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# **The Depiction of the Anti-hero in Milton's Paradise Lost**

Zobrazení antihrdiny v Miltonově Ztraceném ráji

(Bakalářská práce)

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## Abstrakt

William Blake ve svém díle *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* píše o Miltonovi, že „patří na ďáblovu stranu, aniž by o tom věděl“. Antihrdina *Ztraceného ráje* jistě už před dobou romantismu přitahoval čtenáře pro své neochvějné rebelství a jiné rysy, jež sdílí s hrdiny klasického eposu, jakož i pro občasnou podobnost se shakespearovským tragickým hrdinou. Přestože nelze tvrdit, že Satan je skutečným hrdinou *Ztraceného ráje* – existují kritici, kteří přesvědčivě argumentují proti Blakeovi – je zřejmé, že Miltonův úspěch tkví v zobrazení Satana takovým způsobem, že si čtenář nemůže pomoci, aby s ním nesympatizoval. Jakákoliv taková sympatie je samozřejmě podle křesťanské tradice klamem, přesto však je Miltonovou zásluhou, že učinil postavu padlého anděla lidštější a komplikovanější.

Zkoumat vykreslení postavy Satana právě tak, aby se čtenáři zalíbil, je cílem této bakalářské práce. Metodou bude především close-reading básně. Práce začíná rozborem vnějškového popisu Satana a jeho činů, přičemž se zaměřuje na podobnosti a rozdíly mezi Satanem a hrdiny klasického eposu. Poté se práce soustřeďuje na Satanovy promluvy, v nichž se ukazuje jeho výřečnost a skvělé vůdcovské schopnosti. Rozpor mezi Satanem tak, jak vystupuje veřejně, a mezi jeho vnitřním světem a úvahami, bude rovněž zohledněn, zvláště v souvislosti se čtenářovým pokušením interpretovat Satana jako tragického hrdinu. V každé z těchto částí se práce věnuje zobrazení Satana právě tak, aby si získal čtenářovu náklonnost. Závěr práce bude věnován problému možné rozporuplnosti ve *Ztraceném ráji*; právě to mohl mít na mysli William Blake, když odmítl Miliona zařadit do ortodoxního tábora.

## Abstract

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, William Blake wrote of Milton to be “of the devil’s party without knowing it”. Indeed, even before Romanticism, the anti-hero of *Paradise Lost* was attracting readers for his steadfast rebellious bearing and other traits he shares with Classical epic heroes, as well as for the way he sometimes resembles a Shakespearean tragic hero. Although we cannot really say that Satan is the true hero of *Paradise Lost* – there are critics convincingly arguing against Blake – it is clear that Milton succeeded in portraying him in such a way that the reader cannot help sympathizing with him. According to the Christian tradition, of course, any such attraction to evil is deceptive, but it is still to Milton’s credit that he humanized and complicated the character of the fallen angel.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the way the Satan figure is depicted in the poem so as to appeal to us. Methodologically, I will focus particularly on a close-reading of the poem. First, I shall analyse Satan’s outward description and his actions, suggesting what Satan might have inherited from Classical epic heroes and how he differs from them. Then I will concentrate on his speeches in which he reveals his eloquence and good command of leadership skills. I shall also consider the discrepancy between his public self and his inner world and reflections, keeping in mind our temptation to interpret Satan as a tragic hero. In all of these discussions, the focus will be on the way Satan is depicted to sway the reader’s sympathy in his direction. Finally, I wish to conclude by reflecting on the problem of the poem’s potential inconsistency – precisely the problem that may have been on Blake’s mind as he refused to make Milton “of God's party”.

# Introduction

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## Introduction

*The hackneyed and lavished title of Blasphemer should be welcome to all who recollect on whom it was originally bestowed. Socrates and Jesus Christ were put to death publicly as blasphemers, and so have been and may be many who dare to oppose the most notorious abuses of the name of God and the mind of man.*

Lord Byron, Preface to Cantos VI-VIII in *Don Juan*

*Satan took in Eve for a time, and (so thoroughly and subtly Milton did his job) is still pulling the wool over the eyes of fallen men, critics especially.*

Harry Blamires, *Milton's Creation (A Guide through Milton's Paradise Lost)*

In more than a three-hundred-year long history of the reception of *Paradise Lost*, it was only in the twentieth century that some critics started questioning the status of the poem as an unequalled literary masterpiece. But the controversy surrounding Satan, the poem's most puzzling character, as well as the questions about the relationship between Satan and his creator John Milton are much older. Andrew Marvell in a poem on *Paradise Lost* confessed being “[h]eld awhile misdoubting his [Milton's] intent”, presumably because of Satan, John Dryden was wondering whether Satan is the true hero of the epic or not, and perhaps most famously, William Blake put it firmly when he said that Milton “wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell”.<sup>1</sup> And indeed, to give just one notorious example, the third book in which God is finally introduced does appear relatively unexciting compared to the Satanic passages of the first two books. How is it, one may ask, that a devout Christian poet, who took very seriously not only his divine calling but also the calling of the Muse<sup>2</sup>, did not represent God still more gloriously and in an even more engaging manner, than he did Satan? Another question immediately arises: was he a Christian at all? Blake attacks Milton the Christian by making him of the devil's party but he exempts his poetic reputation

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<sup>1</sup> James Thorpe, *Milton Criticism: Selections from Four Centuries* (London: Broadway House, 1965) 335-8.

<sup>2</sup> Although some have conflated the two addresses of Milton's invocations, that is the Muse and the Spirit, John Steadman argues that Milton has “two distinct invocations to two different powers”. John M. Steadman, *Milton's Biblical and Classical Imagery* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1984) 114-20.

when he adds that “he was a true poet”. But Blake’s implication is that Milton was a true poet precisely because he was of the devil’s party.<sup>3</sup> To quote Blake more fully on God of John Milton:

Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained;  
and the restrainer or reason usurps its place and governs the unwilling.  
And being restrained, it by degrees becomes passive, till it is only the shadow of  
desire.  
The history of this is written in *Paradise Lost*, and the Governor or Reason is  
called Messiah.<sup>4</sup>

This appears quite a controversial agenda. However, it is very much in agreement with that of Satan who several times in the poem uses expressions such as “Monarchy of God” or “Tyranny of Heav’n” (1.42; 124)<sup>5</sup>. Then, on the other side, we have Milton apologists, of whom, for example, C. S. Lewis or Stanley Fish are among the most important advocates. They imply that the orthodoxy of *Paradise Lost* goes hand in hand with the poet’s overall control of the poem. Satan may emerge for some as a proto-Byronic Byronic hero; but no matter, for others, as Lewis puts it, he is still an ass.<sup>6</sup>

What do we make of such polarized views on Satan? The first epigraph to this chapter is from Lord Byron, the other is from an American theologian and critic Harry Blamires who published a student’s guide to *Paradise Lost*. The two quotations were chosen because they roughly symbolize the dichotomy of the “unorthodox” and the “orthodox” with which we – it seems – always end up if we want to study Milton’s Satan. The two positions, I think, are sometimes implicitly understood as “exciting” and “boring”, respectively. In other words, when

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<sup>3</sup> The full wording of Blake’s famous note is as follows: “Note.—The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true poet, and of the Devil’s party without knowing it.”

<sup>4</sup> Thorpe 352-3.

<sup>5</sup> The poem will be cited from an online version edited by Thomas H. Luxon of Dartmouth College. The poem is a part of the project called John Milton Reading Room which puts together Milton’s poetic works as well as prose. Available at [https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading\\_room/pl/book\\_1/text.shtml](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_1/text.shtml) 1 Jul 2018.

<sup>6</sup> C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1969) 95.

Blake claimed that the diabolic forces in the poem are in fact the liberating ones and that the Messiah is the supreme restrainer and “governor of the unwilling”, he made Milton a great blasphemer in the name of liberty with the very word “blasphemer” shifting its meaning from condemnation to commendation. And when readers such as Blamires say that Satan (and Milton) “is pulling the wool over the eyes of fallen men”, many of us hear the moralizing undertone. While the “unorthodox” would like their Milton to be praised for his blasphemous portrayal of a horrible God on the one hand, and the Promethean Satan on the other, the “orthodox” insist that Satan is not only the tempter of Eve but of readers, too. One contemporary critic bewails the fact that both camps “have sometimes resorted to name calling” as the “[d]efenders of Milton’s God have characterized their opponents as ‘Satanists’, while they have fired back with ‘neo-Christian’.”<sup>7</sup> To return finally to Blake and Lewis, these represent the most visible extremes which is reinforced by the simple fact that one of Lewis’ most popular books is titled *The Great Divorce* [of Heaven and Hell], a direct response to Blake.

