonomies continue to shift and evolve. The front lines of epistemological slippage have shifted since earlier periods, but creatures still lurk among the crevices of those shifting boundaries." (Mittman & Dendle 2012, p. 442)

59 Burnett (2002), Haybron (2002), Pagels (1996), Paré (1982), Poston (1989), Purkiss (2005) and Tolkien (1936) help understand the configurations of the monster in Milton, in English Literature before the 17th century, and in religious texts.

or having the forms of various animals in combination, as a centaur, griffin, or sphinx; any creature so ugly or monstrous as to frighten people; any animal or human grotesquely deviating from the normal shape, behavior, or character; any animal or thing huge in size; an animal or plant of abnormal form or structure, as from marked malformation or the absence of certain parts or organs; huge; enormous. The dictionary clearly explains those initial occurrences in the epic and points to monstrosity *qua* animal malformation and enormity.

In Book II of *Paradise Lost*, the occurrences seem to depart from bestiality and enormity and fall flat on, and still according to the OED, "monster, monstrosity, omen, portent, sign," from the root of *monere*, "warn." Abnormal or prodigious animals were regarded as signs or omens of impending evil. The textual occurrences are: lines 622-625 (A universe of death, which God by curse/Created evil, for evil only good,/Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,/Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,) and lines 674-676 (Satan was now at hand, and from his seat/The monster moving onward came as fast/With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode). Again, the monster is linked to enormity, but unlike the previous occurrences in Book I, the monster means more than its inherent, visible abnormality; it serves as a portentous sign or omen of perverse and prodigious things to come.

Textual occurrences of monster, monstrous, and monstrosity continue in Books III and VI of *Paradise Lost*: Book III, lines 455-457 (All the unaccomplished works of Nature's hand,/Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed, Dissolved on Earth, fleet hither, and in vain); and Book VI, lines 861-863 (Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed/Into the wasteful Deep. The monstrous sight/Strook them with horror backward; but far worse). Now, the occurrences take on the hybrid substance of monstrosity, the life-threatening quality of the monster, and all that seems to come from the Latin *monstrum*, "warning, portent, omen, miracle," which is in turn derived from the verb *monstro*, "show, point out, urge."

At this point, the monstrous is associated with things to come and participates in the logic of (in)visibility.[60]

Books X and XI mount to the figurative uses of the terms monster, monstrous, and monstrosity. A breadth of applicability of these terms proves evident in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*: Book X ("His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining/ Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell,/A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,/Reluctant, but in vain; a greater power" [lines 512515]) and lines 521-525 ("Dreadful was the din/Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now/With complicated monsters, head and tail—/Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire, Cerastes horned"); and Book XI (In meats and drinks, which on the Earth shall bring/Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew/Before thee shall appear, that thou may'st know [lines 473-475]). The dragon-like figure that Lucifer has become after his fall represents calamity, terror, distress, oppression, and it indicates that "like produces like" in monstrosity.

In brief, monsters have both a scientific and a political dimension as well as cultural and religious consequences. Nonetheless, the focus of this essay falls on the effects or on the consequences of the monstrous figures, the writing/ naming/reading of monsters and the aftermath of this composite act.

---

60 James Smith enumerates the monster in Derrida: "First, the monster is often a kind of hybrid, 'a composite figure of heterogeneous organisms that grafted onto each other. This graft, this hybridization, this composition that puts heterogeneous bodies together might be a monster' (*Points*, 285). Second, the monster is 'that which appears for the first time and, consequently, is not yet recognized. A monster is a species for which we do not yet have a name' (*Points*, 386). Characterized by both novelty and strangeness, the monster emerges from the lagoon of familiarity, shows itself (*elle se montre*), but because we lack categories to constitute it—and often because its very strangeness frightens us—we invest it with monstrosity. Third, at the moment the monster is named as a monster, it is tamed: 'as soon as one perceives a monster in a monster, one begins to domesticate it, one begins, because of the "as such"—it is a monster as monster—to compare it to the norms, to analyze it, consequently to master whatever could be terrifying in this figure of the monster.' (*Points*, 386)" (2003, p. 2). In other words, an in-visible hybrid (a catachrestic, aporetic being that participates in the logic of Milton's "darkness visible") is cognized as such and gains visibility when named a monster, that which is visible in terms of an indexing sign.

III. Miltonic and Derridean Monsters

This section discusses the necessity to study the limits and possibilities of the epic poem in relation to what Sara Ramshaw (2006) and Rosi Braidotti (1994, 1996) call signs of wonder and traces of doubt through the figure of the monster. Although Ramshaw discusses scientific discovery and the monster that is feminine, I focus on wonderment and doubtfulness, the portentous sign or omen of perverse and prodigious things to come as monstrous inventions in *Paradise Lost*. In addition, I argue that occurrences of the terms monster, monstrous, monstrosity in *Paradise Lost* are associated with the idea of iterability (The capacity to be repeatable in different contexts), to the figuration of an aporia, and to the sense of "things to come" that mark the future with (im)possible meaning.

It is in this intersection that studies on monstrosity, abnormality, and sin most clearly overlap with my own interest in deconstructive theory. In his interview "Passages – from Traumatism to Promise", Derrida (1995) similarly envisions the monster as hybrid, aporetic, and a "to-come". For Derrida, however, "[t]he monster is also that which appears for the first time and, consequently, is not yet recognized. A monster is a species for which we do not yet have a name." (1995, p. 386) It is this aspect of the monstrous that I concentrate on in relation to *Paradise Lost*. In other words, to what extent are Satan and the other fallen angels monsters? According to Derrida, the monster "shows itself" (1995, p. 386), which relates to the etymological meaning of monster, "in something that is not yet shown and that therefore looks like a hallucination, it strikes the eye, it frightens precisely because no anticipation had prepared one to identify this figure." (1995, p. 386) Derrida continues, "as soon as one perceives a monster in a monster, one begins to domesticate it, one begins […] to compare it to the norms, to analyze it, consequently to master whatever could be terrifying in this figure of the monster." (1995, p. 386)

In a rather succinct fashion, at the exact moment the monster is named as such, a monster, it is tamed, domesticated, made familiar. Thus, in spite of monstrosity, "from the moment [it] enter[s] into culture, the movement of

acculturation, precisely, of domestication, of normalization has already begun." (Derrida 1995, p. 386) The purely monstrous is thus, for Derrida, an im-possibility. The monster exists as aporia, catachresis[61], a wholly novel ungrammaticality that crouches in the shadows between the radically other and the wholly same. It shows itself only through the repetition of "the traumatism that is the perception of the monster" (Derrida 1995, p. 386) and it is in this iterability that its promise (of future inventions) lies.

Monstrosity or "spectropoetics" (as Derrida [1994] also calls it) is what allows Lucifer, and later on Satan, to be sutured to a hybrid body, to a paradox or aporia, and to a radical anticipation/domestication. The complicated monsters that are born with the fall of angels and the Fall of Man are made of parts and bits of traditional monstrous figures: "Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire, Cerastes horned". This obvious hybridization of Satan makes him a monster. However, is Satan's monstrous substance revealing an inauguration? Yes, for it points to the transformation of "pure" bestiality into bestiality with a conscience. Satan's monstrosity in *Paradise Lost* only begins with his hybrid body. His conscience, as the epic narrator tells us (readers) later, will dictate that he opposes God in every act of creation. Satan and his cohorts will attempt, in a conscious and planned manner, to undo God's creations. Hence, Satan is an inaugural monster exactly because no anticipation had prepared us to cognize bestiality contaminated with mind, spirit, and conscience. Yet, simultaneously, we begin to domesticate Satan and his demons when we try to master whatever

61 Kronick (1999, p. 187) equates the monster with catachresis: "A monster is what abuses a norm; it is catachresis. It is also a figure of the future, the coming of what surprises. In an interview, Derrida explains that 'philosophy is literary, not so much because it is *metaphor* but because it is *catachresis*. The term metaphor generally implies a relation to an original 'property' of meaning, a 'proper' sense to which it indirectly or equivocally refers, whereas catachresis is a violent production of meaning, an abuse which refers to no anterior or proper norm. The founding concepts of metaphysics—*logos, eidos, theoria, etc*.—are instances of *catachresis* rather than metaphors.' … A monster is not an absolute break with normality but is a graft that puts heterogeneous things together: 'This in fact happens in certain kinds of writing. At that moment, monstrosity may reveal or make one aware of what normality is.'"

is terrifying in his monstrous figure. Some readers would even excuse Satan's monstrous behavior in *Paradise Lost* by associating it with the logic of *non serviam*, with the figure of Prometheus and with the role of hero. I do not intend to analyze the so-called Satanist readings of *Paradise Lost* as opposed to the Godly readings, what is of first and foremost importance to me here is that a domestication of the monster is on its way.

Bringing Derrida's reasoning to bear on the monstrous inventions in *Paradise Lost,* one finds that signs and traces of the epic poem, similarly to Derrida's monster, must, by definition, show something that has not yet been shown; they must offer the wholly new and the heretofore undiscovered. Ramshaw and Braidotti trace the monster as unprecedented event, unique, and singular, in Derrida as such: the monstrous inventions must be an "event without precedent" (Derrida 1989, p. 43), a "unique situation" (1989, p. 60), constituted by its "singularity" (1989, p. 28). In order to appreciate the signs and traces of monstrosity in *Paradise Lost*, they must be captured within a system of conventions that will ensure its position more generally in culture and society. The monstrous inventions in this epic can only be analyzed or understood through pre-existing or prevailing laws of language and figuration. Moreover, it is through the naming of previous, traditional monsters, "Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire, Cerastes horned", that the system of conventions help readers position or locate Satan. It is therefore a paradox or "aporia" (Derrida 2002, p. 244) that the monster figurations in *Paradise Lost* are constituted by their originality/singularity and yet wholly dependent on recognition and legitimation (and therefore subject to codes and laws).

The relation between wondrous signs, doubtful traces (what would make Satan a different monster, as say, Scorpion, Asp, Amphisbaena, Cerastes) and monstrosity can thus be likened to the problematic relation between the singular and the general or the antinomy between the general and the particular. In his deconstruction of "absolute singularity" (Derrida 2001, p. 90), Derrida reveals that the relative "singularity" of language and its figuration can only be understood as "original repetition," as "iterability" (Derrida 1989, p. 51), in which the "instituting

act", according to Ramshaw (2006, p. 4), "only gains meaning through the repetition of an origin with which it cannot coincide, since it is of the very essence of the origin to be pure anteriority." That would explain why the monster in *Paradise Lost* is concocted through body parts that belong to previous monstrous figures, its occurrences in the epic move in a crescendo and rely on repetition or iterations. Ramshaw (2006, p. 4) continues: "the singular, creative event is accordingly marked by the lack of self-presence and it is this 'repetition,'" this "repeat[ed] […] traumatism that is the perception of the monster (Derrida 1995, p. 386)", is also that which makes wonderment and doubtfulness possible in the first place. We, readers, are surprised by sin, following Stanley Fish's formula (1998), but we are also surprised, or traumatized, by the monstrosity in progress and its im-possible effects/consequences in our reading/writing the epic.

Of course, Derrida is not against the impossible, not against wonderment (what parts constitute the whole of Satan, or how original his defiance of God is) and doubtfulness (to what extent Satan's opposition to God is both a success and a failure). It is actually deconstruction's proclivity for the im-possible that brings us closer to an ethical reading/writing of the long poem, which propels us to set a place at the table for the wholly other, and that is the impossible itself. Furthermore, this impossible is monstrosity without judgment, monstrosity before any judgment whatsoever. Let us not forget that monstrosity is never present as such, in its entirety: as an "inaugural event" (Derrida 1989, p. 28), a "first time ever" (Derrida 1989, p. 28), the monster figuration must also be "a last time" (Derrida 1989, p. 29; 2005, 2). If this were not the case, we would be deprived of all relation with it and we could not know it as a serious, and positively lofty (as in noble and superior as opposed to having a haughty overbearing connotation) linguistic endeavor.[62]

62 See, for instance, "The devil's advocate": "Dr Johnson found John Milton too lofty, T. S. Eliot said he wasn't serious enough, and today he is more admired than loved. But, 400 years after his birth, Milton remains our most thrilling poet, argues Claire Tomalin" (2008). In addition, "One part of Milton's greatness is that he never lets us forget that magic is a component of poetry". This magic can also be spelled as monstrosity.

