

PARADISE LOST AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PAGEENTRY

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AND
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PAGEANTRY

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Recent scholarship has added to our knowledge about the court masque, reinforcing its significance for the literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Milton's Comus has profited from such re-assessment so that its high valuation as dramatic literature need no longer be regarded as incompatible with its success as a court masque. The new seriousness of approach to the court masque in general and Milton's Comus in particular provides the impetus for an examination of the rest of Milton's poetic output for the purpose of tracing there the influence of his experience with the complimentary court entertainment.

The court entertainment was encomiastic in intent, this encomium being patterned according to certain conventions. Paradise Lost, which praises God, uses a number of these conventions. Contrary to usual epic practice, Milton does not immortalize worldly conquests and compliment the statesmanship of his nation's leaders. Early notions of a British epic, to use the Arthurian or other indigenous material, were abandoned in favour of a work to celebrate the heavenly king and the spiritual kingdom. In the finished poem epic structures are interpreted in ways suggestive of the influence of court pageantry. Encomium of the heavenly king is expressed in the God-centred structure of Paradise Lost. The whole action of the poem focusses on the throne of the omniscient viewer. The angels sing and dance about this throne as the court danced before royalty in the court entertainment, and even creation is the setting for "a Race of Worshippers"

(VII.630). A foil to the glory of Heaven, provided in the parodic activities of the fallen angels in Hell, suggests the conventions of the antimasque and the comedy of misrule. The victorious reign of Christ is celebrated, as many a pageant celebrated the reign of a seventeenth-century king, in a tournament. A mock battle in which no one is maimed, this culminates in the triumphal entry of Christ himself in a pageant chariot, symbolically banishing, rather than waging battle with, the forces of evil. In Satan's pilgrimage to earth even the traditional epic wanderings are transformed into an allegoric progress. The devices of the court entertainment inform the action of the poem, which is made up of processions, ceremonies and masques. The scenic spectacle, too, is influenced by the theatrical effects and iconography of royal pageantry.

One might expect Heaven and Hell to be presented in terms of allegoric theatre, but in Paradise Lost even the garden itself is a golden world which works according to the pastoral conventions that so often informed court entertainments. Adam and Eve are the poem's legendary rulers. As he describes the pomp of the prelapsarian kingdom, Milton relies on a knowledge of contemporary pageantry. Here such pageantry expresses the perfection of the most perfect earthly kingdom of all. Referring to a legend often used to glorify the British court, Milton says of Paradise: "Hesperian Fables true, / If true, here only" (IV.250-51). To see Paradise Lost in the context of the contemporary pageantry and masque theatre is to see it not as history reconstructed, but as historic incident transmuted through the use of a series of literary devices into encomiastic fiction. The fictional world of the poem is designed to justify the workings of God's creation; it glorifies the providence of the omnipotent creator.

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I

INTRODUCTION

The present essay seeks to study Paradise Lost in the context of the contemporary pageant and masque theatre. From Dryden's time on the theatrical qualities of the poem have always been recognized. In his edition of the poem, Merritt Y. Hughes describes it as "a heightened kind of drama which is too big for the stage and too rich for it in poetic perspectives around the conversations and debates that take up more room than the narrative does."¹ He suggests that dramatic analogues may be found in Greek drama and contemporary seventeenth-century Christian dramas such as Grotius' Adamus Exul and Andreini's L'Adamo. Helen Gardner, among others, has compared Satan to the damned heroes of Elizabethan tragedy. She attempts to show that not only in his soliloquies does he appear like such tragic heroes as Macbeth and Doctor Faustus, but that in the course of Paradise Lost he undergoes a similar deterioration of character.² But the theatre of realistic character does not adequately explain much of Paradise Lost. When Dryden adapted the poem in The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man he found the temptation in the garden the most congenial material; and the concept of Satan as a personality which undergoes development in the

¹John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 173.

²A Reading of "Paradise Lost" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), Appendix A, pp. 99-120.

course of the action is queried by a number of recent studies. Davis P. Harding, for example, discussing the character of Satan in the context of classical allusion, shows that far from deteriorating from heroic fallen angel to bestial, sly serpent, the latter characteristic is seen in Satan from his first appearance, and that "Milton never lets us forget for long that the qualities of the Serpent coexist in Satan along with those of Lucifer, poised and ready, when the right time comes, to perform their work of fraud and destruction."³ There is, after all, barely any human drama present in Paradise Lost.

The plot of the narrative suffers from that inconvenience which Dr. Johnson observed, "that it comprises neither human actions nor human manners."⁴ The allegoric theatre of political disguisings has much more in common with Paradise Lost than the realistic theatre. The epic was traditionally concerned with politics, monarchy and the mythical or legendary ancestry of present rulers. Paradise Lost, dealing with the Christian kingdom, is no exception. But the masque and pageant were also concerned with such themes and, as Paradise Lost does, they referred to contemporary realities while portraying a golden age where human character was typified in the exploits of legendary ancestors. The theatrical vision of Paradise Lost resembles the world of pageantry in that it mingles the supernatural and natural worlds. Such mingling, less characteristic of the naturalistic drama, recalls the theatre of the court entertainment with its gods who descend to earth and its scenes

³The Club of Hercules: Studies in the Classical Background of "Paradise Lost" (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), p. 63.

⁴Lives of the English Poets, ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), I, 181.

where men and gods join together in celebration. This resemblance is further borne out in the use of allegoric rather than realistic settings, particularly as these allegoric settings, the bower of Love, the gate, the throne, the rising palace, are such as one might expect to find in a Stuart masque.

The pageants and court entertainments of the Renaissance involved all facets of the civilization. They combined music, dance, art and literature in displays which glorified the rulers of Renaissance Europe and celebrated ceremonial occasions. Until relatively recently these allegoric displays were only of historic interest, their artistic and literary components being regarded as merely decorative or even as frivolous flattery. However, since the 1950's there has been a steady rise of interest in the masques and pageants as artistic and literary forms. Within the past decade the work of Stephen Orgel has promoted a new understanding of the Jonsonian masque, of its literary merits and aims. In the field of Milton studies such work has helped promote a new willingness to accept Comus as a masque; and the results can be seen in the comprehensive description of the masque genre which precedes the commentary on Comus in the recently published Variorum Commentary on Milton's poetry.⁵ In the field of English civic pageantry, the work of Sydney Anglo⁶ in the Tudor period and of David M. Bergeron⁷ in the

⁵The Minor English Poems, Vol. II of A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton, eds. A. S. P. Woodhouse and Douglas Bush (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

⁶Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

⁷English Civic Pageantry, 1558-1642 (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1971).

Stuart period has provided some analysis of the literary and artistic content and methods of the pageants. More recently, the magnificent edition of the masque designs of Inigo Jones, by Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong,⁸ has made available all of his costume and stage designs still in existence, alongside the texts of most of the Stuart court masques, while the editors' four introductory chapters provide the most comprehensive and up-to-date study of Stuart court entertainment now available. Roy Strong's Splendour at Court,⁹ published at the same time, should also be mentioned here, for it examines the court fête through all of Europe and provides illustrations which conjure up the visual effect of this theatre. In outlining the context of allegorical disguising in contemporary masque and pageant, the context within which Paradise Lost will be examined in this thesis, I shall be particularly indebted to these writers.

The delight in disguise, oratory and spectacle apparent in these theatrical celebrations is seen also in the pastoral disguises in which the Spenserian poets cloaked contemporary Britain, in love lyrics addressed to a Sacharissa or a Chloris, or in the emblematic tendencies of the metaphysical poets. It is a period in which the devices of emblematic iconology and allegoric disguise frequently inform the poetry to a greater or a lesser extent. Sometimes such allegory is used in a quite frivolous manner, but more often an appreciation of an emblematic device is central to understanding the poem. Because it is theatrical

⁸Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court (London: Sotheby, Parke Bernet; and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).

⁹Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973).

and popular, the pageantry of the seventeenth century illustrates clearly how writers of the period might have visualized the icons they describe. In fact, when certain iconographical ideas were repeatedly realized in theatrical terms, eventually the staging itself tended to become part of the iconographical tradition and the delights attendant upon a certain spectacular staging of an idea became part of the cliché.

Although a discussion of the influence of the masque on the poetry of the period as a whole is beyond the scope of this thesis, two examples will serve to illustrate the kind of influence the masque had. A comparison between the performers at a masque, often disguised as choirs of deities, and the choirs of the gods became a cliché. Perhaps John Donne recalled this cliché when, in "Hymne to God my God, in my sicknesse", the choirs of God hymn him, not in the sky, but in a "holy room" in a performance which is very like a musical soirée performed at court in honour of a king. John Donne describes himself as a performer rehearsing his part before he enters. Similarly, when Edmund Waller describes a figure which appears to him in a dream, in the song "Say, lovely dream", he recalls the commonplace, which is the hinge for Samuel Daniel's masque The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses, that the main masque is like a dream vision; so he exclaims, "In heaven itself thou wert drest/ With that angel-like disguise."

From the pageants and entertainments we may discover ways in which to interpret the poetry of the period, particularly that poetry which contains theatrical or allegoric elements. These occasional shows provide hints as to the nature of the spectacle and actions represented in such poetry. In particular Paradise Lost, with its spectacular

theatrical effects, its allusions to myth, its allegorical characters and scenes, can be illuminated by comparisons to pageants and masques. However, while some writers have indicated how masques and pageants are relevant to themes and forms in Renaissance literature, no full study is yet available which examines the relevance of pageantry to the literature of the period, or how court spectacle informs court poetry. Roy Strong acknowledges that the subject of the court fête "borders on virtually every aspect of Renaissance and Baroque civilization"¹⁰ and Stephen Orgel concludes his study of the Jonsonian masque with comments about Jonson's experience with the masque having evidently influenced his poetry;¹¹ but no one, with the exception of John G. Demaray in his study Milton and the Masque Tradition,¹² where he confines his remarks to Milton's minor poetry, has followed up Enid Welsford's remarks, in The Court Masque, on the influence of the masque on poetry. Even Welsford, although suggesting that the masque may have had a broader influence on the poetry of the period, confines herself to suggesting "certain ways in which the masque touched the imagination of Spenser and Milton". Her study of the masque's influence upon Milton is limited to the tracing of verbal and image echoes from the masques in Milton's poetry, and an examination of his use of masque-like allegorical figures. Her most interesting comments are made when she

¹⁰Splendour at Court, p. 8.

¹¹The Jonsonian Masque (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 190-94.

¹²Milton and the Masque Tradition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968). Demaray has also published an article on the masque and Paradise Lost, which I discuss more fully later in the Introduction.

compares the ways in which the staging of pageants and masques may have influenced the way in which these two poets ordered their images. Her remarks are brief but suggestive as she points to the frequent use in Spenser of the processional techniques of the Elizabethan pageant, and to the influence of the more static picture-stage of the Jacobean masque upon the visual effects described by Milton in his poetry, contrasting in this connection the structures of The Faerie Queene and Paradise Lost.¹³

Since Enid Welsford noticed that several scenes in Paradise Lost resemble those in masques, notably certain features of the landscape of Eden, the Messiah's chariot, the gates of Heaven and the rising palace of Pandemonium,¹⁴ several critics have both taken up the hints of her brief comparisons and discovered further resemblances. Northrop Frye shows that the poem seems to have the equivalent of an antimasque, in the opening scenes in Hell. He draws attention to

the extent to which the dramatic form of the Jonsonian masque has informed [the] first three books [of Paradise Lost], a dark and sinister antimasque being followed by a splendid vision of glory. The masque vision moves slowly from heaven down through the starry spheres to Eden. The antimasque modulates into ludicrous disorder of the limbo of vanities, and disappears until it is recalled by Raphael's narrative of an earlier expulsion from heaven.¹⁵

John G. Demaray has shown further that God is a monarch-like viewer who is seated on a throne of state. He writes:

¹³See "The Influence of the Masque on Poetry" in The Court Masque (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), pp. 302-23.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 311-12. See also Merritt Y. Hughes on Pandemonium in his edition of the Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 229.

¹⁵The Return of Eden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 18.

Without minimizing in the slightest the influence of biblical and other works upon Milton's imagination, one can still assert that the opposed thrones of God and Satan placed so far apart in the poet's epic are reflected diminutively in the opposed chairs of the noble peer and the evil Comus placed at opposite ends of the performing space in Comus. Satan's debate in the "scenic" palace of Pandemonium is like Comus' debate in or before his smaller palace in Milton's masque. And God the Father, surrounded by dancing angels but free of noticeable scenic backgrounds, is like the noble peer who, while brightly illuminated during the main masque finale, would have been far from the stage area but circled by dancing main masquers. ¹⁶

Alastair Fowler in his edition of Paradise Lost notes the centrality of Christ's triumphal chariot in the poem. It is the central image numerologically in the first edition and resembles the triumphal chariots which celebrate the sovereignty of allegorical abstractions in Renaissance and Baroque art. In connection with the centrality of this climactic mobile throne or chariot of Christ, Fowler refers to Milton's description of the ideal Christian poet in The Reason of Church Government, who has the power "to celebrate in glorious and lofty Hymns the throne and equipage of Gods Almightyesse". ¹⁷

These features, Frye's antimasque which serves as a foil to heavenly brightness and glory, Demaray's choirs of angels which circle the enthroned Deity, and Fowler's chariot in which the Son rides triumphant before the Father, together suggest that Milton may have borrowed the idea of the king-centered spectacle from the masque, in

¹⁶"The Thrones of Satan and God: Backgrounds to Divine Opposition in Paradise Lost", The Huntington Library Quarterly, 31 (1967-68), 21-23.

¹⁷Alastair Fowler, Introduction to Paradise Lost and note to VI. 749-59 of that poem in The Poems of John Milton, eds. John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London and Harlow: Longman, 1968), pp. 447, 763-64. Fowler's note to VI. 762-63, referring to Valeriano and Ripa, illustrates the emblematic nature of this chariot.

order to demonstrate the glory of the King of Heaven in his poem.

To read Paradise Lost as an allegory in the way masque and pageant were allegorical, and to see in its shape the influence of seventeenth-century celebratory theatre, is not to negate its obvious epic qualities. Earlier drafts of Paradise Lost may be dramatic in nature, but Milton indicates clearly that the finished poem is intended as an epic. In his introductory comments on the structure of his verse he places himself in the mainstream of epic tradition: "The measure is English Heroic Verse without Rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin".¹⁸ As he begins the poem, he imitates carefully the formal opening of the classical epic.¹⁹ Paradise Lost asserts eternal providence and justifies the ways of God to man, and in his encomium of the heavenly king and celebration of the kingdom of God Milton's intention parallels both that of the writers of traditional epic and that of the contemporary court masque.

However, although Milton treats the subject of epics, encomiastic history, using the traditional form of the epic poem, he

¹⁸John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 210.

¹⁹See R. W. Condee, "The Formalized Openings of Milton's Epic Poems", JEGP, L (1951), 502-08; and also Davis P. Harding, The Club of Hercules. Harding observes that

[Milton's exordium] begins with a statement of the subject matter of the poem, and this is followed by the invocation to the Muse. Then, at the end of the exordium proper, Milton announces his main theme, the justification of God's ways to Man. Finally, he introduces his narrative by means of a rhetorical question. These are all epic conventions, sanctified by Homeric and Virgilian precedent, but Milton does not use them simply for their prestige value. He is telling his readers something they need to know; that he is serving advance notice on them of the particular tradition in which he will be writing his poem and, by implication, inviting the sort of comparison that will lead to a clearer realization of what he himself is contributing to that tradition, or has tried to contribute but failed. (p. 34)

borrowed many of his ideas about the presentation of history from more contemporary sources. Although he is not influenced here entirely by the masque and pageant, these genres provide an illuminating context in which to assess what Milton is attempting to do. Once Milton has invoked his epic muse and stated his epic intentions, what he presents before his readers is not a simple narrative of events and a recreation of naturalistic characters, as one might expect in the traditional epic style. Rather, he describes a vision which is now present to his view-- not a record of historical events. This vision is particularly theatrical and allegoric, resembling pageant tableaux, emblematic paintings or the dream vision world of the masque.²⁰ Instructed by his Muse, Milton proceeds to "say first" the "cause" of man's fall, which involves introducing the reader, as Virgil had done, to the interest of the gods in human affairs and, following Homer in the Iliad, establishing an emotional impetus for the action. In Paradise Lost, however, the being

whose guile
Stirr'd up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd
The Mother of Mankind (I. 34-36),

though a sort of god, now fallen from Heaven, is also emblemized immediately as "infernal Serpent", an ensign which constantly marks him, forming a continual commentary upon his actions.²¹ While keeping

²⁰Cf. the title of a masque by Samuel Daniel, The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses.

²¹Cf. Davis P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp. 52-66. Harding selects the numerous allusions to classical literature which hint at Satan's monstrous serpentine and dragon-like qualities. These continual allusions to Satan's monstrosity Harding uses to refute those critics of the Satanist school who, reading Satan's actions on a level of psychological narrative, find in him an exemplary heroism. Of the

to epic tradition which found first causes in the jealousies of the gods, Milton also follows the method of the Renaissance mythologists who discovered mysterious truths shadowed forth in the names and deeds of antiquity. More particularly, his treatment resembles that of masque and pageant writers who conjure up these mythological beings in the "now" of tableaux in which, accompanied by some sign which identifies them, they are depicted so as to recall some instructive legend. One might see Hercules with his club choosing between Pleasure and Virtue as in Jonson's Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, or Circe with her wand amid the men she changes to beasts, as in Ulysses and Circe and Tempe Restored.²² The cause of the fall, which interests Milton, is not Satan's envy, as that is seen as a psychological impetus in the narrative. He opens the poem by presenting a vision of Envy, as that quality is precisely located in a particular icon: the leader of the rebel angels at "what time his Pride / Had cast him out of Heav'n", his revengeful envy emblemized in the portrait of him as "infernal Serpent".²³ This

first three books of Paradise Lost Harding writes:

In these books there are two kinds of veiled allusion which perform the task of systematic disparagement, allusions to deformed giants who warred on Jove and allusions to serpents or dragons. Both kinds are at work the very first time we really see Satan in the poem. This is the well-known passage in which he is described as lying half-submerged on the Burning Lake. (pp. 52-53)

²²Cf. John C. Meagher's account of this tradition of allegorizing the classics as it affected the way in which poets, and particularly masque writers, employed classical mythology, in Method and Meaning in Jonson's Masques (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), pp. 39-41.

²³Cf. the emblems of Pride and Envy in Edward A. Maser's edition of Ripa's Iconologia, Cesare Ripa: Baroque and Rococo Pictorial Imagery. The 1758-60 Hertel Edition of Ripa's Iconologia (New York: Dover, 1971). On page 57, "Invidia" has hair of serpents, "the evil thoughts of Envy,

picture of Envy is based on the authority of the biblical narrative, although (as is Milton's wont throughout the poem) the portrait is amplified by the knowledge of ancient and later writers, his inheritance as a Renaissance poet.

Milton was not the only English poet to write a long poem which, while claiming descent from classical sources, used narrative allegorically in the fashion of Renaissance mythologists. Spenser, whose tales of a chivalric fairyland Milton found "sage and serious", provided Milton with a precedent. While beginning his Faerie Queene in a manner that announces his intention to follow the pattern of Virgil,²⁴ Spenser also acknowledges his debt to the allegorical method of the Renaissance festival pageant.²⁵ Spenser intended his Faerie Queene to be read, not as a series of knightly adventures, but as a series of pageants whose action pointed to an allegory. This intention is articulated as the Red Cross Knight takes leave of Guyon at the beginning of Book II, when Guyon is about to embark upon his adventures: "But you, faire Sir, whose

who is always spreading poison", and on page 126 "Superbia", the religious fatto, depicts Michael casting the rebel angels down to Hell. In Middleton's pageant The Triumph of Truth, the figure of Envy is also accompanied by serpents.

²⁴Cf. the proem to the first book:

Lo, I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepherd's weeds;
Am now enforst to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds.

But note how this stanza ends (emphasis mine): "Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall Moralize my song." (All quotations from The Faerie Queene are from the edition of J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt for Oxford Standard Authors, London, 1912.)

²⁵Cf. Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 303.

pageant next enswes / Well mote you thee" (II.i.33). In the letter to Raleigh Spenser explains that the kind of history he is recounting is the kind which pageants portray:

The beginning therefore of my history, if it were to be told by an Historiographer, should be the twelfth booke, which is the last, where I devise that the Faery Queene kept her Annual feaste xii dayes, upon which xii severall dayes, the occasions of the xii severall adventures hapned, which being undertaken by xii severall knights,²⁶ are in these xii books severally handled and discoursed.

The historical fact with which the historiographer's account of The Faerie Queene would begin would be the entertainments of a monarch, and such an account would record festivities which were performed to her glory. Now Spenser, in inventing such a historical fact, is clearly being witty, as the excessive repetition of "xii severall" would also indicate; but for all this, the point of the witty explanations would still seem to be an attempt to indicate the way in which the continued allegory or dark conceit of the poem is to be read.²⁷ Such a reading is further upheld by the numerous episodes which are clearly inspired by procession and pageantry; such episodes are the masque procession in the

²⁶From "A Letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke: Which for that it giveth great light to the Reader, for the better understanding is here unto annexed" as printed in The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, p. 408.