Although the focus of this thesis is the literary depiction of the Satanic character, with all the buttons that Milton can press in order to make the fiend appealing to us, and not the critical controversies, it should be stated which “camp” it will gravitate towards, or rather, from which side it mainly draws inspiration. My reading of Satan will be in line with what Paul Stevens calls contemporary academic orthodoxy,<sup>8</sup> which is in effect rather anti-Satanist. Stevens has in mind a suggestion made 50 years ago by Stanley Fish in his book *Surprised by Sin*, where Fish argues that *Paradise Lost* is a poem of temptation: the reader is tempted to fall for the devil, as it were, and Satan should, indeed, be one of the main reasons why the “fallen” reader admires the poem. For example, Fish refutes the Blakean comment made by A. J. A.

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<sup>7</sup>John Leonard, *The Value of Milton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016) 64. Similarly, John Carey speaks of a clear division between Satanists and anti-Satanists in John Carey, “Milton’s Satan,” *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Danielson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 132-3.

<sup>8</sup> From a lecture called “Milton’s Satan” delivered by Professor Paul Stevens at the University of Toronto, Department of English in 2013. Can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1Dr9JnBGJk> (29:23-31:10) 1 Jul 2018.



Waldock that *Paradise Lost* is full of “disquieting pressures” and since Milton could not find outlet in his poem for his “deepest interests” in the right way, he must have done so, “to a certain extent”, in the wrong way. Fish gives Waldock the following reply:

The “unconscious meaning” portion of Waldock’s thesis is, I think, as wrong as his description of the reading experience as “disquieting” is right. If we transfer the emphasis from Milton’s interests and intentions which are available to us only from a distance, to our responses which are available directly, the disparity between intention and execution becomes a disparity between reader expectation and reading experience; and the resulting “pressures” can be seen as part of an intelligible pattern.<sup>9</sup>

The “pressures” are there because the readers’ expectations about Satan, whom we are prepared in advance to “hiss off the stage”, or indeed God whom we expect to be portrayed more gloriously than Satan, are thwarted. But Fish goes even further than arguing that Milton is in control of the poem (as opposed to being of the devil’s party without knowing it). He suggests that we are expected to read *Paradise Lost* just as we would read Scripture, that is, rethinking it as a sacred text, and finally arriving at the conviction of our sinfulness for having fallen for the devil.<sup>10</sup>

The overall focus of the thesis are the authorial strategies that Milton musters in order to ignite our sympathy for the devil. These strategies are as follows: first, depicting Satan after the fashion of the Classical Epic hero. Satan clearly resembles an epic hero, particularly Achilles of *The Iliad*, and also Odysseus of *The Odyssey*.<sup>11</sup> Milton makes Satan a splendid warrior who is pompous, dignified, and able. Secondly, Satan is endowed with imagination – a

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<sup>9</sup> Stanley E. Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1967) 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> Fish 38. He writes: “[T]he reader who fails repeatedly before the pressures of the poem soon realizes that his difficulty proves its major assertions – the fact of the Fall, and his own (that is Adam’s) responsibility for it, and the subsequent woes of the human situation. [...] The reader who falls before the lures of Satanic rhetoric displays again the weakness of Adam, and his inability to avoid repeating that fall throughout indicates the extent to which Adam’s lapse has made the reassertion of right reason impossible. Rhetoric is thus simultaneously the sign of the reader’s infirmity and the means by which he is brought first to self-knowledge, and then to contrition, and finally, perhaps, to grace and everlasting bliss.” This specific moral aspect of *Paradise Lost* will be touched upon in the second chapter.

<sup>11</sup> For the first chapter which discusses Satan’s “outward lustre”, I have decided to limit myself only to the Homeric epic but Milton also draws inspiration for Satan from the Renaissance epic, particularly from Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*.

faculty traditionally associated with artistic creation – as well as superb rhetorical and leadership skills. Moreover, if we compare Satan’s use of imaginative language to God’s, we might start to wonder why it is not God, but Satan whose language is “more imaginative”: this controversial question of Satanic and Heavenly discourses will be also examined in the second chapter. Lastly, passages in which Satan is depicted as a tragic hero for whom we feel sympathy will be closely examined and I will also consider the possibility that the devil should in fact be morally superior to Milton’s God, as has been argued – not surprisingly – by some “unorthodox” critics.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For example, William Empson in his influential book *Milton’s God*.

# 1. Milton and the Classical Epic

The division of the epic into an oral and a literary one<sup>13</sup> accounts for the difference between both technique and purpose. While it has been established that *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, as well as for example *Beowulf*, exhibit features of oral poetry, which was meant to be performed and to an extent even improvised, with Virgil, a new kind of epic was born. Unlike the oral poet, Virgil, as C. M. Bowra observes, could “vary the words and [...] show in how many different ways he can describe such familiar matters as the coming of dawn or of evening”.<sup>14</sup> Unlike Homer, whose “rosy-fingered dawn” serves as a formulaic epithet, the author of a written epic could pay close attention to the text itself. *Paradise Lost* is a modern literary epic. Milton consciously builds upon the Classical epic tradition, employing many epic similes, catalogues, type scenes, invocations, and countless textual allusions. But apart from that, he does not only exploit the tradition but also evaluates it.<sup>15</sup> This is of course partly because Milton had the chronological advantage of being able to study those who came before him. But it is also the result of Milton’s Christian belief which, by definition, claims to have universal and exclusive access to the truth. Milton’s poem strives to have scriptural authority, as it were, and Milton believed to be himself an inspired poet. His invocations to the Muse are certainly a literary convention; on the other hand, he also addresses the Spirit in the manner of a Christian prayer.<sup>16</sup>

An example might illustrate the point: in Book 1, the poet adds a little coda of “Th’ Ionian Gods” to the very end of the catalogue of the fallen angels, as he briefly mentions the names of Saturn and Jove, and the Olympus:

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<sup>13</sup>C. M. Bowra, *From Virgil to Milton* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1945) 2.

<sup>14</sup>Bowra 4.

<sup>15</sup> Barbara K. Lewalski notes that the poem is “sometimes assigned to categories beyond epic: pseudomorph, prophetic poem, apocalypse, anti-epic, transcendent epic”. Lewalski, “The genres of *Paradise Lost*,” *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 80.

<sup>16</sup> Steadman 114-120. That Milton believed himself to be an inspired poet, indeed a kind of prophet, may sound quite bold, even blasphemous from the Catholic perspective, but not so much in the context of Puritanism.

these first in Creet  
 And Ida known, thence on the Snowy top  
 Of cold Olympus rul'd the middle Air  
 Thir highest Heav'n; or on the Delphian Cliff,  
 Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds  
 Of Doric Land; or who with Saturn old  
 Fled over Adria to th' Hesperian Fields,  
 And ore the Celtic roam'd the utmost Isles. (1.514-521)

The final mention of Italy and the utmost isles of Britain in the last two lines help the sense of encapsulation since we are told that the Christian tradition simply contains all pagan traditions. And even better (or worse): the gods of other cultures are made the devils of Christianity. Elsewhere Milton tells of the gods' smith Mulciber, or Vulcan in Italy ("Ausonian land"), or Hephaistos in Greek mythology, "how he fell / From Heav'n [...] thrown by angry Jove / [...] from Morn / To Noon [...], from Noon to dewy Eve, / A Summers day" (1.740-44). This is what Homer tells us in *The Iliad*,<sup>17</sup> but since Mulciber is – according to the illuminated poet – one of the fallen angels, he must have been falling for "[n]ine dayes" (6.871) with the rest of the lot. "[T]hus they relate / Erring" are the only four words that the narrator spends to "amend" the pagan account.<sup>18</sup>

It is then *in medias res*, into this great imaginative world claiming to surpass the pagan imagination, that Milton hurls his Satanic party. Before we focus on Satan himself, it is interesting to note that all the great Homeric conventions are at once lavishly attributed to the devils. A few hundred lines from the start of the poem, Satan

stood and call'd  
 His Legions, Angel Forms, who lay intrans't  
 Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks  
 In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades  
 High overarch'timbowr; or scatterd sedge  
 Afloat, when with fierce Winds Orion arm'd  
 Hath vext the Red-Sea Coast, whose waves orethrew  
 Busiris and his Memphian Chivalry,  
 While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd

<sup>17</sup> Homer, *The Iliad* 1:710-5, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> See also the poem's third invocation at the start of Book 7. Here Milton invokes Urania whom he nevertheless sees not as one of the nine Muses but as the Christian Muse (7.5-7). Then he distinguishes between her and the pagan Muse of poetry as follows: "For thou art Heav'nlie, shee an empty dreame" (7.39).

The Sojourners of Goshen, who beheld  
From the safe shore thir floating Carkases  
And broken Chariot Wheels, so thick bestrown  
Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood,  
Under amazement of thir hideous change. (1.300-13)

This is one of the similes in *Paradise Lost* which has two parts: the first one refers to the Classical epic precedent as the autumn leaves simile is an allusion to Homer, Virgil, and also Dante;<sup>19</sup> the second part comes from Exodus. As we can see, Milton puts his extensive knowledge of his literary predecessors on display in *Paradise Lost* and he again draws from the Classical and biblical traditions.

