THE HEROIC SONG IN PARADISE LOST AND PARADISE REGAINED

By

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In the following study, I propose to pursue the subject of heroism in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. The Miltonic delineation of heroic virtue in these two works emerges from the tension between seventeenth-century English Puritanism and the strong influence of sixteenth-century Renaissance humanism—between the religious view that human virtue is contingent upon the active power of divine beneficence and the more secular belief in the capacity of natural man to assert his essential dignity. Conscious of this ostensible dichotomy between the temporal and the eternal maintained by secular humanism and strict Puritanism respectively, Milton transcends the impasse in a religious vision of human grandeur. In a Baroque fusion of apparent opposites, Milton synthesizes divine grace and free will: God's will dovetails with man's, and the two are, for all intents and purposes, interdependent, inseparable. And this synthesis is founded on the crucial distinction between theocentric and egocentric humanism—the first recognizing that the centre for man is God, and the second, asserting that the individual is the centre and measure of all things. Man manifests the heroic song in direct proportion to his theocentricity; his magnanimity is contingent upon his moral orientation, and it is this religious humanism which inspires Milton's works. Thus, the theocentric heroic vision is a conscious transcendence of the heroic norm inherited from Western tradition.

In general terms, an epic poem is a narrative of considerable length in which the main character or characters demonstrate in deeds, usually of a violent nature and directly related to war, their capacity to realize a level of human achievement that is "larger than life." But Milton, in his choice to write classical epic on a Christian theme, consciously alludes to the Graeco-Roman precedent in order to establish a new, revolutionary heroic ethos. The classical heroic norm, specifically illustrated in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, celebrating deeds motivated largely by personal ambition and
resulting in a recognizable secular glory, is wholly inadequate to Milton's vision. Milton thus rejects the Western heroic tradition, describing mythic, "superhuman" feats only to transcend them. He demonstrates the inferiority of the "long and tedious havoc [caused by] fabl'd Knights/ In Battles feign'd" (Paradise Lost, IX, 30-31) in contradistinction to "the better fortitude/ Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom [hitherto] Unsung" (ll. 31-33). While the more primitive classical epic isolates only the value of worldly success, Milton, the product of a Christian age, identifies and embraces a heroic ethos celebrating the sacredness of the human spirit.

In Paradise Lost and in Paradise Regained, Milton orchestrates his epic vision through Satan, the Son, and Adam and Eve. Satan he creates as the embodiment of the classical ideal, underscoring the parallel portrait in direct allusion to "the wrath/ Of stern Achilles" (PL, IX, 14-15), the "rage/ Of Turnus" (ll. 16-17), and "Neptune's ire or Juno's" (1. 18). In Satan's futile heroism, Milton deflates the validity of "might" not subject to the character and will of divine beneficence. The Son, later the incarnate Christ in Paradise Regained, is the one true hero who fully embodies Milton's new and "better fortitude," the initiator of the heroic song. While the classical spirit hails human achievement for its own sake, Milton eulogizes in the Son the paradox that what is most often considered weak exemplifies greater spiritual strength--"By Humiliation and strong Sufferance:/ His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength" (Paradise Regained, I, 160-161). And in man Milton consolidates his view that genuine heroism is the exercise of moral magnanimity in the cosmic battle between good and evil. Edenic man knows that bliss is contingent upon his obedience, and fallen man, raising himself from the depths of despair, realizes that the pursuit of spiritual heroism coincides with his possession of "A paradise within... happier far" (PL, XII, 587).
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CHAPTER I: The Heroic Idol: "strength from Truth divided."

Fundamental to Milton's revolutionary vision of heroism in both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* is the controversial figure of Satan. Satan exemplifies the violent classical heroism futile in a Christian universe; this conflict between classical and Christian ethics has raised two major critical responses to Satan. First, as C.S. Lewis implies, Satan is a contemptible fool deserving divine laughter. Secondly, as A.J.A. Waldock suggests, he is the sole epic hero in an arena populated with insipid and ignoble characters. But Milton's depiction of Satanic energy defies the narrow and apparently mutually exclusive categories of "hero or fool" first defined by Sir Walter Raleigh. The title "fool" implies that Satan is intellectually inferior, which he is not, and the critical approach isolating his rebellious stance as the sole heroic activity in epics criticizing that very heroic convention is equally absurd. A discussion of the Satanic role in Milton's epic vision must consider the nature of the secondary epic where it is the poetic custom to delineate an older heroic ethos which the poet at once rejects. Satan, like Turnus of the *Aeneid*, displays a magnificent heroism which is, tragically, opposed to the laws of the universe and therefore morally foolish. The glorious antagonist of heaven in both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* embodies an outmoded heroic ethos and, in the poet's vision, this tragic hero is the moral fool. Milton unmistakably creates Satan as the embodiment of the classical ideal, underscoring the parallel portrait in direct allusion to "the wrath/Of stern Achilles" (*PL*, IX, 14-15), the "rage/ Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd" (IX, 16-17), and "Neptune's ire or Juno's" (IX, 18). Satan exhibits the combined martial prowess and egoistic wrath of an Achilles. He surpasses Odyssean deception in the accomplishment of his grand enterprise—the beguilement of innocent man. John M. Steadman even compares him to Aeneas concealing actual despair from his companions in an attempt to raise
their spirits, knowing his own high words to be false. But in the significance of his classical portrait Satan is closer to Turnus as the tragic anti-type of the espoused heroic ethos. And Milton chooses to sing an "Heroic Song" (IX, 25) which is "more Heroic" (IX, 14) than the combined violent rage of Satan's predecessors. Relegating classical martial valour to the level of fable, the unreal and insubstantial—

Not sedulous by Nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only Argument
Heroic deem'd, chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights
In Battles feign'd...

(IX, 27-31)

—Milton elevates rather "the better fortitude/ Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom [hitherto] Unsung" (IX, 31-33). In Satan's futile heroism Milton dispels the validity of "might" which is not subject to the character and will of divine beneficence. Satan is true to the classical heroic code where action is motivated by the love of secular glory, personal honour and pride, and, in Milton's universe this fidelity to the egotistical self is hell—as Satan exclaims, "Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell" (IV, 75). Satan is the parody of genuine heroism who bears only the "Semblance of worth, not substance" (I, 529), the demonic anti-hero self-raised "with calumnious Art/ Of counterfeited truth" (V, 770-771). As Steadman observes, Satan presents the fraudulent version of genuine heroism which finds its summation in the Son: in contradistinction to the Son's identity as the "True Image of the Father" (PR, IV, 596), Satan is the magnificent but infernal "Idol of Majesty Divine" (PL, VI, 101). Thus, in Paradise Lost, Milton orchestrates his epic vision in both the delineation of the futility of martial valour for its own sake and in Satan's tragic awareness of that futility.
In *Paradise Lost*, the moral deflation of Satanic heroism is woven into the very grandeur of his classical portrait. The fallen Arch-angel is "beyond/ Compare of mortal prowess" (I, 587-588), the epitome of conventional heroic ardour:

... he above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a Tow'r; his form had yet not lost
All her Original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than Arch-Angel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of Glory obscur'd ....

(I, 589-594)

Satan is the pre-eminent leader asserting himself "with Monarchal pride/
Conscious of highest worth" (II, 428-429), the seemingly invincible hero displaying the classical qualities "Of dauntless courage, and considerate Pride/ Waiting revenge" (I, 603-604). And Milton's usage of the extended epic simile depicts Satan's superior martial grandeur.

... the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose Orb
Through Optic Glass the Tuscan Artist views
At Ev'ning from the top of Pesole,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new Lands,
Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe.
His Spear, to equal which the tallest Pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the Mast
Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand,
He walkt with to support uneasy steps ....

(I, 283-295)

Determined to counter suffering by sheer endurance and the exercise of military might, the Arch-Angel in ruin cuts a glorious figure. He calls to his "Abject and lost" (I, 312) followers with a "General's Voice" (I, 338) "so loud, that all the hollow Deep/ Of Hell resound[s]" (I, 314-315):
"Princes, Potentates, / Warriors .... Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n" (I, 315-316, 330). But Milton's usage of the extended epic simile to portray also the malign nature of Satanic grandeur undercuts his heroic stance.

With Head up-lift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blaz'd, his other Parts besides
Prone on the Flood, extended long and large
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the Fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the Den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that Sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim th'Ocean stream:
Him haply slumb'ring on the Norway foam
The Pilot of some small night-founder'd Skiff,
Deeming some Island, oft, as Seamen tell,
With fixed Anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the Lee, while Night
Invests the Sea, and wished Morn delays ....

(I, 193-208)

As A.S.P. Woodhouse elaborates, Milton compares Satan's gigantic stature to beings who
are also the enemies of God, defeated and subject to punishment:
Briareus who, according to Virgil, strove against the thunderbolts; Typhon the serpent so huge that he reached the stars, but Zeus overcame and imprisoned him; Leviathan, called by Isaiah the serpent and dragon that is in the sea and said to be reserved for God's special vengeance, but more commonly thought of (and by Milton) as the whale.

Milton's classical hero is the Arch-deceiver, and those readers who see him as the sole epic hero in an arena populated with insipid and ignoble characters are like the deluded mariners mistaking the Sea-beast Leviathan for a protective island.

In the character of Satan, Milton deflates the classical vein of egocentric humanism. Satan extols to Beelzebub the heroic nature of his own rebelliousness—"that fixt mind/ And high disdain, from sense of injur'd merit,/ That with the mightiest rais'd me to contend" (I, 97-99)—and argues for the virtue of irreconcilable revenge:

What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?

(I, 105-109)

He assumes the role as the very antithesis of God, bent on a course of negative creativity counter to the moral order. Rejecting the weakness central to theocentric heroism, Satan confirms to Beelzebub his resolve to resist God with either violence or treachery.

... to be weak is miserable
Doing or Suffering: but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his Providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil ....

(I, 157-165)

Whereas the God of love protectively creates the universe, "as with a Mantle" (III, 110) investing life into chaos, Satan is motivated by malice "to confound the race/ Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell/ To mingle and involve" (II, 382-384), to rob man of his "blissful Seat" (I,5). But the fact that the egocentric energy which Satan prizes as his "Glory" (I, 110) is animated only by whatever resolution he may gain from despair (I, 191) condemns him. In a Christian universe, hellish glory is finally impotent: "Thir spite still serves/ His glory to augment" (II, 385-386). The reader experiences Satan "Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despair" (I, 126), and it is clear that the Arch-angel in ruin, both tragic and formidable, is engaged in a self-destructive enterprise.

Milton's invalidation of classical humanism is further underlined in the portrait of Satan endorsing the Romantic delusion that only the autonomous individual enjoys liberty. In the speech of his reconciliation to hell (I, 242-270), Satan voices an indomitable determination to overcome damnation itself, but his contradictory rhetoric undermines the assumed heroism. His opening words appear to assert a superlative example of classical courage:

Is this the Region, this the Soil, the Clime,
Said then the lost Arch-angel, this the seat
That we must change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so ....

... Farewell happy Fields
Where Joy for ever dwells: Hail horrors, hail
Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell

Receive thy new Possessor ....

(I, 242-245, 249-252)

Satan first distinguishes between "mournful gloom" and "celestial light," acknowledging the eternal loss of joy in exchange for the horrors of hell, then proceeds to a stoic embrace of doom. But his subsequent denial of this distinction between heaven and hell throws the heroic rhetoric into question. Satan eulogizes his presumption that the self is the centre of the universe, that personal liberty is the result of autonomy from God, and that moral laws are subject to the individual's will.

The mind is its own place, and in itself.

Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n ....

Here at least

We shall be free ...

Here we may reign secure, and in my choice

To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:

Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.

(I, 254-255, 258-259, 261-263)

But the euphoria generated by the rhetorician countering the "Universe of death...worse/ Than Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceived" (II, 622, 626-627) with classical humanism is short-lived. The self-declared master of his fate has already undercut his own argument, and his weak conclusion completes the process. The hell briefly embraced as the seat of a worthy empire is again referred to as "th'oblivious Pool" (I,266), "this unhappy Mansion" (1.268), and an irresolute Satan concludes the fraudulent heroic declaration by asking Beelzebub if they ought not "to try what may be yet/ Regain'd in Heav'n, or what more lost in Hell?" (I, 269-270) Satan thus attempts to assert the supremacy of his ego through a rhetorical equation of heaven and hell, but his own understanding of the moral universe deflates
the fierceness of his claim to "make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n."

Similarly, Satan invalidates his own argument on the individual's liberty in the war in heaven. In the speech calling his congregation to cast off the "Yoke" (V, 786) of submission, Satan argues that the introduction of the Son constitutes the beginning of a monarchy which would deprive angels of their rightful liberty. But in introducing the democratic argument Satan infuses hierarchical language, thus suggesting attractive equality while maintaining his own position. The lines "if not equal all, yet free,/ Equally free; for Orders and Degrees/ Jar not with liberty, but well consist" (V, 791-793) illustrate the deceptive language which, ironically, contradicts the rebellious argument. Again, Satan attacks the Son's rule in democratic language—"Who can in reason then or right assume/ Monarchy over such as live by right/ His equals" (V, 794-796)—while prudently protecting himself with the subclause "if in power and splendor less,/ In freedom equal?" (V, 796-797) The irony of Satan's argument on the preferable state of self-government is that the license to exercise power is always an idol, never the genuine liberty enjoyed by unfallen beings. As A.S.P. Woodhouse argues, the Romantic conclusion that Satan is the hero of *Paradise Lost* "obliterates Milton's oft-repeated distinction between liberty and license, his cherished principle that only the good can be truly free." And in Book VI, Abdiel voices the poet's view that rebellion is only a false liberty, that Satan suffers from enslavement to the ego:

This is servitude,
To serve th' unwise, or him who hath rebell'd
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralld'....

(II, 178-181)

Milton's ironic delineation of Satan's martial pre-eminence conveys his role as the fraudulent hero. The moral context of Satan's presentation as
the epitome of conventional ardour deflates his exalted portrait. As Stanley
Eugene Fish also observes, the subversion of the ideal of martial valour
begins as early as when Satan "Darts his experienc't eye" (I, 568) through
the armed files of his legions posing "in guise/ Of Warriors old"
(11. 564-565):

Thir number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and hard'ning in his strength
Glories: For never since created man,
Met such embodied force, as nam'd with these
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warr'd on by Cranes ....

(I, 571-576)

Satan's battalion surpasses the merit of "noblest temper Heroes old" who
"instead of rage/ Deliberate valor breath'd" (11. 552-554), but the reference
to classical heroes as "that small infantry/ Warr'd on by Cranes" (11. 575-
576) ridicules the distinction. In extending "that small infantry/ Warr'd
on by Cranes" (11. 575-576) by the subsequent catalogue of mythic and
historic heroes and armies, Milton dispels the very ideal of martial valour
in which Satan is pre-eminent.

... though all the Giant brood
Of Phlegra with th' Heroic Race were join'd
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixt with auxiliar Gods; and what resounds
In Fable or Romance of Uther's Son
Begirt with British and Armoric Knight;
And all who since, Baptiz'd or Infidel
Jousted in Aspramant or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his Peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess ....

(ll. 576-588)

Without exception, Milton relegates martial glory to the delusory stuff of "Fable or Romance" (l. 580). With one stroke, "Baptiz'd or Infidel" (1.582), he deflates even the aura of religious idealism surrounding warfare. The traditional use of the epic catalogue to eulogize military conquest serves here to invalidate the conventional ideal itself. The last item—"When Charlemain with all his Peerage fell" (1. 586)—shatters whatever grandeur these names may suggest to the reader: martial warfare is the texture of the fallen world, and its so-called glories can bring no genuine victory over the human condition. The fact that Satan's battalion ranks "beyond/Compare of mortal prowess" (ll.587-588) signifies their condemnation.

The poet reminds the reader that the Satanic empire founded on martial grandeur is merely a "God-like imitated State" (II, 511), a sham parodying divine glory. Pandemonium is a "Straw-built Citadel" (I, 773), a citadel that appears grand but is insubstantial, a fraudulent version of the grandeur of God's citadel and one that is inhabited by parodic angels who "to smallest forms/Reduc'd thir shapes immense" (I, 789-790). Here the infernal "Champions bold" (1. 763) are better compared to bees (1. 768) than awarded the laurels of epic heroes:

So thick the aery crowd
Swarm'd and were strait'n'd; till the signal giv'n
Behold a wonder! they but now who seem'd
In bigness to surpass Earth's Giant Sons
Now less than smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that Pigmean Race
Beyond the Indian Mount ....

(11. 775-781)

The apparent superiority of classical martial valour is, in Milton's universe, essentially trivial.

The comic deflation of infernal heroism at the end of Book I foreshadows the climactic metamorphosis in Book X. Like the "Pigmean Race" (I, 780) ignorant of the fraudulent nature of "Thir Straw-built Citadel" (I, 773), Satan ends his exultant narrative on the fall of man with the Son's curse:

True is, mee also he hath judg'd, or rather
Mee not, but the brute Serpent in whose shape
Man I deceiv'd ...

... I am to bruise his heel;

His Seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head:

A World who would not purchase with a bruise,

Or much more grievous pain?

(X, 494-496, 498-501)

He fails to realize though that the consequences of his pseudo-heroic exploit are not endurable pain but final damnation, and his erroneous expectation of "high applause" (X, 505) is best answered with the full irony of "A dismal universal hiss, the sound/ Of public scorn" (X, 508-509). In his involuntary degradation to "A Monstrous Serpent on his Belly prone" (X, 514), Satan experiences the implications of the curse he had failed to comprehend. And A.J.A. Waldock, arguing that Satan in Paradise Lost is a figure who does not degenerate but is degraded by the poetic method, charges Milton with manipulating this metamorphosis by using the technique of a "comic cartoon." But in Milton's ironic portrait of Satanic heroism, this metamorphosis is rather the successful comedy of poetic justice. Answering Waldock's complaint on the technique of a "comic cartoon," Steadman points out that the demonic disfigurement was a recurrent convention in Medieval and Renaissance art and
literature, arguing that Milton was actually innovative in delaying the transformation from the revolt until after the fall of man. Furthermore, Satan's final metamorphosis into a serpent "exposes his 'godlike' pretensions as false and his apparent heroism as brutishness;" the climactic penalty "represents Milton's condemnation of virtually the entire epic tradition, the final humiliation of the conventional heroic ideal." Satan's degeneration is the reverse of man's potential movement "From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit, From imposition of strict Laws, to free/ Acceptance of large Grace" (XII, 303-305): Satan exchanges the genuine freedom of man with God, thus falling from his original identity to a mere shadow of himself.

The folly of martial valour divorced from its moral centre is acutely evident in the war in heaven. As Raphael instructs Adam, it would be a mistake to interpret the war in heaven too literally. Raphael asks "how shall I relate/ To human sense th'invisible exploits/ Of warring Spirits" (V, 564-566), stating that his account is an accommodation of celestial events to the scope of human comprehension:

... yet for thy good
This is dispens't, and what surmounts the reach
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
By lik'ning spiritual to corporeal forms,
As may express them best, though what if Earth
Be but a shadow of Heav'n, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?
(V, 570-576)

Thus, the war in heaven should be read as a divine allegory where the meaning rather than the form is crucial. In this sense, Satan's grim classical warfare in a universe where strife is essentially spiritual is particularly ludicrous.

The comparative description of the celestial and rebellious armies at
the onset of the war in heaven underscores the ridiculous nature of the classical enterprise waged in a moral universe. The heavenly army, "Of Union irresistible" (VI, 63), advancing "In silence ... to the sound/ Of instrumental Harmony that breath'd/ Heroic Ardor" (ll. 64-66), is the portrait of eternal grandeur: victory is a counterpart of the genuine heroism serving "in the Cause/ Of God and his Messiah" (ll. 67-66). Against this, the "battailous aspect" (1. 81) of "The banded Powers of Satan hasting on/ With furious expedition" (ll. 85-86) illustrates sheer folly: the "boastful Argument" (1. 84) of physical violence aspiring against unchanging spiritual strength is misspent. Likewise, Satan's hope to imitate heavenly thunder invites a parodic comparison of his enterprise to omnipotence. The bombastic rhetoric and excessively inflated diction describing cannon warfare reflects the absurdity of Satan's stance:

... Which into hollow Engines long and round
Thick rammed, at th'other bore with touch of fire
Dilated and infuriate shall send forth
From far with thund'ring noise among our foes
Such implements of mischief as shall dash
To pieces, and o'erwhelm whatever stands
Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarm'd
The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.