Deconstruction, and, I would add, monstrosity, thus “loses nothing from admitting that it is impossible.” (Derrida 1989, p. 36) It is instead “possibility” that hinders and constrains–for possibility contains “the danger of becoming an available set of rule-governed procedures, methods, [and] accessible approaches.” (Derrida 1989, p. 36) It contains the danger of becoming fully determined, inert, static, and fixed law. The im-possibility of monstrosity brings about hope and enables figuration in language. For it is the attempt at monstrous inventions necessarily failing, which, according to Ramshaw (2006, p. 6) reading Geoffrey Bennington, “leaves a trace or a mark that can be seen as a promise of such an inaugurality.” In its failure, monstrosity survives and thrives. In Milton’s attempt at invaginating his epic with the monster, the monstrous, and monstrosity, there is also the necessity of placing his text on a rather “easily” recognizable epistemological space.

The promise or ethics of such monstrous inventions lies in the tripartite relation between singularity, invention, and alterity. The singular event of monstrosity is not just inventive, it is called by the other and each attempt at invention is an opening towards the singular other. A singular other which, together with ethics, is also “incompossible:” incompatible and impossible (Derrida 1998, p. 8). The itinerary to be acknowledged is the secret of incorporation and repression, what occurs between one conversion and another, between one monstrous invention and another. In other words, what seems to be at stake in the reading of the epic is not whose side the reader is supposed to be on, but what the monster, the monstrous, and monstrosity actually perpetrate in the reader’s mind. If the monster and its monstrosity are not actually to be found on the lines of the long poem, for the monster that is created there has been legitimated by previous discourses and has been domesticated by its naming, where is one to find, if not the monster itself, the effects and consequences of monstrosity?

Yet, the same question posed in more provocative terms: if Satan attempts to separate God (the Father) as symbolic father–ghostly tyrant, disembodied bearer of the law–from himself as supposed father, subject of an obscene enjoyment; if

Satan wants to purge the tyrannical ghost (that is how God is represented in the epic) so as to convert it from an inconsistent to a consistent Other, one whose injunctions are ethically coherent and may thus confer an acceptable symbolic mandate; if Satan must contrive a pure father whose orders come from a place absolutely elsewhere from the "warry" state of Heaven, why is he to be gauged a monster, his attitudes to be seen as monstrous and his pursuits to be taken as downright monstrosity? The answer to this question is not quite evident, for to put things this way is (un)necessarily monstrous. For what Satan represents is not a kind of pure symptom or pure monstrosity (we have learned there is no such a thing) but rather an aporetic point at which the lines between conscience and obsessive plotting become hopelessly fuzzy. Milton seems to employ the tyrannical ghostly figure of God-the-Father to meditate on the dilemmas of inheritance, responsibility, and decision. In so doing, he seems to have engaged Satan in a monstrosity to come: such as the aporia of decision, the violence of law, the logic of resemblance.

Therein lies the promise of the monstrous invention in *Paradise Lost*: endless revolution, openness to undetermined change and reform, a monstrosity to come. The aim of this section was to help prepare us to welcome the monstrous to come in *Paradise Lost,* which is a coming that never arrives, but which promises nevertheless a "gradual and necessary transformation." (Derrida 2002, p. 241) At once an impossibility and a coming, the monstrous invention thus promises the possibility of wonderment and doubtfulness that underwrites the epic, confuses critics of the early 20th century, and baffles readers of the 21st century. The promise of monstrosity in relation to *Paradise Lost* lies in its "lofty" figures of speech and shows a world of possibilities to its readership. "There is no inheritance," writes Derrida, "without a call to responsibility" (1994, p. 91), and the inheritors of the epic poem are us, post-lapsarian subjects enmeshed in monstrosity and entangled with monsters of all kinds.

IV. Borges's Necessary Monsters

The monstrousness of the epic's literary possibilities is the result, on the one hand, of the debunking or deconstructing of certain central conventions of 17th-century literary *ars combinatoria* (especially the notions of the "metaphysical" yoking of disparate materials together and of the amalgamating diverse experiences in the whole of the literary structure); and, on the other hand, of the willingness to allow narrative's newly released parts to float, mingle, and re-cohere through a type of *ars disjunctoria*. As relevant as the complicated and aporetic monsters and the things that might be or might have been (the impossibility of the future) seem to what is central in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and in Derrida's reading of the monster, one is forced to admit that not only do Borges and Milton meet somehow in their blindness[63], but also in the former's necessity to "stress the yoked nature of his heterogeneous monsters." (Zamora 2002, p. 59)

When Jorge Luis Borges wrote in "Things That Might Have Been" (1981, p. 327), "Man without the eyes[,] which have shown the moon to us," he might have referred to John Milton and meant that we see through our current moment by looking forward to things that might have taken place, but did not. The "things" that Borges evoked to describe the restlessness and disjointedness of the early twentieth century is the art of perspective: we gain perspective, in other words, when we project for ourselves an image of the world in which everything takes

63 Other important meeting points for the Argentine writer and John Milton are Borges's (1995, p. 3-16) "Testimony to the Invisible" ("In order for us to imagine, or to begin to imagine, the lowest depth of hell, John Milton speaks to us of 'No light, but rather darkness visible.' Swedenborg prefers the rigor—and why not say it?—possible wordiness of the explorer or geographer who is recording unknown kingdoms") and an interview Borges gave to Dutton: "I have no personal system of philosophy. I never attempt to do that. I am merely a man of letters. In the same way, for example that—well, of course, I shouldn't perhaps choose this as an example—in the same way that Dante used theology for the purpose of poetry, or Milton used theology for the purposes of his poetry, why shouldn't I use philosophy, especially idealistic philosophy—philosophy to which I was attracted—for the purposes of writing a tale, of writing a story? I suppose that is allowable, no?" (1977: 339). In relation to Borges's blindness, see also Souza (1999).

shape in relation to something else. “In the beginning were blindness and dream,” said Borges (1981, p. 327), because we orient our present toward our prospects; taking the mournful view “with some distaste” and distancing ourselves from where we are. We retreat from our momentary blind spots to be part of the big picture; be they the steps that led to temptation and the Fall in Milton, be they ideal objects turned to universals in Borges’s “intellectual teratology” (1981, p. 23).[64] We want to remain with eyes wide open, but Borges looks askance at our constant need to look toward the emerging pattern of events: “Blindness is a confinement, but it is also a liberation, a solitude propitious to invention, a key and an algebra.” (Borges 1981, p. 237)

It seems to me that just around the surface of the blindness-as-liberation tradition,[65] just about its liberatory, theoretical, and structural speculations, just along the circuit of the key to algebraic combinations, there is a meeting point of two authors (Milton and Borges) and their monsters, the monstrous, and monstrousness. Borges has been called the *monstrorum artifex par excellence* (Christ 1971, p. 396) and, curiously enough, Middleman (1972, p. 967) has read Borges’s “Death and the Compass” as “a heterodox version of *Paradise Lost* in which Satan emerges victorious.” According to this reading, Borges, as always, “is engaged in a game of ideas, turning a ‘What if?’ into an imaginative ‘Is.’” (Middleman 1972, p. 970) Before I set out on Borges’s monstrousness, I want to emphasize that I have no particular destination to reach; I want simply to welcome, with the help of Derrida, the monstrous to come in Borges.

I am interested in understanding monstrousness as an event, as an interruption of the normal order. Order implies not just stability of structure but sequence

---

64 Borges’s “A Vindication of the Cabala” continues: “The Trinity … seems like a case from intellectual teratology, a deformation which only the horror of a nightmare could spawn. This I believe, but I try to reflect that every object whose end is unknown to us is provisorily monstrous.” (1981, p. 23) The Borgesian “intellectual teratology” is a meeting point or a *point de suture* aligning Milton, Derrida, and Borges himself.

65 Rowlandson (2011, 2012) sheds light on that tradition and also serves as counterpoint to Zamora’s reading of Borges in general terms.

or flow (as in ordinal numbers) in terms of a linearity that points to a calculable future. There is much to explore in this regard, and in this section, I want to assess Derrida's suspicion of a certain calculable temporal mode: the future anterior. The future anterior, the verbal form that names what "will have been," or the apposite things that might have been in Borges (the conditional perfect), betrays the future as such: the absolute future of an always already to come. The future (and Borges's conditional perfect as well) can only be anticipated in that which breaks absolutely with constituted normality and can only be proclaimed, presented, as a sort of monstrosity. The monster is a temporal figure to the extent that it is analogous to a way of thinking that is "faithful and attentive to the ineluctable world of the future which proclaims itself at present, beyond the closure of knowledge." (Derrida 1974, p. 4) What is to-come and the might-have-beens cannot properly be accommodated to that which is. The logic that permeates the future anterior is a suture of "here" to "then" in anticipation of the result of a completed temporal flow, a realized eschatology.[66] To anticipate the future in the present is to disrupt time's order, to speak or act against order and linearity (let us not forget the first section of this essay and include generation), to be untimely or monstrously out of joint.

The question that remains, however, is whether the future anterior bespeaks and ultimately desires a subordination of the future to the present, whether the undecidability of the event in terms of monstrousness may be kept until it has run its course. Returning to Derrida (1995, p. 387):

> A future that would not be monstrous would not be a future; it would already be a predictable, calculable, and programmable tomorrow. All experience open to the future is prepared or prepares itself to welcome the monstrous *arrivant*, to welcome it, that is, to accord hospitality to

66 Royle reads the time of the monster in Derrida in terms of an alignment "with the law of difference, a movement of deferral and disjointedness or disjointingness that 'never presents itself.'" Royle also asseverates with Derrida that "Philosophy can be monstrous, poetry can be monstrous. Whenever such monstrosity comes about, it constitutes an 'event', though this event does not happen *in the present*: it 'can only be recognized afterwards'. Monstrosity belongs, if it can be said to belong, to a time that is out of joint." (2003, p. 112-113)

> that which is absolutely foreign or strange, but also, one must add, to try to domesticate it, that is, to make it part of the household and have it assume the habits, to make us assume new habits. This is the movement of culture. […] All of history has shown that each time an event has been produced, for example in philosophy or in poetry, it took the form of the unacceptable, or even of the intolerable, of the incomprehensible, that is, of a certain monstrosity.

By merging and (r)e-merging parts and wholes of various imagined creatures or a horde of monsters from a plethora of traditions, Borges's monsters are "at once unique and universal—universal because they are unique. They violate the law of *compossibility* [italics mine], of simultaneous mutual coexistence, for each species is its own genus, each individual a type, their identity not a matter of communal likeness but of unlikeness to all but themselves." (Zamora 2002, p. 60) Again, the monstrous inventions in Borges depend on the tripartite relation between singularity, invention, and alterity. The singular event of monstrosity is not just inventive (unique), it is called by the other and each attempt at invention is an opening towards the singular other (universal).[67] A singular other that is also "incompossible"–incompatible and impossible, says Derrida. Put in parallel and provocative terms: If the monster and its monstrosity are not actually to be found on the lines of Borges's fictions, for the monster that is created there has been legitimated by previous discourses and has been domesticated by its assuming habits, where is one to find, if not the monster itself, the event of monstrosity, monstrousness?

67 In relation to Derridean monsters and the undecidability of the future, Shildrick explains that "Monsters signify not the oppositional other safely fenced off within its own boundaries, but the otherness of possible worlds, or possible versions of ourselves, not yet realized. … The monster is not simply a signifier of otherness, but an altogether more complex figure that calls to mind not so much the other *per se*, as the trace of the other in the self. … The monstrous beckons to a more open future … The very undecidability of the monstrous may signal a way forward: … And it is not just that the *arrivant* is undecidable in itself; although the encounter, the event is always in one sense awaited, it is also unexpected, a necessary surprise, in Derrida's terms, if the welcome is to have ethical valency." (2002, p. 129-130)

Since scanning Borges's works[68] for the occurrences of the words monster, monstrous, and monstrosity would be both "palimpsestuous"[69] and ubiquitously atrocious in its endless lists, catalogues, and enumerations, I will focus on the monster as a combinatory potential of language in Borges's 1941 story "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins." Here I must cite Zamora (2002, p. 68-9) at length:

> This story is cited by Michel Foucault as the very inspiration for Les mots et les choses, his study of the organization of knowledge in the West. The list that Foucault cites is one that Borges's narrator says he recalls because of its "ambiguities, redundancies, and deficiencies." It catalogues all possible categories to which animals can belong in a certain Chinese system. The narrator attributes the list to a certain Dr. Franz Kuhn, who in turn cites an "unknown (or apocryphal) Chinese encyclopedist." The list is itself monstrous in its disjunctions […] Foucault states that "and" has been rendered impossible by Borges's taxonomy: that the "fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately"; that no universal order is implied, nor any possible. … But Foucault fails, in my opinion, to read the rest of the story. After enumerating this list, the narrator muses that "there is no classification of the universe that is not arbitrary and conjectural. … But the impossibility of penetrating the divine scheme of the universe cannot dissuade us from outlining human schemes, even though we are aware that they are provisional" (p. 104). For Borges, the list-of-unlike-parts leads to the contemplation of universal mystery; for

---

68 Borges (2000, p. 19) lists many monsters in his "History of Angels:" "Here we arrive at the near miracle that is the true motive for this writing: what we might call the survival of the angel. The human imagination has pictured a horde of monsters (tritons, hippogriffs, chimeras, sea serpents, unicorns, devils, dragons, werewolves, cyclopes, fauns, basilisks, demigods, leviathans, and a legion of others) and all have disappeared, except angels. Today, what line of poetry would dare allude to the phoenix or make itself the promenade of a centaur? None; but no poetry, however modern, is unhappy to be a nest of angels and to shine brightly with them." In *The book of imaginary beings*, Borges (1987, p. 14) names the dragon a necessary monster: "We are as ignorant of the meaning of the dragon as we are of the meaning of the universe, but there is something in the dragon's image that appeals to the human imagination, and so we find the dragon in quite distinct places and times. It is, so to speak, a necessary monster, not an ephemeral or accidental one, such as the three-headed chimera or catoblepas."