²⁷One must remember that by the analogy Spenser is appealing to an experience as immediate to the Renaissance audience as is the film to a modern reader. Cf. also Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 306, as she comments upon Spenser's apology (in II.i.1-5):

An Elizabethan audience would have no difficulty in accepting this apology; for when Spenser represented Elizabeth as Queen of Fairyland, when he set forth the national ideal and virtues, dressed up as knights and ladies, moving across a charming but conventional background, he was merely translating the doings at Kenilworth, Eltham, Norwich and Bristol into a more interesting and imaginative language.

house of Busyrane and the entertainment of Lucifera.

The history of Paradise Lost is similarly the history of the allegorical poet rather than that of the historiographer. At one extreme Spenser fabricated his history and the geography of his fairyland, and at the other Milton based his poem upon the supreme authority of biblical history. Many readers have been persuaded by the authenticity of the history which informs Paradise Lost into reading the poem as a narrative of historical events. For example, I can agree with Isabel MacCaffrey that "Milton set out in Paradise Lost to embody the history of the true local Garden; from the contemplation of this unique piece of history was to be deduced a justification of God's ways."²⁸ But I cannot accept her suggestion that this embodiment of history which is the poem is to be read literally as narrated history. This statement will perhaps appear less heretical if one examines the difficulties posed by such a reading as MacCaffrey's. She argues that Paradise Lost uses myth "directly" in contrast to "oblique references" to it in such works as The Faerie Queene or The Pilgrim's Progress, that it both records the "archetypal event" and evokes the resonances of later types. She continues with a side-stepping typical of the reader who assumes that Milton records history, as he sees it, literally:

Although Milton, like Spenser and Bunyan, would have laid stress on the "spiritual" significance of his story, and its continuing relevance to our own lives, he would also have insisted, as they would not have done in quite the same way, on the validity of its literal "appearances" as he presented them. In spite of token apologies scattered through the poem ("thus measuring things in Heav'n by things on Earth"), Milton claimed, not idly, that he was accurately

²⁸"Paradise Lost" as "Myth" (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 22.

depicting "things invisible to mortal sight," "things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime." We need not, and cannot, measure precisely the degree of literalness that he meant to confer on each detail of the poem, though a reader of Christian Doctrine will agree that it is greater than casual acquaintance might suggest. What we must recognise is Milton's conviction that, allowing for the inevitable margin of error, he was portraying fact. The claim for the truth of events is absolute; these things happened; for the truth of images--the poem's places and personages--less absolute, but still insistent that the qualities and potencies bodied forth in them are real. ²⁹

But what are the events of the poem, the appearances that Milton presents? Would they not include such tableaux as Satan talking to Sin and Death at Hell's Gate, the construction of Pandemonium Palace in Hell, a lunch upon the lawns with Raphael for Adam and Eve, Sin and Death building a concrete causeway, and Satan's army bombarding the troops of God with cannons? What kind of validity would Milton give these events? MacCaffrey confuses the events of the historical myth and the events of the poem. This may seem a cavil, but if one is to determine the shape of the work of art which is the poem, rather than the shape which Milton's imagination gives to the myth which informs it, it is an important one. Paradise Lost, like a masque, includes figures of varying literal consistencies; characters from history, legendary and barely historical angels such as Abdiel, and allegories like Sin and Death.

The inclusion of the allegorical characters Sin and Death in the poem has been a stumbling block for literal-minded critics from Dr. Johnson's time to the present day. Dr. Johnson himself wrote that Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin

²⁹Ibid., p. 21.

is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell; but when they stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. ³⁰

Dr. Johnson read Paradise Lost as if it were a historical tale, and was clearly not able to envisage the kind of vision of history which Milton was portraying, in which Satan may encounter Sin and Death in the same sort of allegorical context as Hercules could encounter Pleasure and Virtue in Jonson's masque. Modern critics have recognized the integral rôle of these characters in this powerfully moving poem and have tried to explain their inclusion. Anne Davidson Ferry writes:

The inclusion of Sin and Death can partially be explained by the demands of Milton's Biblical material or his epic theory or his theological doctrine. The sanctity of the source for his narrative obviously prevented Milton from inventing characters or events not authorized by Scripture, yet the preface for poetic variety within epic unity encouraged him to elaborate the bare story from Genesis. Allegorical abstraction was the obvious method by which he might include more characters and events without claiming to rewrite sacred history. ³¹

MacCaffrey's explanation is more elaborate. Like Ferry, she believes that these characters are invented to fill out the poem; to be faithful to the great archetype of the journey which Milton intended to include in his poem, "he had to include the trials of traditional quest-literature, and so Sin, Death, and the kingdom of Chaos are stationed in Satan's path". ³² The consistency she argues for the mélange of mythical and allegorical figures is that Sin and Death inhabit those

³⁰Life of Milton, Lives of the English Poets, I, 185-86.

³¹Milton's Epic Voice: The Narrator in "Paradise Lost" (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 129.

³²"Paradise Lost" as "Myth", p. 197.

parts of the poem which "contain the favourite theme of allegory", and that Satan as fallen creature when he encounters them "is already beginning to live in a world of allegorical symbols instead of myth". For MacCaffrey these figures represent a transition between the mythical and the fallen worlds:

When they enter the fallen world they represent the last stage of Milton's mythical presentation. He had promised to tell how the Fall "brought Death into the World" and, since the story in its main outline was mythical, the invasion of earth's frail shell by a literal concrete Death was necessary. . . . Once the fall has taken place, the myth recedes into memory, to be replaced by new modes of experience. . . . With Eve's sin (that is, when, with a sinful act, Sin became "actual"), a part of the archetype is separated from itself, and the fragment lodged in the human soul. Henceforth, because sin will be so widespread, no single representation of her can be complete; Milton's is the last full-length portrait before the destruction of archetypes.³³

When such ingenuity is required to explain the inclusion of so integral a part of Milton's poem, surely the hypotheses from which these critics begin to construct their theories ought to be re-examined.

The shape of The Faerie Queene and the presentation of historical events within that poem suggest that Spenser's poetic methods were similar to those of the creators of the Tudor pageants. The shape of the poem and the way history and myth are used in Paradise Lost recall more particularly the seventeenth-century court entertainment. The peculiarities of Paradise Lost as a history of the Fall are evident in the unbiblical episodes in the narrative. Satan's ascent to earth is an epic journey, but is conveyed by a series of allegorical encounters. The events upon earth, where Milton does have the Genesis story as biblical basis, are similarly rendered in an unhistorical fashion. The descent of

³³Ibid., pp. 197-98.

Raphael and his presentation of a moral entertainment in the form of his account of the heavenly tournament, in which angels, like gods in the masque, do battle in human costume, and also Michael's histories which are presented in a series of visions, not only reshape and add to history, but bring to mind the devices of the pageant. Paradise Lost is a meditation upon the Fall rather than a history of it; and it may be helpful to consider its narrative as a series of imaginative scaffolds, upon each of which some aspect of the fall of man is presented for our examination, disguised in a pageant-like fashion.

II

MASQUE AND PAGEANTRY IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

i

The pageantry and masques of the seventeenth century provide an informative context in which to study any iconographical work of that period because, as they are festive theatre, they present many common themes and concerns in a spectacular and fairly obvious form. Pageant and display celebrated events in many areas of English social life. There were lavish and formal court masques performed at royal banquets, and less extravagant entertainments performed in aristocratic houses. The common people watched the civic pageants which celebrated the investiture of a new mayor or which graced the progress of the king. The Renaissance love of chivalry lived on in tilts and barriers at court and mock battles on city rivers or in public places. The inns of court and the universities had their solemn and parody celebrations, where festive occasions were celebrated with high ceremony or mock solemnity. The inns of court held extensive festivities over the Christmas season, masques, banquets, the mock investiture of the Christmas Prince of Misrule, and parody ceremony in his honour.¹ Milton's "At a Vacation Exercise in the College" provides evidence of similar festive ceremony at the universities.

¹See, for example, the lengthy accounts of the 1594 Christmas festivities in John Nichols, ed., The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth (London, 1823), III, 262-352.

The chief function of these festivities was the celebration of a person or an occasion, or a festive parody of such homage. But what distinguished the masque or pageant from mere games and dancing was that the activities of each of these celebratory forms were given point by some allegory. An entertaining mock battle was made morally relevant because it was between heathen Turks and Christian Englishmen; a tableau at the barriers turned the athletic display into a demonstration that the British court could yet boast the heroic virtue of the golden age of chivalry, and the action of the masque was designed likewise to make the graceful movement of the dancing a morally revealing exercise. In one of the more ingenious of Jonson's masques, Neptune's Triumph, even the banquet meal is allegorized.² The civic and court festivities were occasions for elaborate displays in which the glories of the court or city were celebrated as much by a show of munificence in the lavish splendour of the tableaux and trappings as by the allegory of virtue which the tableaux presented. In Britain such pageantry achieved a peak of scenic splendour and literary sophistication in the Stuart court masque. Both because the court masque is designed to celebrate kings, and because it is the most literary of the allegorical entertainments, the theatrical qualities of Paradise Lost seem to derive more influence from this form than from other entertainments.

If the court masque was the most lavish and subtle of the

²This was not unusual. In Comus, by implication, the temperance of the Ludlow dancing and banquet is praised in comparison with the staged foil of the dancing and banquet hall of Comus in his dark wood. Roy Strong in Splendour at Court, Plate II, provides an interesting illustration depicting an allegorical banquet at Rivoli for the birthday of Duchess Christina of Savoy in 1643.

seventeenth-century entertainments, it shared its basic principles of design with the simpler forms. It too doubled as a celebratory display which was given a form and raison d'être by a moral allegory. Masque and pageant writers typically discuss the "body" and the "soul" of their works, the body being the spectacle erected for the occasion, the soul being the ideal it represents. The literary theory that lies behind the poetry of these celebrations is Platonic, for they are allegories in which the audience's task is to discern through the body of the spectacle an idealized version of the event celebrated, which is there displayed in disguised form. Pageantry is thus principally allegoric display; its basic unit is not the progressive conflicts of the drama but the static and emblematic spectacle of the tableau.

Although the Stuart court masque focussed on a stage performance it was not a drama. It did not show characters in conflict or present a narrative for any intrinsic interest in story. It was a means of providing a theme for an evening's dancing. The court disguised themselves to play appropriate roles in an evening's make-believe, and the masquers moved out of the allegorical tableaux in which they were first presented on the masque stage to give meaning to the dancing which they then led. The court masque was, however, more than merely a fancy-dress ball in the context of a flattering moral allegory; it served a definite political purpose.³ The action depicted an idealized vision of contemporary Britain by allegorically suggesting that it represented the golden age of myth, and that the British king and his court possessed

³For a fuller outline of the political significance and context of the Stuart masques, see the introductory chapters by Stephen Orgel in Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court.

such virtues as the legendary heroes and the gods were famed for. In Charles' reign in particular, as Orgel points out, the Neoplatonic idealization of the court became an assertion of the divine right of kings. Orgel quotes a statement of Inigo Jones which illustrates well how the public demonstration of the royal virtue could be conceived to be a means of asserting that right: "In Heroic Virtue is figured the King's majesty, who therein transcends as far common men as they are above beasts, he being the only prototype to all the kingdoms under his monarchy of religion, justice, and all virtues joined together."⁴

Basic to the "soul" of the masque is the Renaissance interest in allegorical classical fables. The masque discerned in contemporary events a relation to a mythical prototype, a relationship which ideally brought the wisdom of the ancients to bear upon the present, providing a context in which to judge events. The "plot" of Ben Jonson's Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue will show how such legendary material was shaped in a masque. The plot described present realities by alluding to the past.⁵ It did not re-enact past events as the historical tragedy did. When Prince Charles made his masque début in Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, Jonson mythologized the occasion in terms of the moralized Hercules

⁴Tempe Restored, lines 356-60. This quotation, and an excellent analysis of the political relevance of the masque in Charles' reign, is found in the chapter "Platonic Politics" in Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court.

⁵Cf. Ben Jonson in Hymenaei, lines 13-17, speaking of the fables of royal celebrations or shows, which should be "most high and hearty inventions to furnish the inward parts, and those grounded upon antiquity and solid learnings; which, though their voice be taught to sound to present occasions, their sense or doth or should always lay hold on more removed mysteries." (The Complete Masques, ed. Stephen Orgel [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969], pp. 75-76)

story, the subject of numerous emblems in which Hercules chooses between opposing paths along which figures representing vice and virtue beckon him.⁶ Hercules, as one who has deliberately chosen the path of heroic virtue, becomes a model of such for the young Renaissance gentleman.⁷

This myth is thus very appropriate to the masque début of a young prince about to choose his bride, for Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue was performed at a time when political focus was on the proposed marriage between Charles and the Infanta of Spain, and it was performed before the Spanish ambassador. The audience witnesses the triumphs of Hercules before Mount Atlas, symbolic of another achievement of Hercules very appropriate in the context of the masque début of the crown prince. For Atlas taught Hercules

all the learning of the sphere,
And how, like him, thou might'st the heavens up-bear,⁸
As that thy labor's virtuous recompense. (ll. 117-19)

The climax of the masque comes when Mount Atlas opens spectacularly to reveal the Prince as an example of one educated in virtue and about to choose his bride. The Prince and his young lords descend from this hill of virtuous knowledge onto the adjacent flat space of the dance floor, which thus becomes, while the myth lasts, the pleasure gardens of the

⁶Stephen Orgel, The Jonsonian Masque, discusses this Renaissance treatment of the Hercules myth briefly, reprinting one of these emblems (Fig. 1, facing p. 150) from Whitney's A Choice of Emblems.

⁷The commonplace quality of the idea by Milton's day is apparent in Milton's advice to young Richard Jones, couched in terms of the Hercules myth: "remember that the path is common so far to virtue and vice, that you have yet to advance to where the path divides itself in two". (From a familiar letter "To the Noble Youth Richard Jones", Dec. 20, 1659; The Works of John Milton, gen. ed. F. A. Patterson [New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-38], XII, 113.)

⁸The Complete Masques, p. 269.

Hesperides.

Because it is basically a display, the action of the court masque centres on a hinge or device connected with the operation of a piece of stage machinery which brings together the allegorical characters. The "plot" of the masque generally incorporates an assortment of mythical, allegorical and real characters. Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue includes Comus, whose presence refers to the Circe-Ulysses myth, Hercules in his Hesperidian labour, the personifications of Pleasure and Virtue with their reference further to a different episode in the Hercules story, and Prince Charles, who figures as himself and as a model of princely education. These characters are organized by a sketchy narrative-line surrounding the operation of the stage machinery. The result is a moral design rather than a story. When the emblem is complete, evil is manifestly banished; characters propitious to the moment appear, so that the mountain of virtuous knowledge will miraculously open to discover the Prince ready to make his début in the Hesperidian pleasure gardens of the court ballroom.

Masques more reliant on spectacle than upon the wit of some happily appropriate emblem to moralize the occasion were likely to consist, weakly, of a series of discoveries, each reliant upon a marvellous device. Davenant and Jones' Salamacida Spolia, with its succession of breath-taking scene changes and characters descending upon clouds, is such a masque. First a curtain flies up to reveal "a horrid scene . . . of storm and tempest" in which furies dance an antimasque. This is banished by harmonious music and the appearance of a beautiful country scene, into which descends a chariot seating the Good Genius of

Great Britain with suitable attendants. This entry is followed by a recurrence of the antimasque dances, twenty of them, purporting to be examples of the people's folly. These over, the scene changes again to "craggy rocks and inaccessible mountains" representing the difficult way to the Throne of Honour, in which His Majesty is soon spectacularly discovered as "the further part of the scene disappeared". But the discoveries do not end here, for soon the Queen descends on a huge cloud of various colours to join him, and the formal dances then take place. After these, the final scenic triumph is presented to both their majesties; a perspective scene of a city above which not one, but a series of clouds filled with deities descend.

This masque illustrates well several of the spectacular scenic devices which Jones, modelling his work on continental examples, designed for the masque stage.⁹ Such devices include removal of one backdrop to discover a second behind it; the use of stage machinery to facilitate the descent of the gods (who appeared to descend from the height of the scene upon clouds or in aerial chariots); mountains or palaces which rose from the floor or descended as the king's throne of honour does; and the use of a series of flats to give an effect of perspective to a scene. Typical iconographical devices are seen here too: the "horrid scene" of hell or tempest,¹⁰ the pastoral idyll, the mountain, the throne, and a city scene which provides a backdrop to

⁹See Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court, where the existing illustrations for this masque, and for all of the other masques designed by Jones, are reproduced and discussed.

¹⁰Such scenes, very relevant to Book I of Paradise Lost, occur also in the Masque of Queens and Britannia Triumphans.

action.¹¹

However, the allegory describes the political relevance of all this extravagant machinery. The king is enshrined in a throne of honour and surrounded by a loving people. In a further apotheosis he is joined by the queen, whose heavenly virtues are signified in her descent from the skies; the production culminated in a scene revealing an ideal city amid which deities descended upon clouds to hymn the peace and harmony inspired by the virtuous rule of Charles and Maria.¹² The authors' description of the "Subject" of this masque shows that confusion of actual and allegorical worlds characteristic of the masque:

Discord, a malicious Fury, appears in a storm and by the invocation of malignant spirits . . . having already put most of the world into disorder, endeavours to disturb these parts. . . . These incantations are expressed by those spirits in an Anti-masque; who on a sudden are surprised and stopped in their motion by a secret power, whose wisdom they tremble at. . . . This secret wisdom, in the person of the King . . . under the name of Philogenes or Lover of his People, hath his appearance prepared by a Chorus, representing the beloved people, and is instantly discovered . . . in the Throne of Honour.¹³

The subject of the masque refers to the present rather than to myth. In the main masque, discoveries deify the King and Queen while they retain their real-life rôles. Similarly, Prince Charles in Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue is both himself and a model of princely education, and in Oberon Prince Henry is a fairy prince in the same way that Elizabeth I

¹¹Cf. Paradise Lost XI.660-71, the scene before the city gates, or the scene of the town and castle of Ludlow in Comus.

¹²The masque was performed almost on the eve of the outbreak of civil war, and its threat is discerned in the masque. T. J. B. Spencer (A Book of Masques: In Honour of Allardyce Nicoll, gen. ed. G. E. Bentley [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967], p. 339) notes that "The purpose of this masque--a kind of exorcism of the spirit of Discord--is apparent from the beginning".

¹³Salamacida Spolia, ll. 1-15; A Book of Masques, p. 347.

is the Faerie Queene of Spenser's poem. In Milton's Comus Alice Egerton is both herself and "the Lady", an example of chaste lady-hood.

When Charles I (as he often did) performed in his masques, the stage was the focus of the performance. This was, however, a new development occasioned by Charles' tastes. The Jacobean and Tudor masques were usually performed before the monarch, who thus rivalled the stage itself as a centre of attention. Masques were traditionally performed to honour a governor; all action on stage was directed towards him, expressing the homage of his subjects. At the Jacobean masque he was the chief spectator, and from where he sat the perspective scenery of the masque stage appeared in best focus. Such an honoured guest was ushered in state to a special viewing dais prepared for him, a dais suitably decorated and lit. Not only is the formal entrance of the honoured guest often written into the masque, but the performance itself often begins with some device to make him a participator in the action and not merely a spectator.¹⁴

As Douglas Bush observes of the masque in his introduction to Comus, "the structural principle of the masque is found in the necessity of getting the dancers into position and bringing the complimenters to the complimented. It is therefore essentially processional."¹⁵ Bush, however, does not fully emphasize a second structural feature of the masque: contrast between masque and anti-masque. The masque was not merely a procession, it was a triumphal

¹⁴Cf. the openings of The Masque of Queens, The Triumph of Peace and Comus.

¹⁵A. S. P. Woodhouse and Douglas Bush, eds., A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton, II, 741.

procession in spirit and part of its function was to display, so to speak, the spoils of war.¹⁶ Very early examples of the English court entertainment contain this element of battle and triumph. It is seen in the Tudor entertainments of barriers and tournaments. More interesting patterns entered the court entertainment from the moral battles of the morality play and religious allegory and from the moralized battles of the courtly romance. The processional form was influenced by Petrarch's Trionfi and by its imitators and illustrators. In these Trionfi the "Triumph of Love" is first celebrated in a procession of famous lovers, only to be followed by "the Triumph of Chastity over Love" and the successive triumphs of Death, Fame, Time and Eternity.¹⁷

Jonson's The Masque of Queens incorporates a number of these influences. The masque opens with a scene depicting the traditional hell-mouth of religious painting and morality play, from which issues several witches representing vices. The main masque procession illustrates the triumph of virtue over vice as the arrival of the queen with her ladies causes the hellish scene and its occupants to disappear. The queen is presented to the king as Bel-Anna, the embodiment of all

¹⁶Cf. the king's throne in Salamacida Spolia (ll. 332-34) in A Book of Masques, p. 357, under which lie bound captives and trophies of armor, shields and antique weapons.