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<sup>19</sup>Homer, *The Iliad* 2:554; 2:909; 6:171; 21:529. Virgil has “thick as the leaves that with the early frost / of autumn drop and fall within the forest” (6.407-8). *The Aeneid of Virgil*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Dell, 2004). In Dante’s *Inferno* we find “As leaves in autumn loosen and stream down / until the branch stands bare above its tatters / spread on the rustling ground” (3.109-11). Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, trans. John Ciardi (New York: Penguin Group, 1982).

## 1.1 Satan and Achilles: Military Prowess

It is particularly the tradition of the Classical epic hero where Milton looks for inspiration for his Satan. The fiend is an arch-rebel who surely invites comparisons with Prometheus, and from the very beginning he is many other things: a general, a great political leader, a military spy, he is even called a Sultan once (1.348); but what we cannot miss is his description in Achillean terms as a great epic warrior. That Milton activates the very echoes of the Classical warrior topos when he describes the devil for first time is why Satan is so appealing from the very start of the poem. Let us therefore turn to discussing some similarities and differences between Satan and Achilles in terms of their military prowess.<sup>20</sup> For example, when first invited to ponder Satan's "ponderous shield / [...] whose broad circumference / Hung on his shoulders like the moon" (1.286-7), one may recall Achilles' or Aeneas' shields (both forged thereafter by Hephaistos, the fallen angel) with their beautiful decorative scenes and with more than two pages of ekphrasis thereof in Homer. Admittedly, Satan's shield is not made specially singular because the superhuman size of Achilles' "massive shield" was also "flashing far and wide like a full round moon".<sup>21</sup> But the simple fact that Satan is now allied with Achilles makes us wonder whether he is the poem's great hero. Milton puts Satan, himself a giant, on the shoulders of other epic giants, which only supports this idea.

Yet there are details in the poem that contradict even this visible point of Satan's outward magnificence. As Stephen Dobranski notes, what Satan does with his spear is quite inappropriate: "here it helps 'to support [his] uneasy steps' as he reaches the shore (1.295), and in heaven he again uses it as a crutch when Abdiel's blow sends him recoiling (6.195)".<sup>22</sup> Similarly, in Raphael's account of the heavenly war, the devils' shields are improperly used as

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<sup>20</sup> Since it is not my aim to give an analysis of the relationship between Satan and various Classical epic heroes, I have just chosen one of them. But the devil is similar to Homer's hero of *The Iliad* in more than one respect as we will see shortly.

<sup>21</sup> Homer, *The Iliad* 9:442.

<sup>22</sup> Ian Dennis, "Cain: Lord Byron's Sincerity," *Studies in Romanticism* 41.4 (2002): 655-6.

a stretcher: when Satan receives his first wound by Michael, his companions “[bear] him on thir Shields / Back to his Chariot” (6.337-8). But most interestingly, Dobranski suggests a possibility that Satan’s “massy, large” (1.285) shield might be obsolete, as the word “ponderous” (1.284) means, apart from heavy, also clumsy. He writes:

Wearing his shield on his back, crawling from lake to land, slowly moving with “uneasy steps” (1.295), Satan momentarily resembles – to compare great things with small – one of the amphibious tortoises described in seventeenth-century animal encyclopedias. Here we find accounts of the tortoise’s “shield,” a term during the Renaissance that signified not only a piece of defensive armor but also an animal’s “protective covering or shelter,” as in a tortoise’s mottled or “spotty” shell.” Such a humiliating image both captures Satan’s amphibious or twofold nature and anticipates his transformation into a serpent, the animal during the Renaissance with which the tortoise was most commonly allied.<sup>23</sup>

However, other readers might object that Satan’s “uneasy steps” are evidence of his heroic struggle. Yet the improper uses of the weapons stand out quite oddly and almost beg to be used as an argument for an anti-Satanic reading. In other words, Dobranski had to take the trouble of consulting contemporary animal encyclopedias so as to compare Satan to a clumsy tortoise, he need not have done so with the spear. It is more difficult to imagine Satan using his spear as a senior citizen uses a walking stick and still regard it as evidence of heroic struggle.

This problem is not just a matter of Satan’s shield as there are more passages in *Paradise Lost* where heavy weaponry is deemed useless, even hindering the actual fight. Thus during the war in heaven, we see that right after the rebels have revealed their secret weapon, their “devilish Enginrie”, even the angels fall “[b]y thousands [...] / The sooner for thir Arms” (6.553; 595). The narrator later comments that “unarm’d they might / Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift / By quick contraction or remove” (6.595-7). Similarly, after the angels have struck back, the devils’ “armour helped their harm” (6.656). Indeed, such lines betray not only Milton’s general attitude to warfare but also his critique of the military focus of the Classical epic.<sup>24</sup> This

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<sup>23</sup>Dobranski 500-1.

<sup>24</sup> In the invocation to Book 9, he even confesses to being “[n]ot sedulous by Nature to indite / Warrs” and associates military themes with “long and tedious havoc” (9.27-8; 30).

is best expressed by the rebuke which the Son of God addresses to the rebels who “by strength / [...] measure all, of other excellence / Not emulous” (6.820-2). However, there is one problematic passage in Book 2 in which the devils – after their leader has left Hell to find out about Adam and Eve – resort to entertainment: some play races, others go discovering the new locality, “[o]thers, more mild” (6.546), sing about “[t]heir own heroic deeds” and still others discuss philosophy (6.528-75). Particularly in the case of Satan, there is much more to him than just strength and military prowess discussed so far. He exhibits other Classical epic hero characteristics: a sense of honour, and cunning ingenuity.



## 1.2 The Injured Merit and the Better Fortitude

In *The Iliad*, Achilles makes a choice between two alternatives: either to stay and fight which would bring him eternal glory but also certain death; or to return home and live at the cost of being forgotten. In Book 9 of *The Iliad* he says:

Mother tells me,  
the immortal goddess Thetis with her glistening feet,  
that two fates bear me on to the day of death.  
If I hold out here and I lay siege to Troy,  
my journey home is gone, but my glory never dies.  
If I voyage back to the fatherland I love,  
my pride, my glory dies ...  
true, but the life that's left me will be long,  
the stroke of death will not come on me quickly. (9.497-505)

He of course chooses glory; we, as modern readers, tend to forget the extent to which the concepts of honour and glory – *timê* and *kleos* – or indeed their lack – shame – were important in ancient societies.<sup>25</sup> Like Achilles, Satan feels that his *timê* was cut short after the Messiah has been anointed in Heaven (5.600-15); like Achilles, he suffers from injured merit.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, both key words, that is glory and shame, are mentioned by Satan in his first great speech in Book 1 (emphasis mine):

What though the field be lost?  
All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,  
And study of revenge, immortal hate,  
And courage never to submit or yield:  
And what is else not to be overcome?  
That *Glory* never shall his wrath or might  
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace  
With suppliant knee, and deifie his power,  
Who from the terrour of this Arm so late  
Doubted his Empire, that were low indeed,  
That were an ignominy and *shame* beneath  
This downfall[.] (1.105-116)

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<sup>25</sup> These two concepts are discussed in a lecture by Professor Elizabeth Vandiver entitled “Glory, Honor, and the Wrath of Achilles” in a series of lectures called *Iliad of Homer*. The lectures are provided by The Teaching Company.

<sup>26</sup> Achilles, who is a better warrior than Agamemnon, is nevertheless disgraced by the leader of the Greek who took away Briseis, Achilles’ “prize” (1.421-2). Satan voices his own “injur’d merit” in 1.98.

In other words, Satan takes worshipping God as humiliation, which goes directly against his *timê*. At the same time, however, he is able to exercise common sense as he does not push his sense of honour ad absurdum: the fiend makes a refreshingly reasonable decision and peacefully leaves Gabriel at the end of Book 4 when he realizes that he is outnumbered (4.1006-15). Moreover, Satan's numerous attempts at waging war on the Almighty do not, at least at first, appear a foolish contradiction in terms. Rather, they seem to tell of somebody who, after having failed many times, always gets up and tries again.

From the Christian point of view Satan is of course mistaken because there is no humiliation in worshipping the Omnipotent. But part of the problem is that Satan seems to genuinely doubt God's omnipotence (1.113-14). His sense of injured merit, of stolen *timê*, is simply regarded as obnoxious pride: in Book 6, where the two sides meet in battle, Satan is called "proud" five times by Raphael, Abdiel, or the narrator (6.89-90; 131; 191; 789). Out of these remarks, the narrator's comment from the end of the book, after the Son has joined the battle, is the most interesting:

But to convince the proud what Signs availe,  
Or Wonders move th' obdurate to relent? (6.789-90)

Milton here associates the obdurate foes with Christ's frustration with the Pharisees who demanded signs and wonders and wanted to catch him out. Throughout the New Testament, the Son is particularly impatient with these people:

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Mt 16:1-4 (KJV). Throughout this thesis I use the English Standard Version for Bible quotations but here the King James Version paints more vividly Christ's indignation.

The Pharisees were the respectable members of contemporary society and if we were to imagine them in ancient Greece, they would be the men with *timê*. But the New Testament philosophy has grown tired of this social and intellectual elitism and propagates a new kind of spiritual heroism instead: in Milton's words, "the better fortitude / Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom / Unsung" (9.31-3).