69 I play with the noun palimpsest and derive an adjective, palimpsestuous, which points both to writing material used one or more times after earlier writing has been erased and to the monstrous idea of incest.

> Foucault, it leads to the impossibility of meaning. That Foucault reads this story to suit his own position reinforces what we already know: Borges's *ficciones* are endlessly open to philosophical and literary speculation.

Inscribed in these multipart acts of reading (Zamora reading Foucault reading Borges reading Kuhn reading the Chinese encyclopedist) is reading itself as an unrelated yet compossible event. In other words, Borges's story may be related to the im-possibility of meaning and simultaneously refer to a contemplation of universal mystery. I must add that the story does not end with Borges's list, as we have in Foucault, nor does it end with the unlike parts disjointedly combining towards a universal mystery. Actually, the story ends by an indirect and improbable citation: Chesterton via G. F. Watts. But before this "final" citation, Borges parenthetically affirmed that "Theoretically, a language in which the name of each being would indicate all the details of its destiny, past and future, is not inconceivable." (Borges 1981, p. 143)

Therein lies the rub and the crux of the problem: the monster, the monstrous, and monstrosity in Borges have to do with a strategy of permutation that indicates, therefore shows (as in *monstro*), the im-possibility of language and thought to grasp the destinations of a letter (word or text), past and future. Yet, before coming to such a provisional conclusion, Borges ended his citation to David Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779), with the following words: "we must suspect that there is no universe in the organic, unifying sense inherent in that ambitious word. If there is, we must conjecture its purpose; we must conjecture the words, the definitions, the etymologies, the synonymies of God's secret dictionary." (1981, p. 143) The ambitious word, in my reading (after Milton and Derrida), definitely refers to the death of an inferior deity and the attendant necessity to conjecture purpose and meaning. If we take a look at the OED meaning and etymology of conjecture, the first one points to an interpretation of omens and the second one to the Latin *conjectura*, literally, to throw together, from *com-* + *jacere*, to throw.

Yet once more, the monster, the monstrous, and monstrosity in Borges point to the following enumerative conclusion: first, we must always suspect

and doubt, for there are no (given) certainties; second, we must always suspect because there is no uni-verse, let alone a uni-verse unified; third, we must always throw things together, as in an *ars combinatoria*, for purpose and for meaning; fourth, we must throw things together inventively, as on a dictionary list or through an *ars disjunctoria*, if we want to even glimpse at "truth" as that which will be kept secret. We have to resort again to etymology in order to understand the inaugurating monsters created by Milton, Derrida, and, finally, Borges: in Latin, inaugurates means, literally, to practice augury, from *in-* + *augurare*, to augur; from the rites connected with augury. Reading, a rite (of passage) so to speak, is monstrous and we, readers, are the monsters, for we must read omens, augurs, read the past and the future as if they were a-being.

On a final note, I must report to Richard Klein, "The future of literary criticism will be Derridean, or it will not be. And if it is not, it will have been Derridean, since it was he who first envisioned critically the possibility of a future from which literature—and, *a fortiori*, literary criticism—might be absent." (2010, p. 920) The future anterior of Klein and Derrida confounds with Borges's conditional perfect in his "Things That Might Have Been", and hence we can only conjecture that the man without the eyes was Milton showing the moon to us; that the moon might correspond to Milton's Muse, "we must read what the Hebrews and Milton called Spirit" (1981, p. 326);[70] that the moon may be a monosyllable that represents a very simple object; that Borges's monsters (as well as Milton's and Derrida's), like the moon in "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins", oscillate between the poles of phenomenological particularity and epistemological abstraction, between iterability and aporia, between a future anterior and a conditional perfect, between inauguration and conjecture. In sum, the future of literary criticism, a so-to-speak reading (here, especially, of the alignment among Milton, Derrida, and Borges), will be imaginative, complicated, necessary monstrousness, or it will not be. And if it is not, it will have been a monstrosity.

70 Borges's story "Preface to the Unending Rose".

Works Cited

Atherton, Catherine, ed. Monsters and Monstrosity in Greek and Roman Culture. *Nottingham Classical Literature Studies* v. 6. Bari: Levante, 2002. Print.

Bandy, S. C. "Cain, Grendel, and the Giants of Beowulf." *Papers on Language and Literature*, vol. 9, 1973: 235-249. Print.

Braidotti, Rosi. "Signs of Wonder and Traces of Doubt: On Teratology and Embodied Differences." *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs*: *Feminist Confrontations with Science, Medicine and Cyberspace*. London: Zed Books, 1996. Print.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Mothers, Monsters and Machines*. Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Print.

Borges, Jorge Luis and Guerrero, Margarita. *The Book of Imaginary Beings*. London: Penguin, 1987. Print.

Borges, Jorge Luis and Lawrence, James F. *Testimony to the Invisible: Essays on Swedenborg*. Pennsylvania: Chrysalis Books, 1995. Print.

Borges, Jorge Luis and Weinberger, E. *The Total Library: Non-Fiction*, 1922-1986. London: Penguin, 2000. Print.

Burnett, M. *Constructing Monsters in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. Print.

Carrol, N. *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart*. New York: Routledge, 1971. Print.

Christ, R. "A modest proposal for the criticism of Borges." *Books Abroad*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1971: 388-398. Print.

Connor, P. "Review of Monstrous Imagination by Marie-Hélène Huet." *MLN*, vol. 108, no. 5, 1993: 964-967. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. Print.

... *Reading De Man Reading*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx*. New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.

... *Points…Interviews, 1974-1994*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Print.

... *Monolingualism of the Other*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. Print.

... *Deconstruction Engaged: The Sydney Lectures*. Sydney: Power Publications, 2001. Print.

... *Acts of Religion*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

... *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002. Print.

... *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005. Print.

... *Paper Machine*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005. Print.

Dutton, D., " 'Merely a Man of Letters': Jorge Luis Borges: An Interview." *Philosophy and Literature*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1977: 337–341. Print.

Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*. New York: Macmillan, 1998. Print.

Gilmore, D. *Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manners of Imaginary Terrors*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. Print.

Haybron, D. M. "Moral Monsters and Saints." The Monist, vol. 85, no. 2, 2002: 260-284. Print.

Huet, Marie-Hélène. *Monstrous Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. Print.

Kearney, R. *Strangers, Gods, and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Klein, R. "The Future of Literary Criticism." *PMLA*, vol. 125, no. 4, 2010: 92023. Print.

Kronick, Joseph G. *Derrida and the Future of Literature*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999. Print.

Yoder, P. L. & Kreuter, Peter Mario. *Monsters and the Monstrous: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2004. Print.

Middleman, L. I. “Borges, Milton, and the Game of the Name.” *MLN*, vol. 87, no. 7, 1972: 967-971. Print.

Milburn, C. N. “Monsters in Eden: Darwin and Derrida.” *MLN*, vol. 118, 2003: 603–621. Print.

Milton, John. *The Portable Milton*. London: Penguin, 1977.Print.

Mittman, A. S. & Dendle, P. L. *The Ashgate Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. Print.

Monegal, E. R. & Reid, A. *Borges A Reader: A Selection from the Writings of Jorge Luis Borges*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1981. Print.

Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. Print.

Pagels, Elaine. *The Origin of Satan*. New York: Vintage Random, 1996. Print.

Paré, A. *On Monsters and Marvels 1573*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Print.

Poston, D. “Exploring the Universe with John Milton and Mary Shelley.” *The English Journal*, vol. 78, no. 7, 1989: 28-33. Print.

Purkiss, D. *Literature, Gender and Politics during the English Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.

Pearsall, J. & Trumble, B. *The Oxford English Reference Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

Ramshaw, S. *Monstrous Inventions: The Ethics and Trauma of Scientific Discovery*. Belfast: Queen’s University, 2006. Print.

Royle, N. *Jacques Derrida*. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Rowlandson, W. “Borges’s Reading of Dante and Swedenborg: Mysticism and the Real.” *Variaciones Borges*, vol. 32, 2011: 59-87. Print.

Rowlandson, W. “Confronting the Shadow: The hero’s Journey in Borges’ El Etnógrafo.’” *Journal of Romance Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2012: 17-32. Print.

Said, R. and Sá, L. F. F. *Jacques Derrida: Entreatos de Leitura e Literatura*. São Paulo: Ateliê, 2014.

Shildrick, M. *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self*. London: Sage, 2002. Print.

Smith, J. K. A. *Jacques Derrida: Live Theory*. Suffolk: MPG Books, 2005. Print.

Souza, Eneida Maria. *O Século de Borges*. São Paulo: Autêntica, 1999. Print.

Tolkien, J. R. R. "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics." *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 22, 1936: 245-295. Print.

Tomalin, Claire. "The Devil's Advocate." *The Guardian* Saturday 1 March 2008. Print.

Zamora, L. P. "Borges's Monsters: Unnatural Wholes and the Transformation of Genre," *Literary Philosophers: Borges, Calvino, Eco*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

The Erring Destiny of John Milton's Texts in 19th Century North-American Literature.

Miriam Piedade Mansur Andrade

The book, *John Milton and Influence:Presence in Literature, History and Culture* (1991), by John Shawcross, deals with the influence of the English poet, John Milton, on his successors. Chapter 9 of his book entitled "The American Milton: Imitation, Creative Spirit, and Presence" is relevant for this article, because it refers directly to Milton's presence in North-American literature. This title already suggests that Milton's influence does carry a burden of dependence where the notion of imitation is concerned. Shawcross cites R. W. Griswold, a 19th century American editor, and shares his opinion that "Milton is more emphatically *American* than any author who has lived in the United States."[71] The adjective "American" is associated with the political, social, and literary contributions Milton was able to provide to these North-American fields. The notions of imitation and presence, and the reference that the English poet is more American than the authors that were born and raised in the United States elevate Milton to an almighty status that he himself might not have agreed with. Shawcross concludes the introduction of his book by positioning Milton in a high level of presence, despite his attempt to deviate from the anxiety of influence, playing with Harold Bloom's words, he reinforces it, calling Milton a giant and delineating the need to admire him.

71 Shawcross, 1991, p. 139.

> The upshot of these essays is the importance in studying Milton as source of inspiration and presence, and avoiding such study can flirt with superficial reading and understanding. While an anxiety of influence may hang some of these writers and works … the Milton that this influence delineates is an admired force to be enveloped or to be ever like a star apart, an observation better stating Wordsworth's position and others' following after the seventeenth century giant than Milton's position within his own world. (4)

Although Shawcross tries hard to demonstrate that the notion of influence is positive, it can at one point be read as intertextuality – when he works on the references as allusions and echoes, he fails in the moment that he considers Milton as a source of inspiration for his successors.

Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*: *A Theory of Poetry*, published in 1973 and cited indirectly by Shawcross, provokes his readers when he opens a debate pointing to a negative view for the term influence. In Milton's case this influence becomes even worse when he refers to the English poet as a "Covering Cherub." "The Covering Cherub acting as a barrier between the creative desire and artistic completion" (359). In other words, Milton's production, for Bloom, is a barrier that impairs artistic completion, because there is no way for his successors to avoid living "under the shadow of the Covering Cherub" (155). Milton is a shadow that covers and darkens the creativity of the writers that came after him and in order for their creations to be produced, they must be influenced by Milton's ideas and elements of composition. In a more recent publication, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (2011), Bloom attempts to adapt *The Anxiety of Influence,* and the basis of his discussion is the importance of memory and how memory works as a starting point for a creation. In an interview given to the New York Public Library, he emphasizes a different view on influence, moving from its anxiety to its anatomy and he mentions his obsessive concern regarding this notion. For him "one cannot overestimate memory and without it one cannot think," so the exercise of memory, keeping the classics and some poets and writers in your mind is the form one may follow when composing. For Angus Fletcher, who wrote a review on Bloom's book:

> He [Bloom] sees the artist overcoming a burdensome past through a poetic transformation occurring in the poet's present, as the poet's active misreading or "misprision" imagines anew the precursor text. This metamorphic relationship is not with a rival Freudian person, an actual prior master, but instead involves an unexpectedly new textual mentality, the inspired progeny of unsuspected universal memory, until finally the emergent body of any strong poem is a vessel of reshaped knowledge and feeling. (590)

Bloom's movement from the anxiety of influence represented by a burden past haunting the present to a metamorphic relationship based on textual mentality provides a new perspective to the notion of influence, discharges it from a complete negative view and, to a certain extent, directs its concept to the idea of intertextuality, to the relation between texts. Memory plays the most important role, because the present writer's mind possesses the ideas that circulate and from this universe of other compositions he/she is able to recreate elements from previous texts. Thais Morgan, in her essay, "Is There an Intertext in this Text: Literary and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intertextuality" (1985) presents one more possibility of reading intertextuality that corroborates different views on the approach of influence:

> By shifting our attention from the triangle of author/work/tradition to that of text/discourse/culture, intertextuality replaces the evolutionary model of literary history with a structural or synchronic model of literature as a sign system. The most salient effect of this strategic change is to free the literary text from psychological, sociological, and historical determinisms, opening it up to an apparently infinite play of relationships with other texts. (3)

The reading of the triangle of text/discourse/culture places the relationship between texts in an infinite play of meanings, which is part of what literature is. It suggests that influence should not be regarded as a concept or a form to measure cultural power or diminish the works that come in different times and contexts from the ones that occupy the central status of the canon.

The movement that the concept of influence analyzed so far goes through, especially in relation to Milton, opens the possibility of reading this term with

a different perspective. Thus, the aim of this article is to present a discussion on the influence of the English poet of the 17th century, John Milton, on the selected works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, and Henry James. The notion of influence studied here is different, since this concept is going to be read under erasure, in an operation proposed by the French-Algerian philosopher Jacques Derrida. To understand how under-erasure acts upon influence, another term is suggested: *destinerrance*. This term also encompasses the idea of intertextuality; however it establishes a different relation among texts. In this study, Milton's traces in the works of the aforementioned North-American writers offer a revival of Milton's *oeuvre* in their literary recreation and in their experiences as readers of the English poet.

Writing "sous ratur" (under erasure) is a strategy that Derrida employs to suggest that something is "inaccurate yet necessary to say."[72] This operation is about the writing of a word, the placing of an "X" upon the word, and in such a way, both the word and its erasure can be read. Gayatri Spivak explains the background to this technique, as being "The predicament of having to use resources of the heritage that one questions is the overt concern of Derrida's work."[73] The writing of words under erasure is one of Derrida's methods for using the words that he questions. Thus, the concept of influence is questioned in this article, for it is inaccurate yet it can be adapted for the reading of *destinerrance*. The erasure and the presentation of possible readings for influence demonstrate that it is not the intention of this study to include the name of Milton in the inventory of influences received by the North-American writers, not even to highlight that Milton was an impossible source of inspiration to escape from; on the contrary, the point here is precisely to present how they recreated Milton, playing with the English poet's elements of composition in a way as to compose their own, independent, but also intertextual texts and, by so doing, they revive those of Milton. Reading the textual relations between Milton and the North-American

72 Spivak intro. to Derrida, 1976, p.xiii-xiv.

73 Spivak note 13 in Derrida, 1976, p.318.

writers as *destinerrance*, the focus changes from a hierarchical, vertical notion, with Milton occupying a higher position and his successors inferior ones, to another in which they are placed at the same level of importance. The placing of authors in the same tradition, disregarding spatiotemporal distances, functions as a two-way street, in a relationship where both parties benefit. The successor's recreation of the precursor's ideas brings life to the former text(s), at the same time that the successor's new text provides a different form of reading to the previous one(s). In other words, creations and recreations establish textual dialogues that add meaning to both texts/discourses/cultures (using Thais Morgan's triangle structure).

Destinerrance is a term coined by Jacques Derrida and was published in his book *Paper Machine* (1995). Derrida points out aspects of a postal theory – how a letter may or may not arrive at its destination. He discusses how meaning can be derived from the possibility of an erroneous arrival. What is sent and what is received, then, is not just a particular meaning but the sign's ability to be sent and to be received even if in its transmission the sign's intended meaning is lost. This term is divided into three possible readings: destiny, inheritance and errancy. Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá (2013), interpreting Derrida's d*estinerrance,* proposes that it

> comprises also the following notions: a set of texts supposedly fatal, linked by a burden, concocted by fate and pointing to an end whose design is incomplete; that which one inherits (critically), that which is transmitted in the name that becomes memory and this same memory becoming tradition (of a poetics); the texts that wander, err, follow different paths by chance and in an uncertain way. (103)

From this point of view, Sá also discusses Derrida's notion of *destinerrance* as a possible alternative to literary influence and as a further elaboration on intertextuality in general (97). The analyses of this article follow this approach, which enables reading *destinerrance* as an alternative for the inaccuracy of the notion of influence and another possibility for textual relations. Thus, based on Sá's perspective of *destinerrance*, the selected texts of the 19th century North-American writers are read as erring destinies of Milton's inheritance.

The first North-American writer to be analyzed in this article is Ralph Waldo Emerson. He is an important representative of "American Transcendentalism," a movement in philosophy and literature that flourished during the early and middle years of the nineteenth century (about 1836-1860). For transcendentalists, the soul of each individual is exactly the same as the soul of the world and contains what the world, represented by nature, contains. In his essay, "Self-Reliance", published in 1841, Emerson's philosophy of the individual works with the relations of the "self" with the "Over-Soul" – a way to name the moral law present in nature; but these relations are not automatic – the individual is accorded the responsibility of freedom of choice. In this essay, there are direct and indirect references to Milton, especially the ones related to the issue of the individual's choice. Some analyses on the influence of the English poet on Emerson's texts have already been published[74] and they are all based on the ideas of dependence, debt, and the need to name sources of inspiration. Milton is regarded as a superior source and Emerson's texts occupy a secondary position, as if the North-American writer's only genius was of imitation. In the direct references, Milton is named as followed:

> To believe your own thoughts, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, - that is genius. … Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato and Milton. (394)
>
> Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius … Scipio, Milton called 'the height of Rome'; and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons. (399)

At first glance, the reading may be directed to the idea that Milton is positioned at a higher status compared to Moses, Plato, and Scipio, as the ones to be admired, however, what Emerson does is to demonstrate his ability as a reader in dealing with the ones defined as great in his creation. In this sense, the

---

74 For the discussion between Emerson and Milton see Pettigrew, R.C., "Emerson and Milton" (1931); Pollitt, J. D., "Ralph Waldo Emerson debit to John Milton" (1939); Roberts, J. R., "Emerson's debit to the Seventeenth Century" (1939); Whicher, S. E., and Spiller R. E., "The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson" (1966).

North-American author, who is also a reader, portrays his choice in terms of the elements of composition, in the traces of his former experiences of producing his own philosophy, and assumes his inheritance, the tradition he chooses to follow.

Jorge Luis Borges in “Kafka and His Precursors” (1952) indicates the right each writer possesses to create his/her own precursors, as follows: “In the critics’ vocabulary, the word – ‘precursor’ – is indispensable, but it should be cleansed of all connotation of polemics or rivalry. The fact is that every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future” (201). In Borges’s opinion, there is a rupture in the notion of literary linear history, with the successor’s echoes being heard in the precursor’s writing. According to Borges’s suggestion, the development of a writer’s own library and choice of tradition enable him/her to adapt what has been read and, in a sense, part of a cultural background is acquired. There is no debt in the creation of precursors, and nothing to cause controversy; only a relation that may establish textual dialogues that transcend the limitations of time. Emerson’s own words in “Self-Reliance” confirm Borges’s assumption concerning personal development, when the North-American essayist states: “Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life’s cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous, half possession” (406). These lines emphasize the importance of cultivating the individual creation of the reader, supporting the claim that the ideas of others, which have been received and exercised as tradition, can be half possessed, recreated, and reworked, but never fully copied or imitated.

The active role of the reader/writer, the one who takes his/her decisions on what to read and write, points to acts of recreation. In the indirect references to Milton,[75] Emerson adds meaning to the ideas of the English poet in a way

75 For the sake of space, the direct and indirect references to Milton in the selected texts of the North-American writers of the 19th will be limited to one or two, although many other possibilities can be read in the textual relationships among these authors.

that demonstrates his ability in working with something supposedly old, and composing a new version or a different idea. The passage from "Self-Reliance:" "Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places" (405), shows clearly how Emerson plays with Milton's ideas from *Paradise Lost*. In the epic poem, a "Paradise of Fools" (III. 496)[76] is mentioned, referring to the place Satan passes through when he is leaving hell, which is an area without boundaries, considered to be the abode of transgressors. According to Regina Schwartz in *Remembering and Repeating: On Milton's Theology and Poetics* (1993), this boundless area is of great significance to the theme of *Paradise Lost*; the violation of boundaries, as Satan attempted, and as man attempted in desiring Godhead, is a great transgression against God (14). Emerson inverts the Miltonic passage "Paradise of Fools" to his "fool's paradise," playing with the notion of traveling as a way of transgressing, and again refers indirectly to another part of the epic poem, to "One who brings/A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time. /The mind is its own place, and in itself/ Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (I. 252-55). In this act, Emerson is able to reinvent the need to understand the importance of one's good state of mind, regardless of the limits of place and time, exercising the drives of the self with harmony with the Over-Soul, and pointing to the risks of looking for one's completion in the external world. Thus, Milton's idea of a "Paradise within" (12. 587) erred and found its destiny in Emerson's essay and philosophy.

To continue this analysis, the other North-American authors to be studied with respect to their relationships with Milton are Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe. It is possible to read their work together, following Morgan's texts/discourses/cultures triangle structure, especially in regard to the fall(s) experienced by their protagonists, when they live in their Edenic settings only to meet with evil forces in the short stories "Young Goodman Brown" (1835)

---

76 All the references to *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, John. Orgel, Stephen; Goldberg, Jonathan, eds. *John Milton*: the major works. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991 and they will be cited parenthetically with the book number, followed by the number of the line(s).

by Hawthorne,[77] and "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) by Poe. For John Hardt in his article, "Doubts in the American Garden: Three Cases of Paradisal Skepticism" (1988), the "paradisal skepticism" is "a retreat from the paradisal ideal with a recognition of limits in human knowledge" (249). These works are read as portraits of the American experience and instead of presenting man going from ignorance to knowledge, he realizes that he is not capable of knowing everything. In "Young Goodman Brown," Hardt suggests that the woods were once the Garden of Eden, but have been contaminated by the serpent (the old man), who becomes responsible for the ritual in the wild. The movement the protagonist goes through, from faith, both literally and figuratively, towards the unknown, guided by a serpent-like form of the old man's staff resembles Milton's evil guidance in *Paradise Lost*. Although at first sight the comparison lies on the aspect of similarities, Hawthorne deviates from Milton when Brown's fall becomes an uncertainty, being left to the reader's decision to interpret the protagonist's journey to the wilderness as a fantasy or an actual fall.

In "The Fall of the House of Usher," the house can be compared to a Haunted Palace, described in the embedded story and displayed under "the mystic current of its meaning" (556). The Haunted Palace suggests the paradisal ideal, according to Hardt's thought, a place "By good angels tenanted, / Once a fair and stately palace" (556) that turns out to be "A hideous throng rush out forever, / And laugh – but smile no more" (556). The portrayal of evil in this story is highlighted in the figure of the house directly associated to The Haunted Palace and the fall depicted is the one of evil itself. Poe also takes the nature of evil from *Paradise Lost* and plays with it, exercising aspects of depravity in the images of the fissure of the house, in the idea of a tarn reflecting all the characters, and in the aspects of forbidden knowledge, with all these elements culminating in a complete disintegration. Poe revisits the enterprise of evil in

77 The analysis of the textual relations between Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter" is part of this study, but it is not included in this article, because there is another text in this edition that works on this topic.

Satan's acts from the English epic poem, disintegrated when he returns to Hell after the Fall of Adam and Eve, thinking himself victorious, but instead, with his peers, he ends up chewing dust and bitter ashes. Thus, when he revisits Satan's acts, Poe's short story offers an additional reading for the representation of evil.

