THREE ASPECTS OF TIME: A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF

URN BURIAL, THE GARDEN OF CYRUS

AND

SAMSON AGONISTES

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1969

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

in the Department

of

English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

August, 1974
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ABSTRACT

Much of the melancholy of seventeenth-century English writing stems from obsessive concern with the swiftness of the passage of time and the equally swift approach of death. In Urn Burial and The Garden of Cyrus, Sir Thomas Browne demonstrates that the concern is unwarranted. Aware of man's wish to perpetuate the memory of himself, Browne exposes the vanity of a desire for fame as well as the more mundane desire to be remembered in a monument. In Urn Burial he faces death squarely and shows the essential emptiness of man's egocentric ideas. He explains in the closing chapter that happiness consists in living privately in innocence, dealing justly with others, and believing in "the sufficiency of Christian Immortality [which] frustrates all earthly glory." In The Garden of Cyrus, he presents another point of view wherein he shows that happiness can be discovered, regardless of creed, by becoming aware of the loveliness, grandeur and mystery of the universe, and assumes that all human beings can sense the sublime in nature. Therefore, he itemizes a variety of wonders in order to enhance man's appreciation of the mysterious force which creates and incessantly maintains order in the world.

The first essay treats of time in the linear sense through which man comprehends the movement of his own lifespan and the long perspective of history. The second essay deals with the perpetual present. This segment of time, which has more immediacy, is symbolized by the wedge in the Roman numeral V, five. The Garden of Cyrus is founded upon the pattern of a quincunx, a series of five points disposed in the shape of a square or rectangle with the fifth point in the centre. However, each essay has five chapters which together constitute a unit forming "the sacred Letter X"
which is also the Roman numeral for ten, a number denoting fullness or completion.

Whereas Browne chooses to disclose his concepts of time in the form of abstract symbols, Milton, in *Samson Agonistes*, indicates his concept of the time-element by dramatizing the biblical story of Samson and, through the exposure of a human being's thoughts and actions, shows that time is vital to man's understanding of the meaning of his existence. Like Adam in *Paradise Lost*, Samson represents mankind since, despite his superhuman strength, he is a frail mortal who lives in the darkness of human ignorance. In Milton's interpretation of Judges 13-16, Samson's imprisonment in the mill at Gaza is symbolic of the cage within which man tends to incarcerate himself, preferring the prison of mundane ignorance to the freedom of spiritual knowledge. And Samson's blindness symbolizes man's ignorance both of his motives for action and the nature of his connexion with God.

The tragedy is concerned with God's justice toward man. At the beginning of the drama, Samson questions the justice of God's acts, but, time passes during the course of the drama and, finally, the questions are answered. In *Man is Not Alone*, the religious philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel writes: "Philosophy begins with man's question; religion begins with God's question and man's answer." Samson understands that God has questioned him, and the hero, craving for communion with his spiritual father, replies by changing his attitude toward life. Thereafter, in place of physical vision, God gives Samson insight which leads to his self-knowledge, to his release from the confines of the prison, and, paradoxically, to his freedom from the burden of life itself. At the close of the drama, through the tragedy of his untimely death, Samson's human father, his Danite friends, and the audience, gain similar
insight and begin to understand the mystery of God's justice.

A deeply religious atmosphere and an essentially vertical structure inform both Milton's tragedy and Browne's essays. Just as Browne derives much of his imagery from Scripture, so Milton depends upon scriptural sources for the bulk of his drama. In his chapter "On Scriptural Interpretation" in The Seventeenth Century Background, Basil Willey writes: "Milton believed, with Browne...that in Scripture truth was often conveyed figuratively." Both seventeenth-century authors are in search of truth, and both can be seen as theologians: Browne, the physician, expresses his understanding of God as he examines the amazing order he finds in the universe; Milton, the poet, expresses his understanding as he sings of the hidden wonders he finds in the mind of man.
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"There's no clock in the forest," Orlando tells the disguised Rosalind in As You Like It, and with this reply to her flippant question, "I pray you, what is't o'clock?", Shakespeare brings into the demi-paradise garden of Arden the haunting theme of Time and its concomitant Death. The preoccupation with time and mortality in the Renaissance was, of course, nothing new, for its connexion with Genesis is clear, but that the theme of carpe diem was most imperative in this period of history is apparent in the records of writers from Petrarch to Milton. The invention of the mechanical clock: "toward the end of the thirteenth century," the burgeoning mercantilism of the Renaissance, scientific discovery--especially Galileo's telescope--and Descartes' philosophy of universal doubt, were, perhaps, some of the factors that helped to create the tensions of worry and uncertainty. No longer did the church regulate the daily round of citizens with bells for Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers and Compline, but a mechanical clock soullessly chimed the hours; the star of capitalism was on the rise, and time and moneymaking moved together. Around the mid-point of the seventeenth century in England, as the Renaissance grew to ripeness, Sir Thomas Browne wrote two discourses relating to two aspects of time, Urn Burial and The Garden of Cyrus, and Milton published Samson Agonistes, a tragedy fraught with tension, in which time plays a major if invisible role. It is with the idea in mind that, though "there's no clock in the forest," there is a clock within us, that I propose to
examine these works of Browne and Milton.

That a connexion should exist between a piece of dramatic writing and two discursive essays may appear on the surface to be somewhat tenuous. Beneath the surface, however, much can be found to justify the linking of these seemingly disparate literary works. Fundamentally, both the tragedy and the essays are profoundly religious, and part of the aim in each work is to discredit paganism, to the greater glory of God. Also, a persistent upward movement from the lower levels of mundane experience to the upper regions of spiritual enlightenment is expressed symbolically in *Samson* and in Browne's two essays. However, because Browne's two-part work is without a unifying title, I shall attempt first to show that *Urn Burial* and *The Garden of Cyrus* is an integrated single entity. When Browne's work is seen as a totality, somewhat akin to the two hands of a man in relation to his mind and body, one can more fully appreciate the similarity between this two-part piece and Milton's tragedy.

Our sympathetic response to *Samson Agonistes* and the catharsis we experience at the close of the drama come largely from our recognition of the hero's passion and our relief from the tension of his dilemma. Aside from the soaring quality of the blank verse which catches us up in the magic of its cadences, Milton rivets our attention to a story we already know by concentrating on Samson's frailties, in many of which we see our own. Samson, therefore, represents Everyman in much the same way as he represents the people of Israel, for the Hebrew word 'Isra-el' means precisely 'he who struggled with God'; and his struggle to justify himself in the eyes of God is similar to the struggle of all who seek to justify their existence. Samson's eventual triumph comes about, paradoxically, through his submission to the will of God. And the
paradox and the triumph bring into sharp relief the crucial centre in the design of 
_**Urn Burial** and _**The Garden of Cyrus.** Paradox is the essence of the first essay and triumphant renewal is the root of the second. Together the essays form a single unit which can be seen as a cosmic drama turning upon an invisible axis which, like a compass, directs us from the labyrinths of uncertainty to the pole of religious truth.

In the preface to his edition of _**Urn Burial** and _**The Garden of Cyrus,** John Carter refers to the essays as "the perfected products of Browne's maturity," and quotes a remark of George Saintsbury who considered them "'the quintessence both of Browne's thought and of his expression'." The word 'quintessence' operates with peculiar force in connexion with this work, for the number five is the essential note of harmony that is sustained throughout both essays in the rhythmical music of Browne's poetic prose. So much has been written in praise of the style, particularly that of _**Urn Burial,** that it will be sufficient here to summarize the subject matter in each essay before proceeding to an examination of the structure that unites them.

In _**Urn Burial,** Browne ransacks history in order to prove the vanity of man's desire to perpetuate the memory of himself in a monument and thereby to "escape the universal predicament of oblivion." In a comparison between the alternate methods of burying or burning the dead, he finds excellent reasons in support of each method. However, the ostensible subject, a discussion concerning some human bones recently discovered inside cinerary urns, is not, in fact, Browne's main concern. The urns had been found in a field on the estate of Browne's neighbour, Thomas Le Gros, to whom _**Urn Burial** is dedicated. In the epistle dedicatory, Browne makes plain to his friend that "We were hinted by the occasion, not caught the opportunity to write of old things..." And he states his main purpose both in his life and in the essay
when he writes that, as a doctor of medicine, he works "to preserve the living... to keep men out of their Urnes." Ultimately, Urn Burial proves to be a sermon urging people to deal justly with one another.

The Garden of Cyrus is a sermon of another order. Here, Browne displays the wonders of nature, the mystery of the night sky and the "vegetable delights" of gardens. Be aware of the sublime grandeur of the universe, the mystery inherent in a seed that will become a mighty oak or a tiny flower, then happiness will follow, is the message conveyed in this essay. But, understanding the limits of language, Browne wraps his message in a symbol, the pattern of a quincunx or set of five points disposed in the shape of a square or rectangle with the fifth point in the centre. In Urn Burial, Browne scoffs at the essential emptiness of man's wish to be remembered through the medium of some man-made monument, but who can sneer at the stars? In The Garden, Browne evokes awe and reverence for all Creation by working through the symbol of the quincuncial pattern which is found in the natural order, the artificial or man-constructed order of architectural designs and the like, and in the mystical order expressed both "in Holy Scripture" and in the recondite concepts of Plato. And he does so without prejudice toward the superstitions of our primitive ancestors. In Urn Burial, Browne confines himself to mocking the pagan "founder of the Pyramids," in The Garden he opens "a large field" for future enquirers who seek "to trace the Labyrinth of Truth" (The Garden of Cyrus, V, 343).

Many critics study Urn Burial and The Garden of Cyrus by placing each section of the work beside the other. This method certainly makes clear the opposing themes of each essay, which Professor Frank L. Huntley has cogently defined: "One concerns death, the other, life; one the body, the other the soul; one passions, the other..."
reason; one accident, the other design; one substance, the other form."^6

Subsequently, additional opposing pairs swell the list: "The first essay treats of time; the second, space;"^7 and, whereas Urn Burial exposes man's vanity, The Garden "exhorts to humility."^8 Indeed, the aesthetic tension inherent in such oppositions increases as one extends the list yet further to include the contrapuntally rhythmic themes that ring the changes of each essay: dissolution and resurrection, transitory and eternal, conjecture and certainty, darkness and light, chaos and order. The list is seemingly endless. But the suggestion arising from such a presentation of opposing themes is that they balance each other in the way a set of scales can be made to hang on a level. The idea of balancing opposites in this way has led Professor Huntley to call Urn Burial and The Garden of Cyrus "Browne's twin essays."^9

The term "twin essays" can be misleading, for one tends to imagine twins of identical weight standing alongside each other, possibly hand in hand. However, the essays are in no way identical. Leonard Nathanson, in his recent study, The Strategy of Truth, finds great disparity between them. Nor should they be viewed side by side, for the structure of Browne's work is vertical.

I. The Symbolic Structure of Urn Burial and The Garden of Cyrus

The symbolic interpretation is the only one which expands, enlarges the world, makes it boundless, illimitable. All others reduce it.

Andés Nin, Diaries, vol. III, p. 76.

The symbol Sir Thomas Browne keeps perpetually before us in Urn Burial and The Garden of Cyrus is the quincuncial pattern. Not only does each essay contain five chapters but the number five pervades them both. This is obvious in the second
essay where variations on the theme of five provide the central subject; it is not obvious, however, in the first. The five chapters of Urn Burial while corresponding to the five of The Garden of Cyrus, also correspond to the number of points in a pyramid the base of which, being roughly square, creates four points, while the sides sloping up to a single point, similar to the apex of a triangle, supplies the fifth.

Later, I will attempt to show that the pattern of a pyramid is the prime symbol representing Urn Burial. First, however, I will attempt to demonstrate that together the essays form the Roman numeral X, for once the form is recognised the meaning emerges with greater clarity. Indeed, Professor H.D.F. Kitto has emphasized that "in a great work of art . . . the connexion between the form and the content is so vital that the two may be said to be ultimately identical."^10

In Professor Huntley's brilliant analysis of the two essays, he has already drawn attention to the Roman numeral X. He describes the figure as "two V's (five's) joined at their apices," and pursues the design beyond its numerical significance to Browne's scheme. Clearly, the idea of ten, the plenary number denoting fullness or completion, describes the scope of the work; it also indicates the relationship of the discourses. However, Professor Huntley shows them to be related more specifically in the form of "a Platonic dichotomy: two parts opposed yet conjoined, with a rising from the lower or elemental Urn Burial (death) to the higher or celestial Garden of Cyrus, the 'numerical character' of reality (life)."^13

Professor Huntley's words and the thought they carry echo those of Browne who, in the dedicatory epistle to The Garden of Cyrus, writes to his friend, Nicholas Bacon:

"That we conjoin these parts of different Subjects, or that this should succeed the other; Your judgement will admit without impute of incongruity; Since the
delightfull world comes after death, and Paradise succeeds the Grave. Since the verdant state of things is the Symbole of the Resurrection, and to flourish in the state of Glory, we must first be sown in corruption.

Browne's intention here is clear enough. For him, the symbol of the Resurrection "is in the verdant state of things," and his title alone imparts the nature of this discourse for it speaks of growth. The humour in his suggestion that we must first die and be buried in the earth before we can "flourish", both underlines the connexion between the essays and gives an extra fillip to the upward movement in the plan of the composition, the vertical structure of which conforms precisely to the Roman numeral X, albeit resting on a plane surface.

That the second essay is represented by the upper part of the numeral X, the Roman V or five which is the pervasive number of The Garden of Cyrus, is not difficult to perceive. But that the first essay is represented by the lower part of the figure, the inverted V, is not immediately apparent. I propose that the symbolic shape representing Urn Burial is not simply an inverted V that hangs in a vacuum, but a triangle or pyramid that rests heavily on the earth, out of "a shallow part" of which the Walsingham urns "were digged up."

II. The Triangle of Time: Structure in Urn Burial

In the first sentence of the dedicatory epistle to Thomas Le Gros, Browne places before his friend a triangular image. The letter begins, "When the Funerall pyre was out," and this image, shaped very like a pyramid, is set so far back in time by the use of the past tense that it can be viewed with detachment. Before the first sentence reaches its conclusion, the image is reinforced with three references to time: "future
ages," "old experience," and "duration." The triplet announces the main theme of Urn Burial: Time. Thus the triangular shape of a funeral pyre both depicts and assimilates the theme, for "duration" can be visualised as the base of the triangle with "old experience" and "future ages" forming the two opposite sides. Yet so quietly is the scene furnished that both symbol and theme slip by almost without our notice. The second paragraph, however, shatters the quiet of the first. Browne commands the reader's attention, forces him to notice, drags him willy-nilly into the discourse with a battery of questions. "Who knows the fate of his bones?" Browne asks. "Who hath the Oracle of his ashes?" Detachment is now out of the question. For those readers who know that Browne's skull was taken from his coffin in 1840, and endured the vicissitudes of being stolen, sold, measured and treasured until it was reinterred in 1922, the irony in these questions is acute. Yet for all readers, both Browne's contemporaries and ourselves, something happens when these, albeit rhetorical, questions are put: Browne, Thomas Le Gros and the general reader become equally involved in contemplation of the inevitable prospect of death. The tri-partite pattern of the pyre, symbolic of the three grammatical aspects of time, can now be seen to include everyone. Thus, within the first two paragraphs of the prefatory letter, Browne has suggestively created three distinct triangles: the pyre itself, the triangle representing time, and the one composed of "I", "You," and "We;" that is, the writer, the recipient of the dedicatory letter, and the readers.

It is this reader's belief that the triangular shape Browne had in mind during the composition of Urn Burial is that of the Pyramids. In the final sentence of the fourth paragraph of the dedication, Browne hints at these Egyptian monuments. Here, Thomas Le Gros, an antiquary of no "slender" achievement, is asked to consider "The ancient
of dayes, the Antiquaries truest object." The biblical account of men living in ancient
times, "without Aegyptian account" Browne interjects, "makes but small noise," or
only a slight impact compared with the greater number of "thousands." The reference
to "the ancient of dayes" is surely to Chapters IV and V of Genesis where the
descendants of Adam and Eve are listed. The names mentioned in these two chapters
total twenty-seven, and, compared with the "Aegyptian account" supplied presumably
by the massive memorials of the pyramids, the biblical number does seem pitifully small.
If this assumption is correct, and Browne intends us to picture the pyramids, the relations­
ship between a certain number of men's and women's names and architectural objects
may be considered as "a kind of discordia concors." Indeed, Dr. Johnson's famous
remark in derogation of such unlike resemblances can, with justice, be applied to this
particular combination of dissimilar images, for "the most heterogeneous ideas are
yoked by violence together" here.