¹⁷D. D. Carnicelli, in his edition of Lord Morley's "Triumphes of Fraunces Petrarcke" (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), writes of the Elizabethan triumph that "few of these spectacles included distinctly Petrarchan themes; . . . most of these entries, processions, and progresses had little direct connection with Petrarch's Trionfi. Nevertheless, as was the case with the early Tudor poetry, Petrarchan themes and conventions such as the use of allegorical figures of Chastity and Fame and the introduction of the triumphal chariot and throngs of followers made their way into these pageants by way of the artists and illustrators." (p. 55)

virtue, possessor of all the virtues of her eleven queenly attendants from ancient history. The virtuous queen banishes the witches, who embody vices, and rides at the head of her procession of historic queens to a "full triumphant music".¹⁸ The masque celebrates the fame of the queen of Britain by showing an allegory of the triumph of her virtue over vice.

Jonson was not the inventor of the antimasque, although he did perfect the particular balance of masque and antimasque dances which is characteristic of the Jacobean court masque. From early Tudor times the moral battle was used to precede and give meaning to the dancing. Enid Welsford quotes an excellent example of such an entertainment, performed in 1522, in which the entertainment concerns a besieged castle, the allegorical device found alike in religious and courtly allegories, in The Castle of Perseverance and The Romance of the Rose. Welsford quotes from Hall's history of Henry VIII an account of this entertainment:

In the year 1522 Wolsey invited the King and ambassadors of the Emperor to a supper-party. When the meal was finished he brought his guests into a great chamber, at the end of which was a large towered castle kept by eight ladies in Milanese costumes called 'Beautie, Honor,' etc., and underneath the fortress sat more ladies dressed as Indians who were called 'Dangier, Distain,' etc. The castle was attacked by eight lords, chief of whom was the king, called 'Amorous, Nobleness, Youth,' etc. These were led on by one dressed in crimson satin adorned with burning flames of gold, who urged the ladies to yield, but was defied by Scorne and Disdain. Then to a great peal of guns, and encouraged by Desire the Knights hurled dates and oranges

¹⁸The influence of Petrarch's Trionfi is evident in this idea. See Carnicelli, p. 67. Carnicelli notes the extent to which Jonson is influenced by the Triumphal tradition stemming from Petrarch in this work. Of the masque's central device he writes: "Fama bona [whom Carnicelli notes is borrowed from Ripa] turns and speaks to Vertue to enlist her aid in presenting a triumph of Fame; that triumph contains all the details of the Petrarchan trionfo, derived from Cesare Ripa's Iconologia, from the triumphal pageant, and from Renaissance representations of the Trionfi."

at the castle, which the ladies defended with rose-water and comfits. At last lady Scorne and her followers were driven away and 'then the lordes toke the ladies of honor as prysoners by the handes and brought them doune, and daunced together verye pleasauntly'.¹⁹

This pattern of contrasting allegorical figures is seen in the Jacobean masque in the triumph of Hercules over wanton pleasure in Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, in the defeat of Comus, figure of riot and drunkenness, by the noble children masquers in Comus. The guest of honour often symbolically decides the contest as in Sidney's entertainment The Lady of May, or Jonson's Love Freed, in which the king is the answer to the riddle Love must know to be freed.

Another element which became incorporated into the antimasque portion of the court entertainment was the burlesque or 'antic' dance. The association of riot and frivolity with the seasons of festivity is traditional, and indeed most court masques were performed during the Christmas season. In many great houses of England during the Renaissance a mock lord was elected to arbitrate over the festive laws of the holiday season. The inns of court held extensive Christmas festivities, each court having its festive prince or Lord of Misrule. This Christmas season was both a time of "solemn fooleries",²⁰ of elaborate mock

¹⁹Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, pp. 125-26, quoting Edward Hall's life of Henry VIII in The Lives of the Kings (London, 1904), I, 239-40 (13th year).

²⁰A. Wigfall Green, in The Inns of Court and Early English Drama (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931) describes some of these ceremonial fooleries (pp. 56-88) and also describes the sort of nocturnal escapade typical of the Prince of Misrule and his followers (pp. 93-94). He quotes the example of the midnight volley of cannon which alarmed the court and city of London with fears of an insurrection. Such pranks, and more particularly the lack of law and order in the courts over the Christmas period of revelry, became a source of anger and concern in the seventeenth century.

ceremony, and of a continual party atmosphere conducive to riot and pranks. The dance of the goats in Jonson's For the Honour of Wales is a good example of the sort of burlesque and foolery typically part of festive entertainment. However, the characteristics of misrule were manifested not only by riotous, but also by indecorous behaviour. While misrule reigned nobles dressed as commoners and commoners paraded as nobility. Such misrule is found in the playful The Masque of Gypsies, in the association of Titania and Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and in the numerous antimasques of Ben Jonson, in which common characters take it upon themselves to perform the glorious masque for the king. These festive comic interludes, which were frequently incorporated into the court masque from popular sources,²¹ proved so popular that they proliferated and tended to become unrelated to the "hinge" of the masque. Bacon in his essay Of Masques and Triumphs finds it necessary to recommend that they be short, and Jonson in his The Masque of Augurs (ll. 242-46) shows his impatience with current trends.

The comic and the grotesque are, however, important elements in satire. In religious allegory comedy had always been associated with evil, and the devils and vices of the morality play were comic characters.²² It was in this spirit of satire, then, that the more serious masque writers used the comic antics of vicious characters. Ben

²¹See particularly Jonson's Christmas His Masque, for which R. J. E. Tiddy's The Mummer's Play (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923) provides a valuable background.

²²Cf. Bernard Spivack's analysis of the Vice of the morality play in Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor In Relation to his Major Villains (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); see especially p. 121.

Jonson, despite his complaints in The Masque of Augurs, consistently provides a carefully integrated antimasque, and a chronological examination of his masques shows him experimenting more with this section than with the main masque proper, in order to develop the masque as a serious literary form.²³ Milton also, realizing the powerful didactic possibilities of the comic element, if tactfully employed, included the fashionable comic dances in Comus. Though the antimasque interludes of the court entertainment degenerate into frivolous comedy turns, the old didacticism of the morality play is never entirely lost. Even in the extensive frivolity of the twenty antimasque dances of Salamacida Spolia there is an element of satire, for they represent "the people's folly".

The structure of the masque, then, consists typically of an antimasque, generally a series of grotesque dances, followed by the main masque spectacle which concerns the descent or appearance of the gods and the establishment of a golden world of peace and harmony. The antimasque was a comic diversion performed by professional actors, while the main masque was the central part of the entertainment, for it was in this part that the spectacular device, the operation of which served as the climax of the masque, revealed the masqued nobles ready to dance with the audience. The movement of the masquers towards the audience served to include the entire hall in the allegory, uniting masquers and audience in a harmony of music and movement for a brief space of time. Usually the masque opened with some kind of prologue, necessary to

²³Jonson presents his conception of the value of the comic antimasque most clearly in his introductory comments to The Masque of Queens, ll. 15-19; The Complete Masques, pp. 122-23.

introduce the allegory to the audience so that they could grasp its significance. The action is completed often with a kind of epilogue which dispels the illusion that has bound the company together.²⁴ Not only does the glamour of the occasion transform the banquet hall, but the myth and poetry of the masque create a Platonic golden world of harmony and virtue. The banquet hall is thus imagined to become a heavenly world for a brief space, a dwelling place for the gods. Ben Jonson's concluding remarks to the Hymenaei masque describe the transitory magic of these entertainments: "Such was the exquisite performance, as (beside the pomp, splendor, or what we may call apparelling of such presentments) that alone, had all else been absent was of power to surprise with delight, and steal away the spectators from themselves" (ll. 522-26).²⁵ The element of magic and wonder is an important aspect of the masque. The central scenic device is usually some marvellous spectacle: one of Inigo Jones' palaces which rise suddenly amid the scene, or his magnificent displays of colour, light and mechanical ingenuity. In Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, at the confluence of propitious signs Mount Atlas opens miraculously, and the audience are asked to imagine themselves in the Hesperidian pleasure gardens for the evening. In more literary masques this magic is created by the wisdom of the poet, and his ability to conjure up, by the

²⁴ See John G. Demaray's outline of the parts of the masque in Milton and the Masque Tradition, pp. 24-25. The prologue and epilogue of Comus are necessarily particularly extended because Milton has relied on the charming effect of poetry rather than on scenic effects to conjure up his golden world. In many masques this introduction and transitory epilogue take little more than a word or two.

²⁵ Ben Jonson, The Complete Masques, p. 94.

use of myth, mysteries as rare as the marvels of the painted scene.²⁶
 In Comus Milton very competently handles this method of turning a prosaic occasion into an enchanted moment, using both the art of the learned poet to weave a charming fantasy appropriate in its moral and local resonances, and the conventional scenic devices which portray a magic world.

ii

Poets, contemporary audiences and later critics agree most in describing the masque as an ephemeral work of art, and nothing captures the poignant fragility of happy festive moments more than those masques and entertainments whose theme is pastoral. The welcome to a country seat of a court party is the occasion for a number of less formal entertainments. The welcome of Queen Elizabeth at Harefield and the later Arcades performed to honour the Countess of Derby at the same country residence, the charming welcome to Queen Anne at Caversham and

²⁶Cf. Jonson's sarcasm at Inigo Jones' usurpation of the rôle of poet to charm the reader and convey him to the immortal world of poetry in "An Expostulation with Inigo Jones":

O Showes! Showes! Mighty Showes!
 The Eloquence of Masques! What need of prose
 Or Verse, or Sense t'express Immortall you?

.....

Oh, to make Boardes to speake! There is a taske!
 Painting and Carpentry are the Soule of Masque!

(ll. 39-41, 48-49)

On the other hand, a balance is achieved in Campion's The Lords' Masque, where Orpheus conjures up the poetry and music and Prometheus Inigo Jones' spectacle of fire and light.

Discussions of the quarrel between Jonson and Jones over the relative importance of what Jonson called the body and soul of the masque are found in D. J. Gordon, "Poet and Architect: The Intellectual Setting of the Quarrel between Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XII (1949), 152-78, and Stephen Orgel, "To Make Boards to speak: Inigo Jones's Stage and the Jonsonian Masque", Renaissance Drama (New Series), I (1968), 121-52.

numerous entertainments performed to entertain Elizabeth on her progresses, all proclaim the delights of the English countryside, and the short joys of the country visit and the pastoral idyll. In these entertainments nymphs and swains, foresters and gardeners, emerge from the woods and fields to present their homage. The masque Comus, performed at the country seat of the Earl of Bridgewater with its woods and nymphs and shepherds, and its Draytonian Anglicizing of the pastoral mythology, falls in this tradition. Jonson's poem "To Penshurst", in which he conjures up sylvanes and fauns among the trees, and dryads, Pan and Bacchus upon a wooded "mount" at a country residence, again uses this convention of immortalizing the natural scene by disguising it in classical myth. Similarly, when he wishes to express the perfect beauty of the prelapsarian countryside in Paradise Lost, Milton describes "Pan / Knit with the Graces and the Hours" (IV.266-67) dancing through field and grove at this "happy rural seat" (IV.247) of our forefathers.²⁷

These country entertainments were consciously casual and more episodic in nature than the court masque. They consisted of a series of formal speeches or small tableaux of a picturesque nature which were staged at appropriate positions along the path of the courtly guest; the aim was to suggest that the countryside was spreading itself before the guest in a gesture of homage. Most often these tableaux were staged at gates and doors as gestures of welcome, while at other times they merely exploited a particularly picturesque spot in an arbor or garden; but always the iconographic possibilities of the setting were developed

²⁷See also Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 311.

in some allegory. A typical entertainment is that prepared for Queen Anne at Caversham. At the park gates appropriate rustic figures move out of the surrounding parklands and salute the Queen in song and dance; and as she moves on into the gardens, quaintly dressed "gardeners" pay her flowery compliments. A masque performed in the evening continues the pastoral theme with rustic antimasquers, while the noble revelers are introduced by Silvanus, "god of these woods", who, so fiction has it, has made a rare appearance to honour the Queen.

Milton's Arcades is typical in spirit and method of these entertainments, although rather more sophisticated in its poetic allegory than most. The rural atmosphere at the Harefield residence determines the spirit of the piece. The countess is a "rural Queen", her family nymphs and shepherds paying her homage, while the entertainment is presented by the horticultural spirit who tends the woods of the estate. The text indicates that the entertainment was an outdoor one; a seat of state seems to have been set up picturesquely near an elm-lined drive, known since Queen Elizabeth's visit to Harefield as the Queen's walk. A spirit of these royal trees would be an appropriate figure to guide the Arcadian visitors towards the "goddess" of this perfect place. The swains and nymphs are led from the shady gloom of the trees to the spot of light about the state. Allegorically, this illustrates a move from an imperfect world in the dark wood where chill dews and hurtful worms cause decay and death, to the timeless perfection of the performance. The spirit looks beyond this temporal world to the "celestial Sirens' harmony, / That sit upon the nine infolded Spheres" (ll. 63-64); and in the action of the entertainment, both the shepherds and the genius of

the wood are led beyond their woody world by the brightness of the countess in her charmed circle of light as they move "toward her glittering state" (l. 81)

O'er the smooth enamell'd green

.

Under the shady roof

Of branching Elm Star-proof (ll. 84, 88-89).

The gardens and residence at Harefield briefly become "hallow'd ground", transformed into an enchanted place. The evening's dancing takes place as if in a charmed fairy ring "where no print of step hath been". The healthful and simple pleasures of the country were commonly evoked at such entertainments. Silvanus, at Caversham, offers Queen Anne "That health which harbours in the fresh-air'd groves / Those pleasures which greene hill and valley moves".²⁸ In Arcades, the Orphic figure who can charm health and order in nature "with puissant words and murmurs made to bless" exerts the same kind of influence upon the evening's entertainment as he leads the song and dance, creating the special ageless perfection of the pastoral idyll. The fable woven by the genius of the woods calls upon those assembled in the charmed circle of light about the countess to join in a timeless and happy rural festival, at the same time affirming that this is not Arcadia but England by stressing the actuality of the trees, the green, and the noble household where they are at present.

²⁸The Works of Thomas Campion, ed. Walter R. Davis (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1967), p. 245.

iii

In view of the fact that a number of critics have disputed the genre of Milton's Comus, that masque warrants separate discussion. Most people would agree that it is a masque in the circumstances of its performance as an introduction to dancing, and that it includes the conventional antimasque and main masque elements. What has persuaded some readers to attempt to reclassify it is its sophistication and length, and a mistaken notion of the masque as a frivolous spectacle devoted to hyperbolic compliment.

Enid Welsford, arguing that the basis of the masque is to introduce the dancing, finds Comus not a masque because in it, "the essential moment is not the presentation of the young people to their parents, but it is the steadfast refusal of the Lady to partake of the enchanted cup."²⁹ Welsford reads the climactic rural dance as merely "a beautiful, but inessential, epilogue, the omission of which would in no way affect the unity and intelligibility of the piece",³⁰ and places climactic emphasis rather on the Lady's refusal. Welsford and critics who, like her, overemphasize the importance of this debate, change the whole intent of this pastoral work, which is surely to establish at its close a pure pastoral idyll, exemplified in the virtuous children. With such emphasis on debate, Comus loses the elegance of its appropriately allegoric, courtly compliment, and becomes a "dramatized debate" on sensual pleasures, evincing a negative attitude towards dancing and feasting while inappropriately serving as an

²⁹Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 318.

³⁰Ibid, p. 317.

introduction to these very entertainments. To read the work as a drama minimizes the allegoric identification between the masquers and their rôles. Thus, Welsford's reading of the masque leads her to conclude that

Milton has freed Comus not only from the atmosphere and background of the banqueting hall, but also from the tone of compliment and gallantry which pervades the Court Masque. Jonson's poetry is only too often marred by flattery, but Milton's does not break the illusion and spoil his fairy play by making it turn upon some tasteless unedifying compliment. The aesthetic gain was great, but unfortunately Milton substituted a harsh vein of moralising for the spirit of courtly gallantry.³¹

However, Stephen Orgel has shown that the masque, in the hands of Ben Jonson, was far from being mere flattery. The function of the masque's performance was to celebrate an occasion; it did so by allowing the assembled court to witness an idealized version of its own glory. This is an aim comparable to that of Spenser in his creation of the Faerie land of his poem. Although the masques of Milton and Jonson do this with greater integrity than do the masques of lesser figures, such allegory was the basis of any masque. Orgel sees Comus as a supremely well-wrought example of this kind of mythical allegory:

Comus is frequently adduced as the death blow of the masque, yet in many respects it applied Jonson's technique with a success the earlier poet himself rarely attained. That Milton was constantly aware of his work as a real masque--as a symbolic representation of the milieu in and for which it was created, as a production wherein, when the lords and ladies became masquers, the real world became indistinguishable from the world of the masque--is obvious from the frequency and complexity with which references to his audience, the Earl of Bridgewater and his family and court, are woven into the fabric of the piece. . . . To Milton, as to Jonson, the function of the court masque is the making of viable myths, whereby courtiers take on the character of heroes, kings of gods, events of symbols.³²

³¹Ibid., p. 319.

³²Stephen Orgel, The Jonsonian Masque, pp. 102-03.

The myth which the narrative of Comus fabricates to glorify the induction of the Earl of Bridgewater to his Welsh seat turns this part of Wales into a fairyland where blue-haired deities rule under the protection of Neptune. In this magic world the court celebration becomes a rural festival celebrated in a dance of shepherds about the throne of their new lord. The household musician is transformed into an emissary from the heavenly spheres, but known in the court suitably as a shepherd lad. A nearby river has its native nymph, and in the estate's woods lurk evil spirits. The purity of the court is exemplified by the moral purity of the children reared there, whose virtue shines forth as they wander unharmed through the dark woods of the estate.

The moral allegory of this mythical world enhances the virtue of the children and so celebrates the purity of their household. To this end a foil is provided in the antimasque. The enchanted forest is inhabited by the mythical figure of Comus, readily identified by the audience as a figure of licentious pleasure. The dance of his grotesque rout is the conventional comic antimasque dance which provides a foil to enhance the beauty of the main masque song and dance. The prayers and echo song of the Lady and the enlightening discourse of the brothers³³ are thus exemplary main masque activities juxtaposed with the antics of the antimasquers.

The action of Comus is not dramatic. As Dr. Johnson observed, "As a drama it is deficient. The Action is not probable."³⁴ The poet's

³³This display of exemplary character through conversation recalls the courtesy book tradition and such works as Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier and Lyly's Euphues.

³⁴Lives of the English Poets, I, 168.

concern is to display the austere beauty of the virtue Chastity in contrast to the vice of luxurious pleasure. However, the greater reliance upon verbal display rather than upon the painted scene to portray the triumph of Chastity has led many critics to read the work as a dramatic conflict.³⁵ The question and answer speeches of the brothers show neither conflict nor individuality of character. The younger brother's rôle in the dialogue is to raise fears to be dispelled and questions to be answered, while the words of the elder brother display the thoughts and sentiments of an exemplary young nobleman. The martial actions of the brothers show that they are as virtuous in deed as in word. Even the younger brother displays himself as a youth of fine sentiments. How delightful would lines like 476-80 and 580-84 sound on the lips of a nine year old boy.

The narrative of the masque has these exemplary young knights, like characters in a romance or in Spenser's Faerie Queene, looking for a virgin trapped by an enchanter in a forest. The lady is both the pure virgin of a romance and, when the narrative is allegorized, a figure of Chastity. The lady, in her argument with Comus, speaks as a personification of virtue, and her speech is only provoked because she sees herself in this rôle; "I hate when vice can bolt her arguments / And virtue has no tongue to check her pride" (ll. 760-61). In the version of

³⁵John G. Demaray (Milton and the Masque Tradition, pp. 137-42) confutes arguments such as those of Tillyard and Brooks and Hardy who believe the debates of the brothers and of Comus and the Lady find dramatic resolution in the Epilogue. He points out that the action of Comus is magic, and that "It is through a deftly devised invention--allowing the children to step from the stage into the court for the main masque dances--that the magical action of Comus is resolved." He suggests also that the dialogues are illustrative rather than dramatic.

1637 the allegoric nature of the speakers is further illustrated by the lady's identification of herself with "the Sun-clad power of Chastity" (l. 782) and Comus' physical reaction to the power of the lady's words. The lady makes it quite clear that she is not arguing with Comus (ll. 775 ff.) but that she is a spokesman for the side of virtue.