The terms used by Poe in the narrative of The Haunted Palace direct the reader to an allusion to *Paradise Lost*, especially to the structure of Pandemonium. Milton's elements circulate in the stories of Poe and Hawthorne analyzed so far, but they can also be found in other short stories, for example in Poe's "Never Bet the Devil your Head" (1841). In "Never Bet the Devil your Head," the protagonist Toby Dammit invokes the devil and meets him at the passage of a bridge. It is interesting to note the presence of an old man as a character who, according to the narrative, is the devil himself. This can be compared to the old man in Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," and in both texts the expressions of the devil are ready to tempt and conduct the protagonists to evil. Poe uses the figure of an old man as the devil ready to receive what has been bet with him, Dammit's own head. The elements of composition used by the North-American writer were choices that may have come from the traces he inherited from Milton. The personified devil, the bridge and the fall, symbolized by Dammit's loss of his head/mind, are examples of textual compositions recreated by Poe in the writing of his short story. Poe presents a view that defies Transcendentalism when he mocks transcendental beliefs by allowing his characters, especially Roderick Usher, Madeline Usher, the house, and Toby Dammit, to travel in a downward motion into decay and death, rather than the upward transcendence into life and rebirth. From such a perspective, he supplements Milton's creation, adding different meanings to the paths of the devil. On Poe's bridge, for instance, Dammit is guided by the hand of the old man, as if he is being directed through "a passage broad, / Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell" (X. 304-305), in other words, the paved bridge in *Paradise Lost* is wide open for Dammit's fall. Poe also deviates from the American Transcendental project by dislocating some compositional constituents from *Paradise Lost*, as in an erratic ironical strategy.

Herman Melville's short story, "Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" (1853), also presents an ironical technique of recreation, when analyzed together with *Paradise Lost*. Melville was a Milton reader and annotated copies of Milton's poetry were found in his private collection, with interesting comments that can illustrate his affinity with the English poet. Some analyses of Melville's work in relation to Milton's texts have already been made, especially in regard to the North-American novel *Moby-Dick*.[78] Robin Grey, who discusses the legacy of Britain in Melville's oeuvre (2006), points out that "With the mid1980s discovery of Melville's marked and annotated two-volume 1836 edition of Milton's poetry (now housed at Princeton University Library), we have learned that he saw in Milton an independent thinker who was as skeptical of religious and civil institutions as he was" (256). Melville's dedication to the reading of early modern classics was a common habit among the writers of his time. On Grey's account, Melville "found himself in the awkward position of sharing a mother tongue and cultural heritage with Great Britain, while feeling compelled to search for a fresh way of writing that was distinctly American" (250). The affinity with the representatives of the early modern period in English literature, for example Shakespeare, Milton, Marvel, and others,[79] together with the responsibility and desire to share the inheritance of their works with the rather recent North-American literary production, brought about rewritings of those classics. In Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" and his other compositions, the North-American author recreates the early modern English tradition, not to legitimize it, but to exercise an active reader/writer attitude, with texts that had their own trajectory and reinterpretation.

Melville's annotations in his copies of Milton's poetry (mentioned above) confirm this active attitude. He wrote: "he who thinks for himself can never remain of the same mind. I doubt not that darker doubts crossed Milton's soul,

78 See Grey, R.; Guttmann, A.; Sheldon, L.; and Pommer, H..

79 For the list of authors from this period that was in Melville's private library, see Kelley, Wyn, ed. *A Companion to Herman Melville*. Chicago: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

than ever disturbed Voltair" (Grey, *Complicity*, 227). In this sense, Melville acknowledges that the mind is in constant exercise and that he is in sympathy with Milton's questions and, at the same time, he is ready to establish a dialogue with him. Robin Grey provides an intriguing point in Melville's view on Milton: "And so Melville went to great lengths to discover in Milton's poetry ironies, insinuations, and other strategies camouflaging what he believed were signs of Milton's disillusionment and unbelief after the failure of the English Civil War" (Grey 214). Melville's discoveries of Milton's strategies, especially involving his ironies, contributed to the North-American writer's recreations and also to his disbelief in religion, which reinforces his questions on the issue of choice and the rights of the individual in relation to the systems of oppression and power.

For the analysis of "Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" and its intertextual relations to *Paradise Lost*, some definitions of the term irony are necessary to the writing of this text, mainly due to the fact that this rhetorical figure can be associated with the movements of *destinerrance*. For Linda Hutcheon in *The Complex Functions of Irony* (1992), "irony should not be simply taken — as a deliberate evasion of responsibility, instead it is with full awareness of the weight of any judgement that the ironist continues to search, to strive for the answers yet to come" (224). The use of irony involves the necessity of a deferral for elaboration of meaning. Hutcheon's opinion is in consonance with Søren Kierkegaard's *Concept of Irony* (1841). For Kierkegaard, in irony the subject is negatively free, since the actuality that is supposed to give the subject content is not there[80] (262). In such a notion, the subjectivity is totally free and transcends the barriers of time and space. Jacob Bøggild reads Kierkegaard's irony in his article "Irony haunts" (2009), using Shakespeare's metaphorical structure in *Hamlet*, "the time is out-of-joint", to discuss the disorder of time and how it brings about the impossibility of fixing a unique idea and how, because of that, the effects of irony are never immediate, but always deferred.

80 The reference to Kierkegaard's book was taken from the Portuguese version (2005) and the translation is mine.

In Melville's short story, the characterization of the protagonist Bartleby plays on ironical techniques that can be read as receiving various traces from distinct traditions. In this reading, one of these possible traces is from Milton's *Paradise Lost,* and the relationship between these texts is seen wandering different paths of significance. Melville elects Milton's inheritance in the composition of Bartleby's fictional withdrawal from life. This issue represents an ancient theme of history and literature that is also alluded to in the lines of the epic poem. The sentence uttered by Bartleby throughout the narrative, "I would prefer not to," denoting his refusal to do the everyday chores from the law office, plays with the idea of choice and marks his refusal to submit. Although this reference is not direct to *Paradise Lost*, the possibility of reading it with the parts below brings light to a relation that is not based on presence, but absence, and in such, irony plays an important role:

> All is not lost – the unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield – And what
> is else not to be overcome. (I. 106-109)
>
> When Will and Reason (Reason also is Choice),
> Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
> Made passive both, had served Necessity,
> Not me? They, therefore, as to right belonged,
> So were created, nor can justly accuse
> Their maker, or their making, or their Fate,
> As if Predestination overruled
> Their will. (III. 108-115)

The first quotation is spoken by Satan, immediately after the fall of the angels; a crucial moment for the evil decision of not submitting to God's authority. In the second, God is speaking, highlighting the importance of choice with the granted exercise of free will. The word "choice" is written in capital letters to emphasize the humane attitude of guiding his/her destiny, since the idea of Predestination is blurred by the words of God. The voices of good and evil are heard in *Paradise Lost,* in the issue of predestination versus free will.

These echoes resound not only in Milton's epic poem – they are also present in the narrator's doubt of how to behave in Bartleby's situation:

> For the first time in my life a feeling of overpowering stinging melancholy seized me. Before, I had never experienced aught but a not unpleasing sadness. The bond of a common humanity now drew me irresistibly to gloom. A fraternal melancholy! For both I and Bartleby were sons of Adam. (682)

> Under the circumstances, those books induced a salutary feeling. Gradually I slid into the persuasion that these troubles of mine, touching the scrivener, had been all predestined from eternity, and Bartleby was billeted upon me for some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence, which it was not for a mere mortal like me to fathom. (682)

In the first passage, the narrator suffers from a fraternal melancholy; after all, he and Bartleby were sons of Adam. The reference to Adam can also be biblical; however, the fraternal melancholy of God in the epic poem shows the attitudes of the Father being blamed for the sadness of His progeny. Two fathers are referred to in *Paradise Lost* (God and Adam, the divine and the humane, respectively) and reading the poem's passage together with these parts of the short story reinforces the human melancholy experienced in situations that are contrary to the so called ordinary life. The second passage, in the references of books that question the issues of free will versus predestination, leads to the conclusion that the fraternal melancholy is reached via the "mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence." It seems that Bartleby's story responds to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, to the arguments that the epic poem opened to debate, to the portrayal of the lacuna that the fallen human race carries. Thus, Melville's irony problematizes the issue of free will, questions the position of God and His attitudes and demonstrates how humankind suffers from the consequences of them. It is possible to say that such questions highlight Milton's presence as an absent elected heir in Melville's short story and these relations can be noticed only through the experiences of a Miltonic reader.

In Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), Milton's traces are more clearly perceived, and a direct quotation from *Paradise Lost* is borrowed in the last lines of this novel. The line "The world's all before us" in the novel (590) is uttered by Caspar Goodwood begging Isabel Archer to leave her evil husband and run away with him. For Lyall Powers in the essay, "*The Portrait of a Lady*: 'The Eternal Mystery of Things'" (1959), the direct reference to *Paradise Lost* suggests that Isabel goes through a fortunate fall and contributes to an immediate association to the pair Adam and Eve in the final scene of the epic poem:

> [Isabel] has not regained her prelapsarian innocence, but rather has achieved that higher innocence, that superior goodness, which comes to the fallen who are saved. The pattern here is the familiar one of the paradox of the fortunate fall. Isabel's knowledge of evil, her fall into the evil embrace of Gilbert Osmond, is the equivalent of the *felix culpa*. (153)

The paradox of the *felix culpa* is one of the major themes of *Paradise Lost*, with the Fall being the sin that man needed to commit for the great benefit of the incarnation and the redemption of the Savior. In other words, through evil, man would be able to understand goodness. In the case of the protagonist of *The Portrait*, according to Lyall Powers, Isabel's return to her evil husband is the portrait of her redemption in her determination to "confront the evil of the world" (153). Just like Adam and Eve leaving Paradise, who knew they would have to undertake evil and exercise their choice to spiritually regenerate themselves and follow their relation with Providence accordingly.

The issue of individual choice is another major theme in the English poem and it opens other possible readings of the textual relations between *Paradise Lost* and *The Portrait*. For Arnold Kettle in *An Introduction to the English Novel* (1953), "it would not be outrageous, though it might be misleading, to call [*The Portrait*] a nineteenth-century *Paradise Lost*" (19). The critic suggests this similarity with the epic poem due to the idea of the loss of faith in the notion of individual autonomy. In this sense, Isabel's belief in her individual autonomy brought to her life a hard lesson to be learned about the limitations of the self.

The works analyzed so far present major themes of Milton's creational universe and although they attempted to present new ideas in James's *Portrait*, the typological studies tend to be the main subject of such comparisons. While some works focus on similarities, this article privileges a different relation between the texts of James and Milton – one based on reinventions, on the logic of the supplement. According to Derrida's idea, this logic[81] adds meaning and works as a surplus that supplements other texts. The Derridean supplementary logic can also be read in the unfolding traits of the term *destinerrance*. Milton's text [*Paradise Lost*] errs and finds *The Portrait* as one of its possible destinies and this novel adds a new meaning to the epic poem, and in its transmission, James's novel also wanders in uncertain ways and may arouse even more possibilities for the reading of the English poem in North-American literature. As mentioned previously, the operation of *destinerrance* is a two-way street, in which both texts and traditions receive benefits in the intertextual dialogues they establish.

Isabel Archer is characterized in a way that provides different meanings to Milton's Eve. Although in the beginning of the novel the comparisons between these two women are based on similarities, because both share traces of innocence and a lack of knowledge of evil, the novel continues in an opposite direction in relation to the epic. In Eve's case, she follows the tradition expected for women, despite the fact that she sometimes acts in contrary ways, for instance, in the moment she demanded some free time for laboring alone, in the eating of the fruit, and when she decided to share her disobedience with Adam. Milton carefully portrayed her to fit the womanly type of his time. Even though she presents some active behavior, she finished the epic poem with her male companion, following him unquestionably, directed by Michael. James's portrayal of Isabel seems to deviate from the image of the women in the 19th century context. At that time, women were brought up for marriage and opportunities for good unions were rarely declined. Isabel refused all the good proposals, not fitting what was expected of her. She did exactly what nobody approved of. In addition, she

81 For more details on this logic, see Derrida, J.; *Of Grammatology*, 1976.

decided to go back to her husband after the second time Goodwood proposed to her, not because of companionship and the maintenance of her marriage, but for the need to prove the choice was only hers, with nobody guiding her decision. In this way, Isabel adds new characteristics to Eve; she does not follow the expectations of the plot, instead she exercises her own choice, distancing herself from good and preferring to continue on an evil track, for the sake of her own demonstration of strength.