No precise reference to pyramids appears in Urn Burial before the penultimate
paragraph of Chapter III. Here, in the central chapter and heart of the essay, Browne
finds the pyramids to be less ancient than fossils of human bones petrified before the
Flood. The triangular image is brought forward naturally and unostentatiously in the
context of the sentence, for he writes: "mortall bodies may remain in petrified bones
... some may be older than Pyramids, in the petrified Reliques of the generall
inundation" (Urn Burial, III, 271). Thus, somewhat obliquely, Browne reminds the
reader of the pyramidal shape while, at the same time, he reduces the importance of the
Pyramids, perhaps the oldest of man-made monuments, by showing them to be less old
than human fossils. And, in comparing the Pyramids with fossils, Browne, by
implication, comments adversely upon the pagan ceremonies attaching to these tombs.
To be sure, the hint is slight but in the sentence immediately following, he speaks of the opening of "the Tomb of Cyrus, [in which] the remaining bones discovered his proportion" (III, 271). So we receive the first hint of the title of the second essay in as slight a fashion as we receive the initial mention of the symbolic shape of the first.

Before proceeding to the final chapter of Urn Burial where the pyramidal image becomes overwhelmingly symbolic of Browne's central theme, it is necessary to explain that the idea of the shape representing the first essay is planted early in Chapter I.

The first sentence of Urn Burial is concerned with "a shallow part" of the earth's surface. The second concerns three things: "Nature," "the Earth" and "man."

Together, these three things echo the triangular image of the funeral pyre seen first in the epistle dedicatory. The third sentence reveals the theme of the discourse, Time. Browne writes, "The treasures of time lie high," and the phrase introduces a paradox, the humorous absurdity of which pervades all five chapters of the essay. Indeed, the first paragraph concludes with a paradox concerning the oldness of the New World. It also concludes with yet another reference to "the earth," which has been mentioned four times in as many sentences. The paradox by its very nature "exhibits some conflict with pre-conceived notions of what is reasonable or possible," therefore presents a duality, and, since it is coupled in the same sentence with "the earth," the paradox and the image create a triangular pattern: "That great Antiquity America lay buried for thousands of years; and a large part of the earth is still in the Urne unto us." The triangular pattern the sentence evokes can be seen to contain a mystery. And even the mystery, which lies in the future, contains a paradox, for future discoveries are "in the Urne unto us." The urn here represents that which is within us, the mysterious workings of the mind, or man's invisible clock, his imagination. However, what is clear in this
paragraph can be grasped: the plane surface of the earth itself forms the base of the triangle, while "Nature" and "man" supply the opposite two sides. Confined within the space enclosed by these three sides is Time, "which reveals old things in heaven, makes new discoveries in earth," as we are told in the penultimate sentence of this densely packed opening paragraph. However, the ultimate paradox in the final chapter of *Urn Burial*, is the discovery that Time is an illusion, a "Chymera," existing only in the self-centred, confined imagination of man. But before Browne explodes the symbolic triangle of time, he establishes the conceit securely in the reader's mind.

Though the triangle is eventually seen to be empty, as empty as man's vanity, indeed as empty as the Great Pyramid itself which once contained the mummified body of a temporarily mighty Pharaoh, Browne proposes another triangular image that, somewhat differently, repeats the symbolic shape. This profound image concerns the urn-womb paradox which Margaret Ash Heideman finds to be "the dominant and unifying symbol" of *Urn Burial*.

In her penetrating study of the essays, Margaret Heideman follows Browne's variations "on the constant theme of life and death," and finds in the central chapter the "central" paradox of the first essay. She draws attention to the sentence that describes the Walsingham urns which, having recently been discovered in a field near Browne's home in Norwich, provide him with the ostensible subject of the essay: "But the common form with necks was a proper figure, making our last bed like our first; nor much unlike the Urnes of our Nativity, while we lay in the nether part of the Earth, and inward vault of our Microcosme" (III, 262). The significance of the "urn-womb paradox" to the triangular pattern of *Urn Burial* lies in its powerful evocation of mystery. This mystery is of a different nature from the one concerning the future. Here, the two
poles of time between which human life is measured create a line, our life-line, which can be substituted for the base of the triangle seen earlier as the plane surface of the earth. The "vault of our Microcosme" mirrors the vault of heaven, and that "mystery of similitude" which Browne finds in the shape of the urn and the human womb, together with that elevated heavenly mystery, create this other triangular shape. For at birth and at death man is connected with the mystery that, in Christian terms, controls his being.

But the main emphasis in *Urn Burial* is less upon the mystery that fills the space created by the urn-womb-heaven triangle than it is upon ideas, presented in triads, relating to the ultimate worthlessness of man's vain concern with moneymaking. Just as "the treasures of time" are visualized as "Urnes, Coynes, and Monuments" in Chapter I, so a similar triad near the end of Chapter V shows these treasures to be worth only money, for, at the time Browne is writing, "Mummie is become Merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsoms" (V, 283).

Indeed, it is in Chapter V that Browne repeats again and again the symbolic pattern of the pyramid that was first suggested in the central third chapter. And if it is true that we reveal ourselves by our repetitions, Browne here reveals the overriding triangular image that subsumes all the themes he has been discussing. The theme of death, the subject of "these bones" found in the Walsingham urns, and the false idea that man can immortalize himself in a monument, are summed up in the sentence: "But to subsist in bones, and be but Pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration" (V, 280). Equally false and similarly encased in an Egyptian image is the idea that man can continue to exist in the memories of other men, since
in this latter Scene of time we cannot expect such Mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the Prophecy of Elias, and Charles the fifth can never hope to live within two Methusela's of Hector (V, 281).

In his annotated edition of Hydriotaphia (Urn Burial) and The Garden of Cyrus, Professor Huntley clarifies the above passage with a note stating that by the time Charles V, King of Spain, was born in 1500, Hector's reputation was twice as long as Methusela's age. Continuing this thought he draws the logical conclusion that if the world is to end in 2000, as Browne seems here to think likely, the longest life that Charles's reputation could have would be 500 years, "the Prophecy of Elias" indicating that the world would last 6000 years. The assumption Browne makes, surely with tongue in cheek, is that 4000 years passed before the coming of Christ and, therefore, only 2000 years can follow.

An atmosphere of apocalypse reigns in this passage, for not only will each individual die and be forgotten but Time itself is disintegrating. "'Tis too late to be ambitious," Browne calls out in the mannered pentameter of Shakespeare. "The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designes" (V, 281). And at the conclusion of the paragraph, in the symbol depicting "the remaining particle of futurity," Browne shows the actual pyramids collapsing, as Time, "which maketh Pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment," literally runs out.

Part of Browne's charm, however, lies in his human compassion which cannot bear "the iniquity of oblivion." It is with compassion that he looks back upon the pagan Pharaoh and asks with moving simplicity: "Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids?" (V, 282). Indeed, all of Browne's subsequent references to those misguided monarchs have the quality of 'a dying fall.' The great "Aegyptian ingenuity" in the careful wrapping and preserving of their royal dead was "unsatisfied," since all this art
"was vanity, feeding the winde, and folly. The Aegyptian Mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth" (V, 283). And the triad quoted earlier (see above, p.12), completing this particular cluster of Egyptian images, shows the mundane uses to which the bodies of once great kings have now been reduced.

Two further references to pyramids remain to be discussed. The third paragraph before the end of Urn Burial opens with a typical triad of triangular images all of which are italicized. "Pyramids, Arches, Obelisks, were but the irregularities of vain-glory, and wilde enormities of ancient magnanimity" (V, 285). Use of the past tense here is in sharp contrast with the immediately previous reference to Egyptology wherein Browne tells us, in triplicate, the present mercantile use of Pharaoh's remains. The past tense, the recollection of the present absurd use which Pharaoh now serves, and the denigrating phrases that Browne employs to deflate ancient Egyptian pomp, throw into high relief the humility of "the Christian Religion" in which, as the second sentence of this paragraph tells us, "the most magnanimous resolution rests" (V, 285).

The entire discourse leads to the conviction that "the sufficiency of Christian Immortality frustrates all earthly glory" (V, 284). Therefore, in the last sentence of Urn Burial, the final reference to Egypt evokes a flat, featureless desert. The pyramids have vanished and only "the Sands of Aegypt," shifting like the sands of time, remain. It is as if Browne, having demonstrated that Time erases, now erases Time. Clearly, for him, that which is invisible within us is of infinitely greater importance than that which can be sensually apprehended. He finds external considerations of time to be of little consequence, for "we live by an invisible Sun within us" (V, 285). Inner illumination, therefore, is the only clock we need; and the only epitaph, a good name for having dealt honestly and innocently "with men in this world" (V, 285). "Five
languages secured not the Epitaph of Gordianus" (V, 284), Browne recalls, and, along with this fact the number five re-enters the reader's mind, reminding him of the quincuncial pattern embedded in the pyramidal structure of this discourse and preparing him for the pattern that will permeate the next.

The pattern of time, like so much in Urn Burial that Browne finds of value, is really invisible, as invisible as the happiness of those "whom privacy makes innocent" (V, 285). And, since he is "invisibly interred by Angels," we may concede that "The man of God lives longer without a Tomb than any by one" (V, 284), as Browne avers. Would he permit us to add that the man of God would also live longer without a clock? It is probable that he would since he demolishes the pyramidal structure representative of Time. Time cannot be enclosed, not even by the metaphor of a symbol. It has no structure beyond that imposed by the human mind.

Browne uses the triangular symbol of the pyramid to represent the human concept of time which is, essentially, a linear concept. Our habitation during life is "the earth" into "a shallow part" of which we eventually drop. Hence man and the earth are intimately connected. The base of one triangle is represented by the earth, and the base of the other by man's life-line which extends from womb to tomb. The triangle based upon solid earth is completed by the opposing forces of "Nature" and "man," while that based upon the equally stable 'reality' of the urn-womb paradox is completed by the lines connecting man with the heavenly mystery. Placed parallel to each other, their base lines fixed immovably in fact, the triangles can be seen approaching obliquely until they meet at their apices. Together, therefore, the two triangles create the symbolic pyramid. Browne's purposeful and symbolic destruction of the Pyramids, his concern to show them as empty tombs and as morally disorderly emblems
of vanity, indicates that man's concept of time, along with his vain desire for fame are equally void of meaning.

However, there are three important things to observe in Browne's pyramidal structure. The first concerns what I will call Triangle 1. In this triangle, Browne names the three sides: "the earth," "Nature," and "man." In Triangle 2, however, the implication is clear that he provides names for the two base angles, either 'urn and womb' or 'birth and death.' Equally the apex of this second triangle can be termed 'the heavenly mystery' or 'God.' Therefore, when the two triangles meet at their apices, the topmost point in the symbolic pyramid now created represents the ineffable name. The third and, perhaps, most important fact concerning this design can be observed when, on raising Triangle 2 above Triangle 1 in the manner of lifting a hinge, the quicuncial pattern of The Garden of Cyrus becomes immediately apparent.

The following diagrams illustrate this design:

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Triangle 1

NATURE  MAN

EARTH

Triangle 2

'GOD'

BIRTH  DEATH

Pyramid created

Vertical arrangement of the design

In the vertical arrangement, the topmost point of the pyramid, the prime symbol of the first essay, becomes "the mystical decussion" Browne speaks of in the second essay. In keeping with the vertical structure of the complete work, the point where both triangles meet is the crucial centre of both essays. From this aspect, it appears obvious that this unnamed centre of the Roman numeral X, offers a reason why Browne does not
supply a unifying title to this extraordinary masterpiece. Ultimately language fails, for God's name is ineffable.

The great culminating chapter of *Urn Burial* not only frustrates, symbolically, the earthbound glory of pagan Egypt, but it exposes the real import of the essay. *Urn Burial* is itself a paradox, for though it speaks throughout of death, its essential burden treats of life. "To live indeed is to be again ourselves," Browne affirms at the close of his treatise, and, as one can now expect, the emphasis falls upon the third word of this final sentence. And the word receiving the stress, though written as one word and making complete sense in its singular aspect, is really two. For to live 'in deed' is the positive message Browne conveys through the medium of a massive monument that is made to disappear. The negative message also appears in this final sentence where Browne indicates that it does not matter where our corporeal remains are interred since "'Tis all one to lye in St. Innocents Church-yard, as in the Sands of Aegypt: Ready to be any thing, in the extasie of being ever. . . ." (V, 285-6).

III. The Seeds of Perception: Shape in *The Garden of Cyrus*

A sense of timelessness pervades *The Garden of Cyrus*, yet though time cannot be contained, as Browne makes clear in *Urn Burial*, the second discourse is founded upon a specific shape exposed explicitly in the diagram of the quincunx. So paradox persists, along with the quincuncial pattern. But whereas the gloom in the first essay is illuminated by the smoky flames of funeral pyres and the yellow flicker of candles in the dark caverns of Roman catacombs, the second essay is ablaze with the brilliant light of the heavenly luminaries. Sun, moon and stars shine in *The Garden*, and thus
nature's light informs the inward eye of the reader, enabling him to perceive anew things hitherto taken for granted or even passed by without notice.

A discourse upon nature should come as no surprise to readers of Browne, for in the first chapter of the Religio Medici, he says that there are two bookes from whence I collect my Divinity; besides that written one of God, another of his servant Nature, that universall and publik Manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the eyes of all: those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other: This was the Scripture and Theology of the Heathens (Religio Medici, I, 16).

And at the close of this section of the Religio, Browne insists that nature is not at variance with art, nor art with nature; they both being the servants of his providence: Art is the perfection of Nature: Were the world now as it was the sixt[sic] day, there were yet a Chaos: Nature hath made one world, and Art another. In briefe, all things are artificiall, for nature is the Art of God.

Now, therefore, in his treatise upon gardens, Browne attempts to combat the darkness of "Chaos" with his art, which is replete with knowledge culled from the Bible, the learned works of classical authors, books of horticulture, architecture, medicine, philosophy and from his direct observation of nature. Yet despite the fact that the book of Nature "lies expans'd unto the eyes of all," Browne still expects the reader to bring all his discerning faculties to view the contents of The Garden for there is much here that Nature knows not of. An example of the kind of vision Browne requires of his reader is provided by the title.

The full title is The Garden of Cyrus. Or, The Quincunciall, Lozenge, or Net-work Plantations of the Ancients, Artificially, Naturally, Mystically Considered.
If the comma is removed after "Quincunciall" (and it may be the comma is dubious), one can see that this discourse has three titles that will be considered in three different ways. Thus the triads of Urn Burial are carried instantly into The Garden, reminding the reader not only of the Trinity but also of the account in Genesis of the "Work of the third day; the vegetable creation, and first ornamentall Scene of nature" (Garden, 1, 294). To notice so slight a detail may appear trivial but, apart from the pleasure he derives from his playful art of framing conceits, it is obvious that when Browne is in his Garden he is preoccupied with the great force behind every detail. Therefore, perhaps it is important to see the superior position he gives to the number three in an essay devoted to the number five.

Sight is usually reckoned as the first of the five senses, and sight is referred to in the first sentence of Browne's prefatory letter to Nicholas Bacon. Here, Browne says that if he had not "observed that Purblinde men have discoursed well of sight, and some without issue, excellently of Generation," he would not have "attempted this Subject." And the subject of The Garden of Cyrus primarily concerns both sight and generation.

The faculty of perception is not, of course, limited to the eyes, nor is the power of generation limited to the bodily organs, for thoughts too can be generated. A sense of the limitlessness of human potential is somehow linked to the sense of timelessness in The Garden, and man is invited to participate in this limitless, timeless world by becoming aware of its innumerable mysteries.

Obviously, mysterious matters that are hidden from human knowledge or comprehension cannot be enclosed within a shape, and Browne makes no attempt to confine them. The five points of the quincunx, initially described as the pattern
exemplified by the disposition of trees in the plantations of Cyrus, are represented by the Roman numeral V, the upper half of "the Letter X, that is the Emphaticall decussation, or fundamentall figure" (Garden, I, 297). Apart from its numerical significance in the overall design of the complete work, the Roman V is topless or open at its upper extremity. Indeed, it is unbounded in much the same way as grace is unbounded. Also, the radical shape of the figure resembles the roots of plants, and plants provide the central subject in the longest and central chapter of The Garden of Cyrus.

Before proceeding to an examination of the quincuncial design Browne finds in plants and other natural phenomena, it is important to dwell for a moment on the dedicatory epistle. Here, Browne outlines the purpose of his discourse on gardens.