Usually in a masque the dark scene of riot and deformity is banished by the triumphant virtue of the main masquers who transform the hall into a mythical world of harmony and beauty. In a clever didactic twist, Milton's first discovery of a palace is a false one. The audience soon finds that the iconographic background to the action of the second scene is a palace of luxury. The tables spread with dainties should inform them even before the action begins, for palaces in which virtue is celebrated usually figure statues of heroes of old or choirs of worshippers, but not the carnal pleasures of eating and drinking. In this inappropriate allegorical setting Comus wishes to enthrone the Lady; here, the task of the attendant spirit and the two brothers is to set the tableau to rights. The second scene is briefly a triumph for Comus and vice, emblematically presented in the enthronement of the chaste figure amid the scene representing carnal pleasures. This antimasque scene is used to prove visually that

Virtue may be assail'd but never hurt,
 Surpris'd by unjust force but not enthrall'd,
 Yea even that which mischief meant most harm
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory. (ll. 589-92)

The conventional main masque discovery is brought about by the miraculous descent of the gods or some heavenly intervention.³⁶ To

³⁶Cf. John G. Demaray, Milton and the Masque Tradition, p. 25: "The minor action in these masques is inevitably resolved by a deus ex machina spectacle followed by an allegorical main masque dance signifying the triumph of virtue."

introduce the British pastoral idyll, the spectacle which glorifies this British nobleman and his country seat, a nymph appears from Drayton's patriotic pastoral Britain.³⁷ Sabrina is not only a local pastoral deity but is also a water spirit, presiding over that element which flows from "fountains pure", and so is a Christian symbol of that saving grace which flows from the fount of all being. The Christian suggestions of Sabrina's intervention, the pastoral aid given by the shepherd figure, and the allegoric interpretations which the wild wood and journey home are capable of, are all used by Milton to give his pastoral Christian as well as secular implications. Milton's pastoral is both a patriotic vision of an ideal British court and an allegory of the chaste Christian soul. Such Christian references oblige Milton to modify the Platonic idealization of timeless perfection which the masque world conventionally establishes on earth for a short space of time.

The main masque idyll which follows upon the descent of Sabrina shows a shepherd's holiday in a British Arcadia, taking place before the President's castle at Ludlow. By contrast with Comus's false palace, the castle becomes a palace of pure pleasures, and the fitting triumph for the children is to enshrine them amid this pastoral merry-making, before the rural thrones of their parents. The secular allegory translates the

³⁷Sabrina ultimately derives from The Faerie Queene, as Woodhouse emphasizes. But Woodhouse, primarily interested in the moral philosophy of Comus, ignores the patriotic and courtly elements of the poem, which influence Comus, and seizes rather on the poem's elements of Christian allegory. Cf. "Comus Once More", reprinted in A Maske at Ludlow, ed. J. S. Diekhoff (Cleveland, Ohio: Case Western University Press, 1968), pp. 75-76 where, discussing ll. 908-19, Woodhouse refers to Faerie Queene, I.xi. 29-30, where the Dragon-fighting Redcross knight is restored by living water; Woodhouse brushes aside the most obvious source of the Sabrina myth in Faerie Queene, II.x.17-19, which is more patriotic in its implications.

audience to a rural paradise; the Christian allegory uses the reunion of children and parents to prefigure the triumphant reunion of the Christian with the Father. The Attendant Spirit's first main masque song establishes this scene of pastoral perfection; his second, with its suggestive imagery, proposes that this Platonic idyll is moreover a type of the Christian Heaven.

iv

The court masque was the theatre of a coterie. The common man's equivalent was the civic pageant. The two are not unrelated, for the same group of writers produced both court productions and civic pageants; and in the less sophisticated pageant the workings of this allegorical theatre are often more evident. In the civic pageant the chief dignitary, the mayor or (less frequently in Stuart times) the king, processed through the streets of the city in triumph. These processions often have names like The Triumph of Truth or The Triumphs of Honour and Industry, indicating that the pageant, like the masque, celebrates the triumph of virtue over vice. However, the peripatetic nature of the performance of a civic pageant necessitated somewhat different theatrical devices, and elements like the scenic discovery and the enchanted atmosphere of the dancing within a lighted scene are consequently absent. Typically, the pageant was a series of symbolic displays related to an overall theme or motif suited to the loyalties and accomplishments of the particular mayor it celebrated; a marine theme for a fishmonger, a Ulysses theme for a traveller.

An example of one such pageant is Middleton's The Sun in Aries, performed in 1621; the commemorative text is dedicated "To the honour of

him to whom the noble Fraternity of Drapers, his worthy brothers, have dedicated their loves in costly Triumphs . . ." ³⁸; and the procession's function was triumphantly to honour the mayor. The progress began as usual with a display upon the Thames, after which the mayor was greeted by a series of displays on land. The first waited in Paul's churchyard, "a chariot most artfully framed and adorned, bearing the title of the chariot of Honour." In it, following a pattern borrowed from Petrarch's Trionfi and long part of the pattern for English pageants and tableaux vivants, "are placed many worthies that have got trophies of honour by their labours and deserts." Jason, Hercules and Alexander are named, each designated by a symbol suited to his honourable deeds. From this chariot Jason speaks to the mayor, greeting him as a fellow worthy upon a laborious journey which will bring him honour. Jason speaks from experience as a mariner to guide the mayor through the often treacherous sea of state. He directs him to follow the example of his predecessors who are figured on the next station.

This next triumph is called the tower of Virtue and is a brazen tower upon which six knights, Virtue's standard-bearers, stand while Fame and Antiquity celebrate the famous past mayors of London, each one apparently indicated by some sign. From the tower Fame salutes the mayor and explains the significance of the whole construction.

The mayor is now conducted toward the new Standard, which had apparently been newly repaired. "One in a cloudy ruinous habit, leaning upon the turret, at a trumpet's sounding suddenly starts and wakes, and,

³⁸Thomas Middleton, Works, ed. A. H. Bullen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1886), VII, 327.

in amazement, throws off his unseemly garments." He represents the spirit of the building and exclaims at his renewed beauty and at the sight of the mayor who is "Virtue's fair edifice, rais'd up like me".³⁹ He exhorts the mayor to maintain the peace and unity that the rebuilt ruins, with their decorations signifying the united kingdom under James, stand for.

The morning's procession seemed always to culminate in a particularly glorious triumphal monument; this one was particularly appropriate to a draper mayor: "near St. Laurence-lane stands a mountain, artfully raised and replenished with fine woolly creatures; Phoebus on the top, shining in a full glory, being circled with the twelve celestial Signs. Aries, placed near the principal rays, the proper sign for illustration, thus greets his lordship:". ⁴⁰ This triumphal monument illustrates the significance of the title, The Sun In Aries. Aries, the ram, signified the drapers' guild, whose sign was a golden fleece. There is a political allegory present in this picture of the sun, the sign of kings, on his mountain top, whose influence is expressed in each of the signs of the zodiac in turn. It is now the turn of the sign of Aries to influence the city of London under the reign of a Draper mayor. The Drapers' guild not only honours a mayor of the noble Fraternity of Drapers, but pays its homage to King James as it does so. Aries describes the significance of the sight:

This Mount, the type of eminence and place,
 Resembles magistracy's seat and grace;
 The Sun the magistrate himself implies;
 These woolly creatures, all that part which lies

³⁹Ibid., p. 345.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 346.

Under his charge and office.

From this emblematic representation of majesty the mayor can learn:

Now, as it is the bounty of the sun
 To spread his splendours and make gladness run
 Over the drooping creatures, it ought so
 To be his proper virtue, that does owe
 To justice his life's flame, shot from above,⁴¹
 To cheer oppressed right with looks of love.

After the great feast at noon the whole triumph attends in procession upon the mayor as he proceeds to church and from thence home where "two parts of the triumph stand ready planted", the Brazen Tower and a "triple-crowned Fountain of Justice". As the mayor approaches his gates Fame greets him from her brazen tower, to acclaim his virtue, and explains the meaning of the fountain, which is crowned by a cloud pierced by a sunbeam. This golden cloud becomes both a presage of "care discharged with honour" and the golden fleece, emblem of the drapers' guild. Thus the triumph ends, and the mayor is bid rest after his day's as he will after his year's labour.

The Sun in Aries celebrates the labours of virtue completed, but a number of pageants illustrate the fighting power of Virtue utilizing the battles of vices and virtues of the old morality play, whose influence is also seen in the masque. In Elizabeth's reign these pageant battles were often very elaborate,⁴² but Middleton's The Triumphs of Truth best illustrates the less spectacular battles of the Jacobean and

⁴¹Ibid., p. 347.

⁴²The most famous is probably the mock sea battle staged on a specially built artificial pond at Elvetham in 1591. The citizens of Bristol staged a hardly less spectacular mock battle lasting an epic three days in 1574. See J. Nichols, ed., The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth, III, 110-16 and I, 399-406 respectively.

Caroline pageants. Although other pageant cars featured in the procession, this pageant chiefly figures an allegoric battle between Truth and Error. At first three figures on horseback, Zeal, Truth's Angel, and their trumpeter of fame, ride up to welcome the mayor and guide him on his journey. They are no sooner arrived than their opponents Error and Envy drive up in their chariot. Error, with the smooth guile of the morality vice, offers the mayor false pleasures and an easy path. There follows a conflict between the forces of Truth, whose chariot now appears, and of Error, each aiming to place his chariot in the forefront as the victor in the mayor's procession. The action here is clearly also informed by the Petrarchan Trionfi where each successive figure triumphs over the previous one. As the procession moves on, it encounters a display called "London's Triumphal Mount". This must have been a comic display for the bulk of the procession for, as well as the usual tiers of enthroned virtues, it also contained four ugly monsters who attempted to cast a veil over its virtues. This Triumphal Mount becomes the focus of the peripatetic battle which continued throughout the day between these rival chariots, each side trying to take control of the chief display. The battle finally ends with the victory of Truth after the procession has accompanied the mayor to church, and concludes in a fireworks in which Error's chariot is ceremonially burned before the gates of the mayor's house.

Because the impact of the pageant is visual rather than verbal, the speeches lasting for only a small portion of the time during which each car was seen, great care was taken to build each station so that it was a speaking picture. The care shown in this emblematic

representation is well illustrated in Middleton's description of the figures of Error and Envy in The Triumph of Truth. Error is seated in a chariot, "His garment of ash-color silk, his head rolled in a cloud, over which stands an owl, a mole on one shoulder, a bat on the other, all symbols of blind ignorance and darkness, mists hanging at his eyes". The description of Error in triumph is incomplete unless he is accompanied by figures which illustrate the means by which he triumphs: "Close before him rides Envy, his champion, eating of a human heart, mounted on a rhinoceros, attired in red silk, suitable to the bloodiness of her manners, her left pap bare, where a snake fastens; her arms half naked; holding in her right hand a dart tintured in blood."⁴³ Thus even before they speak or act the natures of Envy and Error are displayed to the crowd by means of the symbols accompanying them and their costumes and gestures. Many of the attributes of the vices and virtues became commonplaces; but for their guides in building up emblematic tableaux, the pageant writers borrowed not only from traditions established by their predecessors and by the morality pageants before them, but clearly they also used such emblematic works as Ripa's Iconologia.⁴⁴ The complexity of the emblematic portrayal of

⁴³ Thomas Middleton, Works, VII, 241.

⁴⁴ Ben Jonson used this work for his masques. He acknowledged it as his source for Fama bona in The Masque of Queens. See The Complete Masques, p. 137. In this work Jonson uses "properties" such as snake and rat and ointment pot to suggest the vicious attributes of the witches in a fashion similar to Middleton in his portraits of Envy and Error. David M. Bergeron, in his English Civic Pageantry, 1558-1642, explores the relationship between emblems and civic pageants. In this connection he examines the figure of Envy in Geoffrey Whitney's A Choice of Emblems and Henry Peacham's Minerva Britannia and discovers there many of the attributes of Middleton's Envy in The Triumph of Truth.

Middleton's *Error and Envy* indicate that he must have used some such source.

The allegorical tableaux of the pageant were spectacular and varied, but as the basis of each was one of a few standard settings which became the clichés of masque and pageant literature, and also of allegorical poetry. David Bergeron lists these common constructions in his chapter on the machines of the English civic pageant.⁴⁵ The pageant basically made use of the scaffold stage of medieval theatre, modified to accomodate new mechanical and thematic demands. The arch, erected across the path of the dignitary, from which speakers saluted him, developed into the magnificent triumphal arches of the Stuart coronation processions. In the proscenium arch of the masque stage a triumphal arch is erected to honour the king as he enters his masquing hall, bringing the note of triumphal celebrations to the masque performance. This triumphal structure found other forms in the pageant. It became the triumphal mountain on which figures sit according to their degrees. Such mountains occur in both The Triumph of Truth, in the form of Truth's Mountain, and in The Sun in Aries where the figures of Phoebus and Aries on the mountain in "St. Laurence-Lane" (sic) clearly form an allegory of the relative places in the hierarchy of civic government of the king and the draper mayor. Another triumphal form is the tower, which is often a tower of Fame. Sometimes this tower retains characteristics of the morality play fortress, scene of battles between virtues and vices.

⁴⁵English Civic Pageantry, 1558-1642, Chapter 10, "Body: Men and Machines", pp. 266-72. What follows is basically a summary of his chapter.

The tower of virtue in Middleton's Triumph of Truth is not only a well kept fortress with its knightly standard-bearers, but also a height from which Fame may blazon abroad the virtue of good men, and a monument on which the names of good men may be recorded.

On these scaffold stages the pastoral themes so suited to country entertainments and to the creation of a masque paradise of festivity lose much of their charm. The scaffold is modified to form an arbour or a garden where the pastoral themes of good husbandry, of the good shepherd and the fruitful garden are commonly portrayed. A variation of the Circean bower of sensual pleasure occurs in Middleton's The Triumph of Truth where a boat steers itself wisely about five beautiful spice isles which represent the lures of the five senses. These natural scenes of the pageant are, on the whole, less frequently influenced by the classical pastoral tradition than the masques and entertainments, and generally paint natural scenes in the spirit of the moral emblem and the religious metaphysical poem which discover heavenly instruction in the book of nature.

Several other common emblematic devices found in the masque also occur in pageants. Several fountains of goodness occur, like Middleton's Fountain of Justice in The Sun in Aries, and a number of turning globes. In the ironmongers' shows the mine and the forge frequently occurred, utilizing the allegorical myths concerning Vulcan. Pageants with a marine theme made use of the much overworked British Neptune myth, and figured sea horses, dolphins and scallop-shell chariots. Because the pageant tableaux were usually added to the procession, one of the most frequently used stations was that of the triumphal chariot. In these

chariots figures often sat according to their degrees so that the chariot became a tiered pyramid like the triumphal mount,⁴⁶ and always, as in the case of Middleton's figures of Truth and Error, the chief charioteer is accompanied by supporting vices or virtues who spell out a moral narrative by their presence.

These stereotyped stations which provided the setting for the action quickly identified the moral theme which was likely to be the foundation of the spectacle, while the figures within the setting identified themselves as virtuous or vicious by their dress and gesture. The action is usually very simple, often only a speech to supplement the visual representation and explain the aptness of the moral to the present occasion. Such theatrical devices as the fortress occupied by vices, the palace of Fame, the triumphal arch, or the triumphal chariot were clichés that even the common man began to recognise. The contemporary reader, too, would bring to the printed page a recollection of scenes he had seen presented in the display of pageants and masques. It would be fair to assume, then, that when any moral sense is to be found in a scene which resembles one of these common situations, one might be guided, at the least, by what such a station represented popularly in the pageant.

Pageantry and masque theatre, while it contained also the more

⁴⁶Bergeron provides an illustration of one such chariot, "The pageant chariot of Richard II and the Royal Virtues in Munday's [sic] Lord Mayor's Show", (English Civic Pageantry, Fig. 12), which is very like illustrations of Petrarch's Trionfi collected by D. D. Camicelli in his edition of Lord Morley's Tryumphes of Fraunces Petrarcke. See particularly Figs. 7-10 showing the Hampton Court tapestries, depicting respectively the triumphs of Death over Chastity, of Fame over Death, of Time over Fame and of Chastity over Love.

frivolous element of display, depended for its dramatic impact upon the audience's appreciation of the aptness of its allegory. This is true whether one is speaking of the subtle mythologizing of the Egerton household on the occasion of the Earl's investiture as President of Wales in Comus, or the rather trite explanation given of the golden cloud in The Sun in Aries. Milton wrote two works in the masque genre which clearly show that he understood this allegorical use of myth basic to the form. As a citizen of London he must have witnessed the annual mayoral pageant; he was a boy of five and thirteen respectively when The Triumph of Truth and The Sun in Aries were performed, and one might expect that the magic of such spectacles would linger in his memory. Demaray has shown that Milton's earlier poems are masque-like in nature.⁴⁷ In the next chapter I shall discuss his understanding of disguise and allegory as revealed in these early poems, and later develop the thesis that in his major epic Paradise Lost he imitates theatrical devices which can be traced to masques and pageants, and that he uses them, as do the writers of masques and pageants, in an allegorical fashion.

⁴⁷See particularly Milton and the Masque Tradition, Chapter II.

III

MASQUE TRANSFERRED TO POETRY

i

One can observe from Arcades and Comus that, like Jonson, Milton took the masque form seriously and that he saw the court entertainment as a means of immortalizing an occasion in poetry. Like Jonson, too, Milton gracefully combines moral allegory with courtly compliment in his entertainments. While Milton's courtly entertainments show that he was a competent masque writer who understood the conventions of the form, it is not only in these works that he uses the particular theatrical effects and allegorical method typical of the masque. In "L'Allegro" Milton describes how the sights of contemporary "pomp, and feast, and revelry, / With mask, and antique Pageantry" (ll. 127-28) influence the imagination of the youthful poet. Milton uses iconographical details in his minor poetry which are clearly borrowed from the masque and pageant; indeed, the form of these poems is often influenced by the conventions of the celebratory entertainment. Demaray, analysing the influence of the masque on Milton's minor poetry, concludes that in these poems the allegorical figures of the masque are frequently described although, as he points out, the figures themselves are not the exclusive property of the masque; it is the way in which Milton chooses to present them that most suggests the influence of the court masque:

In composing what has come to be known as the "Nativity Ode," Milton described events related to the birth of Christ in a

manner that many seventeenth-century readers would have associated with masque figures and scenic designs. Although some of these masque figures and images could also have been derived from Renaissance iconography and from such emblem books as Andrea Alciati's Emblemata Liber (1531), Geoffrey Whitney's A Choice of Emblems (1586), Cesare Ripa's Iconologia (1611) [actually first published in 1593, first illustrated in 1603], and the English translation of Epectetus Manuall and Theophrastus Characters (1616), the figures borrowed from literature and from the "static" arts of painting and drawing were placed in motion on the masquing stage in certain characteristic ways. When masque figures and effects are alluded to in poetry, they are usually identifiable, though such identifications are not intended necessarily to exclude other interpretations.¹

Demaray demonstrates that the allegorical figures of the early poems seem to be described as if they were actors and actresses upon a stage. One finds such typical masque figures as Peace in the "Nativity Ode" who, crowned with olive and bearing a wand of myrtle, descends in a manner which recalls the cloud machines on which the figures of Peace in Jonson's The Vision of Delight and Shirley's The Triumph of Peace make their entrances.² Allegorical figures are often spoken of in terms of costuming. Nature in the "Nativity Ode" "had doff't her gaudy trim" and now hides her "naked shame" with "the Saintly Veil of Maiden white".³ The costumes and the throne of Truth, Justice and Mercy⁴ are likewise described as if they formed part of a glorious theatrical spectacle which formed the climactic discovery of a masque:

¹Milton and the Masque Tradition, pp. 31-32.

²Ibid., pp. 32, 36.

³Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁴Demaray (pp. 33-34) notes several court masques and entertainments in which Truth and Justice figure, but points out that with the inclusion of Mercy the trio becomes more relevant to Christian than to secular allegory. See also Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, pp. 310-11.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
 Will down return to men,
 Th' enamel'd Arras of the Rainbow wearing,
 And Mercy set between,
 Thron'd in Celestial sheen,
 With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering,
 And Heav'n as at some festival,
 Will open wide the Gates of her high Palace Hall.

(ll. 141-48)⁵

However, it is not only the carefully chosen allegory and delightful spectacle of masque costume and machinery that are recalled in such figures. These figures are not realistic; they are of the theatre, their gestures often recalling the conventions of the masque. Nature, having symbolically reclothed herself, a gesture not unlike that of the attendant spirit at his entrance in Comus or the masquers in The Masque of the Inner Temple (1613),⁶ "woos the gentle Air" with "speeches fair", which would seem to suggest that her role resembles that of the figures who so often introduced the main masque in explanatory song or speech. Peace, in this poem, comes "softly sliding" in a way that recalls the cloudy chariots of the masque and, in a gesture typical of the manner in which many a figure in a masque magically conjures up the glorious discovery of the main masque scene of harmony, strikes a sudden universal peace by waving her wand. One can see these masque-like figures not only in the "Nativity Ode", but also elsewhere in Milton's minor poetry. Demaray compares the dance of Mirth and her crew in "L'Allegro" to the symbolic dances of the court entertainments and suggests that it corresponds to the antimasque of

⁵Cf. Demaray's discussion of the masque-machine-like effect of this discovery in Milton and the Masque Tradition, pp. 38-39.

⁶See Philip Edwards' edition of Beaumont's masque in A Book of Masques, p. 140.

such works as Jonson's Haddington Masque.⁷ Similarly, the band of Folly in "Il Penseroso" moves fantastically, like a group of antimasquers, before being banished at the entrance of divine Melancholy. In both "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" there is the equivalent of an antimasque which forms a foil and is banished as the central allegorical figure is hailed, while in the "Nativity Ode" this antimasque/masque pattern is also discernible.