For this reading, it is important to refer to the line of *Paradise Lost* quoted in James's novel and expanded a little more: "The world's all before us – and the world's very big. I know something about that" (590). This passage was uttered by Goodwood trying to convince Isabel to go with him and find happiness by his side, leaving her evil husband and getting rid of all her suffering. In Goodwood's words she would be able to find companionship and feel secure; after all, he insisted that she should be his as he was hers. An aspect of deliverance, just like the one in Eve's case, was expected from Isabel. She ultimately decided on a different direction, by saying "the world's very small" (590) and disagreeing with him about the world being very big. Nevertheless, in the words of the narrator, it is possible to access her mind and understands that what she said was not what she meant:

> The world, in truth, had never seemed so large [for Isabel]; it seemed to open out, all round her, to take the form of a might sea, where she floated in fathomless waters. She had wanted help, and here was help …; but she believed just then that to let him take her in his arms would be the next best thing to her dying. (590)

Isabel's eyes seem to be like Eve's in the last lines of *Paradise Lost*, getting to know how big the next step would be. On the other hand, her refusal to accept his proposal and the fact that she asked Goodwood to go away demonstrate that she sees through different lenses. The only guidance Isabel accepts was her own, and for this reason, to let Goodwood take her in his arms would be just like dying. Instead of forming a perfect couple [Isabel and Goodwood], representing good and ready to face the world followed by Providence, Isabel deviates from the epic poem's image and directs her steps in a different direction.

Ian Bickford, in his essay, "To Save the Ship: *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Paradise Lost*" (2015), suggests an interesting reading for James's recursive appropriation and recreation of *Paradise Lost*:

> Milton is for Caspar "emphatically American", capturing in the "wandering steps" of Adam and Eve the whole sense of westward expansion and manifest destiny, the world a frontier with the incredible capacity to erase the past. But Isabel detecting a darker and an older note, hears in Caspar's paraphrase the haunting voice of that past and realizes finally horror of her dilemma wherein every alternative empties, like a cruel maze, into the inherited conditions she once thought herself fit to elude. In refusing Caspar, Isabel effectively refuses Caspar's version of Milton. … In folding Milton's text into his own, he [James] emphasizes Eve's dilemma, isolating her character from the epic structure and thereby reconditioning that structure for a transatlantic context.

Bickford's text follows with the same movement of *destinerrance* when he refers to James's recursive appropriation and his reconditioning of Milton's structure for a transatlantic context. There is, in the third recreational act, the logic of the supplement, an erring movement and a transposition of meaning, which carry different effects to a distinct time and space. Thus, with the analyses presented and Bickford's suggestion, *The Portrait of a Lady* is one of the destinies of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and James an heir, who is able to appropriate the inheritance received in his compositional context of 19th century North-American Literature.

Appropriation, recreation, creation or election of precursors, the possibility of one work supplementing another, the recursive use of irony, intertextuality, these terms and the notions they carry are all encompassed in the idea of *destinerrance* and, to a certain extent they promote the reading of influence under erasure. The erasure on influence does not intend to produce a new paradigm for the critical reading of literature, but rather, this strategy helps compose the idea of an operation different from the fixed notion of debt, deviating from the establishment that an "after" or secondary text (in chronological or regional order) is less important than a "before," and deposing a hierarchical relation among texts. While the proposal to draw parallels among texts is legitimate, especially in lists and inventories of writers' private collections to understand

the choices of their private libraries, such studies cannot only focus on the investigations and counting of sources. It is in this matter that *destinerrance* operates and provides an afterlife for influence. The analyses presented here demonstrate how the North-American writers recreated Milton and how their texts gained more life when discussed together as texts/discourses/cultures. The study of the erring destinies of Milton's texts in other contexts revives the English poet's oeuvre and this is reciprocal for the North-American works. This revival may be what Milton wished for his texts when he said, "I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they shall not willingly let it die"[82]. These words contribute to the last lines of this article, and in them, there is the certainty that the North-American writers willingly revivify Milton's written ideas, because they chose to be readers and heirs of his tradition.

Works Cited

Bickford, Ian: "To Save the Ship: *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Paradise Lost*". International Milton Symposium - IMS 11. Exeter University, UK. 20 July 2015. Lecture.

Bloom, Harold. Interview by Paul Holdengraber. New York Public Library. http://yalepress.yale.edu/book.asp?isbn=9780300167603, 2011. Web. 15 Dec. 2015.

---. *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

---. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Boggild, Jacob. "Irony haunts". In: CAPPELORN, Niels; DEUSER, Hermann (eds.). *Kierkegaard Studies*. Berlim: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2009, p. 248-267.

Borges, Jorge Luis. *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*. New York: New Directions Publishing, 1964.

82 Milton 1991, p. 169.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Spivak. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976.

---. *Paper Machine*. Trans. Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Emerson, Ralph. "Self-Reliance". *The American Tradition in Literature.* Ed. Perkins, George, and Barbara Perkins. Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1999, p. 393-408. Print.

Ferrara, Anthony. *The Influence of John Milton on the Fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne.* Boca Raton: Florida Atlantic University Press, 1975.

Grey, Robin. *The Complicity of Imagination: The American Renaissance, Contests of Authority, and Seventeenth-Century English Culture***.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

---. "The Legacy of Britain". *A Companion to Herman Melville*. Ed. Kelley, Wyn. Chicago: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Guttmann, Allen. "From Typee to Moby-Dick: Melville's Allusive Art". *Modern Language Quarterly***,** 24 (1963).

Hardt, John S. "Doubts in the American Garden: Three Cases of Paradisal Skepticism". *Studies in Short Fiction* 25 (3): 249-59, 1988.

Hawthorne. Nathaniel. "Young Goodman Brown". *The American Tradition in Literature.* Ed. Perkins, George, and Barbara Perkins. Boston: McGrawHill College, 1999, 604-612. Print.

Hutcheon, Linda. "The Complex Functions of Irony". *Revista Canadense de Estudios Hispánicos* 16 (1992): 219-234. JSTOR. Web. 20 Dec 2015. James, Henry. *The Portrait of a Lady*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963.

Kelley, Wyn, ed. *A Companion to Herman Melville*. Chicago: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Kettle, Arnold. *An Introduction to the English Novel*. 2 vol.; London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1953, II.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *O Conceito de Ironia:* Constantemente Referido a Sócrates. Bragança Paulista: Editora São Francisco, 2005.

Melville, Herman. “Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street”. *The American Tradition in Literature.* Ed. Perkins, George, and Barbara Perkins. Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1999, 672-694. Print.

Milton, John. Orgel, Stephen; Goldberg, Jonathan, eds. *John Milton*: the major works. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Morgan, Thais E. “Is There an Intertext in this Text? Literary and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intertextuality”, *apud* Landwehr, Margarete**.** *Introduction: Literature and the visual arts; questions of influence and intertextuality***.** *College Literature*, West Chester, v. 29, Issue 3, p. 1-40, Summer, 2002.

Poe, Edgar, A. *Complete Tales and Poems*. New Jersey: Castle Books, 2001.

---. “The Fall of the House of Usher”. *The American Tradition in Literature.* Ed. Perkins, George, and Barbara Perkins. Boston: McGraw-Hill College, 1999, p. 551-562. Print.

Pommer, Henry. *Milton and Melville*. New York: Cooper Square Press, 1970.

Sá, Luiz Fernando Ferreira. “Shalimar, the Ex-Centric: Rushdie Reads Milton Through Derrida”. *Itinerários*, Araraquara, n. 37, Jul./Dec. 2013. 97-109. Web. 25 Nov. 2015.

Powers, Lyall. The Portrait of a Lady: “The Eternal Mystery of Things”. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction.* Vol. 14, No. 2 (Sep., 1959), pp. 143-155.

Schwartz, Regina. M. *Remembering and Repeating: On Milton’s Theology and Poetics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Sheldon, Leslie. “Messianic Power and Satanic Decay: Milton in Moby-Dick”. *Leviathan*. Volume 4, Issue 1-2, March 2002. pp. 29-50

Shawcross, John. *John Milton and Influence*: *Presence in Literature, History and Culture*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1991.

Whicher, Stephen E., and Robert E. Spiller, eds. *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. 3rd ed . Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966.

Frames, Fancy, and Error in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” and *Paradise Lost*

Geraldo Magela Cáffaro

“Rappaccini’s Daughter” (1844-6) stands as one of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s most complex tales. A combination of romance and tragedy, a testimony of authorial ambition, and a testing ground for the author’s longer works (such as *The Scarlet Letter*), it has accrued several critical responses since its publication and has been adapted as a play and an opera in the twentieth century.[83] While these responses and adaptations have guaranteed an afterlife for the story, critics have often read it according to typologies and stereotypes rooted in the author’s puritan background or in the story’s subtexts, most notably Dante’s *Divine Comedy* (1472), Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* (1590), and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667).

Writing specifically on the connection of the story with the latter in “Milton and Hawthorne: The Second Fall in ‘Rappaccini’s Daughter’,” Sheldon Liebman notes that critics have found it difficult to fit all the characters of Hawthorne’s work within the plot of *Paradise Lost* (526). Nonetheless, disregarding Julian Smith’s view according to which *Paradise Lost* can hardly be taken as a model for “Rappaccini” (526), he argues for an unequivocal reading of Baglioni as

83 The play *La Hija de Rappaccini* was written by Octavio Paz and published in 1956. In 1991, the opera – composed by Daniel Catán and based on Paz’s play – premièred at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.

Satan's counterpart in the nineteenth-century fable. In this paper, I propose an alternative approach to that of Liebman's; instead of tracing correspondences between characters – Baglioni as Satan, or Giovanni as Eve, for example – I shall read both works taking into account situations of indeterminacy, ambiguity, as well as perceptual and interpretative distortions. The analysis proposed, which take "frames, fancy, and error" as signposts, will also contemplate points of contact (and dispersion) on thematic and lexical levels between the two works.

As an introduction to the whole analysis, I present the comparative approach adopted in the study of the Milton-Hawthorne connection. This presentation will be followed by a discussion of the two authors' relationship to tradition and of the authorial and paratextual aspects of their works.

If on the one hand Liebman acknowledges the role of ambiguity and indeterminacy in Hawthorne's treatment of Giovanni and indicates important parallels between *Paradise Lost* and "Rappaccini's Daughter," on the other he fails to acknowledge that the relationship between the two works and authors will always be subject to critical (mis)readings. The Edenic garden and the fall are obvious thematic links between the seventeenth century epic and the nineteenth century romance, but any attempt to conflate them, or to show how the former served as a "source" for the latter will simply reproduce cultural, geographical, and temporal hierarchies that have been under attack in comparative studies over the last decades. In carrying out a comparative reading of *Paradise Lost* and "Rappaccini's Daughter," I am aware of the obvious discontinuities and differences between those texts but I shall not address those in order to show the superiority of the former over the latter – either based on precedence or national affiliation (England versus its former colony). The intersections I identify are critical interventions and derive from an understanding of tradition as an element erring through time and enabling encounters among texts of different periods and natures.

Tradition is of paramount importance in evaluations of *Paradise Lost.* Likewise, "Rappaccini's Daughter" is ostensibly intertextual and, as shown in the opening of this text, turned to the European literary canon of the fifteenth,

sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Concerning *Paradise Lost*, Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá observes that

> the poet convokes the Muse and invokes his predecessors, Homer, Hesiod, and Virgil, who also establish origins (domination and resistance) and interrogate into the causes that led to the created universe. *Paradise Lost* does not hide behind the pretense to be an originary song – the very first line of the epic argues about the origin of the errors and its evils. (92)[84]

Hawthorne does not display the same pretense as Milton, but in the opening of the tale proper (the preface will be discussed further on) he elects a place characterized by antiquity and literary ancestry as the setting for his drama:

> Giovanni, who had but a scanty supply of ducats in his pocket, took lodgings in a high and gloomy chamber of an old edifice, which looked not unworthy to have been the palace of a Paduan noble, and which, in fact, exhibited over its entrance the armorial bearings of a family long since extinct. The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of his family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno. (976)

In addition to setting an authoritative ground for the narrative, this excerpt foreshadows Giovanni's ordeal in dealing with the threat represented by Beatrice. Furthermore, it establishes a link between the diegetic level of the story and Dante's poem, which in turn constitutes an "external" referential field, a supplementary element that destabilizes the very idea of origin (and unity) as well as the frontiers between inside (the narrative) and the outside (the author's knowledge of and use of the canon). In what follows I expand this discussion on textual and semiotic frontiers in light of the notion of "frames."

---

84 My translation. "o poeta convoca a Musa e invoca seus predecessores, Homero, Hesíodo e Virgílio, os quais também estabelecem origens (domínio e resistência) e perguntam sobre as causas propiciadoras do universo criado. *Paraíso Perdido* não se esconde por trás da pretensão de ser uma música de origem – até mesmo na sua primeira linha o épico argumenta sobre a origem do erro e seus males."