(VI, 484-491)

With a general's sense, Satan attempts to raise courage in his followers:
"Meanwhile revive;/ Abandon fear; to strength and counsel join'd/ Think nothing hard, much less to be despair'd" (VI, 493-495). But the comedy of a self-raised general solely occupied with "Training his devilish Enginry, impal'd/ On every side with shadowing Squadrons Deep,/ To hide the fraud" (ll. 553-555) confirms his folly. Satan's adoption of the conventional "strife of Glory" (VI, 290) does not reap the expected victory. When he
confronts "the grisly terror" (II, 704) of Death at Hell's gates, wearing the menacing appearance worthy of an Aeneas—

Incens't with indignation Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a Comet burn'd,
That fires the length of Ophiucus huge
In th'Artic Sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes Pestilence and War.

(II, 707-711)

--the contest turns into a drama of self-awareness. The comic intrusion of Sin prevents Satan from exercising martial valour—"and now great deeds/ Had been achiev'd" (11. 722-723)—and the would-be hero is forced to recognize the "miscreated" (1. 683) foe as a mirror of himself, the ugliness of Sin as his "perfect image" (1. 764). This deflation of the classical contest also takes place in the encounter between Michael and Satan. Milton depicts the two as superlative examples of conventional heroism:

... for likest Gods they seem'd,
Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms
Fit to decide the Empire of great Heav'n.

(VI, 301-303)

The sight of these two gods like "Two Planets rushing from aspect malign/
Of fiercest opposition in mid Sky" (11. 313-314) elicits "expectation ... In horror" (11. 306-307). But the expectation of the individual deciding fate on the merit of his physical strength is not met. When Milton associates Michael's victory with divine power—"the sword/ Of Michael from the Armory of God/ Was giv'n him temper'd so, that neither keen/ Nor solid might resist that edge" (VI, 320-323)—he surpasses even the convention where the victor's success is due to Olympia's intervention. Here the potential glories of the physical combat become wholly irrelevant: Satan cannot conquer the moral order where battle is essentially spiritual. And the impotence of Satanic
heroism is further underlined in juxtaposition to Abdiel.

The force of Abdiel's singular faithfulness exposes Satan's fraudulent heroism. Abdiel is the solitary hero, "Among innumerable false, unmov'd/ Unshak'n, unseduc'd, unterrifi'd" (V, 898-899), constant in loyalty, love, and zeal (V, 900). He possesses a faith parallel to what Fish calls "an existential assurance of God's love," and is thus the positive counterpart to Satan. The adversary "thought himself impair'd" (V, 665) at the introduction of the Son, but Abdiel concludes from experience that the event is "bent rather to exalt" (V, 829) the angelic state. It is out of this unalterable assurance of divine beneficence that Abdiel voices the final doom awaiting Satan's self-imposed alienation: "Then who created thee lamenting learn,/ When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know" (V, 894-895). Abdiel fulfills the Son's command to "stand only" (VI, 810), and receives the praise awarded the righteous servant for having "fought/ The better fight ... Of Truth, in word mightier than they in Arms" (VI, 29-30, 32). This distinction between the superiority of truth against sheer violence is central to Milton's negation of classical heroism. The Father refers to the subsequent war in heaven as by far "the easier conquest" (VI, 37) in comparison to the test of solitary faithfulness. Abdiel understands that the spiritual victor necessarily succeeds in a physical contest:

... nor is it aught but just,
That he who in debate of Truth hath won,
Should win in Arms, in both disputes alike
Victor; though brutish that contest and foul,
When Reason hath to deal with force, yet so
Most reason is that Reason overcome.

(VI, 121-126)

And the figure of Satan raised on his "Royal seat ... Affecting all equality with God,/ In imitation of that Mount whereon/ Messiah was declar'd in sight
of Heav'n" (V, 756, 763-765), infusing unwary associates "with calumnious
Art/ Of counterfeited truth" (V, 770-771), is thus an idol of genuine heroism.
He exhibits the Miltonic principle that "strength from Truth divided"
(VI, 381) must fail. As Michael later relates to Adam, might for its own
sake is confused with "Valour and Heroic Virtue," but is only destruction,
never valid heroism (XI, 689-697). The appearance of the great Ensign of the
Messiah (VI, 775) on the third day of the war in heaven is emblematic of the
final defeat Satan must meet in a moral universe. Autonomous martial valour
disintegrates in the encounter with manifested Truth:

... they astonisht all resistance lost,
All courage; down thir idle weapons dropp'd ....
His arrows ....
... wither'd all thir strength,
And of thir wonted vigor left them drain'd,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n.

(VI, 838-839, 845, 850-852)

Furthermore, it is significant that the Son "meant/ Not to destroy, but root
them out of Heav'n" (VI, 854-855) and that the fallen angels "headlong them­
selves threw/ Down from the verge of Heav'n" (VI, 864-865). Satan's act of
rebellion is one of self-negation: the Son restores order to heaven, but
Satan himself embraces destiny.

Central to Milton's refutation of the classical heroic ideal in Paradise
Lost is Satan's consciousness of the torture that evil is. As Satan approaches
the climax of his enterprise in Eden, he experiences the intrinsic chaos of
his infernal condition—a psyche divided between unabated rage and debilitat­
ing despair.

Satan, now first inflam'd with rage, came down,
The Tempter ere th'Accuser of man-kind,
To wreck on innocent frail man his loss
Of that just Battle, and his flight to Hell:
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold,
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt, which nigh the birth
Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish Engine back recoils
Upon himself; horror and doubt distract
His troubl'd thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him, for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step no more than from himself can fly
By change of place: Now conscience wakes despair
That slumber'd, wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse: of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.

(IV, 9-26)

Here the narrator's voice links the rage characterizing classical heroes to the intrinsic vanity of Satan's odyssey. Satan is the victim of imprisoning egocentricity where he experiences the emptiness of his earlier boasts on the glory of autonomy from God. The initial heroic boast that "The mind is its own place, and in itself/ Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (I, 254-255) now takes on a tragic significance: the autonomous mind is no longer able to distinguish between heaven and hell because it is itself hell. Satan is the victim of a self-induced moral schizophrenia, the hell of conscious rebellion from which there is no escape. The fact that his choice to "wreck on innocent frail man his loss" (IV, 11) "like a devilish Engine back recoils/ Upon himself" (11. 17-18) illustrates the Miltonic vision of sin as the continuous act of suicide. As Jon S. Lawry comments,

For Satan, "recoil" identifies a warlike and war-engineering
pride that must return destructively upon its inventor's head, thereby identifying sin as a form of suicide and Hell itself as a perverse and helplessly vacant reflection of Heaven .... We scarcely notice that the immediate image or metaphor for Fall is that of war and "Battle proud" (I, 43), but it is well to fit that sense: any erroneous choice is direct warfare against both creativity and eternity, as well as a suicidal antagonistic "recoil" against the chooser. Similarly, M.M. Mahood describes hell as the concave mirror for heaven where good things are not excluded but perverted. And C.S. Lewis captures the tragedy of Satan's inner antithetical dilemma: "he has become more a Lie than a Liar, a personified self-contradiction." In the private portrait of Satan, the poet illustrates that infernal heroism necessarily "recoils" (I, 17) upon itself because it is the erroneous choice of warfare against both God and the created self, the very inversion of positive reality.

In the privacy of the soliloquy, Satan expresses existential consciousness of the horror of self-imprisonment. He experiences the consequent punishment of egocentric rebellion of which God says

... him who disobeys
Mee disobeys, breaks union, and that day
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness, deep ingulft, his place
Ordain'd without redemption, without end.

(V, 611-615)

And the glories of the created world enforce upon Satan the meaning of self-inflicted separation from God; his fallen lot is that "utter darkness, deep ingulft" of the psyche that coincides with rebellion and the eternal loss of the beatific vision. In his address to the sun on Mount Niphates, Satan voices the tortured conscience wakened by the beauties of the created world:
... to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name
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
Warring in Heav'n against Heav'n's matchless King:
Ah wherefore! he deserv'd no such return
From me, whom he created what I was ....

(IV, 35-43)

Here, in flat contradiction to earlier proud rhetoric, the warrior excelling all classical precedent admits he is guilty of a pseudo-heroism directed against a benevolent God. Awareness of a genuine heroism superior to his own "high disdain, from sense of injur'd merit" (I, 98) condemns him: "but other Powers as great/ Fell not, but stand unshak'n, from within/ Or from without, to all temptations arm'd" (IV, 63-65). Logic demands that Satan pursue this self-imposed trial: "Hadst thou the same free Will and Power to stand?/ Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse,/ But Heav'n's free Love dealt equally to all?" (IV, 66-68) But the infernal hero is unable to fulfill the demands of moral logic and, unlike man, undergoes the existential crisis of personal guilt without responding to awareness with repentance. Satanic consciousness is that limited scope of awareness which brings "No light, but rather darkness visible" (I, 63). Satan expresses the agony of a divided consciousness and, in his perverse reasoning, sentences himself to ego-centricity:

Be then his Love accurst, since love or hate
To me alike, it deals eternal woe.
Nay curs'd be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell ....

(IV, 69-75)

Similarly, upon entering the serpent, Satan voices tragic self-awareness of the extent of his depravity—tragic because he again isolates his moral guilt without transforming the consequent horror to repentance.

O foul descent! that I who erst contended
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd
Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the highth of Deity aspir'd;
But what will not Ambition and Revenge
Descend to? who aspires must down as low
As high he soar'd, obnoxious first or last
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long back on itself recoils;
Let it ....

(IX, 163-173)

He asks the incriminating question "But what will not Ambition and Revenge/Descend to?" and answers with the fatalism that the law of depravity precludes a reversal. He understands the vital principle that "Revenge ... back on itself recoils," but dismisses the sweeping implications of his moral argument in two fatal syllables—"Let it."

The tragedy of Satan's antithetical state is that the revelation of divine goodness serves only to renew his own hellishness. When on the threshold of Paradise, he courageously declares "all good to me becomes/ Bane" (IX, 122-123) in the best classical fashion, there is no voice to contradict him. He perceives the earth as a "Terrestrial Heav'n" (IX, 103), a world
signifying uninterrupted delight whose virtues are "all summ'd up in Man" (IX, 113), but his mind is truly that "hateful siege/ Of contraries" (IX, 121-122) where good is perceived but cannot be tasted. Satan is the victim of his own desire to substitute evil for good (IV, 110): pleasure is experienced as torment, Eden as hell, good as evil. It is in this dramatic conflict between infernal malice and a lingering sensitivity to good that the subsequent sight of Eve so transfixes the Archfiend: innocence divorces Satan from malice and he momentarily, significantly, becomes "Stupidly good" (IX, 465).

... her Heav'nly form

Angelic, but more soft, and Feminine,
Her graceful Innocence, her every Air
Of gesture or least action overaw'd
His Malice, and with rapine sweet bereav'd
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
That space the Evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remain'd
Stupidly good, of enmity disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge....

(IX, 457-466)

The power of the divine image in Eve's person brings about the miracle of momentarily separating Satan from the hell that is his fallen self. It is this drama of Satan standing "Stupidly good" (1. 465) before Eve, and then forcibly recollecting "Fierce hate" (1. 471), which captures the moral conflict in Paradise Lost. As G. Rostrevor Hamilton observes, Satan undergoes "the conflict between love, which delights in deriving from someone else and ultimately from God, and pride or self-love, which clamours for personal independence." Satan in Paradise Lost is the tragic anti-type, both hero and fool, whose erroneous belief that hatred is stronger than love...
(IX, 489-493) locks him into a pseudo-heroic stance vainly opposed to the benevolent order of the universe.

Satan of *Paradise Regained* is a different antagonist from the figure in *Paradise Lost*, just as the "begotten Son" (PL, III, 80) in whom "all his Father shone" (1. 139) is not the equivalent of "th'exalted man" (PR, I, 36), but the continuity of Milton's epic vision invites comparison. In *Paradise Regained*, the aura of grandeur surrounding classical heroism is dispelled in a delineation of spiritual ineptitude. In this brief epic, the attractiveness of Satan in the early books of *Paradise Lost* gives way to an inglorious portrait of the infernal mind: throughout *Paradise Regained*, Satan subconsciously discloses the intrinsic spiritual weakness only thinly veiled by the sham glories of the classical heroic enterprise. The Romantic rebel degenerating into moral schizophrenia throughout *Paradise Lost* exhibits here a riotous psyche divided by envy, fear, rage, and sheer desperation—a presumptuous energy exhausting itself against the profounder mind of Christ. As Northrop Frye says of this epic, "Satan, who seems so lively and resourceful, is the power that moves toward the cessation of all activity, a kind of personal entropy that transforms all energy into a heat-death." In *Paradise Regained*, the portrait of Satan attempting to discover the nature of Christ's sonship by tempting him with secular versions of the messianic role conveys the Miltonic vision that the old era of sheer violence must collapse before the advent of Truth incarnate.

Satan's aspirations towards glorious heroism in *Paradise Regained* are undercut from the outset. In contrast to the courageous general prudently concealing fear and doubt from the public eye in *Paradise Lost*, Satan in *Paradise Regained* freely discloses well-grounded fears to the infernal council. After witnessing Christ's baptism "With wonder, then with envy fraught and rage" (I, 38), the would-be hero escapes to report his overwhelming sense of doom.
Long the decrees of Heav'n
Delay, for longest time to him is short;
And now too soon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compast, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long threat'n'd wound,
At least so if we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infring'd ...
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, displaying
All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.

(I, 55-62, 66-69)

Then Satan seizes the opportunity to exploit their awakened sense of
danger for the familiar purpose of self-exaltation.

Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
Not force, but well couch't fraud, well woven snares ....
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam, and the exploit perform'd
Successfully; a calmer voyage now
Will waft me; and the way found prosperous once
Induces best to hope of like success.

(I, 94-97, 100-105)

But in contrast to the monarch offering "Deliverance" (PL, II, 465) from
hell, Satan's attempt to conjure a majestic image is unconvincing. His
publication of fear undermines his credibility as a hero in the classical
mode. And his easy admission of the fraudulent nature of his enterprise—
"Not force, but well couch't fraud, well woven snares" (PR, I, 97)—is
indicative of a defeated hero having given up on the original intent to prove
equality, if not superiority, to God. Satan recalls his past expedition to
Eden in heroic terms, but his own description of the "ruin" of Adam and the
successful "exploit perform'd" (l. 103) acts rather as an indictment. His
allusion to the "dismal expedition" (l. 101) is intended to bolster his
image but, ironically, signifies a tragic event where the ensuing suffering
is most felt by the seducer. Satan ends his resolution to beguile Christ
with the necessary "hope of like success" (l. 105), but this adherence to
heroic form is the crowning irony of his transparently ludicrous stance.

The ineptitude of Satan against his enemy is evident in the antithetical
rhetoric following the failure of the first temptation. While his disguise
as "an aged man in Rural weeds" (I, 314) is perfectly acceptable in Odysseus'
world, it is folly in the encounter with Truth incarnate, and Satan's sub­
sequent speech illustrates his awareness of that folly. A foiled Satan
wavers between bemoaning his misery, describing himself as "that Spirit
unfortunate" (I, 358) who exchanged heaven's bliss for "the bottomless deep...
that hideous place" (ll. 361-362), and boasting over his "Large liberty"
(l. 365) as usurper. Contradicting his earlier boast to the council over the
successful ruin of man (I, 100-105), Satan denies the validity of his indict­
ment as "foe/ To all mankind" (I, 387-388), preferring the generous title
"Copartner" (l. 392). Then Satan invalidates the just self-drawn portrait of
liberty by admitting that while he may have sought man as a companion to
misery, he now has learned that shared pain is "Small consolation" (l. 403)
when the companion is eligible for a restoration he has excluded himself
from. Satan's words illustrate the dilemma of self-imprisonment, and Christ
answers his speech by echoing Satan's own lament in Paradise Lost that "all
good to me becomes/ Bane" (IX, 122-123). Christ judges Satan as "a poor
miserable captive thrall ... now depo's d, / Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd, / A spectacle of ruin or of scorn" (PR, I, 411, 413-415) who is "never more in Hell than when in Heaven" (1. 420).

The drama of Satan's encounter with the Nazarene lies in the ambiguity as to how far he comprehends the identity of "th' exalted man" (I, 36). Significantly, Satan associates the arrival of Christ with the execution of "that fatal wound" (I, 53), the curse pronounced upon him following the fall of man. Unlike his initial reduction of the Son's curse to endurable pain (PL, X, 494-496, 498-501), Satan now undermines his own rebellious determination by voicing the likelihood of imminent defeat. But at the same time "the Adversary" (1. 33) appears unaware of the full import of Christ's baptism, distinguishing between the Son he encountered in the war in heaven and this unknown enemy.

His first begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep;
Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
(PR, I, 89-93)

Later, relying on the familiar delusion that a spirit of heaven cannot lose his station (PL, II, 687), Satan counters Christ's title as the Son of God with the assertion that the title is not restricted to the singular sense, and that he is himself a Son of God. The illogical nature of Satan's assertion is evident in his irresolute diction:

... thou art call'd
The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
The Son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was, I am; relation stands;
All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought.
In some respect far higher so declar'd.

(IV, 516-521)

In his characteristic manner, Satan declares equality with Christ, checks the presumption by adding the past tense, and then weakly returns to the assertion—"And if I was, I am" (I, 519). And in a democratic spirit, Satan briefly includes man under the title, then immediately contradicts himself by reassuming the suspicion that Christ occupies a more august station. Of course, Satan never was the Son of God, not even as the superior Arch-angel, and his confused rhetoric betrays the pretense. D.C. Allen argues that the ignorance Satan persists in is not doubt over the identity of his opposite, but over his own failing powers as a corrupter. He insists that Satan is not so much uncertain as he is afraid, and that he uses insincere uncertainty as an implement of seduction intended to establish self-distrust in his opponent. Christ's belief that Satan hides his recognition of him as the Messiah—"Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,/ Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?" (I, 355-356)—supports Allen's view that Satan is feigning ignorance in order to raise Christ's "distrust" in his own identity. However, it is not ever clear that Satan consciously recognizes Christ as the sole begotten Son of God incarnate. Certainly Satan is aware of Christ's godlike virtues, but intense fear confused with ambitious classical aspirations precludes discernment. The conflict between what is perhaps Satan's subconscious awareness of Christ's identity and his apparent ignorance of the full implications of this discernment sustains the drama of his foolish enterprise in Paradise Regained.

Satan's temptations of Christ with the lures of selfish classical heroism illustrate his inability to fathom the depths of Christ's mind. Satan is "the importune Tempter" (II, 404), both persistent and unfit, who vacillates between his conviction of defeat and desperate attempts to alter the course of imminent doom. After the failure of the first temptation
urging Christ to perform the miracle of turning stones into bread, Satan acknowledges Christ's exalted mind and fears he may be "overmatch'd" (II, 146):

If he be Man by Mother's side at least
With more than human gifts from Heav'n adorn'd,
Perfections absolute, Graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest Deeds.

(II, 136-139)

He thus rebukes Belial's suggestion to lure Christ with physical lust, insisting that "one look from his Majestic brow,/ Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill" (II, 216-217) would nullify the seductive powers of female beauty. But while Satan thus reasons that Adam's weakness is not Christ's, he repeats the context of Eve's fall by tempting a famished Christ with a sumptuous feast, only to admit later that his "temperance invincible ... no allurement yields to appetite" (II, 408-409). Failing to move Christ, the cumulative effect of Satan's temptations illustrates the folly of tempting spiritual strength with the sham glories of selfish and ambitious materialism.

Much of Satan's energy is devoted to redirecting Christ's future with the appeal to the necessity of public fame. Ridiculing the lowliness of Christ's station as carpenter, the tempter insists that "Great acts require great means of enterprise;/ Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth.... Money brings Honor, Friends, Conquest, and Realms" (II, 412-413, 422). He shuns Christ's obscure, "private" (III, 232) life, insisting that the lack of public experience leaves the wisest man "Timorous and loth, with novice modesty ... Irresolute, unhardy, unadvent'rous" (III, 241, 243), and, citing historical examples, attempts to inflame the Messiah with the thirst for secular glory (III, 31-43). Satan's appeal that Christ fulfill messianic prophecy by becoming a political ruler is a timely temptation, one fully in accordance with the expectations of contemporary devout Jewry:
If Kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And Duty ....
Zeal of thy Father's house, Duty to free
Thy Country from her Heathen servitude;
So shalt thou best fulfill, best verify
The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign,
The happier reign the sooner it begins.

(III, 171-172, 175-179)

Satan then embellishes this appeal by offering military superiority in the best classical vein: "Thou on the Throne of David in full glory,/ From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond/ Shalt reign, and Rome or Caesar not need fear" (III, 383-385). Failing to comprehend Christ's complete rejection of classical epic values, Satan insists that spirituality is weakness—"Virtue, Valor, Wisdom sit in want" (II, 431)—and enforces the temptation with the assertion that greatness can only be realized in a political conquest of the entire world: "The Kingdoms of the world to thee I give ... On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,/ And worship me as thy superior Lord" (IV, 163, 166-7). Satan's bold words illustrate a myopic egocentricity which is indeed "overmatch'd" by the theocentric hero.