The first paragraph of his letter to Nicholas Bacon announces the general theme: since "the Earth is the Garden of Nature, and each fruitfull Countrey a paradise," this discourse will follow the example of Theophrastus* who "raised his generalities chiefly from the field." Thus, in his Garden, Browne will raise general truths. Eventually we learn that what he has been raising is a mental replica of Paradise to be enjoyed not hereafter, but here and now. The present moment is the segment of time wedged into the Roman V, and the perpetual present is the golden mean time between antiquity and "future ages", wherein Browne would have us live.

In the second paragraph of the epistle, Browne defines his subject through the

* Theophrastus, who is said to have attended Plato’s lectures, eventually took over the presidentship of the school from Aristotle. He wrote the first system of botany. (Oxford Classical Dictionary)
process of exclusion. "We write no Herball, nor can this Volume deceive you, who have handled the massiest thereof," he explains. And in the third paragraph, any idea that he might be attempting to "erect a new Phytology" or study of plants, is dismissed. What he will attempt, however, is to remember "old things" and from this old field of knowledge "write something new, if truth may receive addition."

To add "something new" to truth is Browne's aim. In making the attempt, he follows the precept that in order to become human, man must reach for the superhuman. The idea of giving oneself "a mark to aim at" is expressed by Browne's contemporary George Herbert in his preface to A Priest to The Temple. And in the previous century, Sir Philip Sidney had expressed the same thought when he wrote in his Arcadia that man shoots higher when he threatens the moon than when he aims at a tree.

Browne's aim is high indeed, for to "write something new" would seem almost impossible. Yet this is his intention and, in the opening sentence of the fourth paragraph of his letter, he explains the difficulty of his task to his friend, whose knowledge Browne respects although he considers it to be somewhere incomplete, for he writes:

You have been so long out of trite learning, that 'tis hard to finde a subject proper for you; and if you have met with a Sheet upon this, we have missed our intention. In this multiplicity of writing, bye and barren Themes are best fitted for invention; Subjects so often discoursed confine the Imagination. . . .

To "confine the Imagination" is precisely what Browne does not wish to do. Therefore, he refuses to "fix" his friend's mind by spelling out what addition to truth The Garden of Cyrus contains. Instead, he encourages Bacon and the reader to seek
it out by reading the treatise, and merely hints here at the "collaterall truths" which, "though at some distance from their principals," may be admitted. The wide opening of the unbounded figure V illustrates the final sentence of this fourth paragraph, for Browne writes that "if we sometimes take wide liberty, we are not single, but erre by great example." Perhaps he is referring to those interpreters of the Bible who were especially active during the seventeenth century. On the other hand, he may have had in mind the "great example" of the biblical writers themselves, or that other great exemplar, Plato, to whom later he pays particular homage. But, apart from the "wide liberty" which offers a wide angle through which the reader can view "the Quincunx of Heaven" and other mysteries of the universe, the radical shape of the Roman V can be seen to be rooted in the pinnacle of the pyramid representing Urn Burial. And, since the pinnacle represents the ineffable name, everything in The Garden of Cyrus is intimately connected with God, for everything emanates from "the Emphaticall decussation." Hence, the Roman five, "the 'numerical character' of reality (life)" in Professor Huntley's phrase, illustrates Browne's plan of composition: he placed The Garden after Urn Burial in order to show that life can follow directly from death, since from the Pyramid, which is Pharaoh's urn, spring up the real and the symbolical flowers that grow in this philosophical garden.

The Garden of Cyrus opens with the lovely pagan image of Vulcan giving arrows to Apollo and Diana. The image evokes a pellucid atmosphere of both sunlight and moonlight. It also indicates an appreciative attitude toward primitive mythology, an attitude which persists throughout The Garden and is very different from that shown
toward the pagan beliefs of the ancient Egyptians in Urn Burial. Evidently the open angle of the V sign admits many kinds of truth. Indeed, while taking to task his beloved Plato, "the Divine Philosopher," for omitting "the noblest part" of what took place on the third day of Creation, Browne does not disparage the "Descriptions ... from Pagan pens." The theological preoccupation of the final chapter of Urn Burial undergoes a sea change in The Garden, where it is perceptible as an underlying thematic motif, but where it never becomes doctrinal. Browne's insight is at work in The Garden, and here his pastoral inclinations lead him to preach a sermon to all humanity.

The movement of thought in this second essay can be simply charted through an examination of the shapes Browne creates. For instance, The Garden of Cyrus is suspended above Urn Burial in much the same way as "the Pensill or hanging gardens of Babylon" and, possibly, even "Paradise it self," were "elevated above the plane of the Earth" (Garden, I, 295). Yet the famous king, "Nebuchodonosor," presumably the founder of these hanging gardens, "found no circumscription to the eye of his ambition" and, for his folly, was properly punished by exile "in the contrary habitation, in wilde plantations and wandrings of the fields" (loc. cit.). The phrase concerning "the eye of his ambition" opens an unbounded area to the reader, and this uncircumscribed area receives yet broader scope in the image of the exiled king's wide "wandrings." The warning here is implicit.

From this contrary movement, Browne picks up the pyramidal image. He carries it from the dark uncertainty of the first essay and uses it to illustrate the light and clarity of the second. Speaking of vision, he writes:
For all things are seen Quincuncially; For at the eye the Pyramidal rayes from the object receive a decussation, and so strike a second base upon the Retina or hinder coat, the proper organ of Vision... (Garden, IV, 336).

And, in this scientific section dealing with "the Laws of direct Vision," he explains how "the Sun and Moon beheld in water" can be seen "in a perpendicular," since "the visuall raye returneth Quincuncially, and after the form of a V" (Garden, IV, 336).

Browne explains that a similar "rule is observed in the reflection of the vocal and sonorous line in Ecchoes" (loc. cit.), and he even believes that the intellect receives information in a like manner, for he writes:

Things entring upon the intellect by a Pyramid from without, and thence into the memory by another from within, the common decussation being in the understanding... (Garden, IV, 336-7).

The philosophy of the Egyptians as well as their Pyramids enter The Garden with Browne's approval. In fact, he welcomes the mysterious Egyptian lore since, here, it supports the pattern of his thought, for

... if Aegyptian Philosophy may obtain, the scale of influences was thus disposed, and the geniall spirits of both worlds, do trace their way in ascending and descending Pyramids, mystically apprehended in the Letter X, and the open Bill and stradling Legges of a Stork, which was imitated by that Character (Garden, IV, 337).

In this way, Browne pursues the pattern both of perception and generation. Through "the open Bill and stradling Legges of a Stork," the bird which, to this day, symbolizes the birth of a child, the abstract shape of the Roman X is revitalized.

From "old things" such as the Roman figure for ten, Browne brings a refreshing bit of
knowledge, for "the Letter X" merely "imitated" the Egyptian hieroglyph of a stork. And in admitting this lively Egyptian image, he reverses his previous attitude to things Egyptian.

Another ostensible reversal is Browne's attitude to Christianity. The two essays present two perspectives. In Urn Burial, Browne affirms the supremacy of the Christian faith. In The Garden of Cyrus, however, by declining "the old Theme...of crosses and crucifixion" (I, 297), he makes clear the universality of his theological stance. Here, even certain pagan truths are admitted, for was not the book of Nature "the Scripture and Theology of the Heathens"? Even so, during the long process of excluding from the discourse such things as "the mysterious crosses of Egypt...not unlike the character of Venus" (I, 298) which is the biological symbol for female ♀, and the ancient Hebrew tradition wherein "the High-Priest was anointed decussatively or in the form of a X" (loc. cit.), Browne keeps alive, if only by analogy, the memory of the cross of Christ. Yet, throughout Chapter I, indeed throughout all five chapters of The Garden of Cyrus, images pertinent to the main theme, which concerns the number five, are drawn chiefly from pagan sources or the Old Testament.

In his first chapter, Browne writes of the ancient art of planting trees in the shape of the decussis (the "Quincuncial Lozenge"), and attempts to discover the originator of this plan. He fixes upon Noah as the earliest agriculturalist but immediately suggests that some rule of regular planting probably existed before the Flood. His thoughts range back to Abraham, slide forward to the garden of Solomon, then return to the garden of "Paradise it self" where the quincuncial pattern may have
originated since "the tree of knowledge was placed in the middle" (I, 301). Thus, in the movement of Browne's thought, he traces the pattern of the Roman V while, at the same time, he keeps before us the complete picture of the decussis.

In Chapter II which consists of the artificial consideration of the design, Browne pursues the pattern from its earliest known uses in architecture, to the making of crowns, beds, chairs, windows and nets. Not surprisingly, the image of the pyramid reappears but now it is unhampered by religious bias and the ancient Egyptians can be seen as prodigious inventors from whom mankind has learned much that is useful. Browne writes appreciatively of "the sculpture draughts of the larger Pyramids of Aegypt" (II, 302), he finds "Pyramids" in the ancient chess-boards of Persia and describes the work of lapidaries who "cut their gemms pyramidally, or by aequicrural triangles" (II, 304). And finally, after explaining an amazing variety of ancient devices wherein the number five plays a significant role, he closes the chapter with a description of the lozenge-shaped "Funeral bed of King Cheops, in the greater Pyramid" and of another "old sepulchral bed...in the marketplace of Megara" (II, 308). So again Browne links the number five to the larger view of the complete figure by reminding the reader of the sepulchral darkness of Urn Burial.

Powerfully contrasting the gloom of these temporal tombs is the glitter of starlight in the eternally revolving yet ever-fixed night sky that opens the third chapter and illuminates the "naturall examples" of the quincunx spreading across Chapters III and IV. In the central and longest chapter of The Garden, Browne searches for truth in the heavens as well as on earth where he finds other stars in abundance:

Could we satisfie our selves in the position of the lights above, or discover the wisdom of that order so invariably
maintained in the fixed Stars of heaven; Could we have any light, why the stellary part of the first masse, separated into this order, that the Girdle of Orion should ever main­tain its line, and the two Starres in Charles's Wain never leave pointing at the Pole-Starre; we might abate the Pythagorical Musick of the Spheres, the sevenfold Pipe of Pan, and the strange Cryptography of Gaffarel in his Starrie Booke of Heaven.

But not to look so high as Heaven or the single Quincunx of the Hyades upon the head of Taurus, the Triangle, and remarkable Crusero about the foot of the Centaur; observable rudiments there are hereof in subterraneous concretions, and bodies in the Earth... (Ill, 308-9).

In the above passage, the eye of imagination travels from "our selves" upon earth to "the lights above," traverses a wide arc (for "the Centaur" is in the Southern Hemisphere) and returns again to "the Earth." By performing this imaginative act of understanding, Browne's creative mind traces the shape of the Roman V, the numerical value of which he finds in endless examples throughout "the orderly book of nature" (III, 323).

Toward the end of Chapter IV, Browne leads the reader yet again from the "perpetual shades" in which seeds lie, to the airy dominions of the sun, planets and stars. And before embarking upon the mystical consideration, he returns to the creation of light with which The Garden begins and, in a flight of magnificent prose, reverses the initial paean of praise to the first "Orbes" with an invocation to shadow:

Light that makes things seen, makes some things invisible; were it not for darknesse: and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of the Creation had remained unseen, and the Stars in heaven as invisible as on the fourth day, when they were created above the Horizon, with the Sun, or there was not an eye to behold them. The greatest mystery of Religion is expressed by adumbration, and in the noblest part of Jewish Types, we finde the Cherubims shadowing the Mercy-seat: Life it self is but the shadow of death, and souls departed but the shadows of the living: All things fall
under this name. The Sunne itself is but the dark simulachrum, and light but the shadow of God. (IV, 335).

Appropriately, the shadowy mysteries surrounding the number five are brought into sharp focus in the fifth chapter, where Browne settles his natural consideration of the quincuncial pattern by saying that the "greatest number of Flowers, consist of five leaves; and therein doth rest the settled rule of nature" (V, 338), and calls attention to the "wedding number", the emblematic five "which ancient Numerists made out by two and three" (V, 339), that is, by joining the numbers designating female (two) and male (three). To illustrate the generative properties of the number five, Browne dips once more into the Old Testament to remind the reader of the mysterious addition to the names of Abram and Sarai of the Hebrew "Letter He, the fifth in their Alphabet" (loc. cit.). "If Abram had not had this Letter added unto his Name, he had remained fruitlesse, and without the power of generation" (V, 340), Browne writes, and, by implication, the number five is linked with the Roman X which, as has already been noted, "imitated" the Egyptian hieroglyph of a stork.

While it is true that Browne is preoccupied with the precise pattern of the quincunx in its various visible forms, it is also true that he is profoundly concerned with what is invisible. For instance, when he remarks in Chapter III that men take "notice of what is outwardly visible" (III, 313), he proceeds immediately to talk about seeds, the inner mystery of which was invisible to men in the seventeenth century. Throughout his long digression upon seeds in the important central chapter of The Garden, Browne makes clear his lack of knowledge. For instance, he does not know why it is that "in the germination of seeds. . .the lighter part ascendeth, and maketh the sprout, the heaviest tending downward [framing] the root" (III, 316). Browne's
intense interest in what is mysterious leads the reader to seek out the mystery contained in the title of this essay.

What is clear, is that the name 'Cyrus' contains five letters, but it is not immediately apparent why Browne chose this particular Persian prince to stand as the titular head of his discourse. The following explanation may account for the meaning of Cyrus' pre-eminence. In choosing the garden of Cyrus II as the prime example of ancient gardens in which trees were planted in sets of five, Browne casts a brilliant light upon the first and more famous Persian king of this name.

Cyrus the Elder, better know by his cognomen Cyrus the Great, figures prominently in the Old Testament, not "as the splendid and regular planter" of gardens (1, 296), but as God's appointed agent who, in the prophetic words of Isaiah, will "set judgement in the earth" (Isaiah 42:4). This Cyrus was revered by the Jews because he released them from Babylonian captivity, urged them to return to Jerusalem and, by restoring their treasure that had been captured by Nebuchadnezzar, helped them to rebuild the Temple. Babylonia fell to the armies of Cyrus in 538 BCE, from which date the Temple began once again to grow. Of especial interest here, is the garden imagery through which Isaiah sets the scene in preparation for the coming of this enlightened king. In Isaiah 40: 6-8, while quoting the voice he hears, the prophet cries out

-- "All flesh is grass
and its beauty like the wild flower's.
The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of Yahweh blows on them.
(The grass is without doubt the people.)
The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God remains for ever."
"Cyrus the elder" is the first of that name to be mentioned in Browne's essay. His upbringing "in Woods and Mountains" is recalled along with the fact that he beautified "the hanging Gardens of Babylon" so nobly "that he was...thought to be the authour thereof" (I, 295-6). However, Cyrus the Elder is not the Cyrus of Browne's title.

The information that Cyrus was "not only a Lord of Gardens, but a manuall planter thereof" (I, 296), came to Browne through a Latin translation of a work by Xenophon. Of Xenophon's many works, the one concerning "our magnified Cyrus" (loc. cit.) is certainly the _Anabasis_, and this deals with Cyrus the Younger. Browne makes clear that it is this younger Cyrus who was the gardener, for he was "second Brother" to "Artaxerxes Mnemon," and, although "a person of high spirit and honour, naturally a King, [was] fatally prevented by the harmlesse chance of post-geniture" (loc. cit.). The Oxford Classical Dictionary supplies this further information:

CYRUS (2) II, younger son of Darius II and Parysatis, and his mother's favourite....

Cyrus was summoned to the court in 405 on his father's fatal illness, but Arsaces, the elder brother, succeeded as Artaxerxes II.

Yet, since Xenophon also wrote the _Cyropaedia_, an "idealized biography" of Cyrus the Elder, perhaps it is no wild conjecture that Browne is working subliminally upon the imagination of the reader, as it were teasing him into accepting the idea, without debate, that The Garden of Cyrus is connected with "Cyrus the elder" who was renowned as "a model of the upright ruler."28

One is inclined to link the name of Cyrus (the Elder) with that of King Solomon, since the latter built the First Temple, which was "completely destroyed by
Nebuchadnezzar," and Cyrus was responsible for building the "Second Temple." Browne somehow reinforces the reader's natural inclination to link the two names, for The Garden of Cyrus is studded with references to King Solomon. Indeed, Margaret Heideman finds Solomon to be "a presiding spirit" in the essay.