1. Frames and Framing

According to John Frow (1982), the frame is "the limit, at once material and immaterial, literal and figurative, between adjacent and dissimilar ontological realms" (35). It follows that literary frames determine the value of what they frame and are controlled by a number of elements such as the author, publishing houses, and aesthetic conventions. Frow illustrates his concept of frame by identifying it with "the beginning of a text, the point at which the distancing between author and narrator usually occurs" (26). Although this point is not always so evident and framing is not restricted to beginnings, Frow's definition matches the structure of both *Paradise Lost* and "Rappaccini's Daughter." Examining how these two works are permeated and determined by their frames (and framing situations) shall provide elements for comparison and also reveal their embeddedness in particular contexts of production and reception.

Paradise Lost was originally published without any paratextual apparatus; for the subsequent edition, Milton was requested to append "Arguments" summarizing the content of each of the books. Furthermore, the author's manifesto for heroic verse in the second edition (1674) and the incorporated prefaces to Books 1, 3, 7 and 9 are particularly significant as instances of authorial intervention and situate the epic in relation to its period's context and conventions. If in the poem, the speaker sets out to "justify the ways of God to man," in the manifesto the justification consists in reacting against "a barbarous age" and the banalization of rhyme by "some famous modern poets" (1817). "The Verse" arguably carries political as well as aesthetic implications, and the need to recover an ancient freedom against "modern bondage" may be read as a commentary on the restoration of the monarchy by Charles II, which took place in 1660. By contrast, the incorporated prefaces frame the poem around an autobiographical space as Milton resorts to the Muses to seek aid to his ambitious enterprise in face of his blindness:

> ... thee I revisit safe,
> And feel thy Sovran vital lamp; but thou

> Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
> To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
> So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
> Or dim suffusion veiled. (3.21-6, 1859) [85]

In any case, the autobiographical, political, and aesthetic realms are enmeshed in those framing instances of *Paradise Lost*. Something similar happens in the preface to "Rappaccini's Daughter." Entitled "From the Writings of Aubépine," this introductory text was removed from the first edition of *Mosses from an Old Manse* in 1846 because of its declared alignment with the *Democratic Review*, and, by extension, with the political leanings of its editor. Hiding behind a penname and an editor persona, Hawthorne introduces himself to the public and claims a place "between the Transcendentalists" and "the great body of pen-and-ink men who address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude" (975). The author's in-between position is linked with his belief that his fictions make "no reference either to time or space," which justifies his figurative dislocation towards the more cosmopolitan and autonomous French literary field. While Hawthorne's authorial statement is more ambiguous and less assertive than any of Milton's discussed above, he shares with the English poet the same concern with freedom and the same self-authorizing impulse. This impulse is manifested in the catalogue of his works presented in French at the end of the preface, a catalogue meant to give credibility and visibility to the author. With the botanical penname "Aubépine" (a translation of Hawthorne's own name to French), he establishes a link with the story it antecedes, which features a garden of genetically manipulated plants.

If we consider Erwin Goffman's more general understanding of "framing" as a means by which perception is organized (21), we can move beyond the preface to look at the protagonist Giovanni Guasconti's trajectory. The window in his abode affords the protagonist a privileged vantage point from which he

85 References are to the version of *Paradise Lost* anthologized in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Sixteenth Century, The Early Seventeenth Century*, vol. 1B, edited by M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt. The book number is followed by the line numbers.

can watch the garden, the scientist Rappaccini, and his daughter. The window is, indeed, one of the most obvious framing devices for the development of the story. In Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*, the prospect from which Satan overlooks Eden and its inhabitants also has a special prominence in the narrative: "Beneath him with new wonder now he views/To all delight of human sense exposed/In narrow room nature's whole wealth, yea more…" (4.205-7, 1878). A few lines before, Satan's position in relation to the new world had been described as follows:

> and the page, separated by a comma.
> So on he fares, and to the border comes
> Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
> Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
> As with a rural mound the champaign head
> Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
> With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
> Access denied; and overhead up grew
> Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,
> Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
> A sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend
> Shade above shade, a woody theater. (4.131-141, 1877)

An enclosed, protected garden also places Giovanni at the margins in "Rappacini's Daughter." The sense of wonder and the theatrical analogy are two other elements pertinent to the comparison, as the following excerpt shows: "… and Giovanni, at his lofty window, rubbed his eyes, and almost doubted whether it were a girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to another. The *scene* soon terminated" (my emphasis, 980). A number of the events in Hawthorne's narrative unfold as if being watched in a theatre and Giovanni is both a spectator and an actor in them (he is watched by Rappaccini as he approaches Beatrice and by Baglioni at the upshot of the drama).

But Giovanni's position as a spectator matters because it produces the gravest consequences. His apprehension of Rappaccini and Beatrice is constantly being mediated by other framing devices, such as the "sculptured portal" from which Beatrice appears and disappears in the garden. The portal defines a limit around Beatrice, marks a territory Giovanni should not trespass, and highlights

her otherworldly nature: "the maiden of a lonely island" "conversing with a voyager from the civilized world" (992). The underlying reference to Europe's maritime voyages and imperialist expansion furnishes another important parallel with *Paradise Lost*, in which the colonial imaginary is thrown into sharp relief. [86]The portal additionally inscribes a tension between inside and outside, a tension that is reflected in Giovanni's puzzlement at Beatrice's poisonousness in contrast with the purity of her heart. The second fall in "Rappaccini's Daughter" leads Giovanni to kill Beatrice because he is trapped inside a world of external appearances from which there is no redemption. In addition to the narrator's persistent moralizing, Beatrice warns him to "[f]orget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me. If true to the outward senses, still it may be false in its essence. But the words of Beatrice Rappaccini's lips are true from the depth of the heart. Those you may believe!" (992). In *Paradise Lost* Eve is also tricked by the serpent's appearance,[87] and as they leave Paradise they are comforted by Michael who tells them they shall have "A paradise within thee, happier far" (12.586, 2043).

2. Fancy

"Fancy" is a key word in Beatrice's warning to Giovanni and it echoes in the whole work with remarkable persistence, which does not exclude the preface, in which Aubépine's writings are described as "not altogether destitute of *fancy* and originality" (my emphasis, 975). Fancy is also one of Satan's targets in the ploy to tempt Eve in Book 4, as Liebman aptly reminds us in his text.

---

86 Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá reviews criticism on the relationship between *Paradise Lost* and imperialism/colonialism in "Paraíso Perdido Encontra a Cena: Uma Conversação Póscolonial." *Terra Roxa e Outras Terras* 3 (2003): 84-96.

87 Satan uses his disguise as a serpent as one of a number of arguments to convince Eve to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. Therefore, the tempting functions on a rhetorical level while also relying on the living presence of the serpent and on its exceptional attributes.

> Assaying by his Devilish art to reach
> The Organs of her Fancy, and with them Forge
> Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams,
> Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
> Th'animal Spirits that from pure blood arise
> Like gentle breaths from Rivers pure, thence raise
> At least distempered, discontented thoughts,
> Vain hopes, vain aimes, inordinate desires
> Blown up with high conceits ingendring pride. (4.801-809, 1891)

Here fancy is what should suspend reason, awaken desire and cause disobedience. After Eve tells Adam about her dream in Book 5, he dismisses the danger it forbore by expounding on the psychological workings of that faculty:

> But know that in the soul
> Are many lesser faculties that serve
> Reason as chief: among these fancy next
> Her office holds; of all external things,
> Which the five watchful senses represent,
> She forms imaginations, aery shapes,
> Which reason joining or disjoining, frames
> All what we affirm or what deny, and call
> Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
> Into her private cell when nature rests.
> Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes
> To imitate her; but misjoining shapes,
> Ill matching words and deeds long past or late. (5.100-113, 1897-8)

The insight Adam offers on fancy is a remarkable anticipation of Freud's theory of the unconscious. Hawthorne does not place that much emphasis on dreams but rather on the Transcendentalist (and platonic) binaries visible/invisible, appearance/reality. The explicit theoretical concern with that faculty, nonetheless, is another important point of intersection between the two works under consideration and because of this it invites further consideration.

In his historicization of theories regarding the imaginary, Wolfgang Iser concludes that "Repeatedly, fantasy appears not as a substance but as a function preceding what is, even though it can manifest itself only in what is" (172). Further in the same exposition, he adds that "what is called fancy or fantasy or

imagination cannot be objectified, for it is not an entity but an activity" (182). In "Fancy, Dreams, and Paradise: Miltonic and Baconian Imagery in Coleridge's Kubla Khan" (2013), Michael Rager remarks that in the "identification of Eve's dream with Fancy, the division of the self in dreams is presented in which the body unknowingly projects its own feelings onto objects, seeing them as alien" (639). Fancy in "Rappacini's Daughter" may be read in light of both authors and also in relation to Milton's poem: fancy is not a substance; it is an activity and also a vehicle of alienation. As such, it is what causes Giovanni to demonize Beatrice, even if some may consider his error a result of Baglioni's plot to thwart Rappaccini's plans. Giovanni is not tempted by Baglioni in the same way as Eve is by Satan. He becomes a prey to his own desire and perceptual delusions.

The narrator is largely to blame for this impression and he seems to require of readers that they perceive ambivalences in his characters as well as in his own version of the events. The multi-layered structure of the work and the several framing devices employed indicate that what is stake is the very impossibility of reaching a final, unified truth. The large number of modal verbs and expressions ("seem," "might have," "must have"), and the use of litotes ("not unworthy," "not unstudied") – especially common in Renaissance rhetoric and in *Paradise Lost* – reinforce this hypothesis. The very intertextual reference to the biblical narrative in "Rappaccini's Daughter" is not expressed through an affirmation but rather through a question: "Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world? – and this man, with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow, was he the Adam?" (979). Finally, when Giovanni first sees Beatrice in the garden, the narrator ponders that "Giovanni's fancy *must have* grown morbid, while he looked down into the garden; for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if there were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they…" (My emphasis, 980).

"Impression" is alternatively construed as "judgment" as the story unfolds: "But there is an influence in the light of morning that tends to rectify whatever errors of fancy, or even of judgment, we may have incurred during the sun's decline, or among the shadows of the night…" (980-1). If these shadows and

“the oppressive exhalations” (980) coming from the garden of poisonous plants may be regarded as affecting the protagonist’s perception, making him a victim of external circumstances, the narrator goes on to observe that Giovanni was aware of his own “wonder-working fancy” in attributing qualities to Beatrice and Rappaccini (981). In other words, Giovanni knows that the evil and supernatural characteristics he observes in the father and daughter may not be substances, but rather projections associated with an altered state of consciousness.

This altered state of consciousness is not, as I have suggested, merely a function of the odors of the flowers. Giovanni drinks wine with Baglioni before he watches a lizard fall dead in the garden – intoxicated by drops of poison – and his own intoxication is brought into focus: “unless Giovanni’s draught of wine had bewildered his senses…” “in the distance from which he gazed, he could scarcely have seen anything so minute”(984). The “reality” of the phenomena is constantly being put to the test, and when the insect dies at Beatrice’s breath, this event is depicted as a function of Giovanni’s fancy: “Now, here it could not be but that Giovanni’s Guasconti’s eyes deceived him. Be that as it might, he *fancied* that while Beatrice was gazing at the insect with childish delight, it grew faint and fell at her feet…” (My emphasis, 985).

3. Error

While fancy produces dislocations and distortions in “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” the phrase “errors of fancy” reinforces this effect but also works as a pun foreshadowing the postlapsarian fall in Hawthorne’s tale. In this sense, Hawthorne’s use of “errors of fancy” can be likened to Milton’s “mazie errour” (4.239, 1879) and “Serpent errour wandering” (7.302, 1940), phrases that were once considered stylistic aberrations but which were eventually understood as etymological puns by Christopher Ricks in *Milton’s Grand Style* (1963). In reviewing Ricks’s work, John Leonard informs us that in “Serpent errour wandering,” “All three words have sinister overtones, but in context all are innocent” (575). Leonard contrasts this view with that of Stanley Fish’s, for whom the extent to which the

phrase alludes to the fall should remain open (575). The appearance of "error" in different moments might counter the "innocence" of any of those phrases, but I tend to agree with Fish with regard to the openness of their interpretation.