Christ's rebuttal of Satanic rhetoric aggravates the conflict between Satan's subconscious awareness of Christ's identity and his ignorance of the implications. Christ counters Satan's argument that "Virtue, Valor, Wisdom sit in want" (II, 431) with the insight that "Wealth without these three is impotent/ To gain dominion or to keep it gain'd" (II, 433-434), and deflates materialistic presumption with the view that riches are "the toil of Fools" (II, 453), golden in appearance only (II, 459-462). Satan's offer of fame through the wisdom of Greece is rejected as another empty pursuit: Christ reduces secular knowledge to Plato's discernment of final ignorance (IV, 293-294) and, moreover, rejects the intrinsic egocentricity of pagan philosophers
(IV, 314-315). The Nazarene exposes Satan's idolatry of classical glory by juxtaposing the genuine glory central to God's character, echoed in his servants, and Satan is silenced, "struck/ With guilt of his own sin" (III, 146-147). Satan's encounter with truth convicts him of folly, and the reader repeatedly sees him standing "A while as mute confounded what to say,/ What to reply, confuted and convinc't/ Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift" (III, 2-4), a self-defeated figure forcibly "collecting all his Serpent wiles" (III, 5) to renew the vain assault. While Satan senses and fears Christ's godlike nature, his self-imprisonment precludes full comprehension. Satan, directing energy to convince Christ to assume secular leadership, is wholly unaware of the irony that Christ's fulfillment of the command to reign must be his doom. Christ asks,

Why art thou

Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition?

Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,

And my promotion will be thy destruction?

(III, 199-202)

And Satan's answer echoes the desperate heroism of *Paradise Lost* (IV, 108-110): "Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost/ Of my reception into grace; what worse?/ For where no hope is left, is left no fear"

(III, 204-206). But here his attempt to raise victorious courage only underlines the awareness of his own fraudulence. The bold renunciation of fear collapses first into self-condemnation (11. 212-215), then into the hope that Christ's meekness would be a relief from God's wrath (11. 215-222). Satan's rhetoric is deflated against the unchanging spirituality of the Nazarene and, exasperated, Satan rejects Christ's fitness for this world:

Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts,

Kingdom nor Empire pleases thee, nor aught

By me propos'd in life contemplative,
Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,
What dost thou in this World? The Wilderness
For thee is fittest place ....

(IV, 368-373)

Satan is the prisoner of his tortured conscience, the parodic deceiver who
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dash't, th' assault renew,
Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end;
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.

(IV, 13-24).

His caustic denial of Christ's kingdom is the embittered voice of one
denying the existence of worlds beyond his range of vision while feeling
threatened by the same suggestion of their existence.

A Kingdom they portend thee, but what Kingdom,
Real or Allegoric I discern not
Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefixt
Directs me in the Starry Rubric set.

(IV, 389-393)

Satan's inner conflict culminates in his attempt to overcome the "fatal
enemy" (IV, 525) by placing him on the highest pinnacle of the temple in
Jerusalem. Here Christ fulfills his earlier prophecy that he is the "living Oracle" (I, 460) who will silence Satan's false oracular powers. Satan gives Christ the ironic command to stand, unaware that the standing Messiah presages his own defeat.

But Satan smitten with amazement fell
As when Earth's Son Antæus (to compare
Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides ...
Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall.
And as that Theban Monster that propos'd
Her riddle, and him who solv'd it not, devour'd,
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from th' Ismenian steep,
So struck with dread and anguish fell the Fiend .... 

(IV, 562-565, 571-576)

Deceptive classical heroism collapses with the advent of superior spirituality: Satan's fraudulent rhetoric, "dark/ Ambiguous and with double sense deluding" (I, 434-435), ceases in the face of Truth incarnate. As Oedipus overcame the riddle of the Sphinx with the answer, "Man," so Christ silences Satanic falsehood with the heroism of theocentric humanism. Satan in Paradise Regained, the advocate of egocentric classical heroism, is "The Tempter foil'd/ In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't" (I, 5-6).

Thus, the egocentricity underlying Satanic energy in both Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained jars against the heroic song in Milton's universe. Satan's classical heroic stance is an aberration from the drama where true action is moral action: evil is a parody of genuine action, "the surrendering of the power to act" and the defectiveness of inertia itself. 20 As Milton asserts in De Doctrina Christiana, evil is the privation of positive creativity:
It is called actual sin, not that sin is properly an action, for in reality it implies defect; but because it commonly consists in some act. For every act is in itself good; it is only its irregularity, or deviation from the line of right, which properly speaking is evil.  

In the heroic idol of these two works, the poet illuminates both the superficial attractions of evil and its essential destructiveness, thus identifying the anti-heroic strain opposing his epic song. But this identification of Satan is not easy; rather, Milton poses in this character the hard task of discernment in a fallen world. As Lawry argues,

It is a clever mistake to believe that Milton was of the devil's party without knowing it; on the contrary, he wants us to know, fully, that it is we who have been of the devil's party without knowing it. The relationship of Milton to us resembles that of Michael to Adam. We must experience choice, including the choice of error, and recognize the portion of Hell that is where we are—for Milton's Hell is often similar to the City of Men at its best .... We must share Satan's prideful sin and fall before we, as fallible human creatures, can properly comprehend the approaching "great Argument" of divinity.

The poet thrusts the reader into a world where "the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labor to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixed." The reader is actively engaged in the difficult and continuous process of moral choice, alternately attracted and repulsed by Satanic glory, and only after knowing evil is he ready to envision good. Of course, this delineation of the problem of moral choice in Satan runs the risk that the reader will remain in the narrow confines of the "hero or
fool" dilemma; even the great advocate of intellectual liberty considers that "perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil." But, for Milton, the problem of moral choice is inevitable: it is only consciousness of Satan's deficiency that prepares the reader for comprehension of the true image of heroism.
CHAPTER II: The Heroic Image: "His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength."

The opening lines of Paradise Lost promise the advent of "one greater Man" (1.4) who will "Restore ... and regain the blissful Seat" (1.5) lost by Adam. This is the Messiah "in Adam's room/ The Head of all mankind, though Adam's Son" (III, 285-286), the one whom the poet eulogizes both as "the mighty Pan" (1.89) in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," and as the "Most perfect Hero" (1.93) in "The Passion." In the Son in Paradise Lost, and in the incarnate Son, Christ, in Paradise Regained, Milton embodies the antithesis of the classical heroic spirit. While the classical spirit hails human achievement for its own sake, Milton celebrates in the Messiah the paradox that what is most often considered weak exemplifies greater spiritual strength--"By Humiliation and strong Sufferance:/ His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength" (PR, I, 160-161). The Son is the very emblem of the poet's new and "better fortitude/ Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom/ [hitherto] Unsung" (PL, IX, 31-33). Satan poses for the reader the difficult problem of moral choice, but the Son presents the true image of heroism, an answer so revolutionary that it is described as "Above Heroic" (PR, I, 15). Now the obvious problem with the poet's delineation of the Messiah as the representation of heroism lies with how praiseworthy heroism is in a figure who is wholly divine in one work, and semi-divine in the other. The feeling is that human heroes prove grandeur by raising themselves above their ordinary, fallible stature, while gods acting out inherent grandeur prove nothing which we do not already know. But Milton's rejection of the conventional praise of the egocentric human hero in favour of the divine suits the theocentric heroism he introduces. The Son's glorification as the perfect hero does not deny man's central role in Paradise Lost; rather, the Son embodies the sacrificial love offered in submission to the Father which man learns to echo. In Paradise Regained, Christ's rejection of the superficial rewards of classical heroism represents the superior spirituality
which Adam and Eve embrace in the "paradise within ... happier far" (PL, XII, 587). Christ is the emblem of theocentric heroism, the image which man may choose to reflect. Thus, it would be erroneous to go as far as Northrop Frye when he concludes that the Son is finally the sole actor or hero in Paradise Lost. If Christ were the sole hero in Paradise Lost, then the object of his heroism--to inspire similar magnanimity in man--would be lost. But he is in both Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained the perfect image of true heroism, the counterpoint to parodic grandeur in Satan, and the source of divine beneficence which man reflects.

The reader first encounters the Son in Paradise Lost when he responds to the Father's anticipation of man's fall. God argues extensively that man was created a free agent, "just and right, /Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (III, 98-99), one who logically deserves the loss he himself "decreed" (1. 116) and "ordain'd" (1. 128). The amplification of prevailing mercy ending God's speech appropriately introduces the Son:

... Man therefore shall find grace,
... in Mercy and Justice both,
Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glory excel,
But Mercy first and last shall brightest shine.

(11. 131-134)

The Son is the "radiant image" of his Father's glory (1. 63), the figure who makes visible (1. 386) the perfect charity defining God's nature:

Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious, in him all his Father shone
Substantially express'd, and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appear'd,
Love without end, and without measure Grace ....

(11. 138-142)

The chiasmus in "Love without end, and without measure Grace" expresses the
unfathomable spiritual light which generates "in the blessed Spirits elect/
Sense of new joy ineffable diffus'd" (11. 136-137). And the form of the
Son's first speech confirms the charity defining his character. The Son
begins by extolling the Father's gracious sentence towards man (11. 144-149),
and then ensures the given promise of mercy with three related rhetorical
questions. First, he poses the probable tragic consequence of man's fall:

For should Man finally be lost, should Man
Thy creature late so lov'd, thy youngest Son
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd.
With his own folly?

(11.150-153)

In contrast to the Father's title for man as "ingrate" (1. 97), the Son
emphasizes the frailty of the "youngest Son," the defencelessness of one
beloved of the Father who is outwitted by the adversary. He then answers his
own question with the emphatic statement that mercy is the counterpart of
divine justice: "that be from thee far,/ That far be from thee, Father, who
art Judge/ Of all things made, and judgest only right" (11. 153-155).
Second, the Son stresses the horrific victory of Satan over goodness in the
event that God's mercy should fail to save man.

Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
His end, and frustrate thine, shall he fulfil
His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught,
Or proud return though to his heavier doom,
Yet with revenge accomplish't and to Hell
Draw after him the whole Race of mankind,
By him corrupted?

(11. 156-162)

The logical incompatibility of irredeemable tragedy and omnipotence is also
expressed in the third question: "or wilt thou thyself/ Abolish thy Creation,
and unmake/ For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?" (11.162-164) He answers the last questions with the assertion that fallen man unredeemed would deny both God's beneficence and omnipotence: "So should thy goodness and thy greatness both/ Be question'd and blasphem'd without defense" (11. 165-166). The Son's strategic rhetoric supports the argument for salvation over and against the logic of the free agent choosing his own damnation, and he thus establishes himself as the guarantor of divine mercy.

The Son embodies the active mercy of God, and his offer to fulfill the messianic mission signifies his identity as the true image of heroism in Paradise Lost. In qualifying the agreement that "Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will" (III, 173), the Father stresses the need for justice which makes love itself meaningful.

... He with his whole posterity must die,
Die hee or Justice must; unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
Say Heav'nly Powers, where shall we find such love,
Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
Man's mortal crime, and just th'unjust to save,
Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?

(III, 209-216)

This call for a willing saviour parallels Beelzebub's question in hell, "whom shall we find/ Sufficient?" (II, 403-404), and we are meant to compare Satan, "rais'd ... with Monarchal pride/ Conscious of highest worth" (II, 427-429), to the humility of the Son. Satan offering "Deliverance" (II, 465) to his fellow rebels is a parodic foil to the Son piercing the silence in heaven with "the fulness ... of love divine" (III, 225):

Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life
I offer, on mee let thine anger fall;
Account mee man; I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well pleas'd, on me let Death Wreck all his rage ....

(Ill, 236-241)

The caesuras in line 236 accentuate the climactic offer to substitute self for man, and the "fall" ending line 237 stresses the severity of divine wrath which he will expose himself to. In contrast to Satanic egocentricity, the repetition of "mee" and "I" here orchestrates the Son's free sacrifice of his own life in order to make grace possible. The Son expresses in these lines the new and "better fortitude/ Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom" (IX, 312-313): subordination to the universal principle of love supersedes egocentric enterprise. The Son's heroic martyrdom is so potent that even in silence his charity reverberates throughout all of heaven:

His words here ended, but his meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breath'd immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience: as a sacrifice
Glad to be offer'd, he attends the will
Of his great Father.

(Ill, 266-271)

The Son appoints himself as the priestly "Intercessor" (XI, 19) interpreting man's mute sighs (1. 31), offering to God the fruits of contrition which are "of more pleasing savor" (1.26) than all man could have produced in Edenic innocence. He addresses the Father:

Now therefore bend thine ear
To supplication, hear his sighs though mute;
Unskilful with what words to pray, let mee
Interpret for him, mee his Advocate
And propitiation, all his works on mee
Good or not good ingraft, my Merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my Death shall pay.

(XI, 30-36)
The iteration of "mee" again resounds with sacrificial love. The syntactical parallel of "my Merit" and "my Death" underscores the heroic ethos where martyrdom is the mark of genuine grandeur. In contradistinction to Satan's rebellion "from sense of injur'd merit" (I, 98), the Son forsakes "all to save/ A world from utter loss" (III, 307-308), and proves himself "By Merit more than Birthright Son of God" (I. 309). And the Father's distinction of his begotten Son as the worthiest image of himself echoes the heroism centered in self-less love:

... in thee
Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds,
Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt
With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne ....

(11. 311-314)
The Son is the exalted hero illustrating the paradoxical humiliation which is stronger than self-glorification, and his example reverberates throughout Paradise Lost.

The climactic syntax in the Father's acceptance of the Son's offer exclaims the future victory:

So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for Man, be judg'd and die,
And dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brether, ransom'd with his own dear life.

(III, 294-297)
The last important word in one clause is repeated as the first important word in the next, and the effect of succeeding clauses arranged in a rising order
of importance is to celebrate the triumph where "Heav'nly love shall outdo Hellish hate" (1. 298). This is the glory coinciding with the Son's future incarnation as "Virgin Seed" (1. 284). But, as Charles Williams comments, it is significant that Milton did not choose any such august title as the metaphorical meaning of Seed—the triumphant Christ—choosing rather to focus on the simple literal meaning. When Eve says "By mee the Promis'd Seed shall all restore" (XII, 623), the reader does not picture the devoted, self-abandoned Son glorious in the war in heaven; instead, he is confronted with an intimate smallness that is almost invisible. The Son's coming grandeur appears diminutive in comparison to Satanic energy: spiritual heroism overthrows the classical categories of strength and weakness.

The Son's embodiment of the true image of heroism is also evident in his role as the judge of fallen man. As the Father says, the Son's role as "Vicegerent" (X, 56) of divine justice illustrates the reciprocal relation of justice and mercy:

Easy it may be seen that I intend
Mercy colleague with Justice, sending thee
Man's friend, his Mediator, his design'd
Both Ransom and Redeemer voluntary,
And destin'd Man himself to judge Man fall'n.

(X, 58-62)

The Son fully identifies himself with his chosen messianic destiny, and embarks on the task conscious that the burden of sin must fall on himself. He answers the Father, "I go to judge/ On Earth these thy transgressors, but thou know'st,/ Whoever judg'd, the worst on mee must light" (X, 71-73). The Messiah is the "mild Judge and Intercessor" (1. 96), at once "both Judge and Savior" (1. 209) who

... disdain'd not to begin

Thence forth the form of servant to assume,
As when he wash'd his servants' feet, so now
As Father of his Family he clad
Thir nakedness with Skins of Beasts ...
Nor hee thir outward only with the Skins
Of Beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his Robe of righteousness,
Arraying cover'd from his Father's sight.

(11. 213-217, 220-223)

The Son exemplifies even as judge the humility and magnanimity defining the poet's heroic ethos. He meets man as a "pitying" (1. 211) father concerned for the needs of his defenceless children. The act of clothing Adam and Eve's physical nakedness is emblematic of the greater work of covering spiritual nakedness, and, significantly, the extension of the Son's righteousness to man is not referred to as a future event, but one which takes place alongside the judgment. The Son's defining characteristic is sacrificial charity, and his powers are eternal. And Adam recognizes his judge as the archetypal hero. When Adam responds to Eve's attempts at reconciliation with love, he associates the merciful example of the Son with his own newly acquired understanding of penitence.

Remember with what mild
And gracious temper he both heard and judg'd
Without wrath or reviling ....
... his timely care
Hath unbesought provided, and his hands
Cloth'd us unworthy, pitying while he judg'd ....
What better can we do, than to the place
Repairing where he judg'd us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent, and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears ...
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

(X, 1046-1048, 1057-1059, 1086-1089, 1092)

The Son is the precedent for heroic martyrdom from whom Adam takes his example. Later Adam learns from Michael of the sacrifice of Christ, and internalizes the heroic stance based on obedience to God:

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God ...
Taught this by his example whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.

(XII, 561-562, 572-573)

Furthermore, the Son's creation of the universe manifests the beneficence central to his heroic stance. He is the all-creating Logos, "th' Omnific Word" (VII, 217), who infuses disorder with the superior power of divine charity. The poet delineates the Son as the epitome of spiritual strength, the summation of creativity in contradistinction to the inferior annihilative force of Satan's classical heroism.

... Meanwhile the Son

On his great Expedition now appear'd,
Girt with Omnipotence, with Radiance crown'd
Of Majesty Divine, Sapience and Love
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.

(VII, 192-196)

The numberless throng accompanying his chariot, supported with "Celestial Equipage" (1. 203) from "the Armory of God" (1. 200), signifies the theocentric spirituality superior to egocentric rage. The classical imagery is transcended by an omnipotence infused with "Sapience and Love/ Immense." The archetypal hero is the same figure who exercises universal order. The very "Harmonious sound" (1. 206) of heaven's gates opening "On golden Hinges moving" (1. 207)
announces the reign of the Son fulfilling the Father's will, and this contrasts ironically with the antiheroic Satan requiring Sin's agreement to unbolt the gates of hell:

... on a sudden op'n fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound.
Th'infernal doors, and on thir hinges grate
Harsh Thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus.

(II, 879-883)

For Satan, chaos is a "wild Abyss" (II, 917), "a universal hubbub wild/ Of stunning sounds and voices all confus'd/ Borne through the hollow dark ... With loudest vehemence" (II, 951-954), an abyss through which he can travel only "with difficulty and labor hard" (I, 1021). In contrast, the Son views "the vast immeasurable Abyss/ Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild" (VII, 211-212), imposes order on confusion--"Silence, ye troubl'd waves, and thou Deep, peace ... your discord end" (II, 216-217)--and chaos adheres to his authority. The subsequent act of the Spirit of God infusing recipient chaos with "vital virtue" (I, 236), downward purging "The black tartareous cold Infernal dregs/ Adverse to life" (II, 238-239) is parallel to the Messiah restoring moral order in the fallen world. The Son fulfills the principle that "to create/ Is greater than created to destroy" (II, 606-607), and the narrator, echoing the angelic praise of creation, asserts the indomitable power of good over evil:

Who seeks
To lessen thee, against his purpose serves
To manifest the more thy might: his evil
Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.

(II, 613-616)

Man falls from innocence but the beneficence of the Son, evident in the
creation, creates greater good from evil.

The appearance of the great Ensign of the Messiah (VI, 775) on the third day of the war in heaven signifies the final deflation of classical heroism. The equal foes "War wearied hath perform'd what War can do,/ And to disorder'd rage let loose the reins" (11. 695-696) and, as in the classical epic, only divine intervention can obtain a resolution. But the Son does not simply grant one army a martial victory. Rather, his entrance into the war announces the true heroism where superior spirituality quells martial fury. When the Son ends the war, war itself is defeated.

And the Son's response to the Father's decree that he drive out Satan's army expresses that submissiveness which coincides with genuine heroic glory.

O Father, O supreme of heav'nly Thrones,
First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st
To glorify thy Son, I always thee
As is most just; this I my Glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That thou in me well pleas'd, declar'st thy will
Fulfill'd, which to fulfil is all my bliss.
(11. 723-729)

The Son understands that "to obey is happiness entire" (1. 741), and that submission is the paradoxical means to glory, exaltation and delight. He agrees to exercise the role of victor, but with the distinction that he does not identify himself with the role. Whether he expresses terror or mildness, power or weakness, the Son is identifiable by his obedience to the Father.

Sceptre and Power, thy giving, I assume
And gladlier shall resign when in the end
Thou shalt be All in All, and I in thee
For ever, and in mee all whom thou lov'st;
But whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on
Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,
Image of thee in all things ....

(11. 730-736)

The movement from "I" to "Thou," and "mee to "thee" conveys the unbroken harmony of divine love where strict hierarchy is transcended in the greater unity. The relationship between Father and Son is one of reciprocal glorification where each seeks to glorify the other.