It is not only the "body" of the masque that has informed Milton's poetry. The masque method of allegorization, its method of immortalizing an occasion by transforming or transporting it to the world of myth, is seen even in Milton's earliest English poem. In "On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough" the infant's death from winter's chills is described in terms of myth. The myth in turn is presented as a theatrical spectacle, with grim Aquilo descending to carry off the infant from his beautiful triumphal chariot, an "icy-pearled car" or "Snow-soft chair" which is like a masque machine or a pageant chariot. The central conceit of the poem is informed by the mingling of the worlds of myth and reality, a mingling so central to the masque and pageant. The god in his chariot attempts to carry the human actor to the world of immortals, transcending what in the masque is the dramatic illusion, and in doing so he kills the child. The child becomes like the actor in the masque who represents for a short time a virtue descended to the world of men and embodied there:

Or wert thou that just Maid who once before
Forsook the hated earth, O tell me sooth,

⁷Milton and the Masque Tradition, p. 42. Enid Welsford makes the same comparison in The Court Masque, p. 308.

And cam'st again to visit us once more?
 Or wert thou [Mercy] that sweet smiling Youth?
 Or that crown'd Matron, sage white-robed Truth?
 Or any other of that heav'nly brood
 Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

Or wert thou of the golden-winged host,
 Who having clad thyself in human weed,
 To earth from thy prefixed seat didst post,
 And after short abode fly back with speed,
 As if to show what creatures Heav'n doth breed,
 Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
 To scorn the sordid world, and unto Heav'n aspire?

(ll. 50-64)

The visits of the pagan gods of Stanza VIII and the Christian angel of Stanza IX are dramatized in a similar fashion here; as in a masque, the heavenly spirit or allegorical virtue appears to men embodied in human shape and costume, and as in the masque this appearance of the gods furnishes a perfect example of virtue for the instruction of mankind. A similar conceit is used by John Donne of Elizabeth Drury in "The Second Anniversary":

Shee, to whom all this world was but a stage,
 Where all sat harkning how her youthfull age
 Should be employ'd, because in all shee did,
 Some Figure of the Golden times was hid.⁸

In the elegy "On the Death of a Fair Infant" as also in the "Nativity Ode" Milton adapts the Platonic and secular idea of perfection, which is illustrated in the glorious climax of the court masque, to portray the greater perfection of the Christian heaven. In Comus he does the same thing, but more carefully because he must contrast his practice with the current conventions.⁹ In his apotheosis of the Ludlow court he refers beyond the perfect pagan pastoral idyll and yet uses it as a type of

⁸The Poems of John Donne, ed. Herbert Grierson (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 229, ll. 67-70.

⁹See the conclusion of my discussion of Comus, pp. 42-44 above.

heaven.

The triumphal car and the interplay of heaven and earth seen in this early poem are again found in the "Nativity Ode", which is perhaps Milton's most deliberate and extended poetical pageant. In "The Passion" Milton refers to his "Nativity Ode" and describes Christ's birth as taking place upon a stage:

Erewhile of Music, and Ethereal mirth,
Wherewith the stage of Air and Earth did ring,
And joyous news of heav'nly Infant's birth,
My muse with Angels did divide to sing. (ll. 1-4)

The "Nativity Ode" seems to have been planned as a masque, not intended for the stage, which celebrates the birthday of the Lord.¹⁰ The festivities imagined in Milton's poem celebrate the triumph of the birth of Christ and the descent of peace and goodwill to earth which is recalled each Christmas Day by Christians. Just as a masque looks back to a historical or legendary glory and then, in the climactic discovery, turns the banquet hall into a heaven upon earth, so the "Nativity Ode" recalls the first coming of Christ and briefly conjures up the spectacular heaven upon earth of the second coming. The poem, "about the skies giving birth to a new star, about the hosts who sang in the air, and about the pagan gods suddenly shattered in their shrines",¹¹ not only dramatizes the story appropriate to the day's celebration but also describes the banishment of evil by the forces of goodness in the same

¹⁰Cf. Thomas B. Stroup, Microcosmos. The Shape of the Elizabethan Play (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 21. Stroup notes that in the first four lines of "The Passion" Milton relates this poem to his "Nativity Ode", "indicating that he consciously set the action of the ode upon the stage of the world."

¹¹"Elegia Sexta" in John Carey's translation, The Poems of John Milton, p. 117.

manner as does a masque. As the poem opens, the actions of Nature and Peace banish all pollution and discord from the world's stage. This is followed by a transformation in the skies,¹² where the triumphal chariot of Christ, described as a "polish'd Car" (l. 240) banishes an antimasque-like rout of heathen gods. This rout is described first (in stanza 6) as the stars (the zodiac was often referred to in terms of pagan deities) led by Lucifer, which disappear at the bidding of the Lord, and later (ll. 167 on) as a procession of pagan gods.

The whole action of the "Nativity Ode" is brought into focus by the triumphal chariot in which hymning angels sing praises to their king and from which they descend into the world's stage for a short space of time to attend upon their Lord, who, incarnate in the flesh, is the chief masquer.¹³ Christ's chariot, "Heav'ns youngest-teemed Star" (l. 240), is variously described as a "polisht Car", a "Globe of circular light" in which "the helmed Cherubim / And sworded Seraphim / Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd", and is compared to the sun's throne. The vision may be compared to the

¹²Numerous masques had divided stages. Note the effects called for in Salamacida Spolia, described on p. 25 above, where in one scene a spectacular rocky landscape is discovered, which then opens further to discover the king seated in glory; and in the final scene, a city landscape is first discovered, above which the skies then fill with the choirs of the gods. See Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court, illustrations on pp. 737, 748 and 752-53.

¹³Cf. "The Passion", ll. 15-19. An interesting comparison may be made with the secular triumph of Love in Jonson's poem "Her Triumph" (No. 4 of "A Celebration of Charis in Ten Lyrick Peeeces"). This poem, with its central chariot of love, also gains its inspiration from the masque triumph. Jonson's lady is chief masquer, riding in triumph in an allegorical car of love, while all beholders do homage to her as a Queen of Love: "all hearts doe duty / Unto her beauty".

ingenious spectacle of light of Inigo Jones' masque scenery such as the machina versatilis of The Haddington Masque, a glistening globe around which masquers were placed, representing the twelve signs of the zodiac, and from which they descended to do homage to the king and the bridal couple in their dances. Rather as the enthroned Charles and his queen, lately descended upon a cloud, in Salamacida Spolia, are presented with a triumphant apotheosis of their reign, so, before Christ, a vision of the final peace on earth forms the climax of the celebration of the "Nativity Ode" in lines 141-48. ¹⁴

There is no better indication of the influence of contemporary pageant theatre on Milton's poetry than his portrayal of the paradox of Christ's triumph in "The Passion". This poem has always been regarded as a failure, and J. G. Demaray speculates that the reason for the failure was that Milton failed to visualize a masque:

Why did Milton fail? Influenced by the masque in his creation of the "Nativity Ode", the poet seems to have tried to write a companion poem, visualizing Christ as the featured figure in a masque. Because the pagan masques presented at court did not contain important Christian figures, Milton experienced difficulty in realizing the necessary scenes, digressed from his main theme, and finally left the poem incomplete. Other reasons can also account for the failure: Milton's youth and his inability to reflect in the body of his work any profound, immediate, and personal experience of the passion of Christ. But the view that Milton failed to visualize a masque, though not previously advanced, is surely worthy of consideration. ¹⁵

Demaray may be correct in his judgment, yet if indeed Milton "failed to visualize a masque", it was not for any lack of precedent in suitable material of an emblematic nature. The court masque often actually

¹⁴Demaray, Milton and the Masque Tradition, p. 34, suggests that the arrangement of ideas in the poem may be influenced by the structure of the masque. His analysis is somewhat different from mine.

¹⁵Milton and the Masque Tradition, pp. 41-42.

modified religious emblems to suit its purposes; it also borrowed themes from the morality play and religious allegory. Edgar Wind, discussing various symbols used in the Renaissance to express that aspect of God's face which is hidden from human kind, quotes as an excellent example of the sort of metaphor used, not a religious work but the riddle that is the hinge upon which Jonson's Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly turns; he notes that "the transference of divine traits to King and Country" is a familiar subject.¹⁶ In the "Nativity Ode" Milton returns these divine traits, used in the masque to portray the king's authority, to their original significance--not by direct reference to philosophy or theology, but by referring to the conventions of the masque and overgoing them; in The Masque of Flowers King James is "the great Sun of our firmament" ¹⁷ but in the "Nativity Ode" Christ is a "greater Sun". As in The Haddington Masque the bridal couple is attended by the pagan stars of the zodiac, so Christ in Milton's ode is attended by heaven's newest-teemed star. The "Nativity Ode" celebrates the triumph of the peace and justice of Christ's reign by presenting, as does a masque, a theatrical representation of that triumph before him on his birthday. Milton fails in "The Passion" because he attempts to shape a masque which is not the traditional one of celebration but one of lament. "The Passion", with its backdrop of black, its central monument of the sepulchral rock and its group of mourners, begins to resemble a triumph of death. Milton attempts to organize this not, as had Petrarch, as a solemn funeral procession, but using the stage devices of the seventeenth-century

¹⁶Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1967), pp. 223-24.

¹⁷A Book of Masques, p. 168.

celebratory masque which typically reaches a climax in the sudden discovery of a glorious monument about which choirs of gods descend, hymning joyously. The "holy vision" that Milton so portentously discovers in "The Passion" is the "sad sepulchral rock" which the poet's lugubrious imagination surrounds with anti-climactic mourners weeping loudly upon their clouds. The theatrical discovery designed to celebrate joy is not appropriate to grief; indeed, Milton wisely puts this imagined tableau in the conditional tense and does not complete the celebrations.

Milton's poetry abounds with classical allusions and allegorical figures which often are realized in ways similar to their use in pageant theatre. Such figures, found throughout Milton's work, are particularly evident in his celebratory and occasional poetry. The conventions governing the action of "An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester" are clearly enunciated in that poem's opening reference to a hymeneal masque. In "At a Solemn Music" Voice and Verse, a pair of "sphere-borne" sirens, in some ways resemble Pleasure and Virtue of Jonson's masque in that their action effects the discovery of the climactic scene of heavenly celebration. In the quasi-legal procession of Sonnet XIV, Mrs. Thomason's Good Deeds, disguised as a group of purple-robed orators, are led in procession by Faith, with her golden rod, before the great Judge; here, the mingling of ceremony and morality-play allegory recalls both the civic pageant and the solemnities of the inns of court. Even in Lycidas one might detect such a disguised occasion; King's accomplishments are extolled in a suitable pastoral setting and he is honoured in the procession of dignitaries: "the Herald of the Sea, / That came in

Neptune's plea"; "Camus, reverend Sire, . . . footing slow, / His Mantle hairy, and his Bonnet sedge, / Inwrought with figures dim"; and "The Pilot of the Galilean Lake, / Two massy Keys he bore of metals twain". In each of these poems, not only is the occasion decorated with the ceremony and costume of these allegorical figures but, as in a masque, this theatrical spectacle serves both to ornament the occasion elegantly and to immortalize it by transferring it to the realms of allegorical mythology.

ii

Paradise Lost, like much of the minor poetry, uses the conventions of the masque and contemporary pageantry to realize allegorical scenes. One can distinguish in the poem processions, chariots, descending cloudy chairs and allegorical figures resembling those in seventeenth-century British pageantry. More significantly, Paradise Lost is influenced by these entertainments in its overall design. The influence of the masque on the design of Paradise Lost has been noticed by Enid Welsford, who remarks that the action of the poem occurs before the reader's eyes as if upon the picture stage of the Masque.¹⁸ The earliest outlines of the subject of the poem in the Trinity MS. were set out as if they constituted the drafts of a work intended for the stage. Whether these drafts were for a drama or for a

¹⁸The Court Masque, pp. 313-14. Welsford, comparing the structures of Paradise Lost and The Faerie Queene, comments interestingly that "It is at least a curious coincidence that The Faerie Queene was written when the masque was still usually processional in form, and that Paradise Lost was written after the masque, and its offspring the opera, had come to be performed upon a picture stage."

narrative poem, the way in which Milton conceived his ideas seems to have been influenced from the very beginning by the theatre.¹⁹ These drafts, which consist of lists of characters set out like lists of dramatis personae, and in one of which description of dialogue and action is divided into five acts punctuated by choruses, show many characteristics which, although they are present in realistic tragedy, are all more common in the allegorical theatre of the courtly entertainment. Such features include the choruses, the dumb show called "a masque of all the evils of this life and world", and the entrance of the angel Gabriel whose descent, if performed on stage, would presuppose a stage machine. Figures from allegory and from other episodes in the biblical "legends" were to be introduced to illustrate the loss of Eden so that, like such masques as Comus and Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, the drama would contain a mixture of characters of different consistencies rather than being dramatized history in the manner of Samson Agonistes.

The germ of Milton's proposed work is dramatic, certain details of this germ indicating that the kind of drama he envisages is possibly influenced by his experience of the court masque. Even if these drafts were for a five act tragedy, it would not be at all a conventional tragedy. In the first place, it would not be set in this world; in the conventional tragedy even legendary heroes are shown in a situation which

¹⁹Besides these drafts in the Trinity MS., Paradise Lost has a further direct connection with the theatre in that Dryden turned the poem into an opera, The State of Innocence, with Milton's permission. In his biography of Milton, Edward Phillips recorded Milton's intention, at one time, of shaping the story of the fall of man as a tragedy which would open with Satan's soliloquy (at the beginning of Book IV).

we can recognize as mirroring our own world and human predicament. Milton proposes to deal with the archetypal tragedy which is set in the golden world now lost. However, the lists of dramatis personae alone would indicate that the stage world he envisaged would not have the consistency even of the conventional pastoral drama. The references to heaven in these drafts, and the movement between heaven and earth, integral to masque theatre, are basic to the projected work. As in the masque, immortals descend from the heavens to instruct mankind, so that one might compare the rôles of Moses in draft iii and Gabriel in draft iv with that of the attendant spirit of Comus. In draft iii

Moses προλογίζεαι recounting how he assumed his true body, that it corrupts not because of his [being] with God in the mount declares the like of Enoch and Eliah, besides the purity of the place that certain pure winds, dews, and clouds preserve it from corruption whence he hastes to the sight of God, tells they cannot see Adam in this state of innocence by reason of their sin.

And in draft iv, "the angel Gabriel, either descending or entering, showing since this globe was created, his frequency as much on earth as in heaven, describes Paradise."²⁰ Like the attendant spirit both these figures descend from the heavens to introduce the mythical world. The fantasy world Moses weaves, with allegory lying behind its very climate, is reminiscent of the elaborate fantasy world created by the attendant spirit in Comus (ll. 1-82). The rôle of God in these skeletal dramas seems to resemble that of the monarch in a masque, who is the most important member of the audience, instigator of the action, and object of the praise which is conveyed in the action of the virtuous. These

²⁰The Poems of John Milton, ed. John Carey and Alastair Fowler, pp. 419-22, where the transcriptions are regularized and modernized. A more accurate transcription occurs in Poems Reproduced in Facsimile from the Manuscript in Trinity College, Cambridge (Menston: Scolar Press, 1972), pp. 35 and 40.

drafts are punctuated by the songs of praise of the chorus of angels and, as in the finished poem, the vigilant God from time to time sends his angelic messengers to mediate on his behalf in the action of the stage world. Like a masque too, these dramas portray a golden world, the purity of which is carefully explained by Moses in draft iii; his speech is an attempt to establish the kind of reality represented by action in which characters from different historical epochs may coexist. The theatrical experience envisaged in these drafts concludes, like a masque, with the encroachment of the world of time and decay and the movement of the chief performers into the world of reality.

The heritage of these drafts is apparent in the completed epic poem of Paradise Lost which is narrated theatrical spectacle rather than narrated history. Although Anne Davidson Ferry emphasizes the importance of the narrated rather than the dramatic elements of Paradise Lost, she assumes, in her analysis of the narrative voice, that the narrator's function is to describe and comment upon a vision. She says, for example, that "the rôle of the narrator as interpreter to the fallen reader of the unfallen world, the world "invisible to mortal sight," determines the distinctive style of Paradise Lost"; and,

It is my belief that if we analyse carefully the nature of the speaker and the language he uses, we will find that there is no confusion between unconscious emphasis and conscious intention, between "dramatic" and narrative portions of the poem. By analysing the quality of the voice we hear in the poem, its relation to the story and to its readers, we should be led to the heart of the epic, to the meaning of the narrator's vision.²¹

While I agree with Ferry that an understanding of the narrative voice is

²¹Anne Davidson Ferry, Milton's Epic Voice, pp. 45 and 18.

essential to an interpretation of the vision, for we have no other means of seeing, this study differs in emphasis in that it undertakes to analyse how this vision is structured dramatically and to assess the nature of the spectacle that Milton presents to his readers with the kind of reality it represents. The meaning of the narrator's vision, I believe, is found more fully contained in the spectacle itself than Ferry will allow in her discussion of the voice that guides our reading of it. This is because the narrator's vision is presented in terms of allegoric spectacle which is to some extent self-explanatory to the "fit audience though few".

From the very announcement of his subject Milton shadows forth eternal truths by primarily visual means; and even as he moves from the invocation and launches into the epic subject he first pays homage to the superior vision of his muse: "Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view / Nor the deep Tract of Hell, say first what cause . . ." (I.27-28). While the epic matter begins with an outline of the history of the fall of Satan (ll. 36-54), this is merely a kind of prologue to the action, defining with greater precision the myth that informs this part of the poem and amplifying the emblem of the "infernal Serpent". As the action begins Milton makes a sudden switch in tense to describe the "now" of Satan's agony and his present dark abode as if it were a vision, as if with the help of his muse Milton has penetrated the depths of Hell and now records these "sights of woe". In The Return of Eden Northrop Frye records the vivid visual experience the poetry evokes:

At the opening of the poem we find ourselves plunged into the darkness of hell and eventually, after our pupils have expanded, look around and see one or two lights glowing. We then realize that these are eyes, and a number of huge clouded

forms begin to come out of a kind of sea and gather on a kind of shore. Throughout the first two books we move through shadowy and indefinite gloom, and then at the opening of the third, we are plunged quite as suddenly into the blinding light.²²

What we are first presented with is a view of Hell as Satan sees it, with a corresponding understanding of Hell's pains and imprisonment. We are, however, objective observers of Satan's observations:

round he throws his baleful eyes
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay
Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
At once as far as Angels' ken he views
The dismal Situation waste and wild,
A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades (I.56-65).

Our understanding of Hell stems from being told what Satan sees, but it is a wider understanding than Satan's for we also see his expression as he views his new abode; so that, although a vast scene of horror is depicted the figure of Satan, with his baleful eyes, trapped within it serves as a focus and a measure of this infinite perspective. The reader is also assumed to be aware of the world beyond the flaming walls of Hell that bound Satan's view, for the narrator comments "O how unlike the place from whence they fell!" (I.75). Satan, who sets himself up as emperor in this "Prison ordained / In utter darkness", not seeing well within its confines and unable to judge the impact of his action beyond them, is presented with a dramatic irony which ridicules his ambition. We are encouraged to view him critically and objectively as one might an actor upon a stage, evaluating both his words and appearance as he

²²Northrop Frye, The Return of Eden, pp. 17-18.

moves within a setting expressive of his condition. This perception of the characters as actors within a scene is established early in Book I by the "stage directions" in the speeches of Satan and Beelzebub, for example those at lines 76-83 and 180-85. The description of Satan "talking to his nearest Mate / With Head uplift above the wave, and Eyes / That sparkling blaz'd" (I.192-94) establishes him as a human figure, although this is followed by the ominous reminder of his identity as "infernal Serpent" in the extent of his "other parts".

To establish the theatrical basis of Paradise Lost is not to restrict its power or the awesomeness of the conditions it portrays. Paradise Lost is drama of a particular kind; it is a vision of an invisible world, so that the anthropomorphic Satan is merely a vehicle by means of which certain invisible truths are embodied. The metaphors that follow this first description of Satan extended upon the lake modify the perception granted us by it. Immediately, this perception is all but negated as Milton describes the gigantic size and almost infinite bulk of Satan; we have first visualized a human figure, now Milton asks us to see that figure "extended . . . many a rood", suggesting that the figure is symbolic of a larger reality which cannot be represented in terms merely human. To enable the reader to comprehend the nature of this reality, Milton invests this quasi-human figure with names which define what he represents, names used in ancient fables to describe similar natures.²³ This figure is discovered by its posture

²³Such mythologizing, discovering truths illustrated in the words and deeds described by ancient writers, became a means by which Renaissance writers sought tangible methods for the representation of moral and abstract qualities. Francis Bacon, in the Preface to De Sapientia Veterum (The Works of Francis Bacon, Vol. VI, ed. J. Spedding,

and aspect to be of the same kind as the rebellious Titans who warred on Jove; particularly appropriate are the names of the giant serpentine Typhon and Briareus, both defeated and imprisoned in fiery jails.²⁴ Finally, Milton mythologizes Satan using the supreme ancient authority, demonstrating his moral purport in biblical terms: Satan's huge wallowing figure is like Leviathan, particularly as he is commonly emblemized in the Renaissance.²⁵ Satan's extended "other parts" reveal

R. L. Ellis and D. D. Heath [1861; rpt. Stuttgart-Bad Constatt: Friedrich Fromman Verlag Gunther Holzboog, 1963]), writes that "beneath no small number of the fables of the ancient poets there lay from the very beginning a mystery and an allegory" (p. 696). In Alciati's emblem, Aeneas bearing his father from the ruins of Troy becomes a demonstration of "Pietas filiorum in parentes". See Whitney's adaptation in Geoffrey Whitney, A Choice of Emblems and other Devices, ed. Henry Green, rpt. Hildesheim and New York: Da Capo Press, 1969. Discussion of the mythological tradition in the Renaissance is found in Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology (New York: Harper, 1962), Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods (New York: Harper, 1961) and Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1967). This tendency, as related to the composition and understanding of masques, is discussed in John C. Meagher, Method and Meaning in Jonson's Masques, pp. 39 ff.