In Chapter I, Solomon is first mentioned in connexion with the Persian word 'Paradise' (I, 295), and "the Garden of Solomon" is described in considerable detail (I, 300); in Chapter II attention is drawn to the "Lattice and Stonework... in the Temple of Solomon," and also to the "Lillies, and Pomegranats" that decorate "the pillars of Solomon" (II, 303); in Chapter III, the network "on the head of the Teazell" is described where, "in the house of the solitary maggot, one may finde the Seraglio of Solomon" (III, 310); and in Chapter IV, "the Husbandry of Solomon" is applauded since it agrees with "the doctrine of Theophrastus" (IV, 328). Thus the emphasis upon Solomon's wisdom in the matter of planting his luxurious garden, connects this great king with the founder of the Persian Empire, the Cyrus whom Browne mentions first as having "brought the treasures of the field into rule and circumscriptio" (I, 295). Somewhat hidden though it may be, the connexion between Cyrus and Solomon is not the only invisible item in Browne's mysterious Garden.

Not at all mysterious, however, is the fundamental shape of The Garden of Cyrus which, resting in the Roman V, leads the reader to seek for two distinct climaxes in the discourse. The peak or climax of Urn Burial comes in the final chapter and is symbolized by the emptiness of the pyramid. But, as Margaret Heideman notes, The Garden of Cyrus "has a double climax... which she finds in" the image near the end of Chapter IV, and in the symbol in the conclusion."
This "double climax" can be perceived to be suspended above the two upper points of the Roman V. The first climax, the image summarizing the mystical considerations of Chapter IV, is "the figure of a Greek X" (IV, 337). But this Greek $\chi\nu$, of which "Figure Plato made choice to illustrate the motion of the soul, both of the world and man" (IV, 337), is seen to reside within a circle.

Paraphrasing Plato's explanation of how "the Creator compounded the world" (Timaeus 32), as well as the soul and body of man, out of the four elements, Browne writes:

\[ \ldots \text{God divided the whole conjunction length-wise, according to the figure of a Greek X, and then turning it about reflected it into a circle; By the circle implying the uniform motion of the first Orb, and by the right lines, the planetical and various motions within it (IV, 337).} \]

The first climax, then, is represented by a cross within a circle. The symbol conjoins both essays, for the shape of Plato's Greek X is identical to the Roman numeral X and the circle containing this figure thus encloses all the points of Browne's discourses. The symbol is clearly that of a wheel with four spokes; it evokes the Wheel of Fortune which is forever turning, and the circling planets which control light and darkness as well as the months and seasons. It also represents the soul, which Plato says is "interfused everywhere. . . and which\] began a divine beginning of never ceasing and rational life enduring throughout all time" (Timaeus, 36b).

Therefore, among other things, the circle represents Time, while the four segments created by the central cross represent the four elements, the four seasons and man himself. Indeed, in regard to the latter, one is reminded of the famous circle of Leonardo inside which is drawn the figure of a man with arms and legs extended obliquely and touching the perimeter at all four extremities.
Professor Huntley finds the "central emblem" of The Garden to be the circle, or, more precisely, "the Greek Theta, 0, which is thanatos or death: the circle is God, perfection, immortality; the horizontal representing the corporal, divisible, death." From this view, the circle of the Greek theta with its central bisecting line can also be seen as a symbol of each essay. Moreover, Browne has drawn attention to "the mortall right-lined circle" in the concluding chapter of Urn Burial where he writes: "Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortall right-lined circle, must conclude and shut up all" (Urn Burial, V, 281).

The concluding symbol of The Garden of Cyrus, which is the second climax, is the cluster of stars "in the constellation Taurus" known as the Hyades, which Browne calls "the Quincunx of Heaven" (Garden, V, 343). In astronomy, Taurus "is the second sign of the zodiac" occurring in the spring of the year during the last part of April and most of May. At this time of the year, Browne's England is a garden rich with flowers of every hue; the sap is rising in the trees and the general atmosphere of freshness and renewed vitality is characterised by the bounds of newborn lambs. It is the time of the celebration of the Passover, a word deriving "from the root 'dance' or 'leap,' connecting it with an ancient spring-festival." The Paschal Lamb, traditionally sacrificed as "a burnt offering" at this ancient festival, is the symbol representing Christ whose supreme sacrifice is celebrated at Easter, the chief Christian feast, which solemnizes the anniversary of the resurrection. Appropriately, one derivation of the word 'Easter' is from the Old English word for "spring goddess." All these metaphors come into play in connexion with Browne's spring symbol "the Quincunx of Heaven," and the date he places beside each
dedicatory epistle to the discourses is May 1st, or May Day. The date serves to unify the essays and might also serve to conceal a message that Browne's contemporaries, especially his readers with Royalist sympathies, would be quick to observe. In 1658, the year in which Browne published the essays, Oliver Cromwell died. Cromwell's death not only prepared the way for the restoration of Charles II two years later, but was preparatory to the restoration of the celebration in England of May Day. A chief feature of this celebration is the flower-decorated Maypole around which young dancers weave intricate patterns while holding the loose ends of streamers attached to the pole. "These dances were forbidden during the Puritan Revolution, but were again sanctioned at the Restoration," thus Browne, the Anglican Royalist, had cause to rejoice. That he did so through the symbol of his springtime date, is typical of much that is conveyed through the subtlety of silence across both essays. Perhaps the most significant of Browne's 'silent' messages is that conveyed by the non-existent title of the work.

There is no doubt "that Browne intended us to read the two essays together and in the order he gave them;" for he consistently published them together "and in this order in the four editions published during his life." Moreover, in the dedication of Urn Burial he clarifies his aim which is "to preserve the living, and make the dead to live, to keep men out of their Urnes...which is not impertinent unto our profession; whose study is life and death" (dedication of Urn Burial, 246). Each essay is thus seen to be concerned with one subject: the best way to live. Nevertheless, duality resides in almost everything within this two-part work and Browne's reference in each essay to the Janus head aptly summarizes his double-lensed
view of the world. In the reflection of the triangular shape of the Roman V, one can perceive the pyramid. By joining these supposed opposites into one clear, intelligible symbol, the Roman numeral X, Browne somehow resolves the paradox, for he places the symbol within a sphere. Just as the triangular shapes may be seen to represent the Trinity, so the sphere is representative of "the mysticall Name of God, which consisting of Letters denoting all the sphaericall Numbers, ten, five, and six" (Garden, V, 340), may be imagined as the 'invisible' title of Browne's work.

In his Tractatus Philosophicus, Ludwig Wittgenstein writes: "Of that which one can say nothing, thereof one must remain silent." This knowledge is Browne's through intuition. There is no name for the unifying principle of the world in religio-philosophical terms, therefore Browne quietly resists the temptation of inventing one. In the quiet close of the discourse, before he drops into a brief and natural sleep beneath a night sky brilliant with starlight, Browne completes his circular image, that "must conclude and shut up all," by symbolically circumnavigating the globe. "The Huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia" (V, 344), he murmurs while drowsily approaching sleep in England. Thus the reader is reminded of the New World in the west, first mentioned at the beginning of Urn Burial, and the old world in the east wherein lies Persia, the country to which "we owe the very name of Paradise" (Garden, 1, 295), and in which Cyrus planted his orderly garden.
IV. Man's Relationship with God: Vertical Structure in *Samson Agonistes*

In the introduction to this paper, I have spoken of resemblances between Browne's essays and Milton's tragedy. I would now like to discuss some of these resemblances. The first concerns design.

In the vertical structure of Browne's two-part work, he ascends from the chaos of uncertainty on earth to the "order and mystical Mathematicks of the City of Heaven" (Garden, V, 343). As Browne ascends from the earthly confusion of *Urn Burial* to the mysterious order of *The Garden*, he gradually opens up progressively wider perspectives that continually increase man's awareness of the inexplicable nature of the universe. In *Samson Agonistes*, Milton, too, constructs an ever-widening design in the vertical pattern of his tragedy. Samson ascends from the nadir of confused despair to the zenith of intuitive certainty. Throughout this upward movement, the hero gains wider and deeper insight both into his own mind and into the nature of his kinship with God. Thus, not only is the essential structure of both works vertical, but the design of each displays a marked resemblance to the Roman numeral V.

Eventually, I will show that in Samson's passage from ignorance to understanding, the shape of this Roman numeral is clearly delineated.

As are Browne's discourses, Milton's drama is based upon juxtapositions: the hero's glorious past and the degradation he suffers in the present, his relationship with his human father and with his spiritual father, the alternation between the metaphors of darkness and light, the disorder and tension inherent in doubt and the peace of mind resulting from certainty. However, although both Browne and Milton emphasize man's need of 'light from above' to illuminate the darkness of his ignorance, Milton's tragedy
unfolds its central message not through contemplation, but through the experience of the hero's active search to understand his destiny and to fulfill it. Only with the passing of time can Samson receive the inspiration that leads to his redemption and undying fame.

Indeed, time in Samson Agonistes, as in Browne's essays, is of paramount importance. It is the only one of the so-called 'three unities' that Milton mentions in the preface to his dramatic poem, a preface which explains Greek tragedy, upon the form and in the spirit of which Milton constructs his tragedy. In Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in 'Samson Agonistes', while discussing 'The Three Unities,' William Riley Parker calls attention to the fact that Milton's reference to time "constitutes the last sentence of his preface," and points out that "lack of space did not prevent his adding more." "Is there anything significant about this?" Parker asks. I suggest that there is wider significance than Parker indicates. That Milton should leave out of account all reference to other unifying factors in Greek tragic drama and lay stress only upon time in the closing sentence of his preface, would indicate that the reader should pay particular attention to time when reading the tragedy. One should be aware, for instance, that not only does time control the mechanics of Milton's plot and the progress of Samson's soul, but it also controls the long delayed dawn of understanding that, for Manoa, the Chorus and the reader, eventually illuminates the dark mysteries of God's justice. And of particular interest to this discussion is the phrasing of the final prefatory sentence:

The circumscription of time wherein the whole Drama begins and ends, is according to antient rule, and best example, within the space of 24 hours.

According to Parker, the 'antient rule' concerning the time-limit of Greek
tragedy "was the invention of Renaissance criticism, probably deduced from a passage in the *Poetics* where Aristotle is contrasting tragedy with epic poetry."\(^{47}\) The passage in the *Poetics* to which Parker refers merely states that whereas epic poems have "no fixed limit of time. . . Tragedy endeavours to keep as far as possible within a single circuit of the sun, or something near that."\(^{48}\) By his strict adherence to this rule of the sun's circuit, Milton makes of the element of time a simile that acts powerfully to underscore the brevity of the hero's life. The action of *Samson Agonistes* begins at sunrise, "With day-spring born" (11), and ends at noon (1612); thus Milton abbreviates the prescribed "24 hours" by approximately seventeen hours. While this abbreviation of time is a staggering stroke of dramatic compression, it is also a technique to heighten the essential tragedy, the cutting off of Samson's life while in the prime of his manhood.

However, of even greater significance than the correspondence between Samson's foreshortened life and the foreshortened day is the connexion between Samson and the sun itself. The hero's name is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Shimshon* which means "serving like the sun."\(^{49}\) Thus, when the sun reaches the highest point in the heavens, Samson, too, reaches the zenith of his career and the implication is clear that Samson's spirit, like the sun, has mounted to the highest heaven. The sun's extreme elevation and Samson's return to God are, therefore, synonymous. Nevertheless, the catastrophe introduces a paradox, for the light of Samson's life is extinguished at the very moment when the sun's light is strongest. The moral is obvious: Samson is stronger in death than he was in life. Indeed, his fame is still being sung.
In the essays, Browne's preoccupation with paradox, with the errors of paganism, with life and death, with what is invisible as well as what is visible, and with darkness and light has already been discussed. That Milton is equally preoccupied with these matters in his tragedy is, of course, eventually apparent. However, that the analogy goes beyond the general and manifests itself in various particular ways I now hope to show in the following analysis of Samson Agonistes.

As the title indicates, conflict and tension form the substance of the tragedy, yet the sum of the parts shows that the various conflicts treated here result in progress. Indeed, Blake's famous dictum, "Without Contraries is no progression," could stand as a motto beneath Milton's title, for the agon or contest reflects not only Samson's conflict with the Philistines but the contrary forces at work within the hero himself. Just as Browne remarks in the opening paragraph of Urn Burial that "a large part of the earth is still in the Urne unto us," so Milton makes clear in the opening soliloquy of Samson that a large part of the hero's mind is, so to speak, "still in the Urne" unto him. The inner workings of Samson's mind are exposed in his speeches; thus the reader is aware of all the many troubles over which he agonizes, and the sense of his eponym, Agonistes, is carried over from his outward activity as a contestant and his inward battle with his ignorance, to reinforce the multiple agonies he suffers. That his suffering stems from an error of judgement is, of course, in accordance with Aristotle's summation of Greek tragedy, but one of the few details from scriptural sources which Milton does not include, the fact that Samson "judged Israel twenty years" (Judges, 16:31), has additional implications that bear directly upon his suffering and Milton's treatment of this suffering.
According to modern scholarship, the narratives in the book of Judges are the most ancient of all biblical writings, predating Genesis by hundreds of years, and their antiquity, no doubt, accounts for their fragmentary nature. Abba Eban, in his history, *My People: The Story of the Jews*, provides the following information about the judges of Israel that explains Samson's profound feeling of responsibility toward his people, his acute despair over his failure to lead them wisely and, worse, his failure to wisely judge himself:

In times of crisis the people applied for help to a judge. He was a general custodian of the public interest—seer, military leader, and deliverer all in one. He was a man chosen by God for his mission, endowed with divine spirit. The Book of Judges is our only record for this period. It is very fragmentary and details of the rule of the Judges are few. Of some, like Othniel and Ehud, who were not involved in any military crisis, we know little but their names. On the other hand, Deborah and Jephthah, Samson and Gideon, Eli and Samuel, have made history. No judge ever ruled over the whole of Israel. The evolution which led to the establishment of national unity was caused not so much by internal as by external developments. The Philistine crisis was an emergency that the tribes could not meet.\

Milton has captured the spirit that motivated these highly particular judges but nowhere does he mention the specific fact that Samson "judged Israel twenty years." Possibly the extended period during which the biblical Samson exercised his custodianship did not suit Milton's design, for in the drama Samson is presented as a man still comparatively young and with no authority over "Israel's Governours, and Heads of Tribes" (242). Only his peculiar position as a Nazarite, one who took upon himself certain vows of abstinence, allowed "no rasor... upon his head" and separated himself "unto the Lord" (Numbers 6: 2-21), is stressed. However, that Samson feels a distinct responsibility to all of Israel and not simply to his own tribe of Dan, is clear from the start. In his only monologue, when he is face to face with
himself, Samson refers to the angelic prophecy (Judges 13:5) announced to his parents before his birth: "Promise was that I/ Should [Israel] from [Philistian yoke] deliver" (39), and his intimate and prenatal connexion with God from whom the promise emanated is, for Milton's Samson, sufficient authority. Samson knows that God expects from him "some great act" that will benefit "Abraham's race" (28-9). It is this inner knowledge that spurs so many questions, causes such mental turmoil and eventually reduces to the level of merely minor problems the bitterness of his blindness, his subjection to ridicule, and his physical misery in the Philistine's slave mill. Therefore, the biblical reference to Samson's eminence as a judge of twenty years' experience, is of no advantage to Milton; indeed, it would weaken the concentrated force of the hero's character. Milton's Samson suffers, not because his Nation has come to expect wise guidance from him but because he has come to expect wise guidance from God and, for a moment, it appears God has let him down. As Samson's thoughts move onward in his soliloquy, he discovers that the contrary is true: "what if all foretold/ Had been fulfillld but through mine own default. . ." (44–5).

The soliloquy with which Milton opens the drama is even more densely packed with information pertaining to past, present and future than is Browne's paragraph that opens Urn Burial. That Milton, like Browne, is initially concerned with time is clear from Samson's "restless thoughts" that press upon him he says, "like a deadly swarm/ Of Hornets. . . and present/ Times past, what once I was, and what am now" (19–22). And Milton's wish to convey a sense of the mystery that lies in the future, appears in Samson's innate understanding that he "must not quarrel with the will/ Of highest dispensation," for God "Haply had ends above my reach to know" (60–63). Samson's
use of the past tense when referring to God's intentions concerning him does not thwart the reader's expectations. On the contrary, these expectations are heightened, for what Samson will do in the future is already known to the audience and their concern rests solely in the desire to learn how the hero will overcome the slavishness of both his physical condition and his mental attitude.

In the opening paragraph of *Urn Burial*, Browne is concerned with "the deep discovery of the Subterranean world" and he says that "Nature hath furnished one part of the Earth, and man another." In Samson's soliloquy, Milton is concerned with "the deep discovery" of man's subconscious mind, and, if one substitutes the word 'God' for "Nature" and the words 'man's mind' for "Earth"—and these words are metaphorically synonymous—it is not difficult for the reader to perceive that Milton is explaining, through Samson, that God "hath furnished one part of [man's mind], and man another," for Samson's "high gift of strength" (47) comes from God, whereas his weakness in revealing the source of the gift comes from himself.