Moreover, the extent of the Son's deflation of classical heroism corresponds to the nature of the poet's classical allusions to the Son's own person. Is the Son not simply a more powerful military force? the reader might ask. The poet's allusion to the vision of Ezekiel rests on this question.

... forth rush'd with whirl-wind sound,
The Chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, Wheel within Wheel, undrawn,
Itself instinct with Spirit, but convoy'd
By four Cherubic shapes, four Faces each
Had wondrous, as with Stars thir bodies all
And Wings were set with Eyes, with Eyes the Wheels
Of Beryl, and careering Fires between ....
Hee in Celestial Panoply all arm'd
Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
Ascended, at his right hand Victory
Sat Eagle-wing'd, beside him hung his Bow
And Quiver with three-bolted Thunder stor'd,
And from about him fierce effusion roll'd
Of smoke and bickering flame, and sparkles dire;
Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
He onward came ....

(VI, 749-756, 760-768)
As I have indicated in Chapter One, the war in heaven should be read as a divine allegory where the meaning and not the form is crucial. The classical implications of the Son as martial victor, charioted and hurling thunder, are undercut by the meaning of his wrath. This wrath is the counterpart of heaven's laughter at "injur'd merit": "Love laughs at anti-love," and divine justice drives out its "impious Foes" (1. 831). Like the Son's chariot,"The Chariot of Paternal Deity ... instinct with Spirit" (11. 750-752) announces the victory of Truth over the futile machinations of Satan. It is significant that the Son's role in the war in heaven is the manifestation of his identity as the Messiah, God's "annointed King" (1. 718), the "worthiest ... Heir/ Of all things" (11. 707-708). His triumph on the third day of the war is emblematic of the final triumph over sin and death in the resurrection. The great Ensign of the Messiah (1. 775) symbolizes the infinite superiority of theo-centric spirituality over "strength from Truth divided" (VI, 381). With the arrival of the Son, Satan's classical warfare collapses. The "horrid confusion heapt/ Upon confusion" (11. 668-669) is ordered upon his entrance without conflict:

Before him Power Divine his way prepar'd;
At his command the uprooted Hills retir'd
Each to his place, they heard his voice and went
Obsequious, Heav'n his wonted face renew'd,
And with fresh Flow'rets Hill and Valley smil'd.

(11. 780-784)

The rebels rally their powers (1. 786) and stand "reimbattl'd fierce, by force or fraud/ Weening to prosper" (11. 794-795), but no battle follows. The power of the Son dissolves Satanic heroism.

So spake the Son, and into terror chang'd
His count'nance too severe to be beheld
And full of wrath bent on his Enemies.
At once the Four spread out thir Starry wings
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the Orbs
Of his fierce Chariot roll'd, as with the sound
Of torrent Floods, or of a numerous Host.
Hee on his impious Foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as Night; under his burning Wheels
The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout,
All but the Throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arriv'd; in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand Thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in thir Souls infix'd
Plagues; they astonisht all resistance lost,
All courage; down thir idle weapons dropp'd ....
His arrows ...
... wither'd all thir strength,
And of thir wonted vigor left them drain'd,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n.

(VI, 824-839, 845, 850-852)

As Charles Williams argues,

The overthrow of the rebel angels is the overthrow, spiritually, of all in whom that deriving and nourishing Love is dead. The very blaze of eyes from the chariot in which the Divine Son rides is the spectacle of a living and stupendous universe rolling on the "exhausted" rebels. There needs no battle; the exposition of the Divine Nature is enough. 4

In contrast to the classical glorification of strength for its own sake, the Son exercises strength solely to restore order: "Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd/ His Thunder in mid Volley, for he meant/ Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n" (11. 853-855). Similarly Michael,
relating to Adam the final dual between the Messiah and Satan, echoes the concept that warfare is spiritual. He insists that the final victory will be achieved through the destruction of evil works, not through the physical defeat of Satan worthy of celebration in a classical epic.

Dream not of thir fight,

As of a Duel, or the local wounds

Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
Satan, whose fall from Heav'n, a deadlier bruise,
Disabl'd not to give thee thy death's wound:
Which hee, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works
In thee and in thy Seed ....
The Law of God exact he shall fulfil
Both by obedience and by love, though love
Alone fulfil the Law; thy punishment
He shall endure by coming in the Flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death,
Proclaiming Life to all who shall believe
In his redemption ....

(XII, 386-395, 402-408)

This is the "God-like act" (XII, 427), the heroic martyrdom of love conquering self-centered classical heroism. While Moses, a type of the law, could not bring Israel into Canaan, the Messiah

... shall quell

The adversary Serpent, and bring back
Through the world's wilderness long wander'd man
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.

(XII, 311-314)

In character with the Son ordering chaos at the creation, the Saviour will
... dissolve

Satan with his perverted World, then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,
New Heav'ns, new Earth, Ages of endless date
Founded in righteousness and peace and love,
To bring forth fruit Joy and eternal bliss.

(XII, 546-551)

In the war in heaven, the Son proves himself "Worthiest to Reign" (VI, 888),
and his re-establishment of "Holy Rest" (VI, 272) is emblematic of final
victory.

One may of course raise the contention that the Son making his sacrificial
offer while conscious of the sure resurrection (III, 241-253) undercuts or
even makes a mockery of heroism. The sentiment underlying this argument is
that the suffering "in Adam's room" (I. 285) is nothing in contrast to the
surpassing glories of the "Anointed universal King" (I. 317), and that Christ's
passion is then merely a trivial gesture towards martyrdom. Now while the
first half of the argument is undoubtedly correct, the conclusion is not.

In Paradise Lost, Milton is attempting to "see and tell/ Of things invisible
to mortal sight" (III, 54-55). His poetry both expands the ordinary limitations
of time and space to embrace infinity, and collapses these same images of
infinity into the experience of a single moment. The Son's sacrificial offer
is captured in a few lines within a vast epic; the offer involves the brief
span of thirty-three years, but the significance of this offer merits cele-
bration beyond the expanse of human history into eternity. It is therefore
erroneous to negate the Son's heroism on the basis of quantitative time and
space. The eternal paean lauding the Son's unprecedented, godlike charity
merges with the poet's own voice:

O unexampl'd love,
Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!
Hail Son of God, Savior of Men, thy Name
Shall be the copious matter of my Song
Henceforth, and never shall my Harp thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.

(III, 410-415)

The incarnate Son in *Paradise Regained* embodies the heroic song defining both epics. While the disobedience of the first Adam "Brought Death into the world, and all our woe" (*PL*, I, 3), the heroism of the second Adam "Recover'd Paradise to all mankind" (*PR*, I, 3). Certainly the process of regeneration is celebrated prior to the advent of the Messiah. The loss of an Eden consumed with "torrid heat" (*PL*, XII, 634), an atmosphere as parched "as the Libyan Air adust" (l. 635), is juxtaposed to the optimism of the human pair countering a spiritual wasteland with "A paradise within ... happier far" (l. 587). However, Milton both alludes to in *Paradise Lost* and fully eulogizes in *Paradise Regained* the Messiah's instrumental function in this ultimate restoration. In *Paradise Regained*, Christ's heroism embodies the human choice for God, the obedience and charity coinciding with Edenic bliss.

I who erewhile the happy Garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't,
And Eden rais'd in the waste Wilderness.

(I, 1-7)

Ironically, Satan also acknowledges the Messiah's exemplary moral stature:
"Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words/ To thy large heart give utterance
due, thy heart/ Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape" (III, 9-11).
M.Y. Hughes insists that the word "shape" here means "the absolute perfection
of the thing—its form," and connects this to a parallel situation in Paradise
Lost when Satan is rebuked by the angel Zephon: "Abasht the Devil stood,/And felt how awful goodness is, and saw/ Virtue in her shape how lovely"
(IV, 846-848). It is noteworthy that some critics reject Milton's delineation
of a figure "Private, unactive, calm, contemplative" (PR, II, 81) as the epic
hero. E.M.W. Tillyard goes so far as to deny the poem its epic qualities:
"How this poem should be labelled is doubtful. None of the traditional cate­
gories fit it. And the epic category fails to fit it most conspicuously. It
is too short, confined, and simplified for the necessary epic variety and it
quite lacks choric character." W.W. Robson argues that Christ rejecting the
temptations "as the spokesman of pure reason" is "the failure of incarnation
in its most obvious form." The reader is confronted with a hero allegedly
too passive to be epic, one accused of being rather the embodiment of harsh
rationality than of flesh and blood humanness, and it is the reader who must
decide for himself the strength of these allegations. As Satan professes the
need to learn of the identity of the declared Son of God—"Who this is we must
learn, for man he seems/ In all his lineaments, though in his face/ The
glimpses of his Father's glory shine" (I, 91-93)—so much more must the reader
discover the nature of Jesus and the heroism he exemplifies. I shall argue
that Milton's revolutionary epic vision answers a potentially skeptical
reading of the poem. In the words of John M. Steadman, " In Paradise
Regain'd the hero not only rejects all ends or means that seem incompatible
with his ordained role as Suffering Servant; he also redefines the heroic
ethos and heroic poetry specifically in terms of sanctity."8

The heroic ethos of the poem emerges from the conflict between the
Renaissance ideal of the active hero and the Medieval cult of the contemplative
ideal. This conflict in *Paradise Regained* is that same tension between secular humanism and seventeenth-century English Puritanism—between the Renaissance belief in the capacity of natural man to assert his essential dignity, and the religious view that human virtue is contingent upon the active power of divine grace. Satan accosts Christ with the Renaissance quest for glory and fame, attempting to inflame in him that thirst for active heroism belonging to the "most erected Spirits, most temper'd pure/ Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,/ All treasures and all gain esteem as dross" (III, 27-29). And Christ, not by any means the active Renaissance hero asserting that magnanimity is most effective in the political arena, looks all the more like the Medieval monastic. Merritt Y. Hughes comments on the Medieval character of such a Messiah. Responding to the critical view that Milton's Christ in *Paradise Regained* is "a self-portrait of an aging Puritan taking refuge in Stoicism," Hughes argues that

> Contemptus mundi was never carried further by medieval pope or doctor of the Church than it was by Milton in this poem. Disillusion like his may have been possible only in the twilight of the Renaissance; and perhaps the denunciation of ancient culture that consummates Christ's refusal of even the noblest earthly glory could have come only from a spirit to whom classical literature had promised the fulfillment of the vision of ancient civic liberty that is painted in *Areopagitica*.  

Now while the thrust of Hughes' argument is exactly right, it would be misleading to construe Milton's political disillusionment as a throwback to regressive Medievalism. I would stress rather that Christ in *Paradise Regained* transcends the traditional dichotomy between active and contemplative heroism.

It is significant that Jesus' first words express his own confusion over the means to attain "public good" (I, 204). "This perfect Man" (I. 166),
awakened by the sense of a great calling, has a limited awareness of the
time. He is called to a role of messianic proportions, and must find an answer within himself to
the problem of glory and fame.

... victorious deeds

Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts; one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
Brute violence and proud Tyrannic pow'r,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd:
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear;
At least to try, and teach the erring Soul
Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware
Misled: the stubborn only to subdue.

(I, 215-226)

The "glorious Eremite" (I, 8) does not simply replace boyhood aspirations
towards political victory with a retreat into private contemplation; rather,
his choice to impart the gospel becomes the mode of heroic action. Military
prowess cannot establish truth and equity: the Messiah must offer himself
as the suffering servant in order "to conquer willing hearts" (I, 222).

Ironically, Christ fulfills Satan's imperative to "Quench not the thirst of
glory, but augment" (III, 38): he transcends the secular concept of the
active hero by his revolutionary vision of man attaining eternal glory in
direct proportion to his submission to God. This is the theocentric heroism
which synthesizes the tension between secular humanism and seventeenth-
century English Puritanism, and creates a mode of existence which is,
paradoxically, "more humane, more heavenly" (I, 221). As Eden resembles
heaven, so it is only that which most closely resembles divine beneficence
which realizes humanness. Christ unites in himself the one impulse for action and the other of submission to grace: it is only the human choice for God, made perfect in the Messiah, and reflected in men, which can raise Eden in the "waste Wilderness" (I, 7). The essence of theocentric humanism is that the hero does not seek his own glory, but his Father's, and, in so doing, paradoxically, is himself elevated:

Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek
Oft not deserv'd? I seek not mine, but his
Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.

(III, 105-107)

As the Father says in Paradise Lost, the Son's choice to glorify God in turn exalts both himself and repentant mankind (III, 312-314). M.M. Mahood observes this of theocentric heroism:

'Not I, Lord, but Thou': Milton's ultimate feeling about the thirst for glory is that, like other humanist impulses, it is a divinely-bestowed quality which can exalt or debase the mind according to whether it is given a Godward or selfward direction. It becomes a stolen fire only when man 'thinks to break out into sudden blaze' for his own glory. Thus, in Paradise Regained, Christ is the very image of a Job-like patience superior to frenetic classical activity. He is "th'exalted man" (I, 36) of whom the Father prophecies,

By Humiliation and strong Sufferance:

His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength ....

(I, 160-161)

In Paradise Lost, heaven, hell, and Eden are both physical and symbolic environments. Similarly, in Paradise Regained, the wilderness and garden landscapes have both psychological and spiritual significance. The wilderness environment is not only symbolic of the spiritual wasteland that is the
fallen world, but of Christ's own psyche. Jesus recalls Mary's words that he ought to attain the "height [of] sacred virtue and true worth" (I, 231), and so "By matchless Deeds express [his] matchless sire" (I. 233). Realizing that his "way must lie/ Through many a hard assay even to the death" (I, 263-264), he follows the inner leading into the wilderness--"A pathless Desert, dusk with horrid shades;/ The way he came not having mark'd, return/ Was difficult, by human steps untrod" (I, 296-298). It is noteworthy that this allusion to the wasteland also adumbrates Christ's victory: he is the superlative hero, the first man to make the difficult return from the wilderness. The specifically human temptations occurring within the framework of the two dreams are inner. The wilderness represents Jesus' psychomachia between secular versions of the messianic role and his own not fully articulated vision: it is a wilderness he must pass through in order to realize his inner calling. Indeed, the "waste Wilderness" (I, 7) becoming "a flow'ry valley" (IV, 586) and "a green bank" (IV, 587) is indicative of the difficult process of heroic choice.

Christ's rejection of the first temptation to transform stones into bread establishes his theocentricity: "Man lives not by Bread only, but each Word/ Proceeding from the mouth of God" (I, 349-350). But both this first temptation and the final one on the pinnacle of the temple address his divinity. The temptations outside of the dream framework are important because Christ rejects there the use of divine powers, and so enters the fray as a human entity only. But it is precisely in those temptations framed by the two dreams that Jesus wins by merit his title as the exemplary human hero. Both the nature of the dreams and the landscape Jesus encounters upon waking are indicative of the "innerness" of these temptations: the Nazarene is being tested in his essential human creatureliness and frailty.

The environment which Christ awakens to after his dream of food implies his receptiveness to a Satan "Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad"
The Nazarene finds that the spiritual refreshment he partook of in his dream with Elijah or "as a guest with Daniel" (II, 278) "was but a dream" (l. 283), and that waking reality consists of both hunger and solitude. However, to the reader's surprise, the "waste Wilderness" of spiritual testing appears to have undergone a genial transformation. Solitude remains, but he saw

... a pleasant Grove,
With chant of tuneful Birds resounding loud.
Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
High rooift, and walks beneath, and alleys brown
That open'd in the midst a woody Scene;
Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art)
And to a Superstitious eye the haunt
Of Wood Gods and Wood Nymphs ....

(II, 289-297)

The artificial quality of the vision where "Nature taught Art" together with the element of classical paganism suggests its dangers. This is a counterfeit nature in which only the "Superstitious eye" can imagine a genial innocence. While the reader is given no indication that Christ trusts the delusory bliss, I do think one is nonetheless meant to feel the potential fall. After this dream, the Nazarene, tested entirely in his human capacity, is vulnerable to the sudden intrusion of evil. Furthermore, the visionary emphasis of the subsequent temptations reinforces their essential inwardness; the debate is, in John Donne's phrase, "a dialogue of one," and this fact introduces the powerful dramatic tension of the poem. Satan accosts Christ with the problematic quest for glory and fame, one which he has already begun to answer for himself, and, in this sense, the temptations framed by the two dreams are inner.
The Messiah baffles Satan's conventional vision of heroic value. The adversary rebukes Belial's suggestion to lure Christ with physical lust, denouncing what must be "a trivial toy" (II, 223) in his preference for the "manlier objects" (I, 225) having "more show/ Of worth, of honor, glory, and popular praise" (II, 226-227). But Christ's performance in *Paradise Regained* is the continual reduction of Satan's "manlier object," "Rocks whereon greatest men have oftest wreck'd" (I, 228), to trivial toys. The materialistic argument that "Great acts require great means of enterprise" (II, 412), and that "Virtue, Valor, Wisdom sit in want" (I, 431), is lost on the man who realizes that "Wealth without these three is impotent/ To gain dominion or to keep it gain'd" (II, 433-434). The Nazarene maintains the stance that "strength from Truth divided" (PL, VI, 381) is impotent—"Witness those ancient Empires of the Earth/ In height of all thir flowing wealth dissolv'd" (PR, II, 435-436)—and argues rather that "men endu'd with [Virtue, Valor, Wisdom] have oft attain'd/ In lowest poverty to highest deeds" (II, 437-438). Satan reinforces this central temptation of fame and glory with the argument that God himself "seeks glory,/ And for his glory all things made, all things/ Orders and governs" (III, 110-112). And Christ counters the assault with the important qualification that glory "to God alone of right belongs" (I, 141) since the end of the Father's creativity is not self-glorification, but the celebration of eternal goodness (III, 122-126). (Such a celebration of beneficence is only self-glorification in a transcendent sense, not in an egotistical one.) As I have already observed, the Messiah stresses the theocentric nature of genuine glory (III, 105-107). He chooses to subordinate the desire for glory to the greater cause of beneficence, preferring the heroic mode characterized "By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent./ By patience, temperance" (III, 91-92), and so attains the "true glory and renoun, [which] God/ Looking on th'Earth, with approbation marks/ The just man" (III, 60-63).

Christ's political perspective underlines his self-image as the
suffering servant. He responds to Satan's call to fulfill Israel's political expectations with a philosophic quietude: "All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,/ And time there is for all things, Truth hath said" (III, 182-183). But this quietude unmoved by Satanic frenzy is not, finally, passive. Satanic activity is rather the kind of self-destructiveness which Frye refers to as "entropy;" Christ, in fact, penetrates Satanic pretension in order to assert that positive action of a moral nature. The Messiah reverses classical epic values with the paradox that while spiritual strength may be ridiculed as secular weakness, secular strength illustrates spiritual ineptitude: "Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome/ Luggage of war there shown me, argument/ Of human weakness rather than of strength" (III, 400-402). Death itself proves that secular conquerors, deformed by the code of Mars, are less than human: "Conqueror Death discover[s] them scarce men,/ Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,/ Violent or shameful death thir due reward" (III, 85-87). Political games are thus indicative of human frailty, and that which appears weak—humility, patience—is true strength and true humanness. He asserts that a political salvation can be no solution to the greater problem of self-enslavement: "What wise and valiant man would seek to free/ These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,/ Or could of inward slaves make outward free?" (IV, 143-145) Now, aside from this radical negation of political enterprise, Christ does introduce a definition of worthy kingship.

... a Crown,

Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights
To him who wears the Regal Diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies:
For therein stands the office of a King,
His Honor, Virtue, Merit and chief Praise,
That for the Public all this weight he bears.

(II, 458-465)

The earthly King only exercises just reign in proportion to his spiritual identity as the suffering servant (II, 469-472). However, to underline the basic irreconcilability of political rule and spiritual leadership in a fallen world, the Messiah continues to say that it is "more Kingly" (I. 476) to guide the inner man into truth than to govern the outer man by what must often be force (II, 473-480). And to emphasize the intrinsic spirituality of worthy kingship, Christ offers the democratic view that the virtuous individual expresses an innate nobility far superior to ephemeral political power: "Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules/ Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King;/ Which every wise and virtuous man attains" (II, 466-468). Finally, greater nobility is expressed rather in selfless giving than in self-aggrandizement, for however noble the original political motive may have been: "to give a Kingdom hath been thought/ Greater and nobler done, and to lay down/ Far more magnanimous than to assume" (II, 481-483). The Nazarene now fully articulates the spirituality central to achieving the "public good" (I, 204), and prophecies on the coming of his kingdom.

Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On David's Throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the Earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All Monarchies besides throughout the world
And of my Kingdom there shall be no end ....

(IV, 146-151)

The violence attending the establishment of this eternal kingdom is that which ends violence.