²⁴In The Club of Hercules, Davis P. Harding traces those classical allusions, particularly to Virgil, which serve to highlight the epic qualities of Paradise Lost and its place in epic tradition. However, Harding also notes that such allusions may have an allegorical function and observes that allusions in this passage and others describing Satan in Book I are informed by the allegorical tradition which identified the Giants with the revolt of the angels. He provides a fuller account of this allegorical tradition in Milton and the Renaissance Ovid (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1946), pp. 85-86. De Witt Starnes and E. W. Talbot, in Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), p. 243, finding evidence of the same confusion of giants and Titans, and the same treatment of Briareus as a giant in the four most popular dictionaries of classical names in seventeenth-century Britain, suggest that Milton is probably indebted in some way to works like these.

²⁵Davis P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp. 59-60, notes that Milton rounds off this sequence of comparisons of Satan to monstrous serpents with an allusion to that "Sea-beast Leviathan":

his nature and identify his type as men later described it on earth. At one moment he seems a giant serpent rebel, at another this shape-changing being resembles the devious Leviathan as his extended hulk lies huge, floating on Hell's sea. The parallels between Satan and those figures of evil and rebellion which his amphibian form is said to resemble are quite specific. Milton would have had access to systematic moral interpretations of the ancient fables like *Natalis Comes' Mythologiae*, and every schoolboy could reap the benefit of the work of these writers in the summarized versions found in the dictionaries of classical names of the period.²⁶ The strongly visual bent of the Renaissance mythologists is demonstrated, however, by the emblematisers like Alciati who translated these insights into visual formulae. Milton is thus following a typical Renaissance allegorical method when he visualizes an abstract quality and finds for it a type in fable or history. The cause of man's evil Milton envisages as a Neoplatonic idea or as an archetype, and when he describes this he imagines a human form

The word is derived from the Hebrew, *livyathan*. As Milton, who knew Hebrew, must have been well aware, the word in that language denoted any monster of the deep. But what gathers the allusion significantly into the context of the passage is a verse in Isaiah (27.1), where the Hebrew prophet predicts that the day shall surely come when the Lord "shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

In his edition of *Paradise Lost* Fowler notes of the legend of the Satanic whale island that "It was a familiar story, which was not only repeated in Renaissance encyclopaedias, but even achieved the currency of a visual representation. At Hardwick House, e.g., there is an emblematic mural showing a ship anchored to a whale, with the legend *Nusquam tuta fides*" (p. 474).

²⁶Cf. De Witt Starnes and E. W. Talbot, *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries*, p. 243.

whose costume and gestures define this archetypical vice. While such emblemization is found frequently in the prose and poetry of the period, it is the principle informing the pomp and pageantry of complimentary painting, of the court masque and civic procession.

The theatrical nature of Milton's vision, and at the same time the grand scope of the contemplation which emerges from the observation of this stage world that Milton constructs, is clearly seen in the methods used to portray Satan. In Book I Milton presents a figure reminiscent of the characters of masque and pageant yet at the same time, by means both of allegorical detail and the use of elaborate narrative devices, Milton provokes the reader to explore the significance presented in the "body" of the vision. At first his proud and envious character is emblemized by the ensign which constantly marks him, the defeated infernal serpent. As soon as his body emerges from Hell's lake Milton provides a description of his armour and bearing which is comparable to the descriptions of the appropriately illustrative costumes and characters as they are first discovered in accounts of the action of pageants and masques. True, the elaborate description of his armour is in the tradition of the conventional epic simile, but the old epic convention is given new life in Milton's Christian and allegoric epic. The epic simile recalls not the arms of the heroic, but the club of the blinded Polyphemus the Cyclops.²⁷ Milton uses epic imitation to define characters as well as to establish the epic nature of his poem. Milton suggests the allegoric quality of his vision by his allusive descriptions of the function and size of Satan's weapons. His

²⁷Davis P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp. 61-63.

spear is enigmatically both like a tall mast and a tiny wand, it is both a weapon and a staff:

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.292-95);

and his shield, not borne protectively before him, as one would expect in the description of a warrior, but cast curiously behind him, is like a moon, complete with geographical features. The reader should be alerted by the curious syntax of the similes to their allegorical portent. Satan's spear is associated with the magician's wand, the wild man's club or the giant Cyclops' weapon--defining his character as enchanter and lawless giant. His moon-like shield bears the heraldry of his nature, being spotted like the skin of a panther, emblem of deceit, and setting him up as antagonist to Christ, the Sun. Not only is his costume allegorical, his pose is too. If we visualize him, it is not as a glorious general prepared for fight, but as a wandering pilgrim; his spear is used "to support uneasy steps", and the ponderous shield "behind him cast" "hung on his shoulders" like a burden or the broad-brimmed hat of the pilgrim.²⁸

In the action as in the description of Satan there is the same apparent conflict of visual data as one is taught to see the mysterious significances the vision embodies. Satan's first action is spectacular. As he rears from off the pool, the flames part to reveal a "horrid vale". For all this, the scene with its emphasis on the description of the

²⁸See Baroque and Rococo Pictorial Imagery, emblem no. 172, "Pilgrimage". Satan is of the nature of the erring pilgrim of Paradise Lost, III.476-77. Cf. Jonson's Masque of Augurs where "a perplexed dance of straying and deformed pilgrims" appears, illustrating "all de brave error in de world".

motion of the flying figure and on the spectacular discovery of the vale by means of the symmetrical rolling-back of the billows has a curiously staged effect and, with its somewhat mechanical quality, resembles the spectacle of masque machinery. Again each of the details has allegorical significance. The spectacle of the parting of the waters evokes the biblical story of the flight from Egypt. But Satan is not Moses with a providential vale opening before him, and a later simile (I.306-11) comparing his troops to Pharoah's shows his real rôle as opposite. In the clumsiness of his flight and his great weight we read his moral penchant for downward rather than upward movement and the dross encroaching upon his ethereal nature.²⁹ Even his landing is mysteriously significant, for while he glories to escape the flood, Milton's description of the terrain he alights upon belies his confidence. The burning land is like Aetna, the prison of the defeated Typhon; such a detail informs the perceptive reader that this is no escape. In fact the moralizing seems almost to negate our visual impression of the action in these first two books as Milton carefully works at the syntax so as to allow the reader to perceive both the shadow of the action and the mysterious meaning behind it. The normal cause and effect chains one might find in a realistic narrative are obscured; when "on each hand the flames, / Driv'n backwards slope their pointing spires" we are given no indication of who drives them, and whether we believe it to be Satan or

²⁹In The Club of Hercules (pp. 53-55) Harding suggests that there are further serpentine allusions here. There is a general resemblance to a passage from the Aeneid describing the movement toward the shore of the sea serpents, which crushed Laocoon and his sons to death, and a resemblance to the passage in Spenser's Faerie Queene that describes the flight of the Red Cross Knight's dragon opponent (I.ii.18).

God depends on whether we interpret the scene literally, as does Satan, or discern in the tableau details that indicate the presence of the mysterious and invisible hand of God. Verbs are used in a figurative sense that opposes their literal sense, which yet may apply simultaneously; at line 237 Satan's unblest feet both do and do not come to rest upon the burning land.³⁰ Two levels of action become apparent: there is the staged movement of clearly defined human figures within a particularized scene which is the literal perception Satan has of his environment, a perception that allows him to glory as he moves up from the lake to escape to the land; while another view is granted the aware reader who sees that there is no escape, nor rest, that his flight is a course he steers with the high permission of all-ruling Heaven.

In Paradise Lost Milton presents geography and cosmology in the same way that he presents history. Obviously such concretely described stations as Hell's Gates, the bridge across Chaos and a Libra with moveable balances³¹ have no place in either the Ptolemaic or Copernican systems of astronomy, but by means of these symbols Milton allows us to contemplate the grandeur of the universe, subtly drawing together allegorical allusions to mythology with what men of science knew of the vast spaces of the universe, to allow the reader to move from the contemplation of his artificial stage devices to an awareness of something so immensely complex as the providence of God at work in the

³⁰In Milton's Epic Voice (pp. 101-02) Anne Davidson Ferry draws attention to the way in which syntax points to the moral meaning of physical description.

³¹Paradise Lost, IV.1013-15; and see Fowler's note on these lines on p. 673 of his edition.

universe. Milton describes staged rather than real events. While he presents Hell and its denizens as awesome scenic spectacle, his interest is not that of a geographer or cosmographer but that of a moralist; his Hell is presented in terms of allegorical drama where abstractions like woe and envy are conveyed in appropriate material forms. The actors themselves are not equivalent to the supernatural beings they represent, but rather illustrate their moral natures and significance. In these early books Milton is not describing the history of Satan's planned assault upon the world but rather the "cause" of man's fall. The figure of Satan can represent the Prince of Hell, it can stand for Envy prompting Satan's revenge for his fall, and it can remind us of evil later manifest upon earth in such instances as Pharoah's pursuit of the Israelites or in the wiles of the serpent. Action is described as if it were occurring within a set scene or allegorical station and the supernatural figures are reduced to resemble human actors whose ceremonial gestures and ~~the~~ rhetorical speech attest to their symbolic rather than realistic nature. The opening scene in Hell is characteristic of the world Milton describes; it is spectacular but circumscribed: a sea of fire and a sooty shore, encircled by walls of flame. The vista may extend as far as angels' ken but it is still a prison and the impression of infinitude false, as in the apparently unending perspectives of baroque paintings or of Inigo Jones' designs for stage scenery. When Satan soars towards the limits of this vista, tacking between land and sea like a sailing ship on the horizon (II.630-45), he reaches Hell's bounds and the impenetrable gates. Milton conveys the same impression of contained grandeur as in his descriptions of actors who are human forms, yet capable of assuming gigantic proportions.

Paradise Lost, then, is not intended to be realistic narrative, for Milton sees and tells of things invisible to mortal sight. Like Spenser, who in his tale of Fairyland tells of a similar invisible world, in Paradise Lost Milton embodies this invisible world in theatrical spectacle which resembles that of the masque and the pageant. Raphael, explaining his method of describing "th' invisible exploits / Of warring Spirits" to Adam, explains also Milton's method in the poem:

what surmounts the reach
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
By likning spiritual to corporeal forms,
As may express them best. (V.571-74)

Raphael is speaking as a fictional character in Milton's poem, and his claim to an understanding of ineffable truths, perfectly in accord with his angelic station, is not a claim to knowledge of such truths on Milton's part.³² However, when he speaks of shadowing forth spiritual truths in corporeal forms he is an exponent of the same literary method used by writers of the masque, to which Ben Jonson referred in terms of "body" and "soul".

Paradise Lost exhibits also another kind of relationship between heaven and earth which is basic to the masque whose climax always presents to man a vision of a golden age. The enigmatic lines that follow Raphael's explanation of his literary theory explain what Raphael is trying to show Adam and Eve, and these lines hint also at what Milton is attempting in Paradise Lost. Raphael asks, "what if Earth / Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein / Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?" (V.574-76). Indeed, Paradise Lost is less a story

³²Cf. William G. Madsen, From Shadowy Types to Truth (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 75-76.

than an allegorical triumph. Raphael's account of the heavenly battle likewise is not history but designed to instruct man in obedience and show him the triumph of goodness. In this account, the battle that demonstrates the triumph of Christ concludes with the triumphant procession of Christ through the jubilant courts of Heaven, followed by his moving forth in his triumphal chariot into the universe to create the golden unfallen world. Now while Raphael's triumph concludes with the presentation of a short glimpse of heavenly harmony and Heaven descended to earth, and is thus like a masque which ends with a vision of "The Golden Age Restored", of "Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue" or of "The Triumph of Peace", Milton's poem itself concerns the loss of Eden, disobedience, death and woe, and ends with a vision of sin and its consequences. As Raphael begins his account of Heaven, Milton has him suggest that earth may be more like Heaven than is thought on earth, a hint that this heavenly battle and triumph may yet be enacted on earth. Thus the sombre ending of the poem, which shows only sin having entered the world, is given light and hope by the triumphal vision at its centre.³³ The shape of Paradise Lost with its central "masque" of Raphael's story is similar to that of the "Nativity Ode", which also has a central masque-like vision of the heavenly peace on earth of the

³³Ibid., p. 110. Madsen's study of Milton's symbolism is informed by an exploration of contemporary biblical interpretation. While his description of Milton as preacher rather than Moses Anglicus or Orphic poet, and his reading of Paradise Lost in terms of typological symbolism, are sane and valuable, his neglect of contemporary writing on literary theory leads him to suggest that the poem is purely typological in its portent, and causes him to neglect to mention the Neoplatonic metaphors used by writers, and by Milton himself even within Paradise Lost, to describe creative inspiration and the extraordinary power of literature to create a visionary world which is in some ways more perfect than the world of men.

second coming (stanza 15). Like the "Nativity Ode", Paradise Lost looks forward to the triumphant victory of Christ over Satan and the glorious restoration of the lost Paradise.

Even on the literal level of Paradise Lost Milton is not concerned with recounting the history of the fall, and in any case the extraordinary and unbiblical events recounted there should warn us to look beyond the events of the narrative for the essential meaning of the poem. This is not to say that Milton did not believe in the literal truth of the biblical account of the fall, but only that in his poem he does not attempt to write a historical novel in poetry, that rather he uses this story as a supremely valid authority to "furnish the inward parts" ³⁴ of his narrative. On its most meaningful level Paradise Lost deals with abstractions: sin, death, the state of the fallen world; and, by contrast, the justice of God and the mercy of Christ. The allegoric discussion of these abstractions is occasioned by man's disobedience and a need to justify the ways of God to man.

³⁴Ben Jonson, Hymenaei; The Complete Masques, pp. 75-76.

IV

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE PARODIED IN HELL

Satan makes the epic journey described in Paradise Lost, though that he is the hero of the poem does not follow necessarily from this. By following the fortunes of Satan one discovers that the poem's plot concerns a progress past a series of allegorical devices rather than the narration of a journey through a realistic landscape. Symbolic encounters in the context of allegorical scenes are the highlights of the journey. The account of Satan's journey contains many echoes of the pomp and pageantry of the royal progress. It is, in fact, not unlike those progresses in which the virtues and victories of the monarch were displayed in terms of allegorized myth; for while such shows referred to a situation from legend or showed a clash between allegorized abstractions, they also described "present occasions" and interpreted matters of relevance both to the monarch on his progress and the viewing public. Just as the monarch on his progress was honoured by allegories which recognized him as of a type with the heroes of old, so Satan is represented in Paradise Lost in such heroic rôles; moreover, his symbolic journey is decorated with all the pomp and pageantry that marked the progress of a conquering emperor. That Satan is accompanied by such pomp and circumstance, and praised by such comparisons, may honour him in earthly terms, but this should also call into doubt the worth of the pomp and the value of these comparisons. Thus the epic

journey of Satan, Prince of Hell, constitutes at the same time an anatomy of the ways of Evil and a parody of earthly glory.

The action of the first book of Paradise Lost concerns the rousing and assembly of the Satanic hosts. The ceremony begins in somewhat comic disorder which soon sorts itself out to become a mock victory procession or triumph as Satan and his hosts take possession of their prison territory. There follows a mock ceremony to establish Satan's rule, although its proceedings are merely a material enactment of what God has already foreseen and preordained. This, following the form of many a seventeenth-century ceremony, concludes in a kind of mock revelry. Up to this point, one might compare the action of the first two books to a court entertainment where the courtiers trooped to the banquet hall in their costumed finery, as in Shirley's The Triumph of Peace (1633), to participate in the ceremony of the masque, which ended in dancing and revelry. Comparable occasions in Heaven are similarly celebrated (III.345-71 and V.579-627), making Satan's rites a parody of the heavenly ceremony. Books III and V contain descriptions of heavenly events which, in their pomp and circumstance, resemble courtly ceremonies and a tournament spectacle. Leaving Hell, Satan makes a journey that resembles in some ways the allegorical pilgrimages of morality plays or of Nabbes' moral masque Microcosmos. Satan passes by two allegorical stations on his journey to the world, the Gates of Hell and the Throne of Chaos. The mock-pilgrimage format of his journey is clearly demonstrated in its goal; while the walls of Heaven, the goal of the religious pilgrim, lie in sight, Satan makes a symbolic choice and turns towards earth. Satan's triumphant return from the world is

similarly described as a mock ceremony performed before various stations: a reception at the foot of a bridge which allegorically celebrates his achievement; and his anti-climactic return to his palace, the bathos of which is dependent upon our seeing it against the exemplary triumphal entry of a victorious emperor. The anti-climax of his return is more specifically moralized in the show that celebrates it. His courtiers are "transformed", but not into glorious demi-gods and heroes. Instead, they turn into serpents and Satan is forced to become part of a masque of shame in which a "show of the forbidden Tree [springs] up before" his court (Argument to Book X). In this show, the forces of evil are finally shamed, and they are banished as the forces of truth, led by Christ, are elevated in genuine triumph.

The action of Satan's mock triumph proceeds in a series of spectacles, of which the first is the procession of the fallen angels amid Hell's wastes. Here, as with those of allegorical dramas, the function of this procession is to establish the nature of the fallen hosts. In his drafts for Paradise Lost in the Trinity MS. Milton showed his familiarity with the device of the allegorical procession and his attraction to it. In these drafts, the function of the procession is to inform the reader or viewer more precisely of the consequences of the central action of the fall, a function largely taken over, in the final work, by the histories of Books XI and XII. In the fourth draft, Milton specifically termed such a procession a "masque", which would suggest his indebtedness to contemporary dramatic sources for this device. The use of such an allegoric procession would not necessarily be inspired only by Milton's experience of the court masque, though there the device

was used most decorously and with least dramatic incongruity; Milton would also have been familiar with masques figuring in plays upon the Jacobean stage. In the third draft (act five) a list of mute characters, including Labour, Grief and Hatred, is "presented by an angel . . . to whom he gives their names". This naming and visual representation of moral qualities is central to the technique Milton employs in Book I. In draft iv Milton describes his masque presentation thus: "The angel is sent to banish them out of Paradise but before causes to pass before his eyes in shapes a mask of all the evils of this life and world".¹ The procession in Hell also identifies the forces of evil by giving them names and shapes.

Ben Jonson's The Masque of Queens has in its antimasque a procession of evils similar in nature to that of Milton. Like that of the fallen hosts, which mirrors the assembly of the heavenly hosts in Book V, Jonson's is a foil to a more glorious procession of virtuous persons. In this antimasque witches, each representing a vice, come forth from a hell mouth to the sound of hollow and infernal music, the qualities of each depicted by some "ensign" or "property". At first they merely exhibit their natures in dance and confused noise but Jonson, feeling the need to be more explicit about the nature of their vices, has them form a procession with a presenter. Jonson explains his dramatic problem thus:

At this the Dame entered to them . . . To whom they all did reverence, as she spoke, uttering by way of question the end wherefore they came, which if it had been done either before or otherwise, had not been so natural. For to have made

¹The Poems of John Milton, ed. J. Carey and A. Fowler, pp. 419-21.

themselves their own decipherers, and each to have told upon their entrance what they were and whether they would, had been a most piteous hearing (ll. 87-94).²

In Paradise Lost Milton does not have this problem of dramatic propriety for the narrator, inspired by his muse, presents the vision:

Say, Muse, thir Names then known, who first, who last,
Rous'd from the slumber on that fiery Couch,
At thir great Emperor's call, as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand
(I.376-79).

As Milton's devils rise from the burning lake he decipherers them, telling us "what they were" and indicating by their appearances in the history of the world "whether they would".

Although Milton gives names and earthly shapes to the vices of his procession, he emphasizes, as he has done with our perception of Satan, the magnitude and elusiveness of the reality he attempts to embody. He gives his beings quasi-human shapes, yet stresses that they are "Godlike shapes and forms / Excelling human" (I.358-59). He names them, yet tells us that they are nameless:

Though of thir Names in heav'nly Records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and ras'd
By thir Rebellion, from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the Sons of Eve
Got them new Names (I.361-65).

He identifies these abstract vices by the pagan deities and the sins done in the performance of heathen rites in the history of mankind. It is a strategy appropriate to the presentation of abstractions in the earthly forms in which men comprehend them; further, it is particularly appropriate here in stressing the part of man in the fall of the world and in the encroachment of evil upon it. The "sons of Eve" will welcome

²The Complete Masques, p. 125.

and name the forces of evil unleashed from Hell after the fall.