When Marjorie Nicolson says "that *Samson Agonistes* is pre-eminently a psychological study of the development of a human being," she is stating a deep truth, for apart from the theological aspects of the tragedy, Milton is primarily concerned with man. Whereas Browne explores the mysteries he finds in external nature, Milton explores the mysteries of man's mind by following Samson along the devious paths of his mental wanderings. This analytical technique allows the poet to show how man perceives himself, how he perceives other individuals, and how he can understand his relationship with God if his cultural background has prepared him to reach an understanding with the Deity. As Arnold Stein has noted in his analysis
of Samson, it is in the hero's opening speech that certain "major thematic anticipations" are made apparent.

In his soliloquy, Samson refers both to his divinely inspired birth and to his subsequent breeding which was "orderd and prescrib'd/ As of a person separate to God" (30-31), but, in bewailing his blindness, he complains that he feels already "buried" (101). This, in a sense, is true for he is totally buried in himself. Milton provides Samson with a fitting image to describe this state of self-immolation: "My Self, my Sepulcher, a moving Grave" (102), moans the erstwhile mighty hero. At the start of the drama then, Samson's initial connexion with God is made clear; he was of God from the womb, and, on his own admission, he is at present in the urn, as bereft of light "As in the land of darkness" (99). The dark weight of Browne's first essay is in evidence here, as well as the hollow sound of the empty pyramid, for the dirgelike wail of distress ceases when Samson hears approaching "The tread of many feet" (111).

The emphasis upon "onward" movement can be felt from the first line of the soliloquy. Samson's steps may be "dark," owing to his blindness, but he knows his direction for he asks the mute actor (or could it be God?) to guide him to "yonder bank." Samson must climb this bank which offers "choice of Sun or shade," and in the upward movement of the climb as well as in the choice, the future dramatic progression of the drama is foreshadowed. When Samson feels "The breath of Heav'n fresh-blowing, pure and sweet," bringing him consolation, there is another foreshadowing of later events, and there is yet another in the announcement of the Philistine feast which brings respite to him now.
The onward movement of the opening lines suffers a set-back when the accumulation of Samson's "restless thoughts" brings him to a stand-still. The serenity of dawn that pervades the first seventeen lines of the poem is shattered once the memory of the hero's brilliant past floods over him, calling forth a series of anguished questions.

The epistle dedicatory of Urn Burial opens in a similar way, for, like Milton, Browne sets the scene for his discourse quietly, then delivers a battery of alarming questions (see above, p. 8). The burden of each set of questions is also similar, for both concern the unknown future. Browne captures the reader's attention by asking "Who hath the Oracle of his ashes?" Milton alerts his audience by having the now infuriated Samson question God. Afraid of his rashness, the hero answers his first questions himself, and, true-born Israelite that he is, Samson answers the questions with a question: "Whom have I to complain of but my self?" (46). Yet, despite this knowledge, Samson slips back quickly to his antagonistic attitude and blames God for failing to give him, along with strength, "a double share/ Of wisdom" (53-4). Once more he checks himself: "I must not quarrel with the will/ Of highest dispensation" (60-1); but "loss of sight" is too great a grief for him to bear with patience. Tossing aside all formality with God Samson gives full vent to his anger, and one can almost hear him shout at his Maker when he hurl's his final question: "Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree?" (85). To this question no answer is forthcoming. Samson is too blind spiritually to respond. The shuttling between sunlight and "total Eclipse" (81), between the flashes of insight and total ignorance, and between the formal and the personal relationship with God ends with Samson's lyrical descent into
self-pity where, shrouded in darkness, he feels "half dead" (100) and almost buried.

A change in metre, in tone and in thought enlivens Samson’s next speech as he rises from the grave of himself to address the Chorus. He greets this group of well-wishers with zest, saying, "Your coming, Friends, revives me, for I learn/ Now of my own experience, not by talk" (187-8) how to distinguish true friends from false. And he leaves behind him the private grief of his blindness, supplanting that pain with another, since he says, "that which was the worst now least afflicts me" (195) for mortal shame humiliates him now. No doubt he feels he can unburden himself to friends and expose the secret he brought back from the grave of his former despair wherein, faced only with himself and God, he reached almost to the core of self-knowledge. Now, face to face with his friends, he can admit to having been a fool who has "divulg’d the secret gift of God/ To a deceitful Woman" (201-2) for which he now suffers "his deserts" (205). But almost immediately he learns something of even greater consequence, something no one but himself could know: he learns the real reason for his punishment.

In Samson’s second speech to the Chorus, while answering their question concerning his reason for marrying "Philistine women" (216), he admits that though his first marriage to the woman of Timna was "of God" (222), his marriage to "Dalila,/ That specious Monster" (229-30), did not emanate from the same "intimat impulse" (223); Samson says, parenthetically, "I thought it lawful from my former act" (231). The knowledge contained in his parenthetical remark that slips by almost without notice is so terrible, its implications so profound, the sin against God so grave, that Samson instantly buries it and blunders on, blaming himself not for his presumption
in assuming God's mantle to cover his own private desire, but for his "weakness" in giving up his "fort of silence to a Woman" (235-6).

In this brief admission of his prime error lies the crucial centre of Samson's suffering. True though it is, the full realisation of his crime against God does not dawn full upon him until Dalila draws it forth some two scenes later, when Samson reaffirms his error of judgement with the words, "I to myself was false ere thou to me" (824). Meanwhile, he tells the Chorus, and, in the following scene, he tells Manoa that his crime is merely "Shameful garrulity" (491), and though openly accepting the blame for "all these evils" that have fallen upon him, "Sole Author I, sole cause" (376), Samson persists in pretending to himself as well as to others that his only fault lay in not keeping God's "holy secret" (497), the source from which flowed his God-given gift of strength.

It was for this prime error, Samson's disdain of God's precise authority and the substitution of his own, his insistence upon marrying Dalila to satisfy himself rather than to pursue God's design, that Samson was denied "the prime work of God" (70) which, in the soliloquy, the hero considers to be the ability to see light. During his monologue, he mistakenly rails against his physical strength, claiming that "strength is my bane,/ And. . . sourse of all my miseries" (63-4). Not strength but eyesight was the real source, for it was the sight of the seductive Dalila that ensnared Samson and made him turn from God to the embraces of the specious Philistine monster.

The connexion between Dalila and the devil is not hard to perceive and Milton is anxious that the reader should not miss the resemblance. As outwardly fair as Satan in the early books of Paradise Lost, Dalila so bedazzles the Chorus with her magnificent
appearance, her "Amber sent of odorous perfume" (720) and her tears, that they call her "damsel," a diminutive generally denoting approbation, and liken her to "a fair flower surcharg'd with dew" (728). But Samson is protected from Dalila's intoxicating physical presence partly by his blindness, much as Odysseus is protected from Circe's charms by the herb Moly. And by vivid recollections of his past experience with her, he is not only proof against her outward glitter but also against the glibness of her tongue and its hypnotic snake-like flickering. Milton here makes sure that the audience is forewarned of Dalila's ability to tell convincing lies, for her first words, "With doubtful feet and wavering resolution I came" (732-3), belie the description given by the Chorus of her swift and overbearing approach, "Like a stately Ship.../Sails fill'd, and streamers waving" (714, 718).

It is true, as Stein emphasizes, that the submissiveness of Dalila's first words "only confirm what the Chorus described," but without question, Dalila could be playing to the Chorus in the tearful hesitancy before she speaks. Perhaps she hopes to win its support. But that this is clever play-acting becomes apparent even to the group of gaping Danites when Dalila eventually departs.

The animal image in Samson's first explosive words to her, "Out, out Hyaena" (748), underlines the baseness of this seemingly fair woman. And toward the end of this speech, the animal image is given more precise meaning for, having compared Dalila's "wonted arts" with those of other false women, Samson describes the situation of well-intentioned husbands who are worn out with the "feignd remorse" of their wives, as "Entangl'd with a poisnous bosom snake" (763).

Milton's evocation of the Serpent-Satan and of Eve in this passage is obvious. Yet it is not to Eve that Milton most pointedly refers, but to the "poisnous...snake."
In *Paradise Lost*, as in Genesis, Eve represents Everywoman just as Adam represents Everyman and since, in *Samson Agonistes*, Dalila does not represent womankind but only those women who are false, who "break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray" (750), she is, without doubt, Sin incarnate, none other than Satan's "Snaky Sorceress" of a daughter (*Paradise Lost*, II, 724). Indeed, Samson calls her "the sorceress" (819). That her serpentine arguments fail to entangle or ensnare Samson at this point in his career in the drama, is positive proof of the sincerity of his repentance and of his new-found strength of character which appears for the first time. The Samson who confronts Dalila and worsts her, is a different Samson from the world-weary son of Manoa who tells his father that "deaths benumbing Opium [is his] only cure" (630).

Samson's relationship with his human father is, of course, different from his relationship with God. Paradoxically, Samson shows a greater degree of respectful formality to Manoa than he does to God. For instance, he never raises his voice to Manoa nor does he address his father with the intimate second person singular "thy" with which he cries out at God in his soliloquy, and with which Manoa addresses Samson. It is clear that Samson is more concerned with God than with his father, for in all but one of Samson's speeches to Manoa, God is the subject, and, in declining Manoa's favour of buying a reprieve from the Philistines for his son, Samson is adamant in his wish to "pay on [his] punishment;/ And expiate, if possible [his] crime" (489-90) against God. Even Samson's first words to Manoa are not those of greeting to a beloved father but those of a lecture in defense of God's justice. However, this is all very human; Manoa is a bitter old man, although basically simple and kind.
Understandably, he is exasperated because his child, from whom he expected so much, has not lived up to his promise. First Manoa is angry with God who, having taken Samson into His special care, has now overwhelmed the boy with "foul indignities" (371). But when Samson takes upon himself the entire blame for his condition, Manoa, unsympathetic, belabours him unsparringy, The old man simply cannot fathom the complexity of his child who, like most children, feels he knows more than his father. In Samson's case this is true, for he knows the real cause of his punishment though he keeps this knowledge from his father, choosing rather to lay the blame upon the lesser crime, his "Shameful garrulity." However, Manoa delivers heavy paternal punishment when he berates Samson for his part in the blasphemy of God taking place this very day in the magnification of Dagon at the Philistine feast. Samson does not explode with self-righteous rage at this sharp thrust; instead he quietly acknowledges his father's right to chastise him for the shame he has brought upon his "Father's house" (447). Nevertheless, the thrust has hit home and Samson's mental anguish at the thought that he has raised the praise of Dagon:

> Among the Heathen round; to God have brought Dishonour, obloquie, and op't the mouths Of Idolists, and Atheists; have brought scandal To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt In feeble hearts... (451-455)

is more than he can humanly sustain. His withdrawal from life begins here, for it is at this point that Samson resigns his responsibility as Israel's champion with the remark: "all the contest is now/ 'Twixt God and Dagon" (461-2).

The adverse effect Manoa has upon his son, foreshadowed by Samson's first remark to the Chorus when they announced Manoa's arrival, now becomes apparent.
The additional "inward grief" (330) that Manoa's very name had awakened in Samson at the approach of this unwanted visitor, is made manifest in the hero's downward plunge to the very nadir of despair. This plunge into the depths is vastly different from the earlier descent into self-pity in the soliloquy. Now Samson says God "hath cast me off as never known" (641), and his only prayer is for "speedy death" (650). Manoa has precipitated this death-wish, for Samson was well-aware of the feast to Dagon which has provided this holiday from "servile toil" (5) in the Philistine gaol. By giving vent to his anger, Manoa, perhaps purposely, has rubbed salt into an already open wound and the ensuing pain at the "sense of Heav'n's desertion" (632), the most excruciating pain of all, makes Samson lose all hope of recovery. The parallelism between the earthly and the heavenly father is clear. Both inflict pain and both are concerned with redemption. Yet, in Samson's wish to die, to give up the self, to submit utterly to "the will/ Of highest dispensation" (60-61), he makes his regeneration possible.

In a highly particular sense, the idea Browne expresses in his prefatory letter to The Garden of Cyrus, that "to flourish in the state of Glory, we must first be sown in corruption" is true here. Samson is only too aware of his corrupt condition since his "wounds immedicable/ Ranckle, and fester, and gangrene,/ To black mortification" (620-23). However, his "state of glory" is soon to be realised, for not only does God grant his request for "speedy death" but, in accepting the hero's honest contrition, prepares the way from the debasement of moral weakness to the height of moral strength. Ironically, Samson is helped to climb not by his friends but by his deadliest foes, the Philistines.

The first of these foes is Dalila, and her appearance at this moment in the drama is most fitting since it was for her sake that Samson first turned from God. Now God
offers His chosen champion an opportunity to redeem himself, and Samson proves equal
to the trial. Indeed, from this heaven-sent interview with his traitorous wife,
Samson gains the insight he lacked earlier when all he could do was complain that
physical strength was his bane. The physical blinding does not begin to strike him as
an indication of his lack of inner perception until, paradoxically, Dalila succeeds
in making his past life clear to him. By pleading womanly weakness as an excuse for
her offence against her husband, and, in accusing him of a similar weakness in making
known to her "wherein consisted all [his] strength" (780), Dalila triggers the
psychological switch that throws sudden light upon Samson's prime offence against
God, and permits him to 'see through' the cunning artifice "the sorceress displays"
(819) in her defensive argument. At last the bitter truth emerges and Samson can say
to Dalila,

\[\ldots I\ gave,\ thou\ say'st,\ th'\ example,\]
\[I\ led\ the\ way;\ bitter\ reproach,\ but\ true,\]
\[I\ to\ my\ self\ was\ false\ ere\ thou\ to\ me.\] (822-24)

He now knows beyond all doubt that his first error lay in his weakness in placing
Dalila above God. In choosing her, he chose to worship a false god. He loved her
"Too well" (879), "could deny [her] nothing" (881).

The extreme low-point of Samson's life in the drama is clearly the moment
before Manoa departs on his errand to the Philistine lords. The turning point can be
seen in Samson's admission of his weakness. He makes plain the knowledge of his
first crime against God, as well as Dalila's crime against himself when he says,
"All wickedness is weakness" (834).

This brief statement, occurring almost exactly halfway through the tragedy, is
the pivotal centre of *Samson Agonistes*. Here Milton shows the hero identifying his judgement of Dalila's behaviour with what he believes must be God's judgement of Samson's own weakness, or wickedness, since Milton finds the terms interchangeable. And to stress the contrast between Samson's physical strength and moral weakness during this earlier period in the hero's life, the poet has Samson repeat the word 'weakness' three times in as many lines:

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. . . weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it, weakness to resist
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse
What Murtherer, what Traitor, Parricide,
Incestuous, Sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness. . . (829-834)
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The stress is necessary, since Samson no longer exhibits this trait. As a result, his insight both into his own "folly" and into that of the other protagonists, grows steadily broader and deeper.

However, in the first three repetitions of the word 'weakness', Milton lays the heaviest stress upon the "weakness to resist. . . gold." This emphasizes the unworthiness of Dalila's wish for mundane reward and brings to mind Browne's emphasis upon the ultimate worthlessness of moneymaking, implicit in his derogatory remarks in *Urn Burial* about the accumulated treasures of the pagan Pharaohs. And his insistence upon the essential emptiness of man's vain wish for fame can be recalled when Milton has Dalila proudly boast about her future fame:

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I shall be nam'd among the famousest
Of Women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded. . . (982-4).
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The emptiness of her expectations is eventually understood when the audience realises that the Philistines capable of writing songs in her honour will soon be dead.
And, presumably, Dalila herself will be dead too, for she would not be absent from the feast where "The public marks of honour and reward" (992) she expects are likely to be proferred.

Samson's moral victory over Dalila has lifted him from the black despair he was in at Manoah's departure. In resisting Dalila's offer and in allowing her to speak out all that her mind contains, Samson has not only demonstrated anew his dedication to God but has taught the Chorus that the "damsel" they had admired earlier is, in their own final estimation, "a manifest Serpent" (997). Undoubtedly, the "double share/ Of wisdom" (53-4) Samson had yearned for in his monologue is now being granted to him, for much wisdom is required to enable him to forgive "wedlock-trechery endangering life" (1009). In the restraint that he shows in his next trial, it is clear that Samson is in full possession of the long-desired "double share of wisdom."