I would like to return now to the skeptical reading of Paradise Regained. I have already referred to both Tillyard's refutation of Christ as an epic
character, and Robson's assertion that the Nazarene's rationality negates the incarnation. A major problem that the reader has with this Messiah is that he appears so unlike the rich compassion evident in Paradise Lost. Even if we can accept, in answer to Tillyard, that Christ's patience redefines heroism successfully, we must still ask if it is possible that the Messiah's undaunted exercise of reason is compatible with love. Christ's rejection of an earthly fame bestowed by foolish humanity has been construed as the harsh voice of reason devoid of the divine charity he ostensibly embodies.

For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmixt?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?

(III, 47-51)

The sentiment underlying such a criticism is that the sacrificial love expressed in Paradise Lost is incompatible with the derogatory view of mankind as "a herd confus'd,/ A miscellaneous rabble." It does not, of course, necessarily follow that the Saviour should dismiss mankind in such an aristocratic fashion. But I would argue first that the derogatory tone is not as conclusively derogatory as it may initially appear, and, second, that this perspective of mankind is entirely compatible with a charity defined by "Mercy and Justice both ...[though] Mercy first and last shall brightest shine" (PL, III, 132-134). First, the poet does not intend to justify the ways of God to mankind collectively, but rather to individual men. That is as much as to say that the process of heroic choice is the burden of the individual, not of the species, and that it is the individual who may strive for the spirituality which is both "more humane, more heavenly" (PR, I, 221). The individual thus distinguishing himself from collective confusion in fact celebrates the human transcendence over intrinsic frailty. Second, divine
charity is founded in that logic or justice which makes love itself meaningful. The justice which rejects folly dovetails with the mercy that effects salvation. Clearly, the Nazarene rejecting collective human folly is the same man who meekly prefers to "teach the erring Soul/ Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware Misled" (I, 224-226). The term "herd" even recalls the image of the shepherd anxious to feed his flock, anxious to rescue "willing hearts" (I, 222) from vast indifference. Thus, Christ's consciousness of mankind's unheroic portrait only underlines the depth of his sacrificial offer.

Similarly, Christ's response to secular learning has been a much disputed point. It appears outrageously contradictory that a poet so deeply indebted to the classical heritage would thus construe the wisdom of Greece as "false ... little else but dreams,/ Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm" (IV, 291-292). Aside from the fact that the Nazarene's voice is not necessarily always the poet's, a closer examination of the nature of the rejection shows that it is far from being the product of senility, pessimism, or both.

The quarrel Christ has with secular knowledge is moral rather than intellectual. He is fully versed in the classical heritage—"Think not but that I know these things; or think/ I know them not" (IV, 286-287)—and it is out of his awareness of the final futility of secular humanism that he prefers the knowledge of revelation: "he who receives/ Light from above, from the fountain of light,/ No other doctrine needs, though granted true" (IV, 288-290). He rebukes the general "Philosophic pride" (I. 300) of men who "in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves/ All glory arrogate, to God give none" (II. 314-315). But Jesus does not, in turn, offer God all glory and men none. Plato he credits with genuine wisdom for having "profess'd/ To know this only, that he nothing knew" (II. 293-294). On a more positive note, he pays tribute to Socrates as an example of the humane quest for truth.

Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?)

By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
Equal in fame to proudest Conquerors.

(III, 96-99)

Significantly, Christ adds to the biblical heritage of spiritual grandeur—"Gideon and Jephtha, and the Shepherd lad" (II, 439)—classical examples of virtue: "Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus" (l. 446). Thus, the Messiah does not reject classical achievement outright. Rather, he stresses the imprisonment of egocentric learning: one who absorbs knowledge without discernment remains "shallow in himself,/ Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,/ And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge" (IV, 327-329). In his response to secular learning, Milton's Christ elaborates on the familiar portrait of the fallen angels expressing knowledge without the insight of revelation, "in wand'ring mazes lost" (PL, II, 561).

The tempest coinciding with a sleep disturbed "with ugly dreams" (PR, IV, 408) presents the climactic conclusion to the temptations of Christ in his human nature. A Christ exposed to the elements underlines both his vulnerability and the spiritual nature of his protection:

... ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken ....

... thou
Satt'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace.

(IV, 419-421, 424-425)

The strength superior to Satanic assault is simply the human choice for God, characterized "By Humiliation and strong Sufferance"(I, 160), made perfect in Christ. In contrast to the Satanic illusion following the first dream, the environment the Nazarene wakens to after the tempest is a regenerative, Edenic emblem.
Like the "morning fair [coming] forth with Pilgrim steps," Christ is the first human hero resisting temptation with a spirit marked by "calm and sinless peace" (1. 425). Christ has attained the human victory over and against the false portents, not sent from God" (1. 491), and so emerges victorious from the "pathless Desert ... by human steps untrod" (I, 296-298). Satan, acknowledging Christ to be his "fatal enemy" (IV, 525) and "Adversary" (1. 527), reduces the Messiah's achievement "To th'utmost of mere man both wise and good,/ Not more"(ll. 535-536). While it is to be stressed that the temptations occurring between the two dreams test only his humanness, it does not follow that he thus remains undistinguished from the best of men, the equal of a Job, a Socrates. In fact, even Satan contradicts his reduction by distinguishing Christ as the solitary inhabitant of the metaphorical wilderness: "This Tempest at this Desert most was bent;/ Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st" (IV, 465-466). His words recall the image of this wilderness as "A pathless Desert, dusk with horrid shades" (I, 296) from which "return/ Was difficult, by human steps untrod" (11. 297-298). Thus, the second dream and the green world upon waking establish the Nazarene as
the one man who counters evil with full obedience to his Maker. Jesus is mankind's "Morning Star" (I, 294); he is "th'exalted man" (I, 36) who wins by true merit what Lucifer lost through his sense of "injur'd merit" (PL, I, 98), the supreme hero whose moral choice represents "deeds/ Above Heroic" (PR, I, 14-15).

The subsequent temptation of Christ in his divinity on the highest pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem agrees with his celebration as the human hero. Jesus is, as Northrop Frye says, "in the position of a tragic hero, on top of the wheel of fortune, subject to the fatal instant of distraction that will bring him down." And, as I have indicated in Chapter One, he realizes here the role of the "living Oracle" (I, 460) forever silencing Satan's false oracular powers. Christ fulfills Satan's ironic imperative to stand: the Messiah standing firm in theocentricity results in the defeat of the adversary's inflated classical heroism. The reason that this divine victory agrees with his identity as the human hero is the following. Central to this portrait of the victorious Saviour is the poet's allusion to Oedipus overcoming the riddle of the Sphinx with the answer "man." In Paradise Regained, Christ silences Satanic falsehood not so much in his divinity, as in his own superlative example of theocentric humanism. When "our Saviour meek ... Unobserv'd/ Home to his Mother's house private return'd" (IV, 636, 638-639), he embodies the quietude of "Holy Rest" (PL, VI, 272). This is the "weakness" superior to Satanic strength.

In conclusion, one must ask in what sense "this hero of patience and triumphant wisdom" is a "savior" of men. Lawry points out that it "is difficult to avoid the conclusion that for Milton "th'exalted man: (I, 36) of Paradise Regained is in part exactly that: an exemplary man holding true the image of God in man, but not otherwise directly effecting the salvation of other men, any more than in the poem he would effect the literal salvation of Israel and Rome." And I think Lawry is right in arguing how it is that
"the exalted man" is at once the Saviour: "Milton does not intend to show that redemption has been inhumanly conferred, but instead that it is achieved in the height of the human choice for God. It is then that man is restored into the sonship of God." Furthermore, as Northrop Frye argues,

Paradise Regained is the definitive statement in Milton of the dialectical separation of heaven from hell that reason based on revelation makes, and the individual nature of every act of freedom. To use terms which are not Milton's but express something of his attitude, the central myth of mankind is the myth of lost identity: the goal of all reason, courage and vision is the regaining of identity. The recovery of identity is not the feeling that I am myself and not another, but the realization that there is only one man, one mind, and one world, and that all walls of partition have been broken down for ever.

Thus, in his embodiment of man's choice for God, Christ regains the theocentric identity intrinsic to man: he is the image of heroism who illustrates what is "more humane, more heavenly" (I, 221).
CHAPTER III: The Heroic Achievement: "A paradise within...happier far."

In man Milton consolidates his view that genuine heroism is the exercise of moral magnanimity in the cosmic battle between good and evil. That is, man is high-souled in direct proportion to his theocentricity, and his existence is defined by the continuous struggle between egocentricity and selfless magnanimity. Now the reader has been actively engaged in the difficult process of moral choice presented by Satanic glory and, upon understanding the deficiencies of evil, he is ready to imagine good. With the victory of the Son's "Humiliation and strong Sufferance" (PR, I, 160) in both works, the reader encounters the image of true heroism defined by the human choice for God. These two heroic prototypes have established the possible moral options, and the advent of man generates their convergence. Heaven and hell await the outcome of man's response to the cosmic battle; Adam and Eve in the garden are the centre of Milton's heroic song. It is within this microcosmic realm of the human spirit that the poet and reader, respectively, test "the better fortitude/ Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom/ [hitherto] Unsung" (IX, 31—33). Edenic man knows that bliss is contingent upon his obedience, and fallen man, raising himself from the depths of despair, realizes that the pursuit of spiritual heroism coincides with his possession of "A paradise within ... happier far" (XII, 587). While the poet of the more primitive classical epic isolates only the value of worldly success, Milton, the product of a Christian age, identifies and embraces an heroic ethos celebrating the sacredness of the human spirit.

Let us for the moment consider the opposition to the supposed centrality of Adam and Eve in this epic. John Dryden held that

Paradise Lost, considered as a Heroic Poem, was a failure:
Milton's subject 'is not that of an Heroic Poem properly so called.
His design is the losing of our happiness; his event is not prosperous, like that of all other epic works; his heavenly machines are many, and his human persons are but two.'

1
But while the title would imply that the subject is human failure, the catastrophe in *Paradise Lost*, even without its sequel, is succeeded by the restoration of a happier paradise regained. Nor should the reader be daunted by the grandeur of Milton's "heavenly machines" in comparison to the frailty of his two human persons. In fact, this frailty is best suited to illustrate the revolutionary spirituality superior to classical "might." What Dryden perceived as the failure of *Paradise Lost* is in fact Milton's redefinition of the heroic ethos and heroic poetry specifically in terms of sanctity.²

Classical criteria for glory are insufficient in a Christian celebration of the human spirit. Thus, it is not so surprising that Milton chose to place his theme for heroic verse (IX, 13-47) at the opening of the ninth book which, far from recounting heroic deeds, tells of the weakness of Adam and Eve.³ The only too ordinary fragility and even blandness of sinful man underscores the grandeur of his final choice to both raise himself from despair and realize the nobility intrinsic to his divine origins. The heroic battle takes place solely within the arena of moral choice.

Man, in Milton's traditional theory of human nature, is a Janus looking simultaneously towards Heaven and earth; earthward towards the brute creation whose appetites he shares and heavenward through his divine gift of reason which unites him with the spiritual orders.⁴

As such Janus figures, Adam and Eve embark on the quest for heroic achievement, and finally confirm the espoused heroic ethos.

Now I have asserted that *Paradise Lost* is a Christian celebration of the human spirit. And this raises the issue of humanism in relation to the poet's heroic vision. The term "humanism" easily suggests divergent definitions. In the words of Jacques Maritain,

Let us say that humanism (and such a definition can itself be developed along very divergent lines) essentially tends to render
man more truly human and to make his original greatness manifest by causing him to participate in all that can enrich him in nature and in history (by 'concentrating the world in man', as Scheler has almost said, and by 'dilating man to the world'). It at once demands that man make use of all the potentialities he holds within him, his creative powers and the life of the reason, and labours to make the powers of the physical world the instruments of his freedom. 

However, the humanistic celebration of the hero's potential does not in itself explain Milton's heroic vision. In answering this larger question, the reader might also note the crucial distinction between two kinds of humanism—a theocentric humanism (l'humanisme intégral) and an anthropocentric humanism:

The first kind of humanism recognises that the centre for man is God; it implies the christian conception of man as at once a sinner and redeemed, and the christian conception of grace and freedom .... The second kind of humanism believes that man is his own centre, and therefore the centre of all things. It implies a naturalistic conception of man and of freedom.

What then is Milton's position on the tension between seventeenth-century English Puritanism and the strong influence of sixteenth-century Renaissance humanism--between the religious view that human virtue is contingent upon the active power of divine beneficence and the naturalistic belief in the capacity of man himself to assert essential dignity?

I argue that Milton transcends the opposed positions in a religious vision of human grandeur.

Milton's humanism ... is that of the seventeenth century, not of the sixteenth. Worldliness and otherworldliness are so joined in his nature, that he seeks to transcend physical limitations even while he asserts faith in matter. The
vitalising spirit with which his imagination imbues all matter is one means by which he resolves the conflict.

Closer to the humanism of the Metaphysicals than of the Renaissance, Milton's thought is in tune with Donne's definition: "'Rectified reason is religion.'"

Of course, one may argue that Milton does not resolve even the tension between theocentric humanism and a tenacious adherence to the sole powers of grace. Let us consider only the words of Milton's God on this matter. While God expounds on the nature of free will, insisting that men are "Authors to themselves in all" (III, 122), responsible for their revolt, he seems to contradict this "authorship" of man's with the precept that man in himself cannot elect salvation: "Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will/ Yet not of will in him, but grace in me" (11. 173-174). Similarly, the Son asserts that sinful man cannot seek grace, that grace can only be found unsought (III, 227-235). But this apparent impotence of human will is further complicated by the divine vision that men will dwell on earth...

... till by degrees of merit rais'd

They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tri'd,
And Earth be chang'd to Heav'n, and Heav'n to Earth,
One Kingdom, Joy and Union without end.

(VII, 157-161)

The obvious question is whether grace or human will deserves praise. But the Baroque synthesis of apparent opposites, free will and grace, in the above lines, suggests that Milton is not asking the obvious. Instead, his transcendent vision is captured in the paradoxical concept of "Prevenient Grace" (XI, 3) renewing man: saving grace anticipates the all-important penitence initiated by man, and so is able to effect salvation. God's will dovetails with man's, and further argument over the exact point of union is, for Milton, superfluous speculation. Thus, conscious of the ostensible
dichotomy between the temporal and the eternal, Milton, reflecting the contemporary Baroque world-view and lyric form, fuses these antitheses into a paradoxical synthesis. Grace is contingent upon man's obedience, human virtue upon grace, and God and man are joined in the eternal process of exchanging laurels for heroic glory. The deficiencies of both seventeenth-century Puritanism and sixteenth-century humanism are transcended in this celebration of theocentric heroism. Adam and Eve, the focal point of this epic, in turn test the options of ego- and theocentric heroism. The poet found the source of a spurious heroism in 'Mans first Disobedience' and of a true heroism in 'one mans firm obedience fully tri'd.' The problem of heroism was an intensification of the humanist dilemma, and in the Fall of Adam and Eve Milton discovered both the source and the symbol of that self-sufficient humanism which perverted the mind from attaining its true heroic magnitude, even while it opened the way to a certain specious grandeur of the kind typified in Satan.

And regenerate man marks the climactic fulfillment of theocentric heroism.

The focal point of Milton's heroic song is the image of perfect human bliss portrayed in the Edenic unity of Adam and Eve. This perfect couple is the centre of the Father's "great Idea" (VII, 557):

... the Master work, the end

Of all yet done ...

... endu'd

With Sanctity of Reason

... upright ...

... self-knowing, and from thence

Magnanimous to correspond with Heav'n ....

(VII, 505-511)

Man's magnanimous stature and consequent right to joint rule over creation
(VII, 520-521) is obvious to Satan when he first sees Adam and Eve:

Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native Honor clad
In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all,
And worthy seem'd, for in thir looks Divine
The image of thir glorious Maker shone,
Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure,
Severe, but in true filial freedom plac't;
Whence true authority in men ....

(IV, 288-295)

And the bliss of majestic lords, true to their divine image, is acknowledged by the rebel's diabolic rage:

Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two
Imparadis't in one another's arms
The happier Eden, shall enjoy thir fill
Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust ....

Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed.

(IV, 505-509, 533-535)

It is significant that it is Adam and Eve together, joined by nuptial communion, who present the human reflection of divinity. As Adam intuitively understands, "In solitude/ What happiness, who can enjoy alone,/ Or all enjoying, what contentment find?" (VIII, 364-366) And in their evening prayer, rejoicing over the happiness of "mutual help/ And mutual love, the Crown of all [human] bliss/ Ordain'd by [God]" (IV, 727-729), they close in recalling the promise of a larger community, "a Race/ To fill the Earth, who shall with [them] extol/ [God's] goodness infinite" (11. 732-724). Again, charitable mutuality expresses man's identity as the quintessence of heroic
potential. In direct relation to their fitting love for one another, Adam and Eve realize their godlike magnanimity; solitude is no gain. And Milton celebrates the significance of conjugal unity in the marriage hymn:

Hail wedded Love, mysterious Law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else.
... by thee
Founded in Reason, Loyal, Just, and Pure
Relations dear, and all the Charities
Of Father, Son and Brother first were known.

(IV, 750-752, 754-757)

Not only is conjugal love emblematic of the relation between man and God, but also this "mysterious Law" reflects the perfect communion enjoyed by the trinity itself. Fully conscious of the hypocritical position that sexuality is necessarily evil (IV, 744-747), Milton portrays in the bower of Adam and Eve a love which lies beyond fallen experience, thus demanding the utmost of the reader's imagination: "Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights/His constant Lamp" (IV, 763-764). Edenic sexuality is defined by an eros which is subordinated to charity, a rational, meaningful love confining itself to the prescribed moral sphere. As Adam later says to Eve, "for smiles from Reason flow,/ To brute deni'd, and are of Love the food" (IX, 239-240). And as William Haller asserts:

Marriage ... stands in the focus of all interest and meaning in Paradise Lost. It is the consummation of God's plan of creation on earth. It is the projection of the divine order, of the order of nature and of the soul, into human society. It is the whole of human society in germ, the living microcosm, truly, of family, church, and state. It is, in consequence, the prime object of Satan's envy, and its disruption the first task
to which he addressed himself on this earth. Man's fall ensues when the harmony and order of marriage, the reciprocal reason and conscience, is broken. His redemption is foreshadowed when woman, upon their expusion from the earthly paradise, declares her renewed loyalty and obedience.

Now Harding argues that classical allusions such as that to Jupiter and Juno (IV, 499-500) discredit Adam and Eve's innocence from their very introduction. Thus, when the Edenic couple, "destitute and bare/ Of all thir virtue" (IX, 1062-1063), enact lust, they are merely realizing the tainted Olympus-like sexuality which the poet has already drawn attention to. However, one should note that the identification of Adam and Eve as classical types does not imply that they resemble their prototypes in all features. In fact, Adam and Eve are themselves the prototypes of classical grandeur, untainted, unfallen. And the reader, however hindered by hindsight, should at least attempt to imagine innocence. Of course, a note of potential evil does penetrate even this "very centre and inmost sanctuary of Milton's cosmos."

These lull'd by Nightingales imbracing slept,
And on thir naked limbs the flow'ry roof
Show'rd Roses, which the Morn repair'd. Sleep on,
Blest pair; and O yet happiest if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more.

(IV, 771-775)

Adam and Eve, united, express the choice of the theocentric hero: "to extol/Him first, him last, him midst, and without end" (V, 164-165). The reader is given a portrait of invincible faith:

Hail universal Lord, be bounteous still
To give us only good; and if the night
Have gather'd aught of evil or conceal'd,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.

(V, 205-208)

And yet, while the note of potential evil does not disrupt Adam and Eve's present bliss, the reader is conscious of the tension between happiness unaware of evil and the foreshadowed quest towards a happier state. Men are "thrice happy if they know/ Thir happiness, and persevere upright" (VIII, 631-632), and the human pair, only once questioning bliss, forfeits Edenic existence. The events following their separation portray the abuse of heroic potential and the difficult choice to practise penitence in the hope of renewal. It is only with their reunion that Adam and Eve, fallen but regenerate, overcome misery and embark on a pilgrimage marked by the possession of "A paradise within ... happier far" (XII, 587).

Adam, "the goodliest man of men since born" (PL, IV, 323), is the epitome of classical excellence.

...His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd

Absolute rule; and Hyacinthine Locks

Round from his parted forelock manly hung

Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad ....

(IV, 300-303)

His hyacinthine locks find their source in both the Aeneid and the Odyssey, and this allusion invites the reader to test him "against the acknowledged exemplars of human excellence, Aeneas and Odysseus." This is the image of "sublime" manliness, a figure whose superlative powers and beauty signify his godlike identity. Similarly, when "our Primitive great Sire" (V, 350) first meets Raphael, he exhibits the perfect nobility unique to innocent man.

Adam

... walks forth, without more train

Accompanied than with his own complete

Perfections; in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On Princes, when thir rich Retinue long
Of Horses led, and Grooms besmear'd with Gold
Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape ....