Satan does have a little bit of this new kind of heroism to show. The fact that he voluntarily comes forward to undertake "the dreadful voyage," which "none among the choice and prime / Of those Heav'n-warring Champions" (2.423-6) dare to do, seems to foreshadow the Son's self-sacrifice in Book 3. The Son's "Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life / I offer, on mee let thine anger fall" (3.236-7) is thus a mirroring of Satan's earlier words about public duty: "long is the way / And hard [...] But I should ill become this Throne, [...] / if aught propos'd / And judg'd of public moment, in the shape / Of difficulty or danger could deterr / Mee from attempting" (2.445-50).<sup>28</sup> What follows is Satan's solitary journey through Hell and Chaos. At one point, it is only by chance that he escapes falling even further deep than Hell:

all unawares  
 Fluttring his pennons vain plumb down he drops  
 Ten thousand fadom deep, and to this hour  
 Down had been falling, had not by ill chance  
 The strong rebuff of som tumultuous cloud  
 Instinct with Fire and Nitre hurried him  
 As many miles aloft[.] (2.932-8)

S. Musgrove sees this episode as "semi-comic" and "allied to slipping on a banana-skin"<sup>29</sup>, but he is unsuccessful in deriding the devil here. Ironically, he chooses a passage which shows instead that Satan was genuinely brave in having decided to go because, as we can see, he was not at all sure about the success of his enterprise. Indeed, if the fiend's solitary journey can be

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<sup>28</sup> Orthodox critics tend to interpret this mirroring as a parody, for example Blamires writes that in the "Son's words of total self-sacrifice on man's behalf the reiterated 'mee' of lines 236-8 echoes the parodic egoistical 'Me' of Satan's corresponding self-offering (2.450) in the council of Hell, and once more emphasizes the antithetic balance between the two councils." Harry Blamires, *Milton's Creation: A Guide Through Paradise Lost* (London: Methuen & Co., 1971) 77

<sup>29</sup> S. Musgrove, "Is the Devil an Ass?", *The Review of English Studies*, 21.84 (Oct., 1945): 306.

seen as a parody of the Son's sacrifice, it is in Satan's earlier words: "I go / This uncouth errand  
sole, and one for all / Myself expose, with lonely steps" (2.826-8). These are not believable  
because Satan is speaking about himself. He cannot be modest therefore he shows himself to  
be a portentous poseur.

### 1.3 Satan and Odysseus

What constitutes the third component of Satan's appeal, likewise based on the Classical epic tradition, is what James A. Freeman calls "the traditional military alternative to force",<sup>30</sup> by which he means fraud, or cunning. Although it is not the main focus of this chapter, we should also mention that especially in the second part of Book 2, Satan resembles Odysseus, as well as the Renaissance epic heroes. Lewalski sees in Satan's journey "a complete mini-*Odyssey*" and measures the fiend against "the crafty Odysseus, man of many ways." She elaborates that "[I]ike Odysseus [...] Satan shows himself to be a skilled rhetorician, a master of persuasion, and at times a liar."<sup>31</sup> Indeed, we can see that Satan deceives even Uriel, the most sharp-sighted spirit and one of the seven who are closest to God (3. 648-50), when he changes his countenance to that of "a stripling Cherub" (3.636). He can also easily assume an altruistic posture before Chaos, "the Anarch old" (2.988), whom he first flatters and then lies to about the motives of his expedition (2.980-7).

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<sup>30</sup> James A. Freeman, "Milton and heroic literature" *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 60.

<sup>31</sup> Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) 66.

## 1.4 Conclusion

Simone Weil has pointed out in her notebooks where she put reflections on Greek literature and philosophy that force is the true hero and subject of *The Iliad*:

The true hero, the true subject, the centre of the *Iliad*, is force. Force as man's instrument, force as man's master, force before which human flesh shrinks back. The human soul, in this poem, is shown always in its relation to force: swept away, blinded by the force it thinks it can direct, bent under the pressure of the force to which it is subjected.<sup>32</sup>

Milton borrows the language of military force of *The Iliad* to outline the formidable foe as well as uses numerous other epic conventions to bestow dignity upon him. These techniques can, however, be viewed from the opposite point of view: Freeman concludes that Satan is undercut "so routinely" that admiration for his bustling should, after the initial explosion upon our consciousness, be temporary.<sup>33</sup> The aim of this chapter was to explore in detail the ways in which Milton uses the Classical epic tradition in order to make his Satanic character such an explosion. He aligns him especially with Achilles, the invincible warrior who at the same time suffers from an affront to his honour, and with astute Odysseus in the latter part of Book 2 of *Paradise Lost*. But since all these reasons for admiration may not last for long, as Freeman notes, in the next chapter I will deal with Satan's rhetorical and leadership skills, which constitute the next facet of his character.

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Bernard Knox's Introduction to Fagles' translation of *The Iliad*. Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin Books, 1991) 29.

<sup>33</sup> Freeman 60.

## 2. Satanic Discourse

In the second invocation to *Paradise Lost*, Milton expresses a relief to have finally “[e]scaped the Stygian Pool” (3.14) of Hell. Now he invokes God, the holy Light, the “[b]right effluence of bright essence increate” (3.6), with accompanying feelings of inner security (3.21), but also with reverence and diffidence (“May I express thee unblamed?”). But Milton is faced with a new difficulty which is to do justice to the representation of Heaven after he has so gloriously portrayed Hell and its inhabitants. The solution he has chosen again exploits both the Classical and biblical traditions. Milton operates with *logos*, a concept used in Greek philosophy as well as in the Gospel of John: in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, it is the only “pure” mode of persuasion, and for St. John it is a divine principle, indeed the Son himself.<sup>34</sup> It is a truism that, in the fallen world, one needs not only the facts but also sufficient rhetorical skills (and sometimes only these) to persuade the audience. Aristotle, in the third book of *Rhetoric*, bewails this fact: “Still, the whole business of rhetoric being concerned with appearances, we must pay attention to the subject of delivery, *unworthy* though it is, because we cannot do without it” (emphasis mine) and it is Aristotle’s wish that from the three modes of persuasion – *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* – it was mainly *logos* by which oratory should operate.<sup>35</sup> This is impossible for a man; but this is what Milton tries to do, on some level, when he introduces the Heavenly discourse (although it is debatable to what extent he succeeds). The result is that God does not use figurative, estranged language, as Anne Ferry observes:

Ancient and orthodox tradition guided Milton to create in *Paradise Lost* a God who speaks a language of statement. The conventional figures of poetry or rhetoric would have seemed blasphemously inappropriate to God, who needs no comparisons[.] The same tradition [...] inspired Milton to avoid similes in his description of Heaven, the incomparable realm of uncreated light. This is the only descriptive passage spoken by the narrative voice which does not employ extended similes.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> John 1:1, Luke 1:2.

<sup>35</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book 3. Quoted from an online source <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.3.iii.html>. 1 Jul 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Anne Ferry, *Milton's Epic Voice: The Narrator in Paradise Lost* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983) 69-70.

Ferry clearly implies that Milton's choice of estranged language rather for the Satanic discourse has a moral aspect to it. At the same time, the absence of epic similes in the description of Heaven probably accounts for the fact that for many readers Heaven may in fact seem unimpressive. Indeed, there is figurative language in Heaven, too, but the effects are not so spectacular. For example, if we examine the first narrative paragraph that Milton devotes to Heaven, we get a view of what the Almighty Father sees, "High Thron'd above all highth" (3.58), when he "bent[s] down his eye":

About him all the Sanctities of Heaven  
 Stood thick as Starrs, and from his sight receiv'd  
 Beatitude past utterance; on his right  
 The radiant image of his Glory sat,  
 His onely Son; On Earth he first beheld  
 Our two first Parents, yet the onely two  
 Of mankind, in the happie Garden plac't,  
 Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,  
 Uninterrupted joy, unrivald love  
 In blissful solitude[.] (3.60-69)

It should be noticed that Milton describes three independent vistas in less than ten lines; what is even more remarkable is the fact that the Son is introduced for the very first time in the poem (if we disregard invocations), and yet he receives just one clause. On the other hand, when Satan returns in line 422, Milton again needs less than ten lines to throw in an extended simile, the first one of Book 3 (excluding the invocation). "Here walk'd the Fiend at large in spacious field. / As when a Vultur on Imaus bred, / Whose snowie ridge the roving Tartar bounds..."; the simile continues for another seven lines.