With the entry of the Philistine giant of Gath, Samson has yet another chance to display the change in his personality and the return of his inspiration. That God is also responsible for the arrival of Harapha can be implied from the announcement of the Chorus who wonder "what wind hath blown him hither" (1070). No doubt it is the Spirit of God, who once "moved upon the face of the waters," and now has inspired Harapha, a windbag of immense proportions, to visit the prisoner. The inflation of Harapha's first speech is underlined by the brevity of Samson's rejoinder. In a single line the Philistine's reason for coming, his desire to see the famous strongman of Israel, is answered: "The way to know were not to see but taste" (1091). What Samson won with his wits in his confrontation with Dalila, he is now prepared to battle for with his brawn. But Harapha declines the offer on the grounds that Samson is not only blind but dirty. The hero parries this insult with a direct challenge,
couched in strictly military terms. Thoroughly convinced by Samson's spirited charge, Harapha diverts the thrust by accusing the Israelite of using "spells" and "some Magicians Art" (1133) to give him strength. This accusation provides Samson with a motive to resume his mission. In his forthright reply to the Dagon-worshipper, Samson denies the use of "forbidd'n Arts" (1139) and instantly takes his stance as God's "Champion" against Dagon. If Samson has lacked a motive for physical action before, he lacks it no longer. Harapha's suggestion that Samson is a liar, that his strength "from Heaven" was feigned (1134-5), provides the hero with an outlet for his desire to "be useful" and to "serve" (564). Samson has nothing but contempt for Harapha himself, but for Harapha as 'stand-in' for Dagon, he has a warm welcome since here is the chance to use his now returning strength in the service of the One who gave it.

In Parker's apt summary of this situation, Samson's

\[ \ldots \text{faith grows stronger as the call to action assumes reality (1139-1155). Harapha now--very significantly for the plot--echoes Samson's and the Chorus's hitherto unanswered complaint of God's desertion (1156-1167). We are now at the heart of the drama. Hearing these words from a Philistine, Samson finds his faith completely; all his doubts disappear.} \]

Several hours have passed since Samson climbed the bank outside the prison and he has made considerable psychological progress during this enforced holiday from the mind-numbing physical labour in the mill. Psychologically, Samson has advanced from the low point of his self-involvement to a higher point of self-mastery, and now, in his dramatic challenge to Harapha, he moves yet higher. As the sun ascends, so does Samson. His statement, "My trust is in the living God" (1140), makes clear his filial devotion to his spiritual father who now, as it were, resides within him, and, like the steadily rising sun, gradually illuminates both the path he has travelled and
the way ahead.

The reader may be reminded here of another statement involving the sun as a spiritual force at work within individuals. In *Urn Burial*, Sir Thomas Browne declares that "we live by an invisible Sun within us" (V, 284), and in his statement can be seen, symbolically, the same clock that controls Samson's destiny.

In his reply to Harapha's assertion that he is "A Murtherer, a Revolter, and a Robber" (1180), Samson brilliantly defends his character and reviews his past in a light very different from his previous guilt-ridden harangues. The boastfulness he displayed initially to the boasting Philistine bully, which harked back to the days when "swoll'n with pride" he walked about "like a petty God" (532, 529), has now been replaced by a humility brought about "by his blindness" (1221) which, though it maims him for "high attempts," does not prevent him from offering yet a third challenge. But the "Tongue-doughtie Giant" (1181), blustering helplessly and calling upon his gods, "Baal-zebub" (1231) and "Astaroth" (1242), retreats "crest-fall'n" (1244). Samson has taken a long stride forward from the static moment of self-defeat when Manoa left him. Now, freed from the hubris which brought about his humiliation, he has successfully passed his second trial and, as the Chorus predicts, has precipitated another encounter with the foes of God.

With the departure of Harapha, Samson displays new insight into human behaviour. When the Chorus expresses fear that the Philistine "will directly to the Lords" (1250) and bring about further suffering to Samson, the hero replies with a clear-cut analysis of the situation. Harapha, he says, "will not dare mention" (1254) the challenge because he will not dare to accept it, nor will the Philistine "owners" (1261) make things worse for the prisoner, for this will only reduce their daily profit from his toil.
This reasoning is superior to that of the Chorus, but, ironically, it is Samson's third point that draws the highest praise from his friends. He speaks from intuition when he says:

But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because thir end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the dead. (1262-67)

That this flash of insight, foreshadowing the final triumph, comes from the "guiding hand" of God seems certain. Yet Parker provides several other views, the most meaningful of which is his own:

Samson does not yet see his mission, of course, and
he is momentarily despondent. We must remember, however,
that in this episodion he has not only been thoroughly roused
to action; he has also been cheated, by circumstances and his enemy's cowardice, of a precious opportunity of serving God. 56

After singing of his strength, the Chorus extols Samson's "Heroic magnitude of mind," his "celestial vigour" (1279-80). He has become, the Danites chant

... his own Deliverer,
And Victor over all
That tyrannie or fortune can inflict. (1289-91)

And the choral song concludes with an ironic suggestion that, possibly, Samson may be renowned more for his patience than for his superhuman strength. But the strenuous mental labour of "This Idols day" (1297) is not over; with the arrival of a Public Officer, the Chorus expects "more trouble".

Samson temporarily averts the coming climax with a truly heroic refusal to attend the games in honour of Dagon. Fearful of the consequences of this defiance, the Chorus, unheroically, begs him to look to his own interests. But Samson is no
longer concerned with his outward self, only his "conscience and internal peace" (1334) interest him now. He has moved a great distance from the human realm within the confines of which he had defended his character to Harapha. Now before the Officer departs expressing his sorrow at the decision, it is clear that Samson has inklings of the destruction he will soon wreak upon his enemies, for he speeds the Philistine on his way back to Gaza with prophetic words: "Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed" (1347).

In view of the sacrifice Samson is about to make, it is interesting to note the care that Milton takes to prepare the sacrificial victim. From Harapha's insults, the reader is aware that Samson is dirty, and from the first description of him by the Chorus it is apparent that the hero's "ill-fitted weeds/ [are] Ore worn and soild" (12283). However, the Public Officer has proposed to make arrangements himself for Samson to be washed "and fresh clad" (1317). The offer does not come from the Philistine's sense of human decency but from his concern for what will appear fitting "before th' illustrious Lords" (1318). And that these "Lords" are themselves 'unclean' is indicated by Samson's speech that directly follows this offer of fresh apparel. He says: "Thou knowst I am an Ebrew, therefore tell them,/ Our Law forbids at thir Religious Rites/ My presence" (1319-20).

The Law, now so precious to Samson, was not held to be so sacred by him in former days when, frequently, he failed to observe its strictures. Feeling no "taint/ Of sin, or legal debt" (312-13), he had married "that fallacious Bride,/ Unclean, unchaste" (320-21) and, worse than that, he had transgressed the law of the sabbath, one of the Ten Commandments, by carrying to Hebron "on his shoulders. . ./ The Gates of Azza. . ./ No journey of a Sabbath day, and loaded so" (146-49). These
memories of his past unconcern for his religious rites throws into yet higher relief his present absolute devotion to the Law of God with which he now encloses himself. It is as if he had already donned his prayer shawl in preparation for his death, which is a custom still practised today by pious Jews before they die.

That Samson is aware of his prime offence against God is clear from his argument with the Chorus in defence of his refusal to obey the Philistine command. From the heart of his piety he asks:

Shall I abuse this Consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgression, so requite
Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to Idols. . .? (1354-58)

But he is also aware that his physical power is returning and therefore allows himself to be persuaded by the Chorus to go willingly "to the Temple of Dagon" (1370).

Having made this decision, Samson begins "to feel/ Some rouzing motions" (1381-2) within him. He begins to see God's plan, for he says,

If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last. (1387-89)

As if blown back again by God, the Public Officer returns and Samson, with a show of humble submission formerly quite absent from his manner toward Philistines, accedes to his command. Yet in his assent to the Officer, Samson makes clear that he will do nothing "forbid'n in our Law" (1409), and asks a strangely significant question that, to the Officer, must sound not unlike the pleading of a coward. This question, "And for a life who will not change his purpose?" (1406), contains a truth which might have been sufficiently paradoxical to please that great lover of paradoxes, the author of Urn Burial; for the life Samson will shortly gain by changing his purpose
and by giving up his own mortal life is life in the memories of men. Thousands of years after Samson's "great act" Milton is singing this paean in honour of the hero's triumph over himself, over the Philistines, and over the pagan god.

Milton's antagonistic attitude toward paganism in *Samson Agonistes* does not draw its force purely from the biblical sources in Judges 13-16. His antagonism dates back to a Latin verse-letter (Elegy VI) written to his friend Charles Diodati in December 1629, some few weeks after the poet's twenty-first birthday. In the final paragraph, Milton writes: "I am singing of the starry sky and the hymns of the angelic host in the upper air, and the pagan gods suddenly destroyed at their own shrines." The hymn Milton began to compose on Christmas Day 1629 is "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." In this ode, the poet calls upon the "Heav'nly Muse" to help him write verse in "sacred vein" which he will offer as "a present to the infant God." Part of the present the youthful Milton offers the Christ-child is the almost total destruction of the old pagan gods. And that Milton persisted in his antagonism to paganism is apparent in *Paradise Lost* where the poet's devotion to the truth he finds in the Old Testament concept of the one, universal, imageless God, leads him to designate the fallen angels as the "Devils" to which much of mankind was later lured "to adore for Deities" (I, 373). In Book I of the epic, the heathen deities are presented as abominable, cursed and obscene. One recollects the Nativity Ode as Moloch "besmear'd with blood" (I, 392), Astoreth, Thammuz, Dagon and the Egyptian deities parade before Satan when he rouses them "from the slumber on that fiery Couch" (I, 377). However, in *Samson Agonistes*, Milton's disgust with paganism takes a new and more sophisticated turn.
In the soliloquy and up to that moment in the drama when Samson recognizes that all wickedness, his own included, lies in weakness, his sense of guilt has been growing until it becomes a kind of self-hatred which verges on self-destructiveness. However, the crisis of faith is really a crisis of faith in his personal powers of leadership. Never for an instant does he lose faith in God. Even when he suffers from a "sense of Heav'ns desertion," the existence of God is never in question. All the questioning concerns basic things about Samson himself. After painful probing into the depths of his conscience, he comes face to face with the truth: he is a man who has sinned, not against another man but against God. Because he is a Jew, Samson understands the seriousness of his crime, accepts his personal responsibility and appreciates the justice of his punishment. In the context of the tragedy, thoughts such as these are incomprehensible to a pagan. When the pagan point of view is presented, Dalila, with deep subtlety, first blames the Philistine magistrates, princes and priests who, she says, threatened and cajoled her, then defends her traitorous act against her husband by stating "that to the public good/ Privat respects must yeild" (867-68). The sheer inhumanity of this attitude is particularly clear to modern readers who may detect in Dalila's argument Hitler's Nazi tactics wherein children were encouraged to denounce their parents to the "grave autority" (868) of the SS. To the pagan Dalila, the idea of personal responsibility to protect life is foreign. No doubt, it is also foreign to Harapha, Samson's Philistine counterpart. However, unlike Samson, Harapha feels no compunction to take upon his own shoulders the duty of doing battle for his deity, Dagon. And the Philistine fails altogether to understand how Samson can continue to trust in a God who has evidently disowned him, "hath cut off/ Quite
from his people" (1157-8), has delivered into his "Enemies hand" and who has permitted these enemies to put out both his eyes and to keep him in prison to grind out his days "Among the Slaves and Asses" (1162).

The essential character of Dalila, unlike that of Harapha, is drawn, of course, from the text in Judges; but in making her Samson's wife, Milton both enhances the plot of his tragedy and places upon her a distinct responsibility toward her husband which she fails utterly to uphold. Reflections of Milton's personal grievance against his first wife come irresistibly to mind, but reference to Milton's own resentment must be left out of account here along with other biographical details. Not only are these details well-known, but they serve no useful advantage beyond that which Pope provides in the final line of "Eloisa to Abelard," "He best can paint 'em who shall feel 'em most." Dalila's visit to the prison is Milton's invention which serves both to advance the progress of Samson's regeneration and to put forward the pagan point of view. The motive behind this visit surely lies in Dalila's desire to regain her rightful husband over whom she hopes to have the same absolute power she was able to exert in former days. In his refusal of her offer, Samson denies any future power over himself to this pagan "sorceress."

In stunning contrast to the sensually beautiful and mentally wily Philistine woman, Harapha is gross and stupid. This heathen, the father of Goliath, springs from Milton's imagination. Harapha's cowardice and his insulting behaviour toward a stricken man, serve to advance the action of the drama and to deepen the disgust of the audience toward the unworthiness of pagans. However, that Milton should make the two Dagon-worshippers succeed both in purging Samson of his self-hatred and in strengthening his
faith in God, is a remarkable coup de théâtre, for when the hero's guilt is lifted his burden becomes comparatively light and the action of the play undergoes a sensational change.

Dalila's possessiveness, seen in her lust for money and for fame as much as in her wish to repossess Samson, echoes the vanity Browne decries in Urn Burial and which he also associates with pagans. Possibly this association of false values with pagans stems from "the main intellectual problem of the seventeenth century, the separation of the 'true' from the 'false'." In their concern to oppose "the 'false'," writers may have felt a necessity to warn against the dangers inherent in paganism, no doubt made attractive by the beauties of classical literature, while, at the same time, they could advance toward the truth by elevating the Christian religion. In this regard, the Jewishness of Samson would prove no stumbling block since his God and the God of Christianity is essentially the same. Indeed, the Father in the Trinity inspired the birth of Jesus in much the same way as, earlier, He had inspired the birth of Samson, and that Christian readers would naturally make the identification between Christ and Samson can, justifiably, be taken for granted despite the fact that it is never made explicit in the drama.

Another possible reason for Milton's anti-paganism rests in John Carey's explanation that the poet's "interest in comparative religion had taken him to John Selden's modernistic Assyrian Gods (a new edition came out in 1629)," shortly before the composition of the Nativity Ode. In Selden's book, Milton read

... theories which connected the ghastly details of Moloch worship—[the cruel sacrifice of children dropped, alive, into the furnace blazing inside the effigy of the god]—with the Roman Saturn, ruler of the golden age. He found
the Syrian Thammuz and the Egyptian Osiris identified with Adonis, and the Syrian Ashtaroth with Venus.

No doubt Milton was aware of the close ties that linked together many pagan deities but, as Carey says, seeing these parallels plainly worked out in Selden's "17th-century Golden Bough" can hardly have made him feel more comfortable about his affection for paganism "that in his youth he had lovingly gathered from the Greek and Roman classics.

With the element of anti-paganism in Samson Agonistes, which, though subtle, is central to the drama, the controversial question arises of the spirit pervading the tragedy. Sir Richard Jebb, in his essay on "Samson Agonistes and the Hellenic Drama," asserts that in Milton's "treatment of the subject he was...genuinely Hebraic." Parker, in Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in 'Samson Agonistes', vigorously defends his contention that Milton's tragedy adheres to Attic tragedy both in its form and in its spirit. A.S.P. Woodhouse, while acknowledging Parker's "effective defence against Jebb," finds the spirit of Samson to be neither Hebraic nor Greek but Christian. Certainly, the problem is a complex one, for each reader brings himself to the contemplation of the drama's spiritual content and takes away largely what he brings. To dispense altogether with personal bias is a difficult task but not an impossible one and, since some of the ingredients that have gone into the seventeenth-century dramatic poem lie upon the surface, they can be isolated and examined.

I propose to consider only one of these ingredients, one that involves dramatic technique but which is not merely a piece of technical machinery. It is the human
element in *Samson Agonistes* that elicits the reader's real concern; therefore, I will
now turn to this aspect of the tragedy.

In his essay, "Tragic Effect in *Samson Agonistes,*" Woodhouse asks two questions:
"What is the effect actually achieved? And is it one that can be legitimately
described as tragic?" His answer to the first of these questions is that the final
effect is "Aristotelian katharsis," and he indicates that in view of Milton's "basic
Christian assumptions," this emotional purification hardly produces "a genuinely tragic
effect." If Milton is attempting "to write a Christian tragedy," as Woodhouse
urges the reader to believe, then the effect is not tragic, but fortunate, even joyous.
But who has felt other than deeply pensive at the conclusion of the tragedy? Who
has wanted to rush out and ring church bells in a passion of religious ecstasy? Even
Manoa's rationalisation that

> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair (1721-23),

fails to alleviate the pain emanating from a sense of tragic disaster. His son is dead,
and in the repetition of negatives, "Nothing. . .nothing. . .no. . .no. . .nothing,"
Manoa fashions for himself a form of consolation that faintly recalls the lamentation
of Lear over Cordelia's dead body. "Nothing is here," indeed, but a corpse to be
buried. It is this plain fact that brings home to each reader the essential tragedy:
the man is dead who has been so alive, so human both in his prevarications and in his
suffering, so similar in many ways to the reader himself. In his eulogy, Manoa certainly
mitigates the pain, but he does not eradicate the terrible finality of this knowledge.