(V, 351-357)

This nobility defining Adam's godliness is the counterpart of his rational spirituality: he learns to know and love God. He is the human hero capable of realizing the heroic song.

In particular, Adam's first memories illustrate his rational spirituality. Answering Raphael's request, Adam relates his own experience of creation. Significantly, he hesitates over the paradox of relating one's own creation—"For Man to tell how human Life began/ Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?" (VIII, 250-251) In contradistinction to Satan boasting self-creation in a deceptive spirit of intellectual gamesmanship, Adam cautiously tells his story in the hope of genuine intellectual advancement—"Desire with thee still longer to converse/ Induc'd me" (VIII, 252-253). Moreover, a striking feature of Adam's first memories is his heavenward gaze and instinctive upright motion:

Straight toward Heav'n my wond'ring Eyes I turn'd,
And gaz'd a while the ample Sky, till rais'd
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavoring, and upright
Stood on my feet ....

(VIII, 257-261)

This hero is "Godlike erect" (IV, 289), the majestic image of God, "For contemplation ... and valor form'd" (I. 297). He delights in an Eden where "all things smil'd" (VIII, 265), but is not content to remain the naive participant in pleasure. As instinctive as his upright motion is his first assertion: "But who I was, or where, or from what cause,/ Knew not"
Adam's self-knowledge regarding his divine origins is innate, and he addresses creation:

...Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power preeminent;
Tell me, how may I know him, how adore
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know.

And having come to know and love God, Adam expresses in his first speech the theocentric humanism characterized by love. He extols the bliss of Eden, notably lauds Eve as the best of Edenic joys, and subordinates all happiness in grateful obedience to the Creator.

Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all; needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample World
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite,
That rais'd us from the dust and plac't us here
In all this happiness ....

As the innocent counterpart to Satan's self-sufficiency, Adam stresses that human worth is realized in direct proportion to self-less obedience. Even in his unfallen wholeness, man is the frail being "who at [God's] hand/ Ha[s] nothing merited, nor can perform/ Aught whereof hee hath need" (IV, 417-419). Thus, as the prototype of classical excellence and the patriarch of theocentric heroism, Adam encounters the difficulty of moral choice.

Now while the unfallen Adam is undoubtedly the unblemished hero, the element of credulity in his portrait teases the reader's anxiety over the
imminent tragedy. When Adam relates to Eve the command not to taste the tree of knowledge in his first speech, his very ignorance of mortality—"whate'er Death is,/ Some dreadful thing no doubt" (IV, 425-426)—underlines the fragility of his bliss. Furthermore, the first man's naivety is evident in his inability to comprehend disobedience. As he says to Raphael,

But say,

What meant that caution join'd, if ye be found Obedient? can we want obedience then
To him, or possibly his love desert
Who form'd us from the dust, and plac'd us here
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?

(V, 512-518)

The reader knows what Adam will still discover: man may know evil only at the high price of losing Eden. And Adam's sense of Edenic experience as unconscious bliss—"I am happier than I know" (VIII, 282)—underscores the dramatic tension experienced by the conscious reader. The reader is confronted with Adam's strong quest for knowledge in conjunction with his worship of the Maker, only to learn how the father of mankind later foregoes upward advancement in an instant of ostensible worship of the created. His innocent desire for knowledge defines him "as one whose drouth/ Yet scarce allay'd still eyes the current stream,/ Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites" (VII, 66-68). While Adam's intellectual appetite is not reprehensible, Raphael introduces an ominous caution to be content with "Knowledge within bounds" (VII, 120):

Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,
Leave them to God above, him serve and fear ....
... Heav'n is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
Think only what concerns thee and thy being ....

(VIII, 167-168, 172-174)

But Milton's delineation of Adam's credulous innocence is not antagonistic.
Rather, the poet is depicting the near inconceivable condition of existence in unfallen Eden. This is the Adam still free of "that doom ... of knowing good by evil."14 This is the extraordinarily sublime stature of the man hearing of evil while he himself knows only good. Milton's portrayal of unfallen simplicity intensifies for the reader the drama where man, deceived, chooses the doom of remembering the perfect good that was.

Whereas it is possible to see, as I shall later argue, that Eve's hope to grow "up to Godhead" (IX, 877) exhibits a certain heroic impetus, it is difficult to see Adam's choice to sin in any other light than weak selfishness. Adam is undeceived by the pretensions Eve entertains, and his conscious choice to join her is less than heroic, whether it is considered in classical or Miltonic terms. Whereas Eve's fall exemplifies a strong egocentric heroism, Adam's fall negates heroism of any sort. His protestations of love for Eve only thinly disguise cowardliness. "Eve forces open a door, Adam slams one to; she claims 'angelicity' and he denies his heavenly nature."15

"Waiting desirous her return, [Adam] had wove[n]/ Of choicest Flow'rs a Garland to adorn ... his Harvest Queen" (IX, 839-840, 842), and "the faded Roses shed" (l. 893) of his dropped garland are emblematic of the horror he feels upon understanding "The fatal Trespass done by Eve" (l. 889).

Grieving, he addresses Eve as if the fatal act were another evil dream:

   O fairest of Creation, last and best
   Of all God's Works, Creation in whom excell'd
   Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd.
   Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!

(IX, 896-899)

But the memory of her innocence beside present ruin enforces his conviction
that nothing can undo the cause for his lamentation. In a powerful combi-
nation of symploce and erotema, Adam cries: "How art thou lost, how on a
sudden lost,/ Defac't, deflow'r'd, and now to Death devote?" (IX, 900-901)
The details of her fall are superfluous to a man now aware of the meaning of
death. And Adam adds to his unanswered rhetorical question his resolution to
join Eve's fate.

And mee with thee hath ruin'd for with thee
Certain my resolution is to Die;
How can I live without thee, how forgo
Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild Woods forlorn?

(IX, 906-910)

He iterates, "However I with thee have fixt my Lot,/ Certain to undergo like
doom; if Death/ Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life" (IX, 952-954).
Thus, at the precise moment of choice, Adam is conscious of his sin: "he
scrupl'd not to eat/ Against his better knowledge, not deceiv'd,/ But fondly
overcome with Female charm" (IX, 997-999). And his consciousness is not a
contradiction of God's judgment that only the fallen angels are "Self-
tempted, self-deprav'd" (III, 129), but man deceived. Adam is of course
deceived by his overwhelming loss of hope in the omnipotent goodness of God,
and it is this despair that distinguishes him from outright self-deprivation.

The central question now is the relation between Adam's conscious
choice to sin and the influence of "Female charm." Satan regards Adam's
fall as a weak surrender quite removed from conscious choice: "Adam by his
Wife's allurement fell" (PR, II, 134). Rejecting Belial's suggestion that
Christ might be tempted by feminine charms, Satan asserts that "Beauty stands/
In th'admiration only of weak minds/ Led captive" (PR, II, 220-222). But
it would be erroneous to assert that Milton simply portrays Adam's fall as
the inevitable ensnarement of the male psyche by the enchantress. While Adam
later accepts this view of the \textit{femme fatale} with remarkable ease, the dramatic tension leading to his fall in fact underscores guilt wholly his own. An Adam "fondly overcome" conveys the sense of a conscious choice to forgo right reason for selfish concerns.

Now the sacrificial appearance of Adam's resolution to join Eve renews the question of heroism. Eve's elated response—"O glorious trial of exceeding Love,/ Illustrious evidence, example high!" (\textit{PL}, IX, 961-962)—unmistakably echoes the heavenly praise of the elected Messiah: "O unexampl'd love,/ Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!" (III, 410-411) But does Eve's perspective here qualify Adam's choice as heroic in the best Miltonic sense of the word? I would argue rather that Eve's elation is sincere gratitude over the fact that she will not have to meet death alone (IX, 826-830), hardly a clear perception of heroism. Furthermore, Adam expresses a similar fear of solitude, and his resolution thus stems rather from love of self than love of Eve. The repetition of "mee," "my," and "I" in lines 906-908, 913-914, and 952-954 is striking. And his protestation to Eve over their fated unity echoes Sin's words to Satan: Adam asserts, "So forcible within my heart I feel/ The Bond of Nature draw me to my own,/ My own in thee, for what thou art is mine" (IX, 955-957). Similarly, Satan's first offspring declares she has been drawn to him by "a secret harmony" (X, 358) that moves her heart with his, "joined in connexion sweet" (1. 359), and that the distance of the worlds between them has not broken the "fatal consequence" (1. 364) that will forever unite them. Adam's echo of the demonic in his assertion of love clearly indicates the unheroic stance. His concluding statement—"to lose thee were to lose myself" (IX, 959)—summarizes the weak selfishness at the centre of his choice.

Of course, an unsympathetic view of Adam's selfishness would be out of character with Milton's portrait of his fall. It is all too easy to regard Adam's passionate plea—"no no, I feel/ The Link of Nature draw me"
(IX, 913-914)—with the cool reason of Raphael. After all, when Adam praises Eve as the summation of beauty in the created world (VIII, 470-477), and insists that, in spite of her inferior intellect, "Authority and Reason on her wait" (1.554), does not Raphael indeed temper his enthusiasm with sound Miltonic doctrine? The Arch-angel's dichotomy of rational and passionate love ostensibly sets the boundary between legitimate and sinful behaviour:

What higher in her society thou find'st
Attractive, human, rational, love still;
In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true Love consists not ....

(VIII, 586-589)

However, a closer examination of Raphael's reasoning complicates the ready equation of his voice with the poet's. There is nothing substantially wrong with the thrust of his argument:

For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so,
An outside? fair no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love,
Not thy subjection ....

(VIII, 567-570)

But the subsequent rationale is more reminiscent of the manipulative spirit of the fallen Arch-angel than of Raphael's characteristic wisdom.

... weigh with her thyself;
Then value: Oft-times nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well manag'd; of that skill the more thou know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her Head ....

(VIII, 570-574)

In fact, Raphael's elevation of "self-esteem" in the attempt to protect Adam from false or undue love stands in direct opposition to the Messiah's
compassionate subjection for mankind. Thus, Raphael's role as the warner does not entirely fit the poet's vision of appropriate human love. Rather, Milton teases the reader with a beneficent Arch-angel who is not only "absent" (VIII, 229) on the day of man's creation, but who remains unteachable about the ordained intensity of the natural bond between husband and wife. And in his subtle portrayal of an "imperfect," partially ignorant celestial messenger, Milton conveys the difficult problem of Adam's dual loyalties—first to God and also to woman.

The effect of a somewhat ambiguous Raphael only underscores Adam's dilemma: if he obeys God, as he knows he ought to, he feels he will lose life itself. This strong sentiment cannot be quelled with Raphaelite logic. Indeed, Raphael's easy reasoning appears, at the moment of Adam's choice, like a moralization oblivious to the fact of human love. And ironically, the Adam choosing to sin in one sense follows the messenger's well-meaning advice: "Heav'n is for thee too high/ To know what passes there; be lowly wise:/ Think only what concerns thee and thy being" (VIII, 172-174). For the man confronted with the probability of the eternal loss of his likeness, fit help, other self, his wish and heart's desire (VIII, 450-451), heaven indeed appears too high. Thus, while Milton illustrates that Adam's fall is due to selfishness, he does not, as I have argued, allow the reader to coolly condemn Adam's concern with himself and his being. God may justly observe that man "decreed/ [His] own revolt" (III, 116-117), "ordain'd [his] own fall" (ll. 128-129).

But the reader is not so much a spectator as an empathetic participant in the confusion of double devotions and wakened selfishness.

I should like to return to Eve's echo of heavenly praise for the Messiah's love in her elation over Adam's choice. While I have argued against the propriety of regarding this choice in heroic terms, there is of course a latent suggestion of heroic potential in Adam's choice. Mahood insists that this
echo gives a double dramatic effectiveness to Eve's cry. In one way the words are an instance of tragic irony, because there is all the difference possible between Adam's sacrifice and that of the Messiah. But Eve's words, by bringing to mind the Son's reconciliation of divine and human natures, sound the hope of man's recovery even in the instant that marks the 'compleating of the mortal Sin Original'.

Moreover, Adam's inverse "sacrifice" enforces upon the reader man's difficult position—the choice between selfless heroism and the tragedy of a parodic reflection.

Whereas it is difficult to see Adam's choice to sin as heroic by any definition, his subsequent indulgence in suicidal despair must dispel all belief in a heroic fall. Clearly, Bowra's assertion that "the old dignity is lost in despair" is an understatement of the extent of Adam's weakness. In his soliloquy of lament, Adam flagellates himself to a degree which defies both the contrition intrinsic to regeneration as well as a classical vision of magnanimity. In fact, the numerous personal references in lines X, 720-844 underscore a masochism which is the inverse reflection of his deep-seated pride. While we must regard Satan's pride as a superlative example of a classically heroic attribute, Adam's pride here expresses only that deficiency of spirit which appears incorrigibly inept. The ineptness is evident in the excessive lamentation over his own suffering, one without a trace of consideration for Eve's similar plight.

O miserable of happy! is this the end
Of this new glorious World, and mee so late
The Glory of that Glory, who now become
Accurst of blessed, hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my highth
Adam's myopia is a convincing dramatization of man's loss of right reason through sin. Adam concedes that his misery is "deserv'd" (1. 726), but this self-condemnation is not an aspect of penitence. Instead, Adam's flagellation is a perverse expression of unchanged pride. First, when he considers the curse his descendents are subject to, he agonizes not so much over their suffering as he does over the fate of his own reputation (X, 725-743). Second, he reasons that God's omission to consult him on the question of whether or not to grant life, can only be corrected by his assumption of the right to end life (X, 743-752). The additional contention that he was "unable to perform ... terms too hard" (11. 750-751) illustrates the sort of pride which precludes penitence. Third, like Satan in two of his soliloquies (IV, 40-68, IX, 163-172), Adam reminds himself of the justice of God.

God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him, thy reward was of his grace,
Thy punishment then just is at his Will.
Be it so, for I submit, his doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return ....

(X, 766-770)

However, while Satan understands the beneficence of the God which he promptly rejects (IV, 68-70, IX, 173), Adam, subconsciously, construes his lesser understanding of divine justice to the view of a God too impotent to save his creation. The earlier faith which prompted unmeditated praise of the Almighty is dormant here. When Adam ostensibly accepts divine judgment, he is merely rationalizing his foremost desire to escape that very judgment.

O welcome hour whenever! why delays
His hand to execute what his Decree
Fix'd on this day? why do I overlive,
Why am I mockt with death, and length'n'd out
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
Mortality my sentence, and be Earth
Insensible, how glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap! There I should rest
And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
Would Thunder in my ears, no fear of worse
To mee and to my offspring would torment me
With cruel expectation.

(X, 771-782)

In effect Adam construes divine justice to a vision of a God too impotent
to reverse the infinite wrath set in motion by man's disobedience.

For though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also? be it, Man is not so,
But mortal doom'd. How can he exercise
Wrath without end on Man whom Death must end?
Can he make deathless Death?

(X, 794-798)

Adam's pessimism over man's future (X, 824-828) negates the all-important note
of redemption in the Son's judgment, and is thus entirely inappropriate to
one whose "inward nakedness" (X, 221) has already been covered. Furthermore,
Adam's perverse humility is blatant when he considers the role of the
sacrificial victim:

... first and last

On mee, mee only, as the source and spring
Of all corruption, all the blame lights due:
So might the wrath.

(X, 831-834)

His fear of death is such that he himself immediately retracts the pretense:
"Fond wish! Couldst thou support/ That burden heavier than the Earth to bear,/ Than all the World much heavier" (X, 834-836). Adam's misery is but a pale reflection of the intense agony expressed by Satan: "Me miserable! which way shall I fly/ Infinite wrath, and infinite despair!/ Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell" (IV, 73-75). Adam exhibits a pride irreconcilable to his Maker, but he is too much the frail man to exercise demonic heroism. And Adam is no saviour of men. At this point, he has yet to accept responsibility for his own actions. His last words are the most convincing: "0 Conscience, into what Abyss of fears/ And horrors hast thou driv'n me; out of which/ I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd!" (X, 842-844)

No hero, Adam is unable to save himself from the "evil Conscience [which] represent[s]/ All things with double terror" (ll. 849-850). Thus, even in pious language, Adam interprets experience as a series of events circling around the self. And the depths of Adam's confusion and despair are perhaps Milton's clearest judgment upon egocentric humanism. The elevation of the self necessarily leads to "a living Death" (l. 788).

The vanity of Adam's tortured reasoning is most dramatic in his misogynistic rejection of Eve.

Out of my sight, thou Serpent, that name best Befits thee with him leagu'd, thyself as false And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape, Like his, and color Serpentine may show Thy inward fraud, to warn all Creatures from thee Henceforth; lest that too heav'nly form, pretended To hellish falsehood, snare them.

(X, 867-873)

Forgetting both the origin of evil and that Eve is his "likeness," his "other self" (VIII, 450), Adam denounces her as "This novelty on Earth, this fair defect/ Of Nature" (X, 891-892), and proclaims that human sin is directly
attributable to "Female snares" (1. 897). Now E.M.W. Tillyard regards this outburst of Adam's to be Milton's own unconscious voice, and traces the poet's latent grudge against women to his first marriage. But however tempting it may be to infer that the man "Wedlock-bound" (1. 905) to Mary Powell was a misogynist after Adam's fashion, the critic ought not to regard an author's characters as the subconscious embodiment of biographical data, if only for the simple reason that they are presented by the conscious author as a separate entity. And, as I shall argue in the case of Eve, I doubt that the poet could have been the misogynist Tillyard suggests he is. Moreover, in the above lines, Adam's accusations portray rather the moral confusion of his own psyche, not the demonic darkness ostensibly Eve's. Adam's insistence that Eve is "the part sinister from [him] drawn" (X, 886), though intended to indict only her, is a telling clue of a guilty conscience repressed. And, as when Adam readily accuses Eve before the Son out of "strict necessity" (X, 131)—the reader recalls that this is "The Tyrant's plea" (IV, 394)—so he again rationalizes personal guilt with the mythic view of woman as the demonic enchantress. Thus, Milton dramatizes misogyny to underscore Adam's unregenerate state. These are the embittered words of a man who protests too much.

It is significant that the suicidal Adam remains "Immovable" (X, 938) until Eve establishes peace between them. Adam, made "for God only" (IV, 299), does not display heroism until he responds to the woman created "for God in him" (1. 299). Now if Milton were the strict sexist he is sometimes taken to be, then Adam, as ordained head, should have been first to instruct a reluctant Eve on the importance of penitence. As it is, the reader enjoys the humor where Adam, just rescued by a remarkably heroic woman, proceeds to inform the same of the very heroism which saved him—"offices of Love [which] ... light'n/ Each other's burden in ... share of woe" (X, 960-961). While he has hardly recovered from making a similar error, Adam warns Eve against
being "too desirous" (X, 947) to take on the world's punishment, and his
certain tone is such as if his better judgment had never left him.
Furthermore, he is able to recognize the folly of suicidal despair in Eve
which he was unable to recognize in himself. Kindly, Adam considers the
latent virtue in Eve's suicidal proposal, and redirects her sacrificial
attitude.

Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent than what thy mind contemns;
But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
That excellence thought in thee, and implies,
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overlov'd.

(X, 1013-1019)

The fact that Adam does not here confess his own "anguish and regret/ For
loss of life and pleasure overlov'd" (11. 1018-1019) is not, I think, a
serious omission. Rather, I would suggest it suffices that Adam embrace
contrition and regeneration at all. And through the comedy of this leader
voicing recently acquired wisdom, Milton illustrates that fallen man is in
dire need of grace and, especially in Adam's case, positive female assistance
is only an asset.

Eve's heroic submission disenchants the deadly spell Adam has woven for
himself. He now recalls both the judgment upon the serpent and the gracious-
ness of the Son himself (X, 1028-1059)—two factors together which inspire
victorious faith. For the first time since his choice to fall, Adam
exhibits the moral dignity intrinsic to theocentric heroism. The new man,
unrecognizable beside his despondent double, understands that genuine
lamentation follows in contrition, contrition in new life. He rightly
instructs Eve:
What better can we do, than to the place
Repairing where he judg'd us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent, and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the Air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

(X, 1086-1092)

It is of course ironic that Adam should verbalize here the manner of Eve's conquest of his despair. He expresses the essence of Eve's lesson to him as if it were a revelation for both of them. But Adam's unperceptiveness, aside from underscoring Eve's heroism, is in part the motivation for his reaffirmation of faith. He seeks to both understand and perpetuate what has evaded him, and so provides the reader with the doctrine defining heroism. And in Books XI and XII, Adam consolidates this young joyous expression of faith with sound knowledge. While he has already renewed his commitment to Eve in Book X, he iterates the grand design in Eve's role:

Whence Hail to thee,

Eve rightly call'd, Mother of all Mankind,

Mother of all things living, since by thee

Man is to live, and all things live for Man.