Apart from the employment of extended similes, the difference between the Heavenly and Satanic modes can be also illustrated on the way Milton exploits his broad learning in the poem. In the first part of Book 3 – the end of this part is marked by another small invocation to the Son of God in lines 410 to 415 – devoted solely to Heaven we find almost no allusions to external literary texts (or other historical or geographical phenomena) other than the Scripture;



whereas in the Satanic passages such allusions are notoriously copious.<sup>37</sup> According to Seth Lerer, Milton's choice to do without allusions in Heaven is one of his strategies to evoke the unfallen language of Heaven and he does it by "privileging the spoken word" of Heaven over the world of texts in which Satan operates.<sup>38</sup> This is a Platonic idea: in *Phaedrus*, a discussion is held about the recent invention of writing which can "repair what was lost, but at the same time it can never replace authentic knowledge and poetic vision".<sup>39</sup> The written word is then called the illegitimate brother of "the living and breathing word":

Now tell me; is there not another kind of speech, or word, which shows itself to be the legitimate brother of this bastard one, both in the manner of its begetting and in its better and more powerful nature? [...]  
You mean the living and breathing word of him who knows, of which the written word may justly be called an image?<sup>40</sup>

If, then, it is Milton's intention to use the more spectacular rhetorical tools and the copious literary allusions mainly to signal the presence of Satan, or sin,<sup>41</sup> it follows that the readers are expected to beware of the diabolic rhetoric.<sup>42</sup> Yet we are tempted to follow Satan on his quest for power and control. The reason is not surprising: the "fallen" reader more readily responds to the forceful and captivating rhetoric of Satan than the less clearly enchanting and perhaps rigid Heavenly mode. Moreover, God's language, in which the "conventional figures of poetry or rhetoric" would be "blasphemously inappropriate", prepares us, as it were, for the explicit "distance and distaste" (9.9) of Heaven expressed in Book 9. The Satanic passages, on the other hand, are more attractive and rewarding to read precisely because Milton exploits the tools of

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<sup>37</sup> To give just the most well-known examples from Book 1: epic similes describing Satan in 1.197-209; 1.284-95; or his legions in 1.301-13; "historical" similes in 1.351-5; 1.497-502; 1.573-87; 1.692-9; 1.717-22; or a "geographical" simile in 1.230-8.

<sup>38</sup> Lerer expresses this idea in his series of lectures called *Life and Writings of John Milton*, particularly in the lecture on Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*. According to Lerer, Heaven is "not a world of books, it is a world of voices".

<sup>39</sup> Martin Procházka, *Literary Theory: An Historical Introduction* (Praha: Karolinum, 2008) 16.

<sup>40</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*. Quoted in Procházka 17.

<sup>41</sup> Lerer also points out the punning potential of the words "sin" and "sign".

<sup>42</sup> Milton of course inserts numerous warnings and "corrective" comments about the devil in the Satanic passages. Moreover, some of Eve's passages are also allusive: Leonard points out that the scene in which she saw her reflection in a lake (4.449-76) is modelled on Ovid (Leonard 89). See also Eve's sonnet-like catalogue of all the things that are sweet in 4.641-56.

figurative language. Paradoxically, therefore, it may seem that Satan is not only made superficially more attractive than God but also that he is, in the sense of “speaking the same language” and after the manner of Prometheus, closer to man than God. What accounts for the first fact is that Satan makes extensive use of the faculty of imagination.

## 2.1 The Imaginative Satan

As I have argued, the visible difference between the Heavenly and Satanic modes in the poem could be intentionally employed by Milton. After all, we are warned by the narrator right after Satan's very first speech that he might be just putting on a show (1.126). Nevertheless, Satanic rhetoric is at least as interesting as God's, if not more. Even though, as John Carey reminds us, God had to imagine in his mind the whole universe before creating it<sup>43</sup> (but this fact is only implied), Satan's use of the imagination is clearly put to the fore. Before we examine his roles of an orator and a political leader, which allow him to display his rhetorical skills fully, let us therefore first turn to some of his imaginative passages. One of Satan's tours de force of the imagination appears in Book 9 where Eve demands explanation of an apparent miracle: "Language of Man pronounced / By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed!" (9.553-4). In response to this, the Serpent does not only give the most vivid – yet completely fabricated – account (9.571-605) as to how he came to eating the fruit and thus acquiring the faculties of reason and speech (9.600), but before he starts he also, with unwavering confidence, asserts how easy such a task is for him:

Empress of this fair World, resplendent Eve,  
Easie to mee it is to tell thee all  
What thou commandst and right thou shouldst be obeyd[.] (9.568-70)

That Satan's ensuing narration (9.571-605) is all made up deserves credit if we realize that he has in fact never come into any contact with the Tree of Knowledge. Ironically, he has done so – unknowingly – with the Tree of Life when he sat on it "like a Cormorant" (4.196). But the fact that Satan does not realize it leads the narrator to comment on the devil's, and perhaps also man's, inability to appreciate what is truly good: "So little knows / *Any, but God alone*, to value right / The good before him" (4.201-3; emphasis mine). Instead of judging aright, the narrator

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<sup>43</sup> Carey 141.

seems to imply, we look to Satan's aptitude for eloquence. And yet later on Adam does make the right and just evaluation of the 'good before him' when he – having just encouraged Eve after her waking from the bad dream instilled by Satan – makes a case for the difference between reason and some "lesser faculties":

But know that in the Soule  
Are many lesser Faculties that serve  
Reason as chief; among these Fancies next  
Her office holds; of all external things,  
Which the five watchful Senses represent,  
She forms Imaginations, Aerie shapes[.]

(5.100-5)

Adam's words here indirectly evaluate Satan who, in the previous book (now in the shape of a toad), sits "close at the eare of Eve" (4.800) and reaches "[t]he Organs of her Fancie, and with them forge[s] / Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams" (4,802–3). His great imaginative powers are thus exploited only to produce "[i]maginations, [a]erie shapes" which Adam condemns.

But what does the reader make of such an evaluation? Blake was one of the readers for whom reason was a negative power which 'separate[s] and objectif[ies] reality' whereas only Imagination can "reunite and recreate" it.<sup>44</sup> That Satan has some weak spots in his reasoning has been shown;<sup>45</sup> that he is creative in his rebellious enterprise is also evident. For example, Paul Stevens suggests a comparison of Satan to an able and resourceful politician imagining a third way – a colonial venture to Eden.<sup>46</sup> This proposal finally wins "full assent" at the devils' council (2.388-9) because it is, in its perverted sense, the most creative one: we can almost compare Satan to a talented businessman who can "think outside the box" and keep bringing new ideas (see also the "devilish Enginrie" in 6.470ff). Moreover, although the task of propounding the plan to the council has been assigned to Beelzebub (2.402-16), it was originally

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<sup>44</sup> Procházka 46.

<sup>45</sup> Lewis 94-103.

<sup>46</sup> From a lecture called "Milton's Satan" delivered by Professor Paul Stevens at the University of Toronto, Department of English in 2013. Can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1Dr9JnBGJk> (19:00-19:45) 1 Jul 2018.

Satan's own idea (1.650-5; 2.380-5), and the climactic moment when the fiend comes forward to volunteer for the task seems arranged beforehand. Indeed, Satan has the upper hand over his peers and can manipulate and outwit them with his superior resourcefulness: so much so that he can get away even with demagogic contradictions. This is because, as Fish observes, he can deceive us with intricacy:

The danger is not so much that Satan's argument will persuade (one does not accord the father of lies an impartial hearing), but that its intricacy will engage the reader's attention and lead him into an error of omission. That is to say, in the attempt to follow and analyse Satan's soliloquy, the larger contexts in which it exists will be forgotten.<sup>47</sup>

The error of omission can be shown by pointing to one of Satan's most important "political themes" – the question of liberty. When he tells Sin and Death that he plans to set them free, as well as the other fallen spirits, he does not forget to vividly paint the hardships that this noble task will bring him: "I go / This uncouth errand sole, and one for all / Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread / This unfounded Deep, and through the void immense / To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold" (2.826-30). And while this all may be in a sense true the reader's attention is led away from the simple fact he is the cause of what he wants to deliver them from.

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<sup>47</sup> Fish 10.

## 2.2 Political Speeches

As has been suggested, Satan's ability to divert the attention away from the occasional contradictions in his speeches belongs rather to the art of demagoguery. But there are less malign tricks of oratory that he uses, too. For example, the one-liners such as "Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n" (1.263) or "Surer to prosper then prosperity / Could have assur'd us" (2.39-40) stand out as great slogans with which it is advisable to close a speech (both of them do appear towards the end). Another strategy of Satan's is his delight in pathos. Before he makes his first long speech addressed to the legions after the fall, "[t]ears, such as Angels weep" (1.620) hold him back. What is remarkable is that Satan does not falter for his tears once, but thrice. The rule of three is of course one of the basic structural principles of rhetorical speeches. But Satan's move is innovative: he combines the rule of three with a gesture of pathos. Elsewhere he is subtler: when he addresses his legions from "High on a throne of royal state" (2.1), he gives them an argument as to why it would be foolish of them to "envy whom the highest place exposes / Formost to stand against the Thunderers aim / Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share / Of endless pain" (2.24-30). Satan aims at the emotions: by using the word pain which denotes a new physical (6.327; 362; 431-2) as well as emotional (6.394; 459-64) state for the devils, he reminds them of this novel unpleasant feeling and thus arouses their fear. On the other hand, when there is a need to encourage the confounded "Cherub and Seraph rowling in the flood / With scattered arms and ensigns" (1.324-5), their general knows the right words to rouse his fellow warriors:

have ye chos'n this place  
After the toyl of Battel to repose  
Your wearied vertue, for the ease you find  
To slumber here, as in the Vales of Heav'n?  
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn  
To adore the Conquerour? (1.318-323)

Once again Satan aims at their soldierly pride and honor. His short encouragement speech ends with a characteristically sharp exclamation: "Awake, arise, or be forever fall'n".