Indeed, there are overtones of Christ's suffering and ultimate sacrifice in the
death of Samson, but Milton makes no attempt to draw attention to the analogy. Nor does he suggest any form of apotheosis. As Stein notes: "The Samson who becomes a symbol of human hope and virtue also becomes a mere person." Throughout the drama, Milton has concentrated upon Samson's human qualities, both bad and good, and at the close it is the human element that takes precedence over all else. Manoah, practical to the last, suddenly breaks the flow of his contemplative eulogy and proposes to "find the body" (1725) and "wash off/The clotted gore" (1727-28) in preparation for the funeral. In Stein's summary of the preparations for the burial ceremony, he mentions three distinctly human elements:

- Decorum, both human and poetic, requires the ritual. The return of Samson to God is a return to his people, and they must, since this tragedy is a shared experience, not walk away numb and dumb. The first of these elements, the human need for ritual, has the effect of removing anxiety by removing choices. A set formula, hallowed by tradition and affording relief to the participants who are obliged to bestir themselves, must be acted out. The second element, Samson's simultaneous return to God and to his people, is a simplified explanation of the complex association of God with the 'House of Israel.' And what may seem like two separate homecomings—one home to God, the other home to Zorah—is, in the Hebraic sense, simply one. When the dead hero is carried "Home to his fathers house" (1733), he is returning both to the people of God and to a place where God resides, for the home is of such sacred importance to devout Jews that it is called in Hebrew migdash mehad, 'a small temple,' a place where people gather and pray together. The third human element in Stein's summary is
that of "shared experience." Not only will all Manoa's "kindred" and all his friends (1730) accompany the hero's body from Gaza to "Zora's fruitful Vale" (181), but all the readers, who have participated vicariously in Samson's life, can now join the solemn and "silent...funeral train" (1732).

In laying emphasis upon the human frailties of Samson and upon his exceedingly human father, Milton throws some light upon the reason why he "added" Samson Agonistes to his brief epic Paradise Regain'd. Published in a single volume in 1671, the two works provide a contrast between divine strength which withstands temptation and human weakness which succumbs. The epic treats of a divine hero whereas the drama treats of a mere man who, for all his physical strength, is weak in his uxoriousness. Yet, granted the hero's imperfections, Samson Agonistes is a hymn to the glory of man who, though bending again and again, retains his capacity for regaining an upright position.

One of Samson's human qualities, his preoccupation with himself throughout the drama, calls to mind the letter "I." The vertical stroke of this letter, which points down as well as up, has peculiar significance for Milton's tragedy: it describes man's earthbound condition and his aspiring nature; it emphasizes man's upright posture and his singularity, and it can also serve as a reminder of the vertical structure of the drama. However, in connexion with man's relationship with God, the letter "I" has a yet deeper significance, for it is also the symbol for one in the Roman numeral system. For Samson, God is One. And when, in confrontation with Dalila, Samson tells his wife, "I to my self was false ere thou to me" (824), the hero's identification with God is seen to be complete. The dangers inherent in a relationship as intimate as this are apparent in Samson's second speech to the Chorus, when he tells his fellow Danites
that he thought his second marriage was "lawful" (231). But Samson has learned to distinguish between his individual thoughts and those of God when he confesses his sin to Dalila. The "self" Samson refers to in his confession is not identical with his reference to "I" which indicates his own person.

In the sense that it represents Samson, the vertical stroke of the letter "I" can serve, symbolically, to represent this human tragedy which treats of compassion as well as of misery, of respect for the elderly as well as of personal responsibility for individual fate. Despite the assertion of F. Michael Krouse, that in Samson Agonistes "the force of Hebraism is strong enough to be regarded as dominant,"70 to which view he adds the support of Wordsworth,71 my contention is that the tragedy transcends all sectarian boundaries and speaks of humanity at large.

In Samson's ability to feel, he goes to the extreme of vindictive anger and lashes out furiously against the enemies of his people, but in his ability to think, he goes to the opposite extreme and revels in the punishment which he knows is justified. When dramatizing these two aspects of Samson's character, Milton is exposing human nature unguided by reason. But Samson is helped to exercise his reason by the Chorus, a sometimes wise, sometimes baffled group of men who offer Samson many opportunities to give his reasons for making various decisions: at first the Danites wonder why Samson should "wed Philistian women," and, finally, they wonder how the Public Officer will report Samson's refusal to participate in the Philistine feast. However, almost exactly mid-way through the drama, Samson achieves a proper balance between the two extremes and, in confrontation with his wife, it is his reasoning power that guides him through the shoals of Dalila's slippery arguments.
When Milton is dealing with the man who, "with what trivial weapon came to hand" (142), furiously set about killing a thousand men single handed, he is recalling the hero's past. The hothead who tore up "by main force" (146) the Gates of Gaza, who set the corn afire in the Philistine's fields, is the Samson of the book of Judges, not Milton's Samson. In the tragedy, all that remains of the incendiary of the Old Testament is the hero's fiery temper, which flares up when he defends himself against what he considers to be an unjust slur of the Chorus. In his reply to the remark, "Yet Israel still serves with all his Sons" (240), Samson explodes with righteous indignation and places the blame on Israel's rulers with whom he has no patience. Milton has subtly transformed the firebrand of Judges into a man who preserves his dignity despite his wretched condition.

The spirit of the book of Judges, the spirit of revenge in a righteous cause, is not the dominant note of Samson. The desire for vengeance is, of course, present and it persists but enters the tragedy much muted. By far the greatest emphasis falls on repentance for the sin against God and, in this respect, Milton draws inspiration from the Prophets. Indeed, not only is the spirit of the tragedy centred on repentance, an act repeatedly called for by the prophets, but in Milton's conception, the hero's character is more closely related to that of a prophet than to a judge or military leader.

In his monumental study, The Prophets, Abraham J. Heschel writes:

A person's perception depends upon his experience, upon his assumptions, categories of thinking, degree of sensitivity, environment, and cultural atmosphere. A person will notice what he is conditioned to see. The prophet's perception was conditioned by his experience of inspiration.
In this concise summary, the reader of *Samson Agonistes* can recognise the pattern of the hero's basic problem manifested in the soliloquy. Samson has been conditioned to see himself as "a person separate to God" (31); he has grown accustomed to God's friendship through the gift of strength and through the experience of his inspiration, subsequently made manifest in his explanation to the Chorus of his marriage to the woman of Timna. However, in the soliloquy, Samson feels an acute sense of disorientation; God, the hero's intimate, has suddenly withdrawn His favour. Naturally, Samson wants to know why. He pours out complaints and, finally, having worked himself up to a pitch of hysterical self-pity by enunciating each aspect of his present misery, he turns his face directly to God and asks, fortissimo, "Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree?" (85).

That the relationship between Samson and God is different from the hero's relationship with his human father has been noted earlier, but if Samson may be regarded in the light of his prophetic spirit, the precise difference can be clarified. The observation of Arnold Stein, that "major thematic anticipations" appear in the soliloquy (see above, p. 10), can serve as a guide for any reader who wishes to plumb the depths of Milton's tragedy. In connexion with man's relationship with God, the soliloquy offers a rich mine of information.

In order to understand the nature of Samson's relationship with God, it is necessary to find an answer to the question: In what way does Samson experience God? My suggestion, that Samson thinks of God as an intimate friend is at best an incomplete answer and it derives in part from the hero's final question in the soliloquy, which denotes a familiarity with the Deity not previously in evidence. However, the suggestion also derives from Heschel's answer to what he believes is an inadequate
formulation of the question—"What is the prophets' idea of God?" Heschel writes:

Having an idea of friendship is not the same as having a friend or living with a friend, and the story of a friendship cannot be fully told by what one friend thinks of the being and attributes of the other friend. The process of forming an idea is one of generalization, or arriving at a general notion from individual instances, and one of abstraction, or separating a partial aspect or quality from a total situation. . . . An idea or a theory of God can easily become a substitute for God, impressive to the mind when God as a living reality is absent from the soul.

The prophets had no theory or "idea" of God. What they had was an understanding. Their God-understanding was not the result of a theoretical inquiry, or a groping in the midst of alternatives about the being and attributes of God. To the prophets, God was overwhelmingly real and shatteringly present.

That God is "a living reality" to Samson is unquestionable. However, in the soliloquy, when Samson addresses God as "thou great Word" (83), the reader knows that although Samson feels free to address God directly, he is not addressing God by His name. Even in the most intimate friendship, unspoken limits are imposed and, if the friendship is to continue, these limits must be scrupulously observed. Samson can only approach the Deity by referring to the sacred letters of the Tetragrammaton, YHVH, which, though they cannot be 'vocalized,' nevertheless form the "great Word." However, the hero is not "groping in the midst of alternatives about the being" of the One to whom the question is directed, for he has a clear understanding that this 'Being' has deprived him of his ability to see. Samson does not rail against the Philistines for putting out his eyes; he knows from his "God-understanding" that the Philistines were merely acting as God's agents. Thus, in the soliloquy, Samson's prophetic consciousness first becomes apparent. God has revealed himself, not in an abstract manner that can be misinterpreted, for Samson misinterprets the connexion
between the "high gift of strength" (47) and the cutting off of his hair (58-9), but in a personal and intimate gesture of severe wrath.

In his first speech to the Chorus, Samson dwells chiefly upon himself. But the 'I' of introspection is inextricably linked with the Other which is above the individual self. Samson's disclosure to his Danite friends makes it clear that he is aware of the reason for God's anger with him, for he tells them that he has "divulg'd the secret gift of God" (201), and in making public this admission of his fault the hero is so ashamed that he says, "How could I once look up" (197). The inferiority of his status next to God, is fully understood. However, just as Samson now rationalises the punishment of blindness, "which was the worst" (195) of his afflictions, into a blessing, so he rationalises that the divulged secret is the cause of his having "shipwrackt" the vessel with which he had been entrusted. What Samson fails to realise in his conversation with the Chorus, is that with the cutting off of his hair, the outward sign of his connexion with God, he has suffered a total severance from his prophetic insight. At this moment in the tragedy, God is not within Samson, though the latter is not yet aware of the loss, and, by implication, continues to blame God for His failure to provide immeasurable wisdom along with "Immeasurable strength" (206). However, when Samson replies to the Chorus's warning against accusing God for an error that is simply human, the hero is led to disclose his most serious offence, his unlawful marriage to Dalila.

It must be allowed that Samson, at this moment, is blind to the truth of the illegality of his second marriage, but he exposes the knowledge nevertheless, and when he says of Dalila that "Shee was not the prime cause, but I my self" (234), he
is no longer laying blame upon God but upon his own weakness. Yet he continues to
prevaricate, to hide from God or from the truth, by naming only the divulged secret
and not the prime offence, until he becomes aware that God is now hidden from him.

When Samson consistently fails to tell the whole truth and, following Manoa's
departure, sinks beneath the weight of physical and mental pain, tortured by the
"sense of Heav'ns desertion," one can detect certain similarities between the hero of
Samson Agonistes and the Satan of Book IV of Paradise Lost. At this point in the epic,
Satan has alighted on Mt. Niphates where, dwarfed by the magnitude of the view and
subjected to "the full-blazing Sun,/ Which now sat high in his Meridian Tow'r"
(IV, 29-30), the fallen angel finds that the brilliant light reminds him of his lost
Paradise, Heaven. The pain of happiness gone forever is the most excruciating of all
mental pains and, in his agony, Satan addresses the sun with that same "steadfast hate"
he experienced in Book I:

> to thee I call,
> O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
> That bring to my remembrance from what state
> I fell, how glorious once above thy Sphere;
> Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down. (IV. 35-40)

Like Satan, Samson, too, has been thrown down by pride but, unlike Satan, Samson's
ambition to take upon himself God's prerogative is not only unplanned but unwitting.
And although Satan, on Mt. Niphates, is in perfect misery, he is also in perfect
understanding of himself, for his dramatic soliloquy is an incisive self-analysis.
Samson, though experiencing the same pain of lost happiness, is not yet illuminated
by the "Sun within" him, in Browne's phrase; indeed, Samson is at the opposite pole
from Satan's mountaintop where he sees everything clearly. Nevertheless, what the
brightness does for Satan the darkness does for Samson: it brings to his "remembrance from what state...fell," and he recalls how, once, he was God's "nursling...and choice delight" (633).

The Satanic element in Samson is not, I think, purely accidental. Samson's disclosure in the soliloquy that he is "Inferiour to the vilest...man or worm" (73-4), his subsequent inability to be completely honest, and the agony he feels at being "cast off as never known" (641) by God, link him quite closely with the fallen angel during the first half of the tragedy. Satan, too, had known a brilliant past when, as Lucifer, he had shone with the pure light of the morning star. But these similarities with Satan serve merely to intensify the contrast between Samson's promising youth and what he has made of himself when the tragedy opens. The brilliant flashes of prophetic insight manifested in the soliloquy—the realisation that he has only himself to complain of, and the recognition that God "Haply had ends above his reach to know" (62)—grow dimmer as he sinks into the darkness of total despair. But it is clear that the Satan-element in Samson is largely dispelled with his wish for "speedy death." All that remains of falseness is the human tendency to rationalise past acts. This tendency is apparent in the confrontation with Harapha when Samson argues that he was "no foe" (1193) of the Philistines when he chose to marry one of their daughters. The reader knows this to be untrue since, in his second speech to the Chorus, Samson has explained that he married the woman of Timna in order to find an opportunity to "begin Israels Deliverance" (225). However, Samson is human and in his argument with Harapha he simply displays the human wish to justify his acts. There is nothing Satanic about this. Nor, one must add, is
there anything of prophetic vision in his conversation with Dalila unless one classes as prophetic his ability to foresee that any future life with her would be "perfet thraldom" (946).

In his resolution to attend the Philistine feast Samson regains his genuine prophetic insight. The certainty expressed in his parting words to the Chorus indicates that, for Samson, the tension of doubt is over; once more he is in communication with the Deity, for Samson's tone is relaxed and confident when he says:

Happ'n what may, of mee expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our Law, my Nation, or my self. (1423-25)

By placing himself last on the list, giving pre-eminence to God and the Law, Samson makes clear his knowledge of the true relationship between man and God. The Nation and its Deliverer must give place to the priority of God and the Law.

V. Conclusion

Milton's thesis in Samson Agonistes seems to be that God is concerned with the individual human being only so long as the individual behaves in accordance with God's commands. In order to obey, one must first understand the meaning of the word 'God,' then one must know, with absolute precision, what is demanded. Like Sir Thomas Browne, for whom God is "the ordainer of order" (Garden, V, 343) according to whose will all creation functions, Milton finds God to be the universal Lawgiver, the ordering principle not only in external nature but within man himself. When in Paradise Lost Adam compares the perfection of God with man's imperfection
Milton is implying that God is self-sufficient. However, in *Samson Agonistes*, Milton indicates that God needs man in order to carry out His justice.

Justice is one of the central themes in the tragedy and Milton equates "Gods universal Law" (1053) of justice with the Lawgiver Himself. Samson eventually understands precisely where he has violated the Law; his cultural background has conditioned him to see that man cannot take the Law into his own hands without incurring a severe penalty. In the soliloquy, Samson associates God with His power to bestow gifts; only later, through suffering the terrible punishment for presumptuously extending the Law to enable him to satisfy his personal desire, does Samson learn that "Gods universal Law" and God Himself are also to be associated. Samson's presumption is the pivot around which the play turns. Only through his repentance for this sin is his regeneration made possible.

In this respect, the tragedy follows the exhortation to repentance of Isaiah. Just as the "great Word" commanding "Let ther be light" (83-84), reverberates in the play, so the word of God reverberates in the voice of the prophet as he outlines the real meaning of repentance and, in so doing, outlines the real meaning of Milton's tragedy:

> And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed. . . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. . . (Isaiah 1:15-19)
When Samson first "spread forth" his hands, God hid His eyes and refused to hear complaints; but when Samson made himself "clean" by imploring God's pardon (521) and by putting away the 'unclean' or unholy Dalila, refusing even to touch her hand, God turned His face to Samson and gave to him both the power of right reason and the self-esteem he had lost through his wilful marriage. In his opposition to Harapha, Samson was learning "to do well;" and in his renewed zeal to uphold the Law—the refusal to attend the "Religious Rites" of the Philistines—he was seeking "judgement" through the strict limits of legalistic Judaism which regulates personal action. Samson had never lost his desire to "relieve [his] oppressed" Nation; therefore the judgement so earnestly sought was finally offered, paradoxically, by a Philistine. As it was in the beginning of the drama, so it is at the end, for the Philistines served as God's agents in putting out Samson's eyes and, finally, they serve a similar function in providing the opportunity for him to make the supreme sacrifice. Samson's sins were 'as scarlet,' but by returning to God and by showing genuine willingness to be "obedient," the sins have been washed "white as snow." Isaiah calls for active repentance, not mere prayers; it is through action that Milton's hero answers the call of the prophet.