(XI, 158-161)

Thus, by wakening to foresight (XI, 368), Adam is to learn from Michael the "True patience" (l. 361) which will sustain the human spirit throughout history. While it may be argued that the lengthy biblical narrative in Books XI and XII is a weakness in Paradise Lost, the reader should consider that the poet, rather than risk the danger of an Adam easily accepting sin and death, naively rejoicing in God's goodness, wanted to ensure that Adam understand the nature of evil, and accept both providence and the necessity
of personal heroism.  

By the end of the poem Milton's Adam must be a man who could not be patronized, however affectionately, by any other man. He must know the worst that Satan, sin and death can provide in all of history, the worst and the most complex appearances which any one of his readers may have experienced. Knowing the worst, he must be willing to live, to conceive life as possible and as possibly blest. For Adam, with his knowledge of the future, to be willing to begin human history, as for the reader with his knowledge of the past to be willing knowingly to continue it, each must know of the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the Final Judgment which give that history meaning. Within the light of such knowledge, each must learn of the "paradise within."  

A regenerate Adam assumes adult consciousness through such revelation. While it is only natural that Adam should revert to his suicidal stance in reaction to the horrors of the future—"O miserable Mankind, to what fall/ Degraded, to what wretched state reserv'd!/ Better end here unborn" (XI, 500-502)—the wisdom of Michael does recall him:

Nor love thy Life, nor hate; but what thou liv'\'st  
    Live well, how long or short permit to Heav'n....

(XI, 553-554)

In fact, Adam's final vision is strong confidence in a God able to transform the greatest evil into greater good:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!  
That all this good of evil shall produce,  
And evil turn to good; more wonderful  
Than that which by creation first brought forth  
Light out of darkness!

(XII, 469-473)
He internalizes the heroism whereby man most closely expresses his divine image:

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God, to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on him sole depend ....

(XII, 561-564)

Importantly, Adam knows that "things deem'd weak/ Subvert ... worldly strong " and that "Suffering for Truth's sake/ Is fortitude to highest victory,/ And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life" (XII, 567-568, 569-571). And in the final vision of Paradise Lost, Adam is the male voice in the heroic song.

Eve, "the fairest of her Daughters" (IV, 324), is the quintessence of feminine beauty and worth. The inequality of the sexes elevates Eve as the manifestation of human glory.

... though both

Not equal, as thir sex not equal seem'd;
For contemplation hee and valor form'd,
For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
Hee for God only, shee for God in him ....

(IV, 295-299)

As D.R. Hutcherson points out "The physical loveliness of Milton's Eve was in part an inheritance from many women, some of whom had been called Eve." Milton compares Eve by direct or indirect allusion to women of mythology such as Juno, Pandora, Aphrodite, Hera, Athena, a wood nymph, an oread or dryad, Delia, Pales, Pomona, and Ceres. But there is little or no physical description of women in Homer, or of Eve in Genesis, and Milton's singular creation is to be regarded in terms of a new precedent set by such as Du Bartas in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. In his introduction of Eve, Milton presents a portrait of innocence possibly suggesting,
ambiguously, a propensity to excessive and therefore sinful sensuality. While Adam also wears "Hyacinthine Locks ... Clust'ring" (IV, 301-303), it is argued by some critics that the language depicting Eve's appearance raises fallen implications: "Shee as a veil down to the slender waist/ Her unadorned golden tresses wore/ Dishevell'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd" (IV, 304-306). Stanley Fish argues that adjectives such as "Dishevell'd" and "wanton" clearly associate Eve with "the scarlet woman." And to support his view of the associations Milton necessarily evokes in his contemporaries, Fish cites Bishop Joseph Hall's example of a visual symbol for the waywardness of sinful man--the image of a woman with a "'loose lock erring wantonly over her shoulders.'" Now while Milton's portrait appears ambiguous, I suggest that this is because the poet does not share a Bishop Hall's view of feminine sexuality. Instead, Milton deliberately confuses the association between disorderliness and moral wantonness in order to convey his revolutionary image of Edenic femininity.

Milton's "enchantress" is a woman whose intrinsic moral stature is equal to Adam's: "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,/ Godlike erect, with native Honor clad/ In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all" (IV, 288-290). Adam hails Eve as "Heav'n's last best gift" (V, 19); she is the answer to his desire for "fellowship ... fit to participate in / All rational delight" (VIII, 389-391), the creation whom God introduces as "Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,/ Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire" (VIII, 450-451). While Satan in Paradise Regained refers to Eve as Adam's "facile consort" (I, 51), and a fallen, desperate husband addresses her as "Serpent" (Pl, X, 867), she is otherwise, with overwhelming consistency, portrayed as the glorious quintessence of creation. The name "Eve" in Hebrew, hawah, means "mother of all being," and the poet celebrates this meaning with addresses such as "Mother of human Race" (IV, 475), "Mother of all Mankind,/ Mother of all things living" (XI, 159-160). Roy C. Flannagan argues that through
motherhood Eve is associated with the great and "all-bearing Mother Earth" (V, 338).

She is also figuratively linked with the Moon as Adam is with the Sun, each being respectively "Male and Female Light,/ Which two great Sexes animate the World" (8.148-51). Thus, Eve is at once a character from biblical history and a mythological earth, moon, and mother goddess who expresses with Adam the fundamental male-female principle of the universe: "male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). 28

It is thus intriguing that several eminent critics should regard Eve as an example of Miltonic misogyny. Dr. Johnson said that the poet had "a Turkish contempt of females." 29 J.H. Hanford says that "There is no gainsaying the fact ... that the poet bears a grudge against woman as the perverse occasion of man's entanglement." 30 And Basil Willey insists that Milton "enlarges the significance of Adam's disobedience by making it a capital instance of surrender to 'female charm'; and in this manner he is able ... to vent much of his personal resentment against womankind." 31 But Eve's intrinsic moral nature negates the traditional usage of the enchantress motif as a morally inferior being. She becomes a heroine of the first order.

Now the validity of the consideration of Eve in heroic terms is seriously tested in her first speech. Eve's voluntary narration of her earliest memories presents an undeniable parallel to the Narcissus myth in Ovid's Metamorphoses, and this arch-symbol for destructive self-love, it is argued, warns the reader of Eve's particular propensity to sin. 32 The reader encounters an Eve transfixed by the "sympathy and love" (IV, 465) of her own image, an Eve rescued from her "vain desire" (1. 466) by the voice of God. D.C. Allen compares Eve's apparent self-love to that of the angels on the first day of creation, and insists that it is only divine intervention which saves Eve from a fall at this point. 33 Similarly, D.P. Harding compares Eve's
creation to that of the full-grown, ravishingly beautiful Sin (II, 757-758), and stresses the following ominous conclusion:

Satan sees in Sin his "perfect image" and falls in love with it. Eve falls in love with the image of herself she sees in the clear waters of the lake. The reader of *Paradise Lost*, knowing the lengths to which Satan's self-love, issuing first in pride, then in *hybris*, then in the act of disobedience, has carried him, is entitled to wonder whether Eve's innocent self-love, an offshoot of her inexperience, may not be susceptible to the same kind of development. Will history repeat itself?"34

The correspondence between Eve and Sin is clearly intentional, but this ominous potential in Eve only underlines the magnificence of her transformation from frail naiveté to substantial, victorious heroism. The reader only too aware of the darker undertone in this first speech should not fail to note that the woman alternately startled and pleased with her own reflection (IV, 460-466) is an innocent. Like a child not yet self-aware, Eve acts "With unexperienc't thought" (1. 457), and when the warning voice guides her into self-awareness—"What thou seest,/ What there thou seest fair Creature is thyself" (11. 467-468)—the subsequent command to follow (1. 469) is without a reproving tone. As N. Frye emphasizes, Eve is not so much narcissistic as innocent. 35 Moreover, Eve begins and ends her narrative with conscious love for both God and Adam, thus displaying the meek submission so integral to Milton's radical vision of heroic strength.

O thou for whom
And from whom I was form'd flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my Guide
And Head, what thou hast said is just and right.
For wee to him indeed all praises owe,
And daily thanks, I chiefly who enjoy
So far the happier Lot ....

... I yielded, and from that time see

How beauty is excell'd by manly grace

And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

(IV, 440-446, 489-492)

Thus, Eve's earliest recollections are the humble portrayal of growth from a naive egotism to a maturer conscious love, and, while Eve's frailty may appear to jeopardize her heroic potential, it is this very frailty, redirected, which is the mark of her heroic excellence. "Since, in Milton's Platonic scale, human love is both analogy and ascent to Divine Love, it is perhaps not too fanciful to see in Eve's tale an allegory of the human mind turned from its egotism to the love of God."36

Furthermore, Eve's love speech also tests the extent of her heroic identity. Eve, "with perfect beauty adorn'd" (IV, 634), declares to Adam:

My Author and Disposer, what thou bidd'st

Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains

God is thy Law, thou mine: to know no more

Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.

(IV, 635-638)

These lines recall Sin's declaration to Satan—"Thou art my Father, thou my Author, thou/ My being gav'st me; whom should I obey/ But thee, whom follow?" (II, 864-866)—and the contrast between Eve's free choice and Sin's unmeditated participation in "a secret harmony" (X, 358) of "fatal consequence" (l. 364) underscores the integrity of Eve's submission. Now one might consider Arnold Stein's cynical reading of this speech. Stein argues that the speech (IV, 639-656) distantly resembles the angelic hymn which celebrates the Son's "unexampled love" for man, but, while the movement in that hymn keeps returning to the subject of praise, "thee," there is in Eve's poem the lack of Adam's presence.37 And Stein asks whether Adam's
absence from the body of the poem does not indeed, at least subliminally, anticipate his abrupt disappearance from Eve's account of her dream or his prominent absence from Eve's consciousness during the temptation. Furthermore, he insists that while the poem is for Adam, it is about Eve. "She is the creative center, perceiving objects and movements, naming and arranging them with conscious artistic delight. A poem of this kind has to be centered in the self, the stimulated source of individual creative perception." If Stein's reading were self-evident, then this speech would indeed undercut Eve's heroic credibility. However, I fail to see how creative poetry, like Eve's, is necessarily centered in the self, bound to the narrow egotism which Stein suggests. It would be equally absurd to claim that the Son's sacrificial offer—"Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life"(III, 236)—revolves around the self. In fact, it is far more reasonable to assume that Eve, like the Son, acknowledges the self in order to stress the significance of her gift. Rather than repress the importance of the self, Eve creatively asserts the self in order to embrace Adam's being. Her full acceptance of femininity is generously embellished with the assertion that nuptial communion with Adam surpasses even the sweetness of Edenic existence (IV, 639-656). Thus, Eve's love speech, especially since it follows the narrative on her newly acquired moral consciousness, marks the strength of her selflessness. And the intensity of Eve's joyous selflessness establishes her heroic significance.

The intensity of Eve's heroic significance is evident even in her fall. Here, unlike Adam's weak surrender, Eve attempts to realize her strong desire for achievement with a courage which, in classical terms, is only praiseworthy. When she suggests to Adam that they divide their labours (IX, 214), she counters protest with a rejection of cloistered virtue quite comparable to that of the Aereopagitica: "And what is Faith, Love, Virtue unassay'd/ Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?" (IX, 335-336) But while tested
virtue is essential to heroism in a fallen world, Eve's use of the argument in Eden "is but the rationalization of her desire—the desire for temptation which is itself the beginning of her defilement .... Knowledge useful—indeed, necessary—to the salvation of fallen man is worse than useless to innocence and purity." However, Milton does not present Eve's egocentric heroism with a simplistic moral logic. Instead, the very intensity of Eve in collision with the Arch-deceiver momentarily, if not permanently, withholds the reader's judgment. After all, if even Uriel, "The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heav'n" (III, 691), was "beguil'd" (1. 689), it is not likely that a woman created "For softness ... and sweet attractive Grace" (IV, 298) should perceive fraudulence: "For neither Man nor Angel can discern/ Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks/ Invisible, except to God alone" (III, 682-684). The divine perspective that Eve was created "just and right,/ Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (III, 98-99) does not characterize the reader's full experience of sin. Rather, Milton's portrayal of both Eve's credulity and strong heroic impetus dramatizes the difficulty of choice in a moral universe.

The prelude to Satan's climactic assault on Eve's psyche is in her demonic dream (IV, 799-809). Here, Satan's psychological assault on Eve, presenting the conventions of traditional witch-love, opens the crucial psychic battle between falsehood and truth. "The demonic attempt to corrupt the phantasy, the choice of woman as the weaker and more vulnerable instrument, the apparition as an angel of light, the diabolical illusion, and the nocturnal flight "up to the Clouds" are all conventional features of witchcraft ...." Thus, Milton establishes in Eve's demonic dream her susceptibility to diabolical illusion, not to lessen her guilt, but to underscore the tragic consequences of her frailty. Similarly, the reader must consider that Satan, in the guise of the loveliest of classical serpents, attacks Eve with truths only obliquely infected with falsehood.
... pleasing was his shape,
And lovely, never since of Serpent kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria chang'd
Hermione and Cadmus, or the God
In Epidaurus; nor to which transform'd
Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen,
Hee with Olympias, this with her who bore
Sirpio the hight of Rome.

(IX, 503-510)

Although the address is intended to waken vanity, there is nothing false in
the assertion that Eve is the "Fairest resemblance of her Maker fair"
(1. 538). And the subsequent appeal to the ego, asserting that Eden is
insufficient audience for the adoration of Eve's "Celestial Beauty" (11.540,
542-548), is the sort of evasiveness that wins easy entrance to Eve's subcon-
scious: "Into the Heart of Eve his words made way; / Though at the voice much
marvelling" (11. 550-551). Importantly, Eve, though "unwary" (1. 614), at
first resists the serpent's intentions. Satan's first explanation of the
talking serpent meets her skepticism: "Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in
doubt/ The virtue of that Fruit, in thee first prov'd" (11. 615-616). And
the sight of the prohibited tree provokes an authoritative rejection:

Serpent, we might have spar'd our coming hither,
Fruitless to mee, though Fruit be here to excess,
The credit of whose virtue rest with thee,
Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects.
But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch,
God so commanded, and left that Command
Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law.

(IX, 647-654)
However, Eve's moral consciousness is seriously endangered by the Satanic lies which have already gained access to her subconscious. Eve's credulous fascination with this talking snake is such that, at the tree, she searches her own mind only to discover that the serpent's arguments have become her own. Satan need merely enforce his lies with the promise of godhead (11. 708-709), and Eve is ready to persuade herself of the truth of his "seeming" reason (1. 738). But the speech preceding the fatal choice illustrates an independent courage of clear heroic stature.

Eve rejects the prohibition which, she believes, denies man divine knowledge and wisdom (11. 750-760), reasoning that fear must be subject to the quest for achievement: "What fear I then, rather what know to fear/Under this ignorance of Good and Evil,/Of God or Death, of Law or Penalty?" (11. 773-775) Ironically, the perceived "Cure" (1. 776) to man's innate quest for betterment instigates a profound curse. And the reader can hardly overlook that it is Eve's misdirected vision of personal advancement, strengthened by "An eager appetite" (IX, 740), which shatters Edenic bliss;...Meanwhile the hour of Noon drew on, and wak'd

An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell
So savory of that Fruit, which with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye ....

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck'd, she eat ....

(IX, 739-743, 780-781)

Eve's fatal rashness is parallel to Sin unbolting the gates of hell: "from her side the fatal Key,/Sad instrument of all our woe, she took" (II, 871-872). Once fallen, the queen of this universe is the very inversion of heroism, classical or Miltonic. Eve, "hight'n'd as with Wine, jocund and boon" (IX, 793), entertains the possibility of "God-head" (1. 790) but,
ironically, begins her new life with an extraordinarily degenerate apostrophe to the tree (ll. 795-807). Perhaps the most striking instance of Eve's ignoble stupor is the calculated consideration towards Adam: should she share "Full happiness" (l. 819) with him, or conceal her experience in order to be "more equal ... sometime/ Superior: for inferior who is free?" (ll. 823-825) The quick succession of jealousy and murderous intentions, thinly disguised by an unconsciously ironic profession of love, presents to the reader the extent of human loss: "Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:/ So dear I love him, that with him all deaths/ I could endure, without him live no life" (ll. 831-833). And the "bland words" (l. 855) next addressed to her husband only underscore the agony Adam must undergo in his consciousness of the fall. But while the effect of Eve's ignoble stance might well provoke moral judgment, Adam expresses only grief. And, on the part of the reader, I suggest that Milton's portrait of Eve's fall does not justify an indiscriminate denigration of her quest. In fact, there is an innocent echo of Eve's experience when appetite triggers Adam's realization that subconscious experience has a parallel in waking reality. As he tells Raphael,

Each Tree
Load'n with fairest Fruit, that hung to the Eye
Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite
To pluck and eat; whereat I wak'd, and found
Before mine Eyes all real, as the dream
Had lively shadow'd ....

(VIII, 306-311)

Milton thus reminds the reader that there is a legitimate appetite, one which helps convince Adam of the truism that divinely inspired dreams emerge as waking reality. And the appropriateness of a legitimate appetite which is fulfilled by a perfection beyond human imagination is the counterpoint to Eve's deception. The potency of Eve's egocentric heroism is finally
transformed to theocentric magnificence.

It is striking that Eve is the first to embody Milton's hope in man's progression from the fallen condition of flesh under the law to his redemption under grace. While some critics interpret Milton's Eve in full expectation of a misogyny considered to be both traditional and Miltonic, his Eve actually most clearly exemplifies the human reflection of the theocentric heroic ethos motivated by divine love. True to her role as the glory of man, Eve initiates the reconciliation with God which is man's hope. Whereas Adam's contemplative strengths degenerate into suicidal ineptitude, Eve's intuitive brilliance catalyzes Christ-like heroism. Already in their confessions to the Son, Eve distinguishes herself as a heroine. While Adam, claiming the tyrant's plea of "strict necessity" (X, 131), blames Eve for the fall and implies God's similar blameworthiness (11. 125-143), Eve admits personal guilt humbly and accurately: "The Serpent me beguil'd and I did eat" (1.162). At this point, Adam secures his nihilistic course but Eve, the heroine, begins the redemptive movement upwards. Thus, accepting the moral responsibility for her actions, Eve counters a misogynistic Adam with all the magnificence of persistent love. Evoking the sacrificial contrition of Mary Magdalene at the feet of Jesus, Eve's attempt at reconciliation calls forth the redemptive process (11. 910-913). And her subsequent language reflects the image of heroism represented by the Son.

... On me exercise not

Thy hatred for this misery befall'n,
On me already lost, mee than thyself
More miserable; both have sinn'd, but thou
Against God only, I against God and thee,
And to the place of judgment will return,
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence from thy head remov'd may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
Mee mee only just object of his ire.

(X, 927-936)

Eve's usage of "mee" here echoes the sacrificial stance of the Son: "Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life/ I offer, on mee let thine anger fall;/ Account mee man" (III, 236-238). Even as the Son meekly lowers himself in the Incarnation, Eve chooses to accept subordination to Adam as the precondition to their union and to man's future. It is only "her lowly plight,/ Immovable" (X, 937-938) which brings about the miracle of contrition in Adam. Eve insists that Adam is her "only strength and stay" (X, 921), but her apparent weakness, supported by an inner strength, is magnificently superior to Adam's comic ineptitude. Eve is the moral enchantress whose folly led to full ruin, whose patient heroism again "shall all restore" (XII, 623). And in her last speech, Eve expresses the essence of what ought to be every man's response to his Maker—not proposing the principle of submission as a general truth but internalizing its importance.

This last speech, delivered upon waking from the sleep imposed by Michael, should be contrasted to her condition prior to sleep when Eve expresses the deepest distress upon learning that she and Adam must leave Paradise for the unknown territory beyond Eden:

O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!
Must I thus leave thee Paradise? thus leave
Thee Native Soil, these happy Walks and Shades,
Fit haunt of Gods?

(PL, XI, 268-271)

In addressing her home as "Paradise," Eve underlines the supreme importance she attaches to the physical surroundings which were the setting for their domestic bliss. The idea that she must learn to dissociate herself from the familiar "nuptial Bower" (I. 280), and "wander down/ Into a lower World,
to this obscure/ And wild" (11. 282-284), appears worse than the one consequence of the Fall—mortality itself. Ironcally, Eve has voiced the very reason for the necessary exile: Paradise is indeed the "Fit haunt of Gods," and fallen gods must seek out their future beyond their former state. The development from Eve's immediate despair to the execution of her closing lines illustrates the interdependence between Milton's revolutionary heroic ethos and the movement from a physical Eden to "A Paradise within ... happier far" (XII, 587).