### 2.3 Satan and Eve

Apart from Satan's public military and political speeches, it is in Book 9 where his masterpiece of persuasion is enacted. And it is as if Milton could no longer resist the explicit identification of Satan with the very symbol of oratory, as he finally compares him to "of old some orator renowned / In Athens or free Rome" (9.670-1). Interestingly enough, what precedes this direct comparison is Satan's sudden emotional excitement after Eve has replied to his 'guileful' question:

Indeed? hath God then said that of the Fruit  
Of all these Garden Trees ye shall not eate,  
Yet Lords declar'd of all in Earth or Aire?  
To whom thus Eve yet sinless. Of the Fruit  
Of each Tree in the Garden we may eate,  
But of the Fruit of this fair Tree amidst  
The Garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eate  
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, least ye die.  
She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold  
The Tempter, but with shew of Zeale and Love  
To Man, and indignation at his wrong,  
New part puts on, and as to passion mov'd,  
Fluctuats disturbd, yet comely and in act  
Rais'd, as of som great matter to begin. (9, 656-69)

What is noteworthy about Eve's reply is its sheer matter-of-factness as well as meticulousness, almost as if a child was reciting a rhyme when asked to do so by a parent. The artlessness of her response is further stressed by the narrator's phrase "yet sinless". But if Eve is artless in this passage, Satan is performing a great exercise in pathos when he, "as to passion mov'd", puts on a show of zeal and indignation and is seemingly disturbed by a just cause while retaining his "comely" style. Finally, the mention of "Love / To Man" is again Promethean, although its sincerity is at once undermined by the context of the put-on part.

Lastly, let us briefly consider Satan's role as a leader in the poem. That he is a leader in a military sense and dominates his warriors is obvious enough; the second instance where Satan assumes leadership is when he overpowers the woman. Milton makes us notice in Book 9 that Eve has exchanged her husband for the Serpent as her guide. She first refers to Adam using this





## 2.4 Conclusion

The general aim of this chapter has been to show the difference between the Heavenly and Satanic modes in the poem and especially how we as readers more readily respond to the latter as it does not shun away from the excessive employment of figurative language. Indeed, it may almost seem that Milton at times teases us when he even inserts little “jokes” such as for example introducing the character of Death at line 666 in Book 2 or even bothering with an acrostic in Book 9 (the lines 510-4 give SATAN)<sup>49</sup>. Satanic discourse is primarily one of the imagination and rhetoric; the Heavenly is less dependent on rhetorical effects. What the critics such as Stanley Fish argue – and it is also common sense – is that the imaginative language is more enjoyable for the reader; whereas God’s language can be at times found boring and repetitive. It is the result of the loss of innocence, as the poem’s title also indicates. The inhabitants of Heaven presumably do enjoy what Mammon calls “celebrat[ing] his Throne / With warbl’d Hymns” (2.241-2). And they are not puzzled at Milton repeating a line word-for-word when he tells us of God’s mercy towards man:

him through their malice fall’n,  
Father of Mercie and Grace, thou didst not doome  
So strictly, but much more to pitie encline:  
No sooner did thy dear and onely Son  
Perceive thee purpos’d not to doom frail Man  
So strictly, but much more to pitie enclin'd[.] (3-400-5)

I have tried to argue that the “boredom of repetition” is not so much a problem of the unexciting style. On the contrary, as G. K. Chesterton suggests, God may enjoy repetition:

Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, ‘Do it again’; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, ‘Do it again’ to the sun; and every evening, ‘Do it again’ to the moon.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> From the online footnotes to the respective passages by the editor Thomas H. Luxon.

<sup>50</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (London: The Bodley Head, 1909) 106-7.

In view of these words it could be said that it is not that Milton would be in fetters when he wrote of angels and God. It is the “fallen” reader who is unable “to value right / The good before him”. However, more complications still emerge when we approach the controversial topic of a horrible God on the one hand, and a Promethean Satan on the other, not from the viewpoint of figurative language, but compassion the reader feels for Satan. In the third chapter we will therefore deal with Satan’s portrayal as a tragic hero as well as with the possibility that Satan is morally superior to Milton’s God.

### 3. The Tragic and Subversive Satan

There is an unbroken continuity in the history of Christian eschatological thought of the idea that eventually all will be reconciled to God, even despite the traditional Christian teaching that hell is the fixed and final destiny of the unsaved. Such views of what is called Christian universalism, or apokatastasis, have never become mainstream; on the other hand, neither can we say that the opposition comprises only obscure names.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, one can easily see that if advocates of universal salvation for all mankind would constitute a minority, in an even greater minority would have been those who would extend salvation to the devils. St. Augustine towards the end of the *City of God* refuted Origen who, in Augustin's view at least, was probably the most dangerous early proponent of the salvation of Satan:

In respect of this matter, Origen was even more indulgent; for he believed that even the devil himself and his angels, after suffering those more severe and prolonged pains which their sins deserved, should be delivered from their torments, and associated with the holy angels. But the Church, not without reason, condemned him for this and other errors[.]<sup>52</sup>

Origen's name does appear in the eleventh and last anathema of the Second Council of Constantinople which convened in 553 AD. But the issue is more complicated mainly because Origen's work has survived only partly and some scholars rather show that he was not in fact ready to accept the salvation of Satan. Origen may have and may have not arrived at the logical implication of this "extreme universalism" which might well be that Christ would have to become a devil himself so as to die for the devils. According to Tom Greggs, Origen never claims that,<sup>53</sup> and Frederick W. Norris even writes that Origen "explicitly denied" the salvation of Satan.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> A brief history of universalism was carried out in Richard J. Bauckham, "Universalism: A Historical Survey," *Themelios* 2 Jan. 1978: 48-54.

<sup>52</sup> St. Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, XXI: 17. New York: Random House, 2000. Translated by Marcus Dods.

<sup>53</sup> Tom Greggs, "Apokatastasis: Particularist Universalism in Origen," *All Shall Be Well: Explorations in Universal Salvation and Christian Theology from Origen to Moltmann*, ed. Gregory MacDonald (Cambridge: James Clark & Co, 2011) 36.

<sup>54</sup> Frederick W. Norris, "Universal Salvation in Origen and Maximus," *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, ed. N. M. de S. Cameron (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1992) 47-50.

The tone which St. Augustine employs when he joins the debate with the universalists of his day, is rather condescending: “I must now, I see, enter the lists of amicable controversy with those tender-hearted Christians who decline to believe that any [...] shall suffer eternally, and who suppose that they shall be delivered after a fixed term of punishment, longer or shorter according to the amount of each man’s sin”.<sup>55</sup> Provided we accept for a moment Augustine’s characterisation, John Milton would clearly not be among the tender-hearted ones: there is no room for universalism in *Paradise Lost*, let alone for the salvation of Satan. In Book 3, Milton at length describes “a Limbo large and broad, since called / The Paradise of Fools” where “[a]ll who have thir reward on Earth [...] find / Fit retribution, emptie as thir deeds” (3.495-6; 451-4). Is he then taking relish in imagining the moment when his rival brothers of the Roman Catholic Church will try unsuccessfully to enter the pearly gates? Milton continues:

And now Saint Peter at Heav'ns Wicket seems  
 To wait them with his Keys, and now at foot  
 Of Heav'ns ascent they lift thir Feet, when loe  
 A violent cross wind from either Coast  
 Blows them transverse ten thousand Leagues awry  
 Into the devious Air; then might ye see  
 Cowles, Hoods and Habits with thir wearers tost  
 And flutterd into Raggs, then Reliques, Beads,  
 Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls,  
 The sport of Winds[;] (3.484-93)

and he does not forget to mention the pagans either, such as “h[im] who, to be deemed / A god, leaped fondly into Atna flames, / Empedocles” (3.469-71). But if, according to Augustine, the precondition for holding hope for the universal salvation, or even the tiniest hope for Satan, is a certain propensity for mercy, then the “tender-hearted” among the readers of *Paradise Lost* need not go very far for examples in the poem where Satan is worthy of their compassion.

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<sup>55</sup> St. Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, XXI: 17.