Each character is first established by name and appearance: given an earthly disguise. Moloch is "horrid King besmear'd with blood / Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears" (I.392-93), and his accompanying rites equally suit his characterization as a god of hate; he is accompanied by "noise of Drums and Timbrels loud" and the cries of children as they "pass'd through fire / To his grim Idol." Chemos is named, his Bacchanalian nature established by the places he inhabits (wilds, vineyards and "th' Asphaltic pool") and by his accompanying "wanton rites" and "lustful Orgies". The description of these two fallen angels concludes with a clear indication of the vices they stand for:

Yet thence his lustful Orgies he enlarg'd
Even to that Hill of scandal, by the Grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate (I.415-17).

However, the extent of the geographical and historical detail given to localize each vicious god shows that Milton was not concerned merely to provide visual images of lust and hate; he is particularly concerned to give an understanding of vice as it occurs in the world. The description of each god's territory indicates simultaneously the ideas of worldly extent and ignominious fall. Moloch's territory, for example, is thus outlined:

Him the Ammonite
Worshipt in Rabba and her wat'ry Plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Armon. (I.396-99)

Commenting on this passage Alastair Fowler notes that "Though ostensibly magnifying Moloch's empire, these lines look forward to his eventual defeat; for Rabba, the Ammonite royal city, is best known for its capture by David after his repentance (2 Sam. xii), while the Israelite

conquest of the regions of Argob and Basam, as far as the boundary river Arnon, is recalled by Moses as particularly crushing." ³ Chemos' territory is similarly defined. This enumeration of territory serves two purposes: it insists on the historicity of what Milton says, on the occurrence in this world of the evils of Hell, and incidentally upon the biblical authority for their existence, and it also shows the eventual defeat of evil. These vices are encapsulated in a central action which exemplifies their appearance in our world, the audacity which led them to build their temples right against the temple of God, turning the pleasant valley of Hinnom into "the Type of Hell", and their final routing by the "good Josiah". Each vice is characterized, then, by its appearance and name, by its place in history and geography, and by the isolation of one particular act that exemplifies it. The historical act becomes typical of all such sinful acts; the audacity and subsequent lust of Moloch and Chemos recalls the fall of Adam and Eve, as well as that earlier fall of Satan which banished him to Hell.

The technique of choosing historical or mythical persons to represent a vice or virtue is common in the processions of masque and pageant. In the main masque of The Masque of Queens Jonson locates the Virtues in queens of history: "Penthesilea, the brave Amazon / Swift-foot Camilla, queen of Volscia, / Victorious Thamyris of Scythia" (ll. 375-77). ⁴ Middleton's civic pageant of 1621 contains two similar

³The Poems of John Milton, n. to I.397-99. Of Chemos' territory Fowler writes, n. to I.407-11, that "Most of these places are named in Num. xxxii as the formerly Moabite inheritance assigned by Moses to the Tribes of Reuben and Gad. . . . Heshbon, Horonaim, 'the vine of Sibmah', and Elealeh all figure in Isaiah's sad prophecy of the destruction of Moab (Is. xv.5, xvi.8f.)."

⁴The Complete Masques, pp. 135-36.

historical catalogues of virtue and honour, though here in the static forms of the triumphal chariot and the tower of Fame. There is a chariot of Honour "in which chariot many worthies are placed that have got trophies of honour by their labours and deserts; such as Jason, whose illustration of honour is the golden fleece, Hercules, with his ne plus ultra upon pilasters of silver, a fair globe for conquering Alexander" and so forth.⁵ In the same procession is a topical and local version, a Tower of Virtue on which are displayed the names and titles of London's notables: "Sir Henry Fitz-Alwin, draper, lord mayor four-and-twenty years together; Sir John Norman, the first that was rowed in barge to Westminster with silver oars, at his own cost and charges; Sir Francis Drake, the son of Fame, who in two years and ten months, did cast a girdle about the world".⁶ Each of these worthies is probably decorated with his emblem, such as Drake's girdle as illustrated by Whitney in his collection of emblems.⁷

However, Paradise Lost is poetry, not theatre, and Milton presents rather more than a visual representation of the world's evil worthies with the vices they stand for. He continually stresses, even as he embodies his abstractions in visual form, that he is describing the indescribable; and he seems to be teaching the reader how to read his vision even while he describes it. Having located the vices of lust and hate in specific false gods, Milton describes the next evil in such a way as to re-emphasize the elusiveness of evil:

⁵Thomas Middleton, The Sun in Aries, Works, VII, 339-40.

⁶Ibid., VII, 342.

⁷Geffrey Whitney, A Choice of Emblemes, p. 203.

With these came they, who from the bord'ring flood
 Of old Euphrates to the Brook that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general Names
 Of Baalim and Ashtaroth, those male,
 These Feminine. (I.419-23)

Instead of finding a specific name he points to the many names, changing sex and nature of evil. For these gods, the tracing of an appropriate shape to embody their quality also presents a problem:

For Spirits when they please
 Can either Sex assume, or both; so soft
 And uncompound'd is thir Essence pure,
 Not ti'd or manacl'd with joint or limb,
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
 Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose
 Dilated or condens't, bright or obscure,
 Can execute thir aery purposes,
 And works of love or enmity fulfil. (I.423-31)

To present the ambiguities of this evil, fair and foul, Milton chooses Astarte, a Circean figure amid a troop of "bestial Gods". She represents that evil which caused Solomon, beguiled by fair forms, to fall to foul idols. She is followed by a troop who show the various gradations of foulness of the evil she conjures up. Appropriately, next described is her lover Thammuz, representing those "wanton passions" unleashed by the allure of seeming fair forms. The Circean theme, a favourite in the court masque, is further developed as the procession moves on. Thammuz is followed by more foul representations of evil located in a number of evidently bestial gods who preside over occasions illuminating the general hint of I.432-35:

For these the Race of Israel oft forsook
 Thir living strength, and unfrequented left
 His righteous Altar, bowing lowly down
 To bestial Gods.

Following Thammuz are Dagon, "upward Man / And downward Fish", then Egypt's "bleating Gods" Osiris, Isis and Orus who lead "Fanatic Egypt

and her Priests, to seek / Thir wand'ring Gods disguis'd in brutish forms / Rather than human" (I.480-82). The sins of an Israel beguiled by these gods are located in the actions of Ahaz and Jeroboam and the worshippers of the golden calf.

Milton's history of mankind beguiled by bestiality does not end, however, with the tribes of Israel. Amongst these manifestations of lust, carnality and riot, "Belial came last", recognizable to Milton's audience as a Vice from the old morality plays and from sermons and pamphlets describing the corruptions of the devil.⁸ Belial is not a pagan idol. Milton discovers the spirit of Belial in the Old Testament, in the carnality and riot of Sodom and Gibeah: "Witness the Streets of Sodom, and that night / In Gibeah". It is the manifestation of the spirit of Belial in contemporary society that most interests Milton. After speaking of Eli who "filled" the house of God with lust and violence, Milton writes in the present tense:

In Courts and Palaces he also Reigns
And in luxurious Cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above thir loftiest Tow'rs,
And injury and outrage; And when Night
Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine. (I.497-502)

This contemporary reference of Belial ends one section of the

⁸See Robert Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, n.d.), under "Belial": "worthless, reckless, lawless. This should not be regarded as a proper name. It is generally associated with the words 'man', 'son', 'daughter', or 'children'. Hence 'son' or 'man' of Belial simply means 'a worthless person'". Merritt Hughes, in his edition of the Complete Poems and Major Prose notes, concerning ll. 490-501, that "Sons of Belial was a widely current phrase in the Bible and in Puritan sermons and pamphlets, meaning dissipated men or Enemies of God. In the New Testament it was sometimes personified (as in II Cor. vi, 15), and in sacred dramas Belial often appeared as a character like Burton's prince of the third order of devils, the 'vessels of anger and inventors of all mischief'" (p. 224).

procession. Milton now introduces the classical gods, a new element. "The rest were long to tell," Milton begins (l. 507), for these form a history of evil traced through the genealogies of the gods to Celtic lands and the utmost isles, or Britain. Such genealogies occurred frequently in masques, generally as a means of asserting the relevance of the masque allegory to the present occasion, as in Comus. There, the blue-haired deities who hold rule under Neptune, or Sabrina, descendant of Brutus, give the piscatory pastoral elements a British relevance, although readers would also recall the histories of Spenser's Faerie Queene. Just as the Tudor and Stuart monarchs were flattered by the myth that Britain was Troy Novant and the monarch a descendant of Brutus, or that they were descendants of Celtic King Arthur, so the evils of the Celtic lands and utmost isles are portrayed as being inherited from this occasion in Hell. A number of dumb shows and processions have such a format, tracing the glories or evils of the past to present times. In Jonson's The Masque of Queens, Queen Anne, consort of James I, is "Bel-Anna, Queen of the ocean", a name coined especially for her by Jonson, who adds her, as a contemporary virtuous queen to his catalogue of the virtuous queens of old. Samuel Daniel's The Vision of Twelve Goddesses similarly culminates in Anne as

Tethys, Albion's fairest love,
Whom she in faithful arms doth deign t'embrace
And brings the trident of her power t'approve
The kind respect she hath to do him grace. (ll. 344-47)⁹

Thus she gives a particularly contemporary relevance to the vision of peace, prosperity and happiness represented by the other goddesses in

⁹A Book of Masques, p. 35.

giving her Albion control of the seas, the source of England's prosperity. The intent of this final section of Milton's procession of fallen angels is similar; he traces the iniquity of usurping and unfilial gods to British shores.

The procession of fallen angels begins by localizing lust and hate in the figures of Moloch and Chemos, after which these two sins are represented in two groups of subsequent gods. The lust for the things of this world is represented by the Circean Astarte and her troop of bestial gods, culminating in Belial, who has been associated with the pleasure seeking seventeenth-century courtier. The hatred that breeds rebellion is represented in the genealogy of the Ionian gods, which culminates in their Celtic and British descendants.

This procession, which swells as the gods come flocking until separate figures no longer stand out, melts as a dream and becomes a second show. The crowd becomes an army, a display of martial might. This display is accompanied by all the pomp and ceremony of military processions. Satan "commands that at the warlike sound / Of Trumpets loud and Clarions be uprear'd / His mighty Standard" (I.531-33), and there follows a description of that bright standard blazing like an ominous meteor, with the sound of the trumpets and the great wacry of the fallen hosts. With this new show a sudden, magical change comes over the gloom of Hell:

All in a moment through the gloom were seen
 Ten thousand Banners rise into the Air
 With Orient Colors waving; with them rose
 A Forest huge of Spears; and thronging Helms
 Appear'd, and serried Shields in thick array
 Of depth immeasurable (I.544-49).

The visionary procession has faded and the fallen angels now appear to

our view "in guise / Of Warriors old with order'd Spear and Shield" (I.564-65). What we are now viewing is the "imbodied force" of the fallen angels in a guise in which we can begin to comprehend it; though even as he represents this awesome force, Milton stresses the inadequacy of his method, for these troops are far "beyond / Compare of mortal prowess" (I.587-88), and

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.573-76).

Again Milton supplements the shape he has given to this force with a catalogue of names indicating its quality--a catalogue, in this case, of mighty defeated armies beginning with the rebellion of the giants. The doom of the fallen angels is reiterated in the actions of Satan, whose ceremonially thrice-wept tears are a sign, a corporeal manifestation of his ruin and despair shadowed in an action later to be performed in the history of man. Satan here is like Xerxes weeping that his proud army might one day be defeated:¹⁰

what power of mind
Forseeing or presaging, from the Depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have fear'd
How such united force of Gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse? (I.626-30).

To Satan in his blindness the question is rhetorical, but the fit audience though few, well read in "knowledge past or present", are reminded of God's continual omnipresence and control over his universe. This show of embodied force ends with a final display illustrating the

¹⁰See The Poems of John Milton, p. 498, n. to I.620. Fowler points to the comparison between the bridge across Chaos and that across the Hellespont at X.307-11, which again compares Satan to Xerxes.

fallen angels' defiance and continued warfare. The flashing swords and din of shields is like the other displays of force that have been evoked--terrible, but rendered ridiculous and puny by being directed at the distant vault of Heaven from whence God sees all. The fallen angels are twice associated with pygmies in Book I (ll. 575 and 780), recalling the allegorical meanings attached to the pigmy warriors of Alciati's emblems.¹¹ The emphasis during the whole of this martial display has been to show a strong and terrible force, yet a force that is puny as compared to the omnipotence of God.

Perhaps the most splendid show in Hell is that which now follows, illustrating a further aspect of evil. Force has failed; Satan outlines the strategy which he now pursues: "our better part remains / To work in close design, by fraud or guile / What force effected not" (I.645-47). Fraud is hatched in a dazzling palace of false fame. Just as the spectacle of Satanic force had been preceded by the comic disarray of the fallen angels prone upon Hell's burning pool, so this spectacle of Satanic guile and perverted reason is preceded by a restatement of the basically grotesque nature of the fallen angels. We are first reminded of the volcanic nature of the scene and, consonant with the theme of false shows and fraud that follows, we are reminded of the essentially revolting nature of this volcanic landscape: its scurf and belched fire. Earlier accounts emphasized the scourging of Hell's defeated inhabitants by the inhospitable terrain. The glorious army is now replaced by hunchback Mammon with his brigade of pick-axe and spade-

¹¹Cf. Emblematum Libellus (1542 ed.; rpt. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), pp. 56-57, Emblem no. XX, showing Hercules attacked by pygmies. Ben Jonson uses this emblem in a scene of Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue.

bearing labourers whose actions are obscene and impious, forerunners of the men who later "Rifl'd the bowels of thir mother Earth" (I.687). Suddenly from this dark scene, amidst these grotesque miners and smithies, rises the splendid palace that is the result of their labours. This glorious structure, risen from such obscure origins, is the symbolic house or station which dominates the next section of the poem, and in which the council of fraud begins.

This palace, made in an hour and rising from the earth like an exhalation, is reminiscent of the scenic effects of many masques in which scenes are suddenly changed to reveal a splendid palace. In Jonson's Oberon a rock parts to reveal Oberon's palace, from which Henry emerges in triumph with his lords. In Milton's Comus the splendid palace, like that in Paradise Lost, is a false show set deep within a dark wood, as this is set within the gloom of Hell. In masques, such a rising spectacle as Milton describes in Pandemonium was a quite spectacular feat of stage engineering. Inigo Jones designed such structures for two court masques to represent a hill or palace of Fame, for Fame was said to have been born from the earth. In Chloridia the final spectacle produced to honour the royal masquers is a hill of Fame which rises and then sinks as spectacularly. That it was a fairly substantial structure this description indicates: "Here out of the earth ariseth a hill, and on top of it, a globe, on which Fame is seen standing with her trumpet in her hand; and on the hill are seated four persons" (ll. 215-19).¹² In Davenant's Britannia Triumphans a palace of Fame similarly rises from the earth. The

¹²Ben Jonson, The Complete Masques, pp. 470-71; see also Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court, pp. 450-51, where Jones' design for this hill of Fame is discussed.

structure of Jones' device bears a striking resemblance to Pandemonium:¹³

In the further part of the scene, the earth open'd and there rose up a richly adorn'd palace, seeming all of Goldsmiths' work, with porticoes vaulted on pillasters running far in: the pillasters were silver of rustic work, their bases and capitals of gold. In the midst was the principal entrance, and a gate; the doors' leaves of bass-relief, with jambs and frontispiece all of gold. Above these ran an architrave, frieze, and cornice of the same; the frieze enricht with jewels; this bore up a ballestrata, in the midst of which upon a high tower with many windows, stood Fame.

This detailed description of Jones' architectural marvel tells how "When this palace was arrived to the height, the whole scene was changed into a Peristilium of two orders, Doric and Ionic, with their several ornaments seeming of white marble, the bases and capitals of gold".¹⁴ Milton's palace, like many a masque discovery, appears to sweet music and, like Davenant's house of Fame, rises from the earth:

Anon out of the earth a Fabric huge
Rose like an Exhalation, with the sound
Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a Temple, where Pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With Golden Architrave; nor did there want
Cornice or Frieze, with bossy Sculptures grav'n;
The Roof was fretted Gold. (I.710-17)

As the palace reaches its height, a further discovery occurs as in the

¹³See Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 229 and n. to I.710-17; Hughes observes that Pandemonium compares interestingly "with the machinery of a masque at court on the Sunday after Twelfth Night in 1637" as described in The Stage Condemn'd (1698).

¹⁴Sir William Davenant, Dramatic Works, ed. James Maidment and W. H. Logan (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), II, 283. Jones also designed a House of Fame for Jonson's The Masque of Queens, for the design of which, Jonson tells us, Jones "professed to follow the description made by Chaucer of the place". In this house the columns are ornamented with statues of the celebrated men of old while elsewhere were paintings of battles, triumphs, loves and "all magnificent subjects of honour", and the whole was lit magnificently with coloured lights. For Jones' design for the palace of Fame in Britannia Triumphans, see Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court, pp. 677-78.

scenic device of Jones and Davenant, and the onlookers gape at the marvels revealed:

Th' ascending pile
 Stood fixt her stately highth, and straight the doors
 Op'ning thir brazen folds discover wide
 Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
 And level pavement: from the arched roof
 Pendant by subtle Magic many a row
 Of Starry Lamps and blazing Cressets fed
 With Naphtha and Asphaltus yielded light
 As from a sky. The hasty multitude
 Admiring enter'd, and the work some praise
 And some the Architect (I.722-32).

Milton's palace is not the setting, as is Jones's, for the discovery of the glory of Britain's nobility appearing from behind the peristilium, but a suitable station to house a "hasty" and "admiring" multitude. Davenant's palace displays figures exemplary of true fame, Milton's admiring multitude suggests on the other hand that the palace may house a pejorative form of fame.

Davenant describes his structure as "the glorious Palace of Fame"; Milton's Pandemonium, an assembly place for all evil spirits, is essentially a house of evil fame. Milton is quite specific about the didactic purpose of the structure:

And here let those
 Who boast in mortal things, and wond'ring tell
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian Kings,
 Learn how thir greatest Monuments of Fame,
 And Strength and Art are easily outdone
 By Spirits reprobate (I.692-97).

It is the archetype of vain glory, a monument to the infernal source of worldly fame. The centre-piece of this vainglorious structure is Satan's royal throne of state, where he sits exalted "by merit rais'd / To that bad eminence" (II.5-6). Milton compares Pandemonium as it rises to the wondrous edifices of barbaric nations and to heathen shrines:

Not Babylon,
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
 Equall'd in all thir glories, to inshrine
Belus or Serapis thir Gods, or seat
 Thir Kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxury. (I.717-22)

The procession of fallen angels hinted, in the rioting of Belial and the evil parentage of Celtic gods, at the relevance of the evil actions of the fallen angels to contemporary England. This display of wealth and luxury enshrining false gods and seating a barbaric king, with its resemblance to court masques, also hints at such national iniquity. The editor of Davenant's Britannia Triumphans notes that the masque "excited great clamour on account of its being represented on the Sabbath".¹⁵ The masque climaxes with the appearance of Charles, glorious as Britanocles, in the doors of the palace of Fame. A commentator on this masque in The Stage Condemned, a Puritan objection to the immorality of the theatre, writes of this discovery: "But now we come to ~~the~~ chief Design of this Mask; which was to celebrate the praises of King Charles I. . . . Was not this Religiously done to convert any part of the Saboth of our Great Redeemer to be misspent in such Fulsom Praises of any Mortal Man?"¹⁶ The remarks of this anonymous commentator were published in 1698, after the appearance of Paradise Lost. However, if so long after the masque was performed it was still being used to show the iniquity of Charles, this would suggest the indignation it aroused at the time; and the comments of the anonymous author might surely

¹⁵William Davenant, Dramatic Works, II, 247. Cf. also A. H. Nethercot, Sir William Davenant, Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 76.

¹⁶Anonymous, The Stage Condemned (London, 1698), p. 26.

represent opinions which had grown up about the performance. Considering such reactions to the masque, it would not have been inappropriate for Milton to choose to design his archetype of the seat of heathen kings after the pattern of those masque scenes that housed the luxury and blasphemy of Charles.¹⁷ In fact, in Eikonoklastes Milton, while criticising the intent of the emblematic pose of Charles in the frontispiece of Eikon Basilike, demonstrates that he too saw blasphemous tendencies in the deifying of the king in the court masque. The artist, he scoffs, has decked out a shrine to provide a setting for the king so that the people may worship him, but the trappings, "quaint Emblems and devices begg'd from the old Pageantry of some Twelf-nights entertainment at Whitehall, will doe but ill to make a Saint or Martyr".¹⁸ In the shrine in Pandemonium Satan is not, of course, equated with King Charles; rather, this allegory of false fame which chooses Satan as its archetype and finds types in history (in the vainglorious wealth of Babylon and Cairo and of barbaric kings of the east) hints also that contemporary Britain was not devoid of such blasphemous splendour.

St. Peter's in Rome may also provide a model for Pandemonium. Marjorie Nicolson, while referring to modern critics who see resemblances between Pandemonium and Davenant's masque palace, suggests that one level of meaning of this palace provides a protestant parody of popery. She points to resemblances in architectural details between St.