There is no indication that Eve at this point can understand and therefore consciously accept the coming exile. In a mild manner, contrary to the fiercer qualities associated with him, Michael exhorts Eve to leave off lamentation, to "patiently resign/ What justly thou hast lost" (11. 287-288). The tone of Michael's words here parallels the instruction he later gives Adam: "Nor love thy Life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st/ Live well, how long or short permit to Heav'n" (XI, 553-554). The Fall gives man the continuing opportunity to exercise the true heroic patience whereby the consequences of his own actions and those beyond his control are accepted and endured. A lamenting Eve must learn that her "Native Soil" is no longer to be found in a particular plot of land but, regardless of particulars in time and space, at her husband's side.

It is significant that the poet who so highly prizes man's capacity for reason should create for the ending of his epic a final speech where man's reason has been effectively by-passed. Eve obtains wisdom by supernatural means, by dreams sent by God; the poet dramatizes the circumstances whereby knowledge penetrates Eve's subconscious while her cognitive processes are inactive. Michael causes Eve's sleep for the period in which Adam is to waken to foresight (XI, 367-369), later explaining the purpose of Eve's sleep: "Her also I with gentle Dreams have calm'd/ Portending good, and all her spirits compos'd/ To meek submission" (XII, 595-597). These "gentle
Dreams" reflect both the character of the divine agent and, more important, their source of a comforting knowledge of the coming greater good. They are dreams sent to alleviate Eve's distress and to enable her to enact the appropriate submission to God and man. It would be simpler if Milton had confined the importance of dreams to the female sex. Eve, the lesser intellect, would thus receive wisdom through divine intervention, Adam only by the use of his reason. But Milton's Eve is not to be easily dismissed as the "facile Consort" (PR, I, 51) Satan calls her. And the mystery of Eve's relation to dreams is not clarified by a recitation of the Miltonic idea that woman was not formed for contemplation, but for softness and sweet attractive Grace. Amplifying the above distinction between the sexes is the poet's account of Eve retiring upon Raphael's visits with Adam:

Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv'd,
Adam relating, she sole Auditress;
Her Husband the Relater she preferr'd
Before the Angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather: hee, she knew, would intermix
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
With conjugal Caresses, from his Lip
Not Words alone pleas'd her.

(VIII, 48-57)

While Eve is not expressly created for contemplation, this does not negate her delight in and basic capacity for intellectual discourse. Rather, Milton underscores Eve's greater pleasure in rational content found within the conjugal relationship. The fact that dreams are thus not to be seen as aids to inferior intellects is, perhaps, clearer in Adam's case. Adam, in his account of creation to Raphael, mingles images of dream-vision with waking
reality. Whereas Eve first experiences God as a voice intruding upon her waking consciousness, the rational Adam, paradoxically, initially experiences God as a dream. Oppressed by sleep, thinking he is "passing to [his] former state/ Insensible" (VIII, 290-291), Adam's subconscious encounters an "inward apparition ... of shape Divine" (11. 293-295), and his "fancy" (1. 294) is directed to greater awareness of his own identity and environment. Again, upon Eve's creation, sleep allows Adam to perceive reality by the open door of imagination:

My earthly by his Heav'nly overpower'd ....  
By Nature as in aid ....  
Mine eyes he clos'd, but op'n left the Cell  
Of Fancy my internal sight, by which  
Abstract as in a trance methought I saw,  
Though sleeping where I lay, and saw the shape  
Still glorious before whom awake I stood ....  

(VIII, 453, 459-464)

Upon learning that the pair must leave Paradise, Adam undergoes a shock whereby he loses consciousness for the period of Eve's lamentation and Michael's responding exhortation (XI, 263-267, 293-294). This movement parallels Eve's sleep, but with the ironic distinction that while Eve's loss of consciousness is due to divine intervention, Adam's is the natural response to trauma. Speaking of Eve's sleep, Michael compares it to Adam's during Eve's creation (XI, 367-369). Thus, it is evident that, for Milton, divinely inspired dreams emerge as waking reality. As Adam recounts, "I wak'd, and found/ Before mine Eyes all real, as the dream/ Had lively shadow'd" (VIII, 309-311). The cumulative effect of Milton's marriage of dream imagery and waking, historical reality is celebrated in this final speech in *Paradise Lost*. The elevation of Eve's lines echoes the praise Adam offers the both "inferior" (VIII, 541) and mysteriously superior woman:
...All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discount'nan't, and like folly shows;
Authority and Reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally ....

(VIII, 551-556)

The movement from Eve's subconscious experience of divine interference to conscious response in her final speech parallels the collective human progressions "From shadowy Types to Truth" (XII, 303).

In Eve's fourteen-line speech, suggesting the sonnet form and its traditional usage as a love poem, Milton both alludes to and transcends form and content.

Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know;
For God is also in sleep, and Dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress
Weary'd I fell asleep: but now lead on;
In mee is no delay; with thee to go,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to mee
Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banisht hence.
This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence; though all by mee is lost,
Such favor I unworthy am voutsaf't,
By mee the Promis'd Seed shall all restore.

(XII, 610-623)
The poet creates here a unity of ideas by the rich internal rhyme, the syntactical connectedness, and the repetition of phrases, some of which echo central passages occurring earlier in the poem. This sonnet expresses the speaker's love for another individual, but as the lines cannot be divided into traditional quatrains or octave and sestet, the first full stop occurring only at line ten, so Eve's love for Adam is fused with her love of God—she being created "for God in him" (IV, 299). As Lee M. Johnson writes: "It is as difficult to divide Eve's sonnet as it is now to divide her from Adam. The musicality of her utterance may be, in fact, Milton's way of indicating that she is now in harmony with heaven."44

In the first four and one half lines, Eve indicates she knows where Adam has been and that he has apprehended revelations of divine grace. The similar endings in "Whence," "return'st," and "went'st" (1. 610) encourages the developing concept of a transcendence of the confines of time and space by the proper relation to the Maker in whom all is one. What is important is not Eve's absence from Adam and ignorance of the "some great good," but her oneness with Adam through the wisdom acquired in the recent dream. The late caesura before the last foot, "I know," followed by a semi-colon (1. 610), stresses Eve's assertion that though asleep, she has not missed the essence of what Adam has learned. In lines 611-613, Eve instructs Adam on the importance of sleep and dreams, saying that God has sent her knowledge of the great future good. The pause after "Presaging" (1. 613) emphasizes the prophetic relevance of Eve's recent dreams. The alliteration of "p" and "g" further orchestrates Eve's sense of an overwhelming unity between Providence and her love for Adam. Her phrase "For God is also in sleep" (1. 611) expresses full assurance in divine charity acting for the good of man. And Eve's amplification that prophetic dreams came to her in answer to distress
(11. 613-614) indicates God's role as comforter. Eve's conscious response to wisdom received in an inactive state underscores the active beneficence of God celebrated in this speech.

The middle section beginning line 614 and ending at the full stop after line 619 comprises the central theme of the speech. Here Eve expresses the essence of what the human response to God ought to be but, rather than voice general truths, a humble Eve fully internalizes truth, stating only what her response is. She begins by commanding Adam to assert his role as head (1. 614), then celebrates through language her love for Adam (11. 615-619). The rhyme of "mee" with "thee," divided and joined by semi-colons, distinguishes between her own responsibility and Adam's, thus consciously stressing their bond of love. The rhyme of antithesis of "delay" and "stay" (11. 615) amplifies her new awareness of what remaining in and leaving Paradise means. In contrast to earlier distress, Eve now exhibits a transformed perception of domesticity: what was endearment to familiar surroundings is now readiness to embark on a journey where the paradise is inner. To leave with Adam is, paradoxically, to remain; to remain without Adam is to leave unwillingly (11. 615-617). For the regenerate, enlightened Eve, whatever was integral to life in Paradise is to be found in their union beyond Eden. In the Miltonic fashion, the boundaries between remaining in and leaving a particular place are confused as the transcendent meaning of the place is associated with the original meaning. As Eve repeats "here," the word no longer refers only to the historical Paradise, but to the inner paradise which recalls all the delights of the earlier Paradise now about to be destroyed. Eve, who feared the unknown world more than death, now escapes the limitations of space.
In lines 617 and 618, Eve restates her love for Adam. The subordination of self in the phrase "thou to me" together with the anaphora in "all" strengthens the conviction that Adam himself embodies all she values under Heaven. The full effect of Eve's speech is to be seen in how the repetition of "mee" occurs throughout *Paradise Lost*. Satanic rhetoric, employed to beguile, expresses sheer egocentricity:

... look on mee

Mee who have touch'd and tasted, yet both live,
And life more perfect have attain'd than Fate
Meant mee, by vent'ring higher than my Lot.

(IX, 687-690)

In contradistinction, Adam begins to admit his sense of moral guilt: "On mee, mee only, as the source and spring/ Of all corruption, all the blame lights due" (X, 832-833). But his conversion is far from complete since he still addresses Eve as "Serpent" (X, 867), and it is only after Eve's consistent attempt at reconciliation that he regains calm and hope. I have already discussed the parallel between Eve's willingness to sacrifice herself for Adam's sake (X, 927-936) and the heroic humility of the Son (III, 236-238). Eve's rhetorical identification with the Son expresses her heroic stature as a moral enchantress: the reader has seen her transfix the magnificently classical Satan into a state bereft of strength, "Stupidly good" (IX, 465); she "seduces" a despairing, misogynistic, and suicidal Adam into the miracle of regeneration; and in the final speech Eve consolidates her stance as the weaker vessel exhibiting greater spiritual strength. Eve expresses an intuitive understanding of prophecy in her transformed domesticity, and thus fulfills the true patience to which Michael had exhorted her.

Lines 620-623 portray the new Eve as a strong, determined individual literally carrying the seed of the promise within her. The repetition of "hence" (11. 619, 621) conveys the lessening importance of a physical Paradise
in view of the glorious future. The "mee" in lines 621 and 623 expresses the full joy that she should be the Mother of Mankind, a joy born out of humility. The antithesis of "lost" and "restore" (11. 621,623) emphasizes the depths of the Fall and the greatness of Grace: she who was the cause of human deprivation becomes the means of salvation. The emphasis is not on the worthiness of Mary, the second Eve, but on the singular worthiness of this first and now regenerate Eve. In these last four lines Eve matches her transcendence of place with the transcendence of time. The significance of the whole of human history is compressed to fill an instant; the essence of history gives Eve joy in the immediate present and aids in her transcendence of the bondage to time and space. Again, the particulars are not as relevant as the universals; the particulars indicate the universal of human movement "From shadowy Types to Truth."

Central to Eve's participation in the scheme of divine redemption is her passivity. From the Homeric perspective where the epic hero is the individual whose extraordinary prowess, usually expressed in violent deeds, is rewarded with fame, Eve must be the "facile Consort" Satan deems her. She freely subjects herself to Adam's leadership; she exercises no control over the body which is to provide Christ's ancestry; she obtains knowledge through dreams, then expresses intuitively what Adam apprehends discursively. But it is precisely this unobtrusiveness of Eve which suits her to Milton's un-Homeric, epic cause. Again rendering ambiguous traditional views of male superiority and female inferiority, Eve's intuitive brilliance in the final speech compares with Raphael's distinction between intuitive angelic reason and discursive human reason where he suggests that intuitive reason may be the reward for obedience (V, 485-595). Paradoxically, if not ironically, too, the "weaker" woman exhibits not only superior moral strength, but an intuitive reason associated rather with the angelic than the human. Eve's "inferior" status is appropriate to Milton's revolutionary heroic ethos "Of
Patience and Heroic Martyrdom [hitherto] Unsung" (IX, 32-3) where "weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength" (PR, I, 161).

It is thus intriguing that several eminent critics would regard the character Eve as an example of Miltonic misogyny, conscious or otherwise. In view of the overwhelming consistency in Eve's portrait as the glorious quintessence of creation, these ideas of misogyny are as valid as the bad Hebrew whereby an aspirated pronunciation of the name "Heva" is interpreted as female serpent. Eve's submission to both Adam and divine purposes undeniably proves her spiritual heroism. In her final speech, Eve fulfills her appellation as "Heav'n's last best gift" (V, 19), realizing the concept of the exalted servant where he who would be great must first be servant of all. In subjection to Adam, the heroine fulfills the paradox of the first being last, the last first. Eve's heroic charity becomes the shadow of Heaven; her love sonnet crowns the final optimism in the epic.

Thus, regenerate man marks the climactic fulfillment of theocentric heroism. Reunited, conscious of the horrors of mortality, Adam and Eve affirm the indestructibility of the human spirit in harmony with God. After Eve's brilliant proclamation of faith in God and man (XII, 610-623), not another word need be spoken. The Edenic pair, regenerate, and "self-reliant" in the very best sense of the word, is able to begin the pilgrimage of moral choice in an afflicted world. Now the poet dramatizes the harsh justice of the cherubim descending

... as Ev'ning Mist
Ris'n from a River o'er the marish glides,
And gather[ing] ground fast at the Laborer's heel
Homeward returning.

(XII, 629-632)

And

The brandisht Sword of God ... blaz[ing]
Fierce as a Comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapor as the Libyan Air adust,
Began to parch that temperate Clime ...

(11. 633-636)
evokes no less terror. The logicality of this death-in-life experience may well lead one to conclude with Tillyard that Milton ends Paradise Lost in unconscious pessimism over the fallen human condition. After all, is not this apocalyptic vision characterized by the pessimistic notion that the fallen world will not improve; and is not the imagined new order, at best, remote? However, the "pessimism" here is only too conscious. Milton entertains no delusions over the plausible geniality of a degenerate world. But it is wholly erroneous to regard this final vision as pessimistic, conscious or otherwise. Moreover, in contradistinction to the despair compatible with the traditional contemptus mundi, Milton asserts a revolutionary optimism. The familiar grief etched into the features of Adam and Eve in Masaccio's Expulsion from Eden (c. 1425) is devoid of the hope portrayed by Milton. Instead, Milton's heroic pair expresses brief sorrow—"Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wip'd them soon" (XII, 645)—a natural sorrow which is only an interlude before the beginning of a glorious future:

The World was all before them, where to choose
Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:
They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
Through Eden took thir solitary way.

(XII, 646-649)
Juxtaposing the despair of Satan's solitary flight from hell, man's "solitary way" is the advent of hope where Adam and Eve, "sorrowing, yet in peace" (XI, 117), have arrived at "Holy Rest" (VI, 272). Just as the created earth becomes the feminine principle, subject to her Maker, so Adam and Eve, together, reestablish harmony in direct proportion to their submission to
both God and each other. Their energetic quest for self-improvement has been channeled into the self-less choice for God, and, thus, they have in some sense begun to realize Raphael's earlier suggestion that obedient man may advance beyond his appointed place in the chain of being (V, 491-503). As earth is "but the shadow of Heav'n" (V, 575), so human progress is the emergence "From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit" (XII, 303). The free creation of God is attaining sonship and the right to be called by a new name: this is the heroic achievement. And this end of the human quest, "A paradise within ... happier far" (l. 587), coincides with theocentric heroism: the new paradise is infinitely more valuable than the natural one because redeemed man, the fulfillment of God's desires, has the power to bestow on his Creator the gift of an inner world, and the number of such worlds is infinite. This final vision of Adam and Eve, consciously optimistic, is, apart from the image of the Son, the clearest human manifestation of the heroic song.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion of this study, I should like to consider Sir Walter Raleigh's verdict on *Paradise Lost* (to say nothing of its sequel) as "an imposing monument to dead ideas." While the literary historian may protest that there is value in studying such "an imposing monument," appreciation for irrelevant ideas is clearly limited. Always, the test of great literature lies in its universality, and anything inferior meets the fate of obscurity. Is Raleigh's verdict on Milton then at all appropriate? Indeed, the anti-heroic tenets of the twentieth-century intellectual climate do contribute to the reading of Milton's two works as magnificent memorials, magnificent but commemorating only the obsolete. Modern man has exchanged the traditional Judeo-Christian world-view of human significance in an ordered cosmos for one of existentialist despair: in the Platonic sense, the modern loss of a universal, an absolute standard of good, results in the loss of meaning of the particular--man is alone in a meaningless, absurd universe. Understandably then, skepticism, if not indifference, is one twentieth-century response to an older heroic sentiment. But I suggest that this is not the best response to the question Raleigh's verdict raises. In fact, three centuries of critical appreciation have hardly given up Milton to obscurity. Moreover, as I have suggested in this study, Milton's celebration of the sacredness of the human spirit affirms a hope in the ideal which, even in this century, is nothing less than a living universal. John Milton's unique delineation of the epic spirit is a vital contribution to Western thought—not so much a turning point in a continuum first inspired by Homer as an achievement of the human spirit set apart from that which comes before and after. His is a view distinctive from and therefore essential to understanding the anti-heroic tenets of the twentieth century. When Milton calls upon the heavenly muse whom he is "Following, above th' Olympian Hill ... Above the flight of Pegasean wing" (*PL*, VII, 3-4), he asserts faith in a dream of the ideal
surpassing the vision of the Olympian muses. He addresses Urania: "So fail not thou ... For thou art Heav'nyly, shee an empty dream" (ll. 38-39). And the poet's inspiration does not fail: he creates for his "fit audience ... though few" (1. 31) a legacy of the imagination, a legacy of faith in the unlimited potential of man to manifest spiritual greatness.

Thus, the heroic song in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* is a living anthem extolling the incorruptibility of the human spirit in harmony with God. The tension between seventeenth-century English Puritanism and Renaissance humanism has been transcended in a celebration of theocentric heroism. The drama in these two works is cradled in the heroic ethos where true action is moral action, where heroic achievement is the miracle of frail man's submission to his Maker. The futility of self-sufficient heroism is evident in Satan; "strength from Truth divided" (*PL*, VI, 381) is vain. It is rather in the Son's "Humiliation and strong Sufferance" (*PR*, I, 160) that man finds the key to the final cosmic victory of life over death. As Charles Williams argues, man must fulfill "the law of self-abnegation in love."² Or as Northrop Frye says,

> The free intelligence must detach itself from this world and unite itself to the totality of freedom and intelligence which is God in man, shift its centre of gravity from the self to the presence of God in the self. Then it will find the identity with nature it appeared to reject: it will participate in the Creator's view of a world he made and found good.³

And Milton does not intend to justify the ways of God to mankind collectively. Rather, he offers the burden of moral choice to the individual. It is only the individual who may strive to realize the spirituality which is at once "more humane, more heavenly" (*PR*, I, 221).

Finally, the hero of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* is the reader.⁴ From the start, the reader has been engaged in the difficult process of moral
choice presented by Satanic strength, and, upon seeing the futility of classical heroism in a moral universe, encounters the image of genuine heroism in the Son's weakness. With the convergence of these moral options upon Adam and Eve, he participates fully in the heroic question posed to man. It is not enough for him to express Sehnsucht for Edenic origins; the hero must be able to transform Romantic longing into a conscious hope that the dream of spiritual liberty is indeed a human potential. And the reader himself thus participates in the revolutionary optimism whereby man's destiny is defined as a spiritual Eden, "A paradise within ... happier far" (XII, 587).
Abstract


Chapter One


5Steadman, Milton's Epic Characters, pp. 236-240.


7Woodhouse, p. 121.


10Steadman, Milton's Epic Characters, pp. 281-294.


12Fish, p. 193.


15Lewis, p. 97.

16Hamilton, p. 40.


22 Lawry, p. 127.


Chapter Two


3 Williams, p. 258.

4 Williams, p. 260.


9 See Mahood, p. 230.


11 Mahood, p. 235.

12 See Jan de Bruyn's discussion on the relation between dramatic structure and the innerness of temptation in the unpublished manuscript, "Innerness in Paradise Regained: A Comment on Structure as an Indicator of the Dramatic Evolution of Temptation."

13 See de Bruyn, p. 4.

14 de Bruyn, p. 6.


Chapter Three

1. John Dryden, as quoted by Mahood, p. 207.


5. Jacques Maritain, as quoted by Mahood, p. 12.


9. Mahood, p. 211.


12. Mahood, p. 182.


15. Mahood, p. 221.


17. Mahood, pp. 221-222.


21 Summers, p. 186.


23 Hutcherson, 12-13.

24 Hutcherson, 13-14.

25 Fish, pp. 92-93.

26 Fish, p. 92.


28 Flannagan, 83.

29 Dr. Johnson, as quoted by Flannagan, 84.

30 James Holly Hanford, as quoted by Dorothy D. Miller, "Eve," JEGP, 61 (1962), 542.


32 Harding, pp. 73-75.


34 Harding, p. 75.


36 Mahood, p. 223.


38 Stein, p. 98.


40 John S. Diekhoff, "Eve, the Devil, and Areopagitica," MLQ, 5 (1944), 434.

41 Steadman, "Eve's Dream and the Conventions of Witchcraft," JHI, 26 (1965), 567.


43 See Frye, The Return of Eden, pp. 77-78.
Conclusion


2 Williams, p. 256.


4 Cf. Fish, pp. 206-207.
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