### 3.1 The Dramatic Soliloquy in Book 4

According to John Carey, Milton's literary approach to evil can be contrasted with a Shakespearean one, in which "evil is inextricably enmeshed in collective human experience"; whereas in *Paradise Lost*, we find evil isolated into "a single kind of being, which has borne fruit throughout history in pogrom, ghetto, and racial massacre".<sup>56</sup> At the same time, however, if evil is thus personified, that is, given a personality which has its own hopes and fears, we are ready to make a relationship with this "isolated evil". Many readers have developed such a relationship to Milton's Satan because in some "private" Satanic passages, "th' Accuser of mankind" (4.10) bears himself so sympathetically that even readers who have perhaps withstood the temptations of the glorious "public" Satan, start to feel for him. At the close of Book 3, after having received the directions from Uriel, Satan, "with hop'd success" (3.740), aims for the mountain range of Niphates. But at the start of Book 4 his mood changes dramatically: "Horror and doubt distract / His troubled thoughts" (4.18-9). It is because, for the first time, his "conscience wakes despair / That slumberd, wakes the bitter memorie / Of what he was" (4.23-5). What follows then is quite an extraordinary soliloquy (4.32-113): Satan addresses the Sun with feelings of poignant emotional pain: "how I hate thy beams / That bring to my remembrance from what state / I fell"; claims that God was after all not in the wrong: "he deservd no such return / From me, whom he created what I was"; confesses sincerely to his own motives for rebellion: "lifted up so high / I sdeind [disdained] subjection, and thought one step higher / Would set me highest". His moment of candour reaches a climax when he considers the possibilities of repentance:

is there no place  
Left for Repentance, none for Pardon left?  
None left but by submission; and that word  
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame  
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduc'd  
With other promises and other vaunts  
Then to submit, boasting I could subdue

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<sup>56</sup> Carey 131.

Th' Omnipotent. Ay me, they little know  
How dearly I abide that boast so vaine,  
Under what torments inwardly I groane:  
While they adore me on the Throne of Hell[.] (4.79-90)

Remarkably, we can see that Satan's earlier "courage never to submit or yield" (1.108) is in fact oddly mixed with his "dread of shame": is he somewhat dependent on the inferior spirits for their admiration? It seems that he is: but how tremendous it is of Satan at this moment to admit it! The "father of lies"<sup>57</sup> speaks the truth even if it means humiliation: Satan is like a schoolyard bully who suddenly realizes the interconnection between being a bully and feeling insecure himself. Although this is not yet 'the better fortitude of patience', it is Satan's most heroic moment in the poem, according to Milton's new standards of "spiritual heroism" (9.13-33).

It must be noted that this discrepancy between Satan's private and public selves is partly also due to the fact that the soliloquy was formerly intended for a piece of drama. "Edward Phillips reports that 'several years before the poem was begun' he saw the lines that now form the opening of Satan's address to the Sun, at which time the speech was designed for the beginning of a tragedy on the Fall."<sup>58</sup> However, Milton still used the soliloquy without any adjustments later in his epic. As Carey suggests, Satan "could be called evil at this point in the poem only in some attenuated sense, since he speaks the truth and curses himself as God curses him." This admission paradoxically "redeems Satan in the reader's eyes," he adds.<sup>59</sup> But it is possible to go still further than just "redeeming" Satan on the grounds of his moment of sincerity as some readers have regarded Milton's Satan as a victim of a vicious divine plan. This idea dovetails well with the reading of Satan as a Promethean hero who is closer to man than God is.

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<sup>57</sup> John 8:44.

<sup>58</sup> Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Malden, Oxford, Melbourne and Berlin: Blackwell Publishing, 2003) 444. Edward Phillips is Milton's nephew.

<sup>59</sup> Carey 134.

### 3.2 “Like His Brothers in Every Respect”

Milton humanizes Satan in that he makes him experience some ignoble yet common human emotions such as jealousy, envy, despair, or self-pity. In Book 4, when we finally see what Eden looks like in Milton’s imagination – it is through the devil’s point of view – Satan has another soliloquy. Milton describes it as “sad” (4.357); interestingly enough as there are only two more instances in the poem in which the word “sad” is used by the narrator about the fiend: in Book 3, the stairs are let down from Heaven to “aggravate / His sad exclusion from the dores of Bliss”; in Book 4, “towards Eden which now in his view / Lay pleasant, his grievd look he fixes sad” (3.525; 4.27-8). One of the saddest passages of *Paradise Lost* seems to be when the devil gives uncensored expression to his feelings of envy, self-pity, and tormenting desire. He watches Adam and Eve conversing and mutters to himself:

Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two  
Imparadis't in one anothers arms  
The happier Eden, shall enjoy thir fill  
Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,  
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,  
Among our other torments not the least,  
Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing pines[.] (4.505-11)

This escalated contrast of absolute bliss which is being observed from Satan’s viewpoint of desperate envy has been also expressed in an earlier line when “the Fiend / Saw undelighted all delight” (4.285-6). According to the “Epistle to the Hebrews”, the incarnate Son of God has been “made like his brothers in every respect” so that he might “sympathize with our weaknesses”.<sup>60</sup> Provided that the underlying idea is that the Son knows and has experienced all possible configurations of human suffering himself, does it also include the degrading emotions of envy or self-pity that Milton ascribes to Satan? If not, Milton’s Promethean Satan is paradoxically closer to mankind in the poem in this respect.

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<sup>60</sup> Hb 2:17-8; 4:15, English Standard Version.

### 3.3 The Tyranny of Heaven

The poem pays attention not only to Satan's inward thoughts but also to his bonds with other characters. In Book 5, for example, Raphael relates to Adam of the initial stages of Satan's rebellion in Heaven. It is of course "[t]hrough pride" (also 1.36) that he fell when he refused to pay homage to the anointed Son but as soon as Satan starts to speak, Raphael's judgemental tone changes. Satan addresses Beelzebub, his "next subordinate" (5.671):

Sleepst thou, Companion dear, what sleep can close  
Thy eye-lids? and remembrest what Decree  
Of yesterday, so late hath past the lips  
Of Heav'ns Almightye. Thou to me thy thoughts  
Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart;  
Both waking we were one; how then can now  
Thy sleep dissent? new Laws thou seest impos'd;  
New Laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise  
In us who serve, new Counsels, to debate  
What doubtful may ensue; more in this place  
To utter is not safe. (5.673-83)

Two things are noticeable: their intimate friendship based on mutual "imparting of thoughts" (provided we can take Satan's words at face value), and the fact that by providing us with Satan's perspective, Milton makes us wonder whether the rebellion might not after all be a just case against a tyranny imposing the new regime ("more in this place / To utter is not safe"). That Satan has a close accomplice and a dear friend (see also 1.87-91; 2.378-80) is certainly another proof that Milton succeeds in humanizing the fallen angel. But if we can interpret the leader of the devils as in fact a leader of morally superior dissent is a harder question.

This interpretation is ingeniously carried out by William Empson in his seminal book *Milton's God*. When Satan and his party tried to overthrow "h[im] who reigns / Monarch in Heav'n [...] upheld by old repute, / Consent or custome," and whose "strength conceal'd [...] tempted [their] attempt" (1.637-8; 641-2), not only does Empson argue that Satan's words are not just mere propaganda, but he also defends the claim that God himself is responsible for the rebellion. In his chapter on Satan, the critic begins with establishing that even after their fall to



Hell, the devils still believed that God is not omnipotent. He demonstrates that by many examples, of which I am choosing one. At the hellish council in Book 2, Belial dissuades others from more warmongering and suggest getting used to their new conditions: then he almost casually remarks that they cannot know “what hope the never-ending flight / Of future days may bring, what chance, what change” (1.221-2). Empson believes that Belial’s remark is sincere and, in accordance with Milton’s making the devils the gods of pagan religions, he points to the fate of the Greek primordial god Uranus, who was castrated by his son Cronus, as “evidence for what the devils thought about the cosmos”.<sup>61</sup> In other words, the devils truly hope for a similar fate for Milton’s God and do not yet know that such a hope is absurd. Secondly, as for the final responsibility of Milton’s God for Satan’s fall, Empson operates with the concept of *felix culpa*, or Fortunate Fall, which is a way of interpreting the fall of man as being fortuitous because it finally leads towards the redemption. However, Empson goes further when he claims that the Fortunate Fall was God’s plan from the very beginning. When Satan in his second speech to Beelzebub announces that ‘to do ill will be their sole delight’ as it may “perhaps [...] disturb / His [God’s] inmost counsels from their destined aim” (1.165), Empson points out a tragic irony: by seducing man, Satan is actually going to fulfil God’s inmost counsels. “However wicked Satan’s plan may be, it is God’s plan too,” Empson adds.<sup>62</sup>

It is possible to disagree with Empson on his second point because the Fortunate Fall can too easily be seen as God’s way of bringing about a positive outcome out of an unwelcome event. And if we consider God’s foreknowledge of Satan’s rebellion, it need not mean its pre-programming. In fact, Milton makes God explicitly discuss the relationship between foreknowledge and predestination: “they themselves decreed / Thir own revolt, not I: if I foreknew, / Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault” (3.116-8). True, this may be seen merely as God’s self-justification but in Book 5, Raphael explains in more positive terms that

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<sup>61</sup> William Empson, *Milton’s God* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965) 52.

<sup>62</sup> Empson 39.