In The Garden of Cyrus, Browne makes it clear that God is "the ordainer of order" (V, 343) in the universe, and, in Samson, Milton emphasizes God's role as universal Lawgiver. From the points of view expressed in these particular literary works, Browne and Milton share a similar understanding of God's prime functions: He decrees order and creates "universal Law." No doubt, part of the "Hebraism" that Jebb, Krouse and Wordsworth find in Samson Agonistes stems from Milton's insistence
upon upholding the Law of the Old Testament which, in orthodox Christianity, is rejected. However, it is not within the scope of this paper to pursue the differences between Browne's and Milton's personal religious beliefs. It is sufficient to note that, in their antipathy to paganism, both men show their allegiance to general truths as they are revealed in the Bible.

Yet, in addition to these similar attitudes, the authors reveal common preoccupations: concentration on the double theme of darkness and light, of visible and invisible; a basic vertical structure for each work both of which are founded upon juxtapositions; delight in paradox, distaste of money-making for its own sake, objective interest in life and death, and concern with time. All these elements are present both in Milton's drama and in Browne's essays. Also interesting is the fact that the essays each have five chapters and the tragedy is divided into five parts. Regardless of where critics choose to find the precise division of the five acts which Milton mentions in his preface to the drama, it is clear that Samson has five major confrontations: first, he is face to face with himself; second, he is faced with the Chorus; third, with Manoa; fourth, with Dalila, and, fifth, with Harapha. The pattern of five is obviously here. Also, the shape of Samson Agonistes, while corresponding to the vertical structure of Browne's essays, is surprisingly similar to the shape of the Roman numeral V in The Garden of Cyrus. Samson has descended from the high point of his past life, so frequently recalled by him, by the Chorus and by Manoa, to the extreme low point of his absolute despair. It is not an abrupt descent during the course of the tragedy, for Samson can be seen moving obliquely down an incline, the angle of which is no sharper than that of the bank which he climbs early in the
soliloquy; his slow ascent to the high point of the catastrophe can be seen as equally gradual. In the slow descent and the gradual climb the Roman V is quite clearly delineated.

Another curious similarity, this time between Urn Burial and Samson Agonistes, lies in the triangular, fiery imagery contained in each work. For instance, the ascending smoke of the triangular funeral pyre described in Browne's prefatory letter to Thomas Le Gros, finds its counterpart in Milton's prefatory material set forth in Samson's soliloquy. Before Samson completes his first question, "O wherefore was my birth from Heav'n foretold/ Twice by an Angel" (23-4), an ascending image appears, both triangular and fiery, when Samson is describing, retrospectively, the ascent of the angel "From off the Altar...in a fiery column" (26-7). A similar fiery picture is evoked near the end of the tragedy when the Semichorus compares the now-dead Samson to the phoenix, "that self-begott'n bird" out of whose "ashie womb" new life "Revives, reflourishes" (1699-1704). The imagery here is not only to the ashes and the urn-womb paradox of Urn Burial but also to the verdure in The Garden of Cyrus.

And the labyrinths Browne traces in his search for truth come to mind when, at Samson's death he is "conjoined" with his "slaughterd foes" (1666-7) and lies "tangl'd in the fold/ Of dire necessity" (1665-6). Of course, the tangled, labyrinthine heap of bodies vividly recalls Samson's physical lust and his lifelong involvement with the Philistine soldiery as well as his amorous meandering which had driven him into the arms of two Philistine women. However, in this comparison with Browne, the grisly heap also reminds the reader of the image in Urn Burial wherein man's false ideas of immortality are summed up: "But to subsist in bones, and be but Pyramidal extant,
is a fallacy in duration" (V, 280).

Of more significance is the resemblance between the urn-womb-heaven triangle of Browne's first essay and the identical triangular pattern in Milton's tragedy. Not only is Samson, who represents mankind as well as Israel, connected with God at his birth and at his death, but his relationship with God is the essential, unifying force that guides the drama and its protagonist from beginning to end. Paradoxically, God's presence is felt even when Samson, swooning with despair, feels a "sense of Heav'ns desertion" (632), for in the next line the hero recalls God's presence in the most personal way. He says, "I was his nursling once and choice delight" (633), and Samson's memories of childhood and of growing up "Under his special eie" (636) reassure the reader, though not, at this point, the hero, that God is concealed in the dark core of Samson's misery.

Milton's stress at this moment upon the effect on Samson of the apparent absence of God, somehow resembles Browne's stress upon the importance of darkness. As noted earlier, Browne writes: "were it not for darknesse...the noblest part of the Creation had remained unseen, and the Stars in heaven" would be invisible. "Oft. he seems to hide his face" (1749), the Chorus intoneat the quiet close of the tragedy. But God's apparent absence can be understood as good for the hero at this earlier moment, for were it not for Samson's dark desire to die, to give up the self, perhaps he would not be sufficiently light (or weightless) to rise in the spectacular way he does.

"The noblest part" of Samson begins to show itself in the scene that follows swiftly after this weak descent into the blackness of total despair, in the episode with Dalila. From this moment onward, Samson rises to every occasion that offers itself, and his
moral strength grows steadily stronger as his recognition of God's continuing presence and concern for him becomes manifest. When Dalila departs, Samson knows that she was a divine messenger since he says, "God sent her" (999). This alternation between the presence and absence of God, like the alternation between light and darkness, resembles the visible and invisible elements in The Garden of Cyrus where the light of the sun, planets and stars alternates with the "perpetual shades" in which seeds lie.

While it would be foolish to strain these comparisons, it must be accepted that these works of the two seventeenth-century authors show a great number of common elements. That Browne and Milton should also share a number of common attitudes is not, of course, surprising, since men tend to write within the climate of opinion of their time. For instance, when Browne indicates by the dissolving Pyramids and by his reference to "the Prophecy of Elias" (Urn Burial, V, 281) that time is running out for mankind, he is expressing a prevalent concern of the century. The work of Copernicus, Brahe, Bruno, Galileo and Kepler was beginning to unsettle the minds of men who were accustomed to thinking in terms of the Ptolemaic system wherein the earth was understood to be the centre of the universe. The old way of regarding the world was, indeed, disintegrating. The "New Philosophy" of the seventeenth century had discovered "the existence of a plurality or infinity of worlds," and this knowledge was throwing into disarray man's comfortable notions of egocentricity. As George Williamson explains when analysing the melancholy of the Jacobean period, "the ancient idea of the decay of the world, which grew particularly strong with the waning of the Middle Ages," was being reinforced by astronomical study and the old idea of the world's mutability was acquiring "powers of disturbing the soul."
could guess where this new and disorienting knowledge would lead? Perhaps Browne suspects that "the Prophecy of Elias" was not all that far-fetched; his reference to the brief life-expectancy of the world can be taken seriously.

When viewed from this seventeenth-century perspective, The Garden of Cyrus can be seen as an antidote to the disquieting thoughts of Urn Burial, for in the second essay Browne concentrates upon the perpetual present, the segment of time occupying the wedge in the Roman V (see above, p. 20). And the quiet close of The Garden, so similar in its tranquillity to the close of Samson Agonistes, may be intended to reassure the reader that, despite man's excursions into the aether, all's right with the world.

Browne's abstract concepts of time in his untitled two-part work are completely different from Milton's in Samson. In the tragedy, time plays two roles both of which are strictly utilitarian: time is useful in the sense that the protagonists and the readers need its onward movement in order to learn the precise nature of God's justice, and it is useful to the playwright who employs time as a metaphor to enhance the tragic outcome of the drama. Possibly, by being both Puritan and poet, Milton is particularly aware of the practical value of time and therefore uses this element for didactic and technical purposes. Precision rather than abstraction, and seriousness rather than playfulness are more typical, perhaps, of the Puritan modus operandi than they are of the Anglican form of expression, and Milton is both serious and precise when he calls attention to time in his preface to Samson. In doing so, he points directly to an element in the tragedy that might otherwise be overlooked. The clock within the tragedy is man's inner clock and, like the "Sun within us," is invisible.
Browne was equally conscious of the value of time in the conduct of daily life, for his friend Whitefoot recalls that Browne was liberal "in everything except his time." However, in his treatment of time in _Urn Burial_ and _The Garden of Cyrus_, Browne was aiming at a different mark from Milton’s. Milton sought to explain, through the example of Samson, God’s justice toward man. Browne sought to "write something new" and, by demolishing one concept of time and establishing another, he may have believed he had, indeed, contributed something to philosophy. "Philosophy begins in wonder" (Plato, _Theaetetus_ 155D), and, in _The Garden_, Browne moves from erudition to wonder. As Joan Bennett writes in her study of Sir Thomas Browne: "the sense of wonder, which some think of as the prerogative of childhood, was undimmed in him in his fifties and probably remained so to the end." "Wonder goes beyond knowledge," Heschel asserts in his philosophical study of religion, _Man is Not Alone_. "Wonder is a state of mind in which we do not look at reality through the latticework of our memorized knowledge; in which nothing is taken for granted."

"Doubt may come to an end, wonder lasts forever." Perhaps it was Browne’s Anglican spirit which encouraged his natural inclination to think feelingly, to seek knowledge with his heart as well as with his mind.

And perhaps the practical spirit of Puritanism, which simultaneously humbled and exalted, inspired Milton to elevate time from its degraded rank as a kind of animalistic devourer, to the powerful force for good he shows it to be in the tragedy. The "lazy leaden-stepping hours" that he speaks of in the opening section of his _Samson_ can be seen in "On Time," to be necessarily slow-stepping, since they are pregnant with self-knowledge and spiritual potential. The seven hours of
Samson's life in the drama are filled with the experience of a lifetime and, as the mystical number of hours pass, he grows imperceptibly wiser. Indeed, the child within Samson literally reaches maturity before the eyes of the audience. The tempestuous, self-centred, conceited young man, who once strutted about showing off his strength "like a petty God," becomes patient, totally God-centred, contrite, penitent, humble and, ultimately, exalted.

The vision of success Samson knew as a boy has grown dim amid doubts when the tragedy opens, but before he leaves the stage, and long before the close of the drama, the vision returns in an unmistakable glimmer of divine intuition (1381-83); therefore, although the dramatic structure of Samson Agonistes is vertical, a circular motion can be discerned in the pattern of the hero's life. An angel foretold his "birth from Heav'n" (23) and thus he began life at the summit of the circle; through pride and the presumption "to give law unto himself, and to depend no more upon God's commandments," he descends toward the circle's lowest point, which he reaches in his wish to die. During the course of his gradual regeneration, he ascends the other half of the circle, becoming again united with heaven in his death.

And still another circle can be perceived insofar as God has remained with Samson throughout his life; even when he feels that God has deserted him, he is imbued with the Divine Spirit, for he is lifted from hopelessness to hope. Thus the circle of Samson's life is enclosed within the circle of God's perfection. Man's relationship with God is close at all times. The concentric circles wheel through time together.

Though it cannot be said that Milton, like Browne, encloses the vertical
structure of his work within a sphere, in the suggestive evocation of the two circles, the circle of God embracing, so to speak, that of man, one can detect Milton's sense of awe. Like Browne, Milton, too, is filled with wonder when contemplating God's mysterious influence in the world. Browne is struck with radical amazement by the "order and mystical Mathematicks of the City of Heaven" which he finds chiefly in external nature. Milton is amazed by heaven's mysterious influence upon man himself. However, "peace and consolation" (1757) come to man only through patiently working toward an affiliation of the heart with the will of God.
NOTES


3 Sir Edmund Gosse, Sir Thomas Browne (London, 1905), p. 120.

4 Ibid., p. 111.

5 Quotations from Hydriotaphia or Urne Buriall and The Garden of Cyrus are from The Prose of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. by Norman J. Endicott, Anchor Books (New York, 1967). The final number in the incorporated references indicates the page in this edition. References to Religio Medici are also from Endicott's edition. I have chosen this text since it follows that in the six-volume edition of Browne's works edited by Sir Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1928-31), and because it is both compact and easily available.


8 Ibid., p. 211.

9 Ibid., pp. 208, 222.


11 Huntley, p. 205.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., p. 209.


16 Browne himself supplies this information in Urn Burial, V, 282. I have checked the count of names in Genesis 4 and 5 and can verify that "Twenty seven Names make up the first story."

18 Ibid.


21 Ibid.

22 Sir Thomas Browne, 'Religio Medici' and Other Works, ed. L.C. Martin (Oxford, 1964), note 1, p. 120.


26 This translation of Isaiah 40: 6-8 is that of The Jerusalem Bible, reader's ed. (New York, 1968), p. 1026.


28 Ibid., see 'Cyrus (1),' p. 250.

29 Jewish Encyclopedia, see 'Temple,' p. 1847.

30 Heideman, p. 243.

31 Ibid., p. 246.

32 Huntley, p. 207.

33 Ibid., p. 208.

34 The Columbia Encyclopedia, 2nd ed., eds. William Bridgwater and Elizabeth J. Sherwood (New York, 1950), see 'Hyades.'
35 Ibid., see 'Taurus.'

36 Jewish Encyclopedia, see 'Passover.'

37 Columbia Encyclopedia, see 'Easter.'

38 Ibid., see 'May Day.'

39 Huntley, p. 209.

40 Ibid., note 9, p. 269.

41 In Hebrew the letters of the alphabet also denote numerals. Thus the letters of the "Name of God" (yod, he, waw, he) are equivalent to ten, five, six, five; 'yod' being the tenth letter of the alphabet, 'he' the fifth and 'waw' the sixth.


43 At midnight in England it would be approximately 3 a.m. in Persia where "they are already past their first sleep," and it would be about 6 p.m. on the eastern seaboard of America where "The Huntsmen" would still be up in early May when Browne completed his work.

44 Sir Richard Jebb and others do not agree that the spirit of Milton's dramatic poem is Hellenic. The controversy concerning the spirit of Samson Agonistes is discussed later in my paper, see note 62.

45 William Riley Parker, Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in 'Samson Agonistes' (Baltimore, 1937), p. 18.


47 Parker, p. 19.


49 The Holy Bible, King James Version, Collins Clear-Type Press (London, 1934), marginal note 7 to verse 24, p. 315. See also A.W. Verity, Milton's 'Samson Agonistes' (1892; rpt.: Cambridge, 1966). In his note on the title, Verity explains that Shimshon "means 'solar,' being connected with Shemesh, the sun," p. 57.


Arnold Stein, Heroic Knowledge: An Interpretation of 'Paradise Regained' and 'Samson Agonistes' (Minneapolis, 1957), p. 139.

Ibid., p. 168.

Parker, p. 46.

Ibid., p. 47.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 28.

Sir Richard Jebb, "Samson Agonistes and the Hellenic Drama," Proceedings of the British Academy (1907-8), III, pp. 343-4. The full text of this quotation is as follows: "Milton's mind was, in the literal and proper sense, Hebraic. . . . When a man with this bent of thought selected as the subject for a poem an episode of Hebrew history, the treatment of the subject was sure to be genuinely Hebraic. . . . Samson is the champion of the Israelites against the Philistines. Jehovah is the God of the Israelites; Dagon is the protecting deity of the Philistines. Samson, through disloyalty to himself, has been permitted to fall into the hands of the idolaters; and Israel shares his humiliation. Yet, even in this abasement, Samson is confident that the Lord of Hosts will finally assert His own majesty against the idol. This confidence is justified: the honour of the true God and of His chosen people are vindicated by the catastrophe which punishes the weakness, as it closes the penance, of His individual minister. This is the issue of the drama—Jehovah has prevailed over Dagon; Israel is avenged on Philistia."


Ibid., pp. 205-6.

Ibid., p. 216.

Ibid.

Stein, p. 201.

Ibid.


Ibid., see note 21 wherein Krouse quotes Wordsworth's remark that when Milton wrote Samson Agonistes, "his mind was Hebraized. Indeed, his genius fed on the writings of the Hebrew prophets."


Ibid., p. 1.

Nicolson, p. 218.


This remark is a paraphrase from the minutes Whitefoot wrote at the request of Browne's widow. The paraphrase is that of Edward Dowden in his Puritan and Anglican: Studies in Literature (London, 1901), p. 39.


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