Attention must be given to the etymology of "error" and the synonyms used in both works. The entry for the verb *err* in *The Online Etymology Dictionary* registers both the root *errer,* from Old French, which means "go astray, lose one's way; make a mistake, transgress;" and the Latin *errare*, meaning "wander; go astray."[88] *Paradise Lost* is centered around several situations of spatial dislocation which may be related to those ideas, beginning with Satan's fall (transgression and disobedience) and subsequent journey through the cosmos towards the newlycreated Eden. The passage in which Satan leads Eve to the Tree of Good and Evil is also remarkable for the repeated references to "wander" and for its rendering of a twisted, intricate, and devious path:

> … He leading swiftly rolled
> In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
> To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
> Brightens his crest, as when a wand'ring fire
> Compact of unctuous vapor, which the night
> Condenses, and the cold environs round,
> Kindled through agitation to a flame,
> Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,
> Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
> Misleads th'amazed night-wanderer from his way
> To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
> There swallowed up and lost, from succor far. (9.631-642, 1975)

It has to be remembered that "wander" takes on a different meaning at the very end of the poem, when Adam and Eve, after being escorted by Michael out of Paradise, walk "hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and slow" (12.647, 2044). Aware of their disobedience and its consequences, they are no longer moving towards their doom, but are rather guided by Providence to face a world of possibilities/choices and to seek Paradise within them. It can be concluded that

---

88 "Err." *The Online Etymology Dictionary*. 12 Dec. 2015. http://www.etymonline.com.

meanings are constantly shifting in the poem and the signifiers (error, wander) are in constant play with different signifiers, situations, and contexts.

Hawthorne insists on the confluence between *fancy* and *wander* in excerpts such as "wild vagaries which [Giovanni's] imagination ran riot continually producing," but the sense of spatial dislocation is also present in the story and may also be related to the idea of error. As the narrator informs us in the very first sentence of the story, Giovanni had traveled from the south of Italy to Padua, which makes him an outsider just like Satan in *Paradise Lost*. According to Lea Bertani Vozar Newman, the protagonist's surname Guasconti had been suggested by Nathaniel Hawthorne's wife Sophia. "She had studied Italian as a girl, and the meaning of the names in Italian is significant. For example, *gustaconti* means 'a meddler into the affairs,' an appropriate surname to assign to Giovanni, whose attempt to 'cure' Beatrice results in her death" (259). The parallel with Satan seems clear in light of this information, and although it disrupts the stock interpretation of the character as a counterpart to Eve, the correspondence is as slippery as any others the story could suggest.

While Giovanni is still watching the garden from above his window, he sees Beatrice *stray* "carelessly through the garden, approaching closer beneath" (987), and when he finally has access to the garden, the description goes as follows:

> He paused – hesitated – turned half about – but again went on. His withered guide led him along several obscure passages, and finally undid a door, through which, as it was opened, there came the sight and sound of rustling leaves, with the broken sunshine glimmering among them. Giovanni stepped forth, and forcing himself through the entanglement of shrub that wreathed its tendrils over the hidden entrance, he stood beneath his own window, in the open area of Doctor Rappaccini's garden. (990)

The "entanglement of shrub" echoes the "tangles" and intricacies of the passage from *Paradise Lost* quoted above. The fact that the guide is Lisabetta – the landlady of Giovanni's lodging – makes the play of correspondences even more shifty and indeterminate. Could this minor character be imagined as occupying Satan's place? The most important thing to keep in mind is that all these situations of dislocation, straying, or wandering anticipate the fatal conclusion

of the narrative. This fatal conclusion, the error or fall, could be interpreted either as Giovanni's infatuation with Beatrice, or as his very violence against her.

"Error" could alternatively be understood on a metaphorical level, as pointing to the several geographical, cultural, and literary dislocations evidenced in the story. Hawthorne derived the theme of his story from a passage – which he recorded in his own diary – about Mexican customs in Madame Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico*. Within the story, Baglioni tells Giovanni of the story of Alexander the Great's infatuation with a woman sent as a gift by an Indian prince and who, like Beatrice, had been instilled with poison from her birth. (996). As in *Paradise Lost*, dislocations proliferate as new allusions and cultural references are made.

Understanding tradition as an erring element opens a myriad of avenues of (mis)interpretations and (mis)readings. The one undertaken here approximates *Paradise Lost* and "Rappaccini's Daughter" but defies the unidirectional, hierarchical, and binary model commonly adopted. The relationship between the two works that emerge is that of an encounter that reconfigures and at the same time questions origins, ancestry, and unity. The focus on indeterminacy, instability and on the play of signifiers is certainly historically-determined and this work was deeply inspired by poststructuralist and postcolonial theories. But the direction adopted allows for a perception of the complexity of the two worlds and authors discussed, instead of just making them disappear in correspondences. Complexity manifests, in Milton and Hawthorne, in framing situations, in the elaboration of fancy as itself a mediating element, and in the emphasis given to error as a multivalent category. These situations and themes allow for greater understanding about nuances of their stories and also foreground the fine lines separating life, context, and work.

Works Cited

Catán, Daniel; Tovar, Juan, and Octavio Paz. *La Hija de Rappaccini: Opera in 2 Acts*. Musical Score, 1991.

Frow, John. "The Literary Frame." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 16.2 (1982): 25-30. Print.

Goffman, Erwin. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974. Print.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Tales and Sketches*. New York: The Library of America, 1982. Print.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*. Baltimore: J. Hopkins UP, 1993. Print.

Leonard, John. *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 16671970*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.

Liebman, Sheldon W. "Milton and Hawthorne: The Second Fall in 'Rappaccini's Daughter.'" New England Quarterly 41.4 (1968): 521-35.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. *Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Sixteenth*

Century, The Early Seventeenth Century. Seventh Edition, vol. 1B. Eds. M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York: 2000. 1815-2044.

Newman, Lea Bertani Vozar. *A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979. Print.

Paz, Octavio. *La Hija de Rappaccini*. Mexico, D.F: Ediciones Era, 1990. Print.

Raiger, Michael. "Fancy, Dreams, and Paradise: Miltonian and Baconian Garden Imagery in Coleridge's Kubla Khan" *Studies in Philology* 110.3 (2003): 637-65. Print.

Ricks, Christopher. *Milton's Grand Style*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1963. Print.

Sá, Luiz Fernando Ferreira. "Paraíso Perdido Encontra a Cena: Uma Conversação Pós-colonial." *Terra Roxa e Outras Terras* 3 (2003): 84-96. Print.

List of Contributors

JOHN ROGERS is a Professor of English at Yale University and former Master of Yale's Berkeley College. Having received his B.A. and Ph.D. from Yale, Rogers is the author of The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton, which was awarded the Modern Language Association First Book Prize as well as the Milton Society of America's James Holly Hanford Prize for Best Book. He is currently working on a book on Milton's relationship to antitrinitarian heresy, entitled Milton and the Heresy of Individualism.

NICHOLAS VON MALTZAHN is a Member of MLA, ACCUTE, Milton Society of America, Marvell Society. John Milton and Andrew Marvell are at the center of his work, where he looks at what happens when Baroque poetics encounter Enlightenment aesthetics. His exploration of Milton, Marvell, and toleration focuses on those writers' different legacies to later liberalism. His interest lies in a set of problems arising where religious and political persuasion or even coercion intersect with the category "literature" as it develops in this period. This study has grown out of his longer work on the reception of Milton's works to ca. 1780. His scholarly editions in progress are Milton's tracts on religious liberty (volume 4 of the Oxford UP Works of John Milton), and Andrew Marvell's letters (a projected volume 3 of the Yale UP Prose Works of Andrew Marvell).

STEPHEN FALLON - A scholar of Milton and early modern literature and intellectual history, Fallon is the author of Milton among the Philosophers, winner of the Milton Society of America's Hanford Award, and Milton's Peculiar Grace: Self-Representation and Authority(Cornell, 2007), winner of a Choice Magazine Outstanding Academic Title award. He has also co-edited The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton for Random House/Modern Library (2007) the Modern Library editions of Paradise Lost (2008), taken from the larger edition. His articles on Milton and on the Renaissance have appeared in various essay

collections and journals, including PMLA and the Journal of the History of Ideas. He is currently writing a series of essays on areas of convergence in the thought of Milton and Isaac Newton. While continuing to study the philosophical and theological contexts of seventeenth-century literature, he is also interested in the literary analysis of early modern philosophical texts. Fallon is on the Editorial Boards of the Yale Milton Encyclopedia and of Milton Studies, and he is on the Advisory Boards of PMLA and Papers on Language and Literature. He has twice been an NEH Fellow as well as a Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. With Clark Power, he co-founded and continues to teach a course on literary and philosophical classics at the South Bend Center for the Homeless, and he is on the Faculty Steering Committee for the Notre Dame/Holy Cross College Westville (Prison) Educational Initiative.

JOHN K. HALE - University of Otago, (otágo), Dunedin (dunídin). Honorary Fellow, English Dept, (2011-). Research Grants: Claude McCarthy Fellowship, awarded by the NZV-CC, 2009, for research assistance in 2010 for completing his edition of Milton's De Doctrina Christiana, for the Oxford University Press series, The Complete Works of Milton. Research Publications (Books): Milton and the Manuscript of De Doctrina Christiana (with Gordon Campbell, Thomas Corns and Fiona Tweedie): Oxford. Oxford University Press (2007). This monograph won the James Holly Hanford Award of the Milton Society of America for the "Most Distinguished book on John Milton Published in 2007"; Milton as Multilingual: Selected Essays 1982-2004 (February 2005) Otago Studies in English 8; Milton's Cambridge Latin. Performing in the Genres 1625-1632. Phoenix, MRTS (2005); John Milton. Latin Writings. A Selection, edited and translated by John K. Hale. Assen, van Gorcum (1998); with Phoenix, MRTS (1999); Milton's Languages. The Impact of Multilingualism on Style. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1997); The Shakespeare of the Comedies: A Multiple Approach. Berne, Peter Lang AG (1996); Sonnets of Four Centuries 1500-1900: An Anthology for Students of English Literature, Otago Studies in English II. Dunedin, Department of English (1992).

LUIZ FERNANDO FERREIRA SÁ is Professor of English and Comparative literature at the Faculty of Letters at The Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG - FALE) and former Junior Researcher of CNPq, Brazil. His research interests include John Milton and early modern England, post-colonialism, post-modernism, especially Salman Rushdie, and the philosophy of Jacques Derrida. His recent publications include: The Orpheus Myth in John Milton's L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, and Lycidas (book 2005); Enjoined by Fate: Private and Public Miltons in a 19th-century Portuguese Play (book chapter, Peter Lang, 2007); Jacques Derrida: Acts of Reading, Literature, and Democracy (book 2009); Towards a spectropoetics: John Milton and Jacques Derrida (book chapter 2011); Quid Pro Quo, or Destination Unknown: Johnson, Derrida, and Lacan Reading Poe (book chapter in Adapting Poe: Re-Imaginings in Popular Culture, Palgrave-Macmillan, (book chapter 2012) and Jacques Derrida: intermission scenes of reading and literature (Co-editor, book 2014).

MIRIAM PIEDADE MANSUR ANDRADE is an Associate Professor of English Language and Literature, at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Her research includes the works of John Milton and the dialogues that different writers from 19th century British, North-American and Brazilian Literature establish with them. Her recent publications are, "Milton and Derrida: Deconstructing Milton's *Paradise Lost* through a Derridean Perspective," In: Christophe Tournu. (Org.). *Milton in France* (book chapter, Peter Lang, 2008); *"Downcast Eyes" on a Downward Path to Wisdom: Reading Milton's "Darkness Visible" through a Derridean Perspective* (book, VDM Verlag Dr. Muller, 2011). Her latest work is: "Delírios e deleites: leitura dos diálogos de Machado de Assis com John Milton em Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas" [Deliriums and Delights: the reading of the dialogues of Machado de Assis with John Milton in Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas], O Eixo e a Roda: Revista de Literatura Brasileira, v. 30, n. 4, p. 95–119, Jan. 2022.

GERALDO MAGELLA CÁFFARO holds a Ph.D. degree in Literary Studies from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG, Brazil), and is a Professor of Literatures in English at Unimontes (Montes Claros, Brazil). He is the author of *Fictionalizing Acts in Writers' Diaries*: *Hawthorne's American Notebooks* (VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2010) and has also published chapters and several articles on nineteenth-century literature, among which are: "'From Beyond the Grave:' The Posthumous Trope in Nathaniel Hawthorne, Machado de Assis, and Henry James," published in *Henry James Today* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014); and "Quid pro Quo or Destination Unknown: Johnson, Derrida, and Lacan Reading Poe," co-authored with Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá and part of the collection *Adapting Poe: Re-imaginings in Popular Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). In addition to the nineteenth century, his areas of interest include the English Renaissance (Shakespeare and Milton), paratext history, literary theory, comparative literature, new historicism and deconstruction.