Our voluntarie service he [God] requires,  
 Not our necessitated, such with him  
 Finds no acceptance, nor can find, for how  
 Can hearts, not free, be tri'd whether they serve  
 Willing or no, who will but what they must  
 By Destinie, and can no other choose? (5.529-34)

Moreover, John Rogers points out that in *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton, who was not a Calvinist, strived to interpret the key biblical passages about predestination in such a way so as to do without a Calvinist God who chooses in advance who is going to be saved and who is going to be damned.<sup>63</sup> Even Satan knows that he was not programmed when he explicitly admits that he had enough free will and enough power to stand (4.66-7).<sup>64</sup>

It seems then that Satan is not a victim of a vicious divine plan. But it can also be argued that such a stance just belongs to what Rogers calls the ‘dominant, official discourse’ of the poem, “produced and sanctioned by the narrator”; whereas on the other hand there is also a subversive critique of it simultaneously present in the poem.<sup>65</sup> Rogers demonstrates this on the first argument between Adam and Eve in Book 9 (205-384): when Eve suggests that they work separately in order to be more productive, Adam praises her idea but warns her against the foe. When Adam implies that she might not be safe alone (9.267-9), Eve voices a powerful critique of Eden itself:

If this be our condition, thus to dwell  
 In narrow circuit strait'nd by a Foe,  
 Suttle or violent, we not endu'd  
 Single with like defence, wherever met,  
 How are we happie, still in fear of harm? (9.322-6)  
 [...]  
 Fraile is our happiness, if this be so,  
 And Eden were no Eden thus expos'd. (9.340-1)

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<sup>63</sup> See Professor John Roger’s series of lectures called “Milton” and delivered at the Yale University and available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-U6pf5v\\_Fkg&t=1287s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-U6pf5v_Fkg&t=1287s) (13:11-16:00).

<sup>64</sup> The only potential qualification for his words is that they appear in the emotionally charged dramatic soliloquy of Book 4.

<sup>65</sup> In other words, the poem is arguing with itself. Rogers speaks of a juxtaposition of “two views which are separate *almost* to the point of absolute incompatibility” (emphasis mine).

According to Rogers, while Adam here represents “the nervous voice of the poem’s orthodoxy”, Eve represents the questioning voice that critiques this orthodoxy. Another example is the interpretation of the fall in the poem. According to the “official” one, the fall is an act of free will on the part of man. On the other hand, it may also be that the Father’s prohibition is what actually produces man’s disobedience in the same way as pruning the trees speeds up new growth (see Eve in 9.205-12). And just as it is with Adam and Eve, it may be that God only represents the official line of the poem which is constantly being questioned by Satan.

The structural mirrors which the orthodox critics interpret as parodies could be then seen as mere subversive alternatives to the poem’s official doctrine. There are emotions in the scenes of the reunion of Satan’s family: “to Hell he now return’d, / And [...] unhop’t / Met who to meet him came, his Ofspring dear”; telepathy between Satan and Sin: “My Heart, which by a secret harmonie / Still moves with thine, join’d in connexion sweet”; or Satan’s heart melting a little bit when he first hears his daughter’s story: “She finish’d, and the suttle Fiend his lore / Soon learnd, now milder, and thus answerd smooth. / Dear Daughter...” (10.346-9; 10.357-9; 2.815-7). When Nigel Smith says that *Paradise Lost* is a “heresy machine”, he also notes that Milton wished to return to the original meaning of the word which is “choice” (from Greek *proairesis*). Smith elaborates that

rather than the Augustinian understanding of heresy as that which is forbidden and to be expunged from believers, making them if need be the object of persecution, heresy becomes a fundamental part of a Christian’s life of faith[.]

and that

the extremely human terms of the poem bring those heterodox views right home to us, the reader, poignantly in the characters of Adam and Eve, and painfully in the character of Satan[.]<sup>66</sup>

It seems that Milton wants us to make a choice between his God and his Satan in *Paradise Lost*, which is after all what has been happening all along.

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<sup>66</sup> Nigel Smith, “Paradise Lost and Heresy,” *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, eds. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 510.

## Conclusion

The order in which the three thesis chapters deal with Satan's appeal to the reader was designed intentionally in such a way so as to proceed as if from the surface to the core, from the first impressions of Satan's outward magnificence, to the more complex problem of the Satanic rhetoric in the poem, and finally to the still more complicated issues of the tragic Satan, and subversive readings of Satan as in fact morally superior to Milton's God. It is only in retrospect that I can see that this order roughly corresponds – although in a sense it is a schematic idea – also to the three stages of the historical reception of Satan, as outlined by Paul Stevens. According to his proposal, the first stage is the Romantic Satan, followed by the “academic Satan” of the twentieth century, and the last stage is the so-called Milton's Satan. As for the first two stages, Satan's prowess and formidable “courage never to submit or yield” were apparently in the fore during the first one; the dismantling of the diabolic rhetoric and the reading of temptation of the reader into the poem came to be the matter of the “academic orthodoxy” by the latter half of the century in the second one. I have implied in the separate conclusions to the first two chapters that Satan's magnificent “outward lustre” should be – if at all – a temporary reason for our admiration; and that his “glozing lyes” (3.93) need not necessarily win the reader even if it is a strong temptation: when put side by side to God's rhetoric which can be repetitive, too other-worldly, and possibly simply boring, Satan's style is captivating to the reader, as it was to Eve.

The considerations of Satan's more sympathetic passages such as his dramatic soliloquies in Book 4 posed the most difficult problem in a sense that I was no longer able, even with the help of a Fishian framework, to “fend off” the temptations to fall for the devil, as it were. Milton's success at humanizing the character of the fallen angel is simply too evident. Empson's argument about Satan being a victim of a pre-conceived divine plan I do not find convincing; but the fact that Milton gives so much space to Satan's perspective in the poem and

that he inserts into his mouth some truly Miltonic ideas (5.792-3; 4.515-6) led me to accept Rogers' suggestion that *Paradise Lost* is a poem which argues with itself: the official line of reasoning represented by God, or Adam, is being constantly undermined by a subversive one, that is by Satan in relation to God, and sometimes Eve in relation to Adam.

The problem of a tragic Satan, however, is still not solved by this. The fact that Stanley Fish's argument about Milton tempting or seducing the reader is called the contemporary academic orthodoxy proves that the efforts of the orthodox critics to show that Milton is not of the devil's party were apparently largely successful. But even if we manage eventually – and it could well be only upon re-reading the poem – to avoid Milton's Satanic traps and baits, the argument made by John Carey that Satan is paradoxically redeemed in the reader's eyes by the end of the soliloquy in Book 4 still remains. Why did Milton keep the soliloquy unaltered? The solution lies, I am convinced, in the last stage of Satan's reception which Stevens calls "Milton's Satan". By way of introducing the third stage, he points out that the author of *Paradise Lost*, whom critics were finally able to "make in control of the poem", is very different from John Milton writing his prose. That Milton was engaged in the political struggle of his country during the English Civil Wars is well known, as is for example the fact that in "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates" he justifies the king's execution. What is perhaps less known, Stevens shows, is Milton's defence of the violent measures taken in Ireland in 1649. Milton writes in *Eikonoklastes* that a nation has a right "by just Warr and execution to slay whole Families of them, who so barbarously had slaine whole Families before".<sup>67</sup> For this reason Stevens concludes that there is blood on Milton's hands and that Milton came to acknowledge this fact. Satan of *Paradise Lost* is no-one else than John Milton analysing himself.

In view of this, the most graphic of Satan's lamentations indeed sound like self-reproaching thoughts of an old man who hopes for his God's forgiveness:

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<sup>67</sup> John Milton's prose works can be accessed online at the John Milton Reading Room. Edited by Thomas H. Luxon. [https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading\\_room/eikonoklastes/text.shtml](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/eikonoklastes/text.shtml) 1 Jul 2018.

Me miserable! which way shall I flie  
Infinite wrauth, and infinite despaire?  
Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell;  
And in the lowest deep a lower deep  
Still threatning to devour me opens wide,  
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n. (4.73-8)

The idea of Satan as Milton also explains why we see Eden for the first time through Satan's eyes: this gives Milton the opportunity to imagine the unimaginable while at the same time he can avoid any criticism by simply appealing to the fact that his Eden is only presented through the eyes of the fallen archangel. Moreover, Satan's perspective gives Milton more freedom to voice his own possible sadness at the loss of Eden. This partly biographical reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost* also dovetails with the fact that Milton used his powers several times to justify all sorts of causes: he wrote a defence of the English people concerning the recent regicide, his announced purpose of *Paradise Lost* is to justify the ways of God to men, and he may be justifying himself through the creation of Satan. John Milton's Satan is certainly not biblical, but rather an impressive literary character casting a long shadow of influence – there would be no Byronic heroes without him – just as Milton's own shadow was a formidable one. Nonetheless, for poets of today this is no longer necessarily the case, and for me as a student and an admirer of the literary giant John Milton, it is refreshing to suddenly look at him, thus yoked with his Satan, from an altogether new perspective.

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