¹⁷Cf. MacCaffrey, "Paradise Lost" as "Myth", p. 181. The seventeenth-century reader doubtless felt even more at home among the Doric pillars and bossy sculptures than MacCaffrey, who thinks that "Pandemonium is all too like the brassy and barren splendours of our own public occasions".

¹⁸John Milton, Works, V, 67-68.

Peter's and Pandemonium, and to the image of bees in this section, for "bees were the emblems of the Barberini Pope Urban VIII", and "his followers were frequently called 'bees'". At the same time, phrases like "close recess" and "secret conclave" suggest that the council scene in Book II is "Milton's Protestant parody of the election of a Pope by the College of Cardinals".¹⁹ For a Puritan writer it would be appropriate to add the seat of the Pope to the list of vainglorious thrones of ambitious princes and shrines to false gods, particularly as, in anti-papist writings like Donne's Ignatius His Conclave and Fletcher's Apollyonists, Rome had become another Babylon, an infernal city.

Pandemonium is an emblematic setting in which Satan is first enthroned like a king (II.1ff.) and later adored like a god (II.477-79). A negative simile outlines this function of the building as it first rises:

Not Babylon
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
 Equall'd in all thir glories, to inshrine
Belus or Serapis thir Gods, or seat
 Thir Kings (I.717-21).

As Book II opens, Satan is enthroned in a royal state which outshines the kings of the east; and at the conclusion of the ceremony, as he is elevated in "transcendent glory" by his ignoble self-sacrifice, the fallen angels adore him: "Towards him they bend / With awful reverence prone; and as a God / Extol him equal to the highest in Heav'n" (II.477-79). The satirical vein of this whole description of Satan's royal seat is evident in the witty bathos of the explanation of the reason for this adoration:

¹⁹Marjorie Nicolson, A Reader's Guide to John Milton (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1963), pp. 196-98.

Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd,
 That for the general safety he despis'd
 His own; for neither do the Spirits damn'd
 Lose all thir virtue (II.480-83).

The character of Satan and his "close ambition varnisht o'er with zeal" is not the sole butt of this satire, which is directed against all ambitious and worldly men, and the time-serving crowd which adores them.

Milton's palace of evil fame is the setting for a council which plans a seditious conspiracy. The reason that the structures dedicated to Fame in the masque rose from the earth was not entirely that one obtained in this way spectacular scenic effect. Rather, Fame was fabled to have sprung from the earth. Bacon, in De Sapientia Veterum, writes:

the poets tell us that the Giants, being brought forth by Earth, made war upon Jupiter and the gods were routed and vanquished with thunderbolts, whereupon Earth, in rage at the wrath of the gods, to revenge her sons brought forth Fame, youngest sister of the giants. ²⁰

Although Milton expresses elsewhere an inability to define the nature of Hell's terrain (at I.228-29, for example, he doubts the applicability of the term "land" to the solid part of Hell), when he describes the area

²⁰Francis Bacon, Works, ed. James Spedding et al, VI, 178. Bacon adapts Boccaccio's account of Fame in the first book of his Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri (Ed. Vincenze Romano, Bari: Gius Laterza & Figli, 1951), I, 36:

Quod cum ab regni cupidinem bellum inter Titanos gigantes, Terre filios, et Iovem esset exortum, eo itum est ut omnes Terre filii qui Iovi adversabantur occiderentur a Iove, et diis aliis. Quo dolore Terre irritata et vindicte avida, cum sibi adversus tam potentes hostes arma deesoent, ut illio quibus poterat viribus aliquid mali ageret, coacto utero, Famam emisit scelerum superum velatricem.

Rumour, a pejorative form of Fame, also dwells in an elevated palace. In Ovid's Metamorphoses, XII.39-63, she is pictured in a brazen palace upon a hill which, like Pandemonium, is filled with many people. Boccaccio's description of Fame proceeds to comment upon the Ovidian passage.

from which the palace rises, he specifically calls it "earth". The council itself is summoned by trumpets, the instrument borne by Fame in allegory.²¹ While they announce the commencement of the council, the trumpets seem also to blaze the fame of Satan and his worthies; their summons calls forth "From every Band and squared Regiment / By place or choice the worthiest" (I.758-59). At Satan's high capital, the assembly place of evil, the spirits worthiest of evil fame have their worth proclaimed as they proceed to the council. Pandemonium is a place where evil is both planned and praised; for worldly ambition, Milton shows us here, promotes fraud and craft.

Bacon, interpreting the meaning of the fable of Fame's birth after the rebellion of the Giants in a political context, gives it the following meaning:

The meaning of the fable appears to be this; by Earth is meant the nature of the common people; always swelling with malice towards their rulers, and hatching revolutions. This upon occasion given brings forth rebels and seditious persons, who with wicked audacity endeavour the overthrow of princes. And when these are suppressed, the same nature of the common people, still leaning to the worse party and impatient of tranquillity, gives birth to rumours and malignant whispers, and querulous fames, and defamatory envy upon the authorities of the land; So that seditious fames differ from acts of rebellion, not in race and parentage,²² but only in sex: the one being feminine and the other masculine.

While this interpretation is specifically political, it emphasizes points similar to those in Milton's use of the myth in Paradise Lost. Milton, too, uses the myth in the context of rebellion against a

²¹Jonson gives a detailed description of his figure of Fame in The Masque of Queens. He acknowledges Ripa's Iconologia as his source. In Minerva Britanna (1612; rpt. Menston: Scolar Press, 1969), emblem no. 35, Henry Peacham represents Fame as a cherubic trumpeter.

²²Francis Bacon, Works, ed. James Spedding et al, VI, 718.

monarch, and associates fame with the sedition that breeds after the defeat of rebel forces. The fallen angels are repeatedly equated with the Titanic and giant rebels, Satan at one point being compared to Typhon, so that this exhalation from the earth following their defeat can appropriately be identified with the birth of Fame. In both interpretations of the myth Fame is seen in a pejorative sense, inspiring Ambition and Envy which plots revenge. Like Bacon, Milton shows the related yet differing aspects of the two forms of rebellion by force and the weaker, to Bacon feminine, nature of defamatory envy. The decreased stature of Milton's fallen angels as they descend to such tactics is portrayed as they gather at the Palace of Pandemonium, where they are transformed to pygmies, or insects or beguiling "faerie elves".

Like the spectacular discoveries of the court masque devised to enshrine the Stuart court, the Palace of Pandemonium forms an allegoric setting for Satan and his followers. Its structural features, even its origins and spectacular mode of appearing, are evocative of types of infamy and blasphemy. The action that takes place within this palace is also reminiscent of the ceremonial rites of the court entertainment. Milton compares the debate to a tournament as against an open battle. The spacious hall is

like a cover'd field, where Champions bold
Wont ride in arm'd, and at the Soldan's chair
Defi'd the best of Paynim chivalry
To mortal combat or career with Lance (I.763-66).

The worthies who are called by trumpet to debate are followed by the gaping crowd: "all access was throng'd, the Gates / And Porches wide, but chief the spacious Hall / . . . Thick swarmed" (I.761-62, 767). The outcome has already been ordained, firstly by God, who foresees all, but

also by Satan, whose speech to his assembled troops already contains the germ of his strategy:

our better part remains
 To work in close design, by fraud or guile
 What force effected not: that he no less
 At length from us may find, who overcomes
 By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
 Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife
 There went a fame in Heav'n that he ere long
 Intended to create, and therein plant
 A generation, whom his choice regard
 Should favor equal to the Sons of Heaven:
 Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
 Our first eruption (I.645-56).

Though the procedures of the council are ceremonial, particularly in the elevation of Satan and in the grand entry and exit, and although the visual element is present in the focus upon Satan enthroned in splendour in this allegorical shrine to false fame, the moral meaning is displayed primarily in the verbal encounters of the council. Even Satan, who is visualized sitting in state, predominantly "displays" his "proud imaginations" (II.10) in his speech; and it is through speech and false reasoning that Satan's worthies display their infamy. Moloch, Belial and Mammon each provides an exemplum of unfairly persuasive argument. Moloch uses threats, Belial the deceptive wit of a clever debater, Mammon the all too well known appeal of the politician to man's desire for physical comfort and worldly wealth. The applause Mammon's rhetoric draws is so overwhelming as to threaten the whole infernal plan of revenge, and it brings Beelzebub quickly to his feet. It is indeed appropriate that Mammon should excel in an allegorical house of worldly fame. Though the ultimate honours for perfidy are, of course, always Satan's, Mammon and Beelzebub share debating success in this infernal palace of fame which expresses both worldly ambition and seditious

rumour.

The final show in Hell in these first two books is a series of vainglorious entertainments, suitable revels for a house of worldly fame. One might compare these, in intent, with some antimasques that consist of numerous entries and satirical dances of clowns and charlatans. Davenant's Salamacida Spolia is such a masque, showing various contemporary exempla of "the people's folly" in antimasque dances, featuring such characters as an amorous courtier, a farmer and his wife, two roaring boys, four antique cavaliers and so on. However, more subtle techniques are available to Milton in the theatre of his imagination. In his dream-vision world he conjures up a nightmare allegorical landscape of folly reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch or the satirical landscapes of Pieter Breughel. Pockets of activity occur on suitable terrain: games on the plain, war in the clouds, poetry in the valley, philosophy on the hills. It is an attempt to convey a more comprehensive vision of hellish activity, particularly in the description of exploration, than the burning landscape and the glorious palace have so far done. As with each of the previous hellish tableaux, this exhibition of the sports of Hell not only indicates the nature of the infernal regions and their occupants, but also provides a satire upon the activities and ambitions of mankind.

Because of the richness of the fabric of Milton's poetry in Paradise Lost, these opening scenes in Hell may be interpreted in a number of contexts: as myth, as dramatized theology, even as a re-creation of biblical history. The chief events in Milton's Hell, however, are not strictly historical. They concern the discovery of a

horrid scene of disorder, a procession in which the inhabitants of this express their vices, a show of arms, the spectacular rising of a palace which subsequently houses the debased ceremony of this infernal court, and a concluding display of the sports and pastimes of this empire. These events are a means of displaying the infamous glories of such an empire; and it is probably intentional on Milton's part that they resemble the means by which seventeenth-century rulers displayed the glories of their courts in exhibitions of arms, and wealth, and courtly ritual. In this display of the nature of Hell's courts and Satan's power, myth, biblical history and theology are all relevant, and Milton repeatedly alludes to the authority of these disciplines. However, he refers the learning of the mythographer, historian and theologian to the fictitious spectacle which he has devised to present an anatomy of Hell and a satire upon ambition and conspiracy. To indulge in an oversimplification that Milton, with his sophisticated pattern of allusions, refuses to make outright, the picture of the ambitious and conspiratorial court of Hell is an elaboration, in a series of tableaux, of the Envy of the Infernal Serpent, the cause of man's sin and disobedience. The courts of Hell show revolt, disobedience and Envy as an opposite to the courts of Heaven, and the golden kingdom of unfallen man, where obedience is demonstrated by Praise and worship of God.

SATAN'S PROGRESS

The opening scenes of Books I and II present an anatomy of Hell which is at the same time a satire on the future human activities portrayed there and an analysis of evil and of the cause of man's disobedience and fall. Following upon this opening series of discoveries which presents evil gods and vices in the courts of Hell, the movement of the poem begins to sweep through the whole universe. From his royal seat, the description of which has presented an allegory of his nature and rule, Satan embarks upon the major voyage of the epic, a voyage during which he moves through almost the entire world of the poem. Because it covers almost the entire setting of the poem, an understanding of the nature of the voyage and of the lands traversed should be important in fathoming the nature of the poem itself.

This voyage takes Satan first to the gate in Hell's city walls where he is accosted by allegorical figures related to him, who express a sympathy with his mission. He then moves out into a wild expanse of territory in which the forces of Chaos are enthroned in a pavilion. From here he is directed to his goal, the garden of Eden. The world he seeks is pendant upon a golden chain from the walls of a second and splendid city but, rather than entering the gates by a marvellous ladder which is let down before him, he enters the smaller globe of the world in disguise. He seems to enter this by a back entrance, for its guardian,

Uriel, has his back turned; and Satan himself is described entering the garden with an indecorum similar to the characters who entered for the antimasque of Jonson's Masque of Augurs from the buttery hatch:

Due entrance he disdain'd, and in contempt,
At one slight bound high overleap'd all bound
Of Hill or highest Wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. (IV.180-83)

He is compared to a wolf leaping a fence or a thief entering a house by a skylight. As he himself explains later to his rebel hosts, his conquest is laughably easy; he spoils the entire world merely by persuading its inhabitants to eat an apple. Following this conquest he returns to Hell in Triumph, over a triumphal bridge constructed and presented to him, with due ceremony, by his children. Here in Hell an instructive, but not entirely delightful, show is presented before him to celebrate his victory. Such a voyage resembles the progresses of kings and magistrates in Tudor and Stuart England rather than the voyages of Ulysses and Aeneas. Its geography is defined by progress between allegorical stations: symbolic gates, a throne, stairs to the gate of Heaven, an angel within a golden orb, a fair garden and a triumphal bridge.

However, while the action is circumscribed and staged, our appreciation of its meaning is not, for we are not confined to Satan's literal understanding of his mission. His journey is a Ulyssean voyage, a triumphal procession, and at the same time an attempt to portray the workings of evil. The geography of Satan's journey is presented in deliberately conflicting terms; he is described as making simultaneously both horizontal and vertical progress, and we are never certain of his

exact mode of locomotion. As he sets off into Chaos he is both ship and angel with "Sail-broad Vans" (II.927) while Chaos, directing him towards earth, begins "If that way be your walk", assuming a path or road. Satan, however, although apparently he takes this path, shoots up "like a Pyramid of fire / Into the wild expanse" (II.1013-14). While Satan makes his progress, neither entirely vertical nor firmly horizontal, Sin and Death build an apparently horizontal bridge and "Pav'd after him a broad and beat'n way / Over the dark Abyss" (II.1026-27). At once we are allowed to visualize space as capable of being bounded and bridged, with stairs from Heaven to earth, a bridge to Hell, and walls around the celestial and infernal cities; yet, while limiting space in order to present mysterious ideas dramatically (cf. III.516-18), Milton impresses on the reader's mind a sense of infinitude and of the magnitude of the universe.

The difficulties inherent in a too-literal reading of Satan's journey, and thus of the world of the poem, are demonstrated in several passages of Walter Clyde Curry's Milton's Ontology, Cosmography and Physics where the author fails to distinguish between Milton's allusions to scientific theory concerning the cosmos and the fictitious world of the poem. Reconstructing the universe of Paradise Lost as a physical rather than an allegorical entity, he interprets each of Milton's conflicting statements concerning Satan's progress as factual and literal:

In Satan's journey through the "illimitable ocean" of chaos, for example, momentary agglomerations of "earthy" particles packed together with only small void spaces between enable him to walk or run upon a density resembling soil. . . . At other times aggregations of "watery" atoms permit him to swim and of

"airy" particles to fly.¹

This is ingenious but, as my analysis shows, Satan is at times progressing in all three of these ways at once, and this not only in the boggy Syrtis area. By reconstructing Milton's world on a physical rather than an allegoric basis, Curry runs into difficulties like the following:

It must be observed that in the representation of this road from Hell to the World and the process of its construction, Milton appears to involve himself in artistic and logical difficulties and perhaps absurdities. The problems are painfully evident: two allegorical figures, Sin and Death, are depicted as building a symbolical road composed of such materials as "bars", "asphalt", and "rock" through an actual entity, the unformed mass of chaos, to the point where the symbolical bridge is attached to the outside shell of the created world by chains of "adamant". (pp.81-82)

But the action and therefore the place are basically allegoric, of course--a point which explains the mixture of allegoric, symbolic and actual, puzzling Curry, who tries to explain how Milton might here wish to sacrifice "logical consistency in favor of psychological effect":

He evidently depends upon the knowledge of an informed reader that bars, rock, and adamant do exist potentially in chaos, else God could not have actualized them in the created World. Consequently, being intimately acquainted with these secondary materials at hand in the Visible Universe, one willingly suspends his logical judgement for a moment and accepts bars, rock, and adamant as basic terms of the highway symbol. (pp. 82-83)

Curry, in many passages like these, tries to persuade the reader that the awe-inspiring images created by these too bulky materials are what make the reader grant the poet his supposed illogicalities of construction--illogicalities that are, in fact, Curry's invention.

The landscape of Paradise Lost resembles closely that of a dream vision where stations loom large and perspectives change as solubly as

¹Walter Clyde Curry, Milton's Ontology, Cosmography and Physics (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), pp. 80-81.

in dreams; but it also owes much to the methods of dramatizing journeys available to Milton as a Londoner, able to witness the annual mayoral pageant, or any of a number of religious and political processions that occurred each year in Britain. Such processions moved solidly about the streets between symbolic arches or scaffolds, while purporting to represent to the imaginations of the citizens a battle between the forces of good and evil or the journey of an epic mariner. In Middleton's The Sun in Aries, Jason speaks as if he is wishing a fellow mariner a fair voyage:

Be favourable, Fates, and a fair sky
Smile on this expedition! Phoebus' eye
Look cheerfully, the bark is under sail
For a year's voyage, and a blessed gale
Be ever with it.²

In Middleton's The Triumph of Truth, Truth's angel describes the year's rule and day's pageantry as a battle:

thy care's but begun,
Wake on, the victory is not half yet won;
Thou wilt be still assaulted, thou shalt meet
With many dangers that in voice seem sweet,
And ways most pleasant to a worldling's eye;
My mistress has but one, but that leads high.
To yon triumphant city follow me,
Keep thou to Truth, eternity keeps to thee.³

On one level, in Paradise Lost a comparison is drawn between Satan and the sea voyagers of the classical epics. Satan, although he either walks between symbolic or flies between angelic stations, is also described as a ship or a mariner. Chaos is a "gulf" or "frith" and

²Thomas Middleton, Works, VII, 340.

³Ibid., VII, 240. Assaults, the sweet-voiced lure of vice, and sights pleasing to the worldly, are all described in the pageant.

possesses a "coast" and a sand bank, "a boggy Syrtis". When he has passed through Chaos, Satan is compared to a "weather beaten vessel". On his voyage he is

harder beset
 And more endanger'd, than when Argo pass'd
 Through Bosporus betwixt the justling Rocks:
 Or when Ulysses on the Larboard shunn'd
Charybdis, and by th'other whirlpool steer'd. (II.1016-20)

Satan's is a more arduous voyage than those of the ancient heroes; however, the comparison relates only to the magnitude of the deeds of these epic mariners and does not necessarily suggest that they could be equated with Satan in evil or be seen as types of vice. In describing Satan as voyager Milton equates Satan's journey more positively with mercantile voyages:

As when far off at Sea a Fleet descri'd
 Hangs in the Clouds, by Equinoctial Winds
 Close sailing from Bengala, or the Isles
 Of Ternate and Tidore, whence Merchants bring
 Thir spicy Drugs; they on the Trading Flood
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
 Ply stemming nightly toward the Pole. (II.636-42)

And as Satan's journey ends he is also described as a merchant ship, "full fraught with mischievous revenge" (II.1054). The contemporaneity of this comparison recalls the conventional Renaissance comparison between the heroes of the golden age and the decline of virtue in the crass present world. The voyage imagery, then, places Satan's journey in an epic context and in doing so makes a moral point: heroism is not simply dependent upon valorous deeds. Yet Milton is also aware that Satan's vicious purpose distinguishes his journey from those of the ancient heroes.

In our imagination Satan may set out on an epic voyage, but its

nature as an allegorical progress between stations is soon established with the looming into vision of "Hell bounds high reaching to the horrid Roof" (II.644) and the "thrice threefold" gates set in these walls.

There is a sudden change of perspective, suggesting a change of position or scene. At one moment we are outside the doors of Pandemonium watching the exit of the imperial procession which disbands while Satan flies "far off" to the horizon, then suddenly "appear" Hell bounds, not as a feature of the far horizon, but looming high above us and so near that the figures which guard the gates can be clearly distinguished.

These symbolic gates with their allegorical guards clearly establish the staged nature of the journey. The symbolic gate or arch was a typical device of allegorical drama, seen in the triumphal arches built for James I's coronation procession, and in the scenes and proscenium arches of masques. In progresses, city gates and entrances of noble residences were often settings for symbolic actions. An account of such a welcome to Queen Anne is found in a poetical celebration of an entertainment at Bristol in 1613:

No sooner did her Grace's Traine approach our Cities bownd,
 And that her Harold 'gan draw neare with blast of trumpets sound;
 Submissive, prostrate on his knees the Maior fall downe,
 And the Recorder by his side, a man of greet renowne;
 With grave aspect and perfect voyce his silence then he broke,⁴
 These words unto her Princely Grace, or not unlike, he spoke.

This doggerel description of the mayor's courtesy provides a nice contrast to the rudeness of the encounter at the infernal gates. Like a station on a pageant route, these gates form an important marker along the route of Satan's journey and help to define its purpose and effect.

⁴John Nichols, ed., The Progresses of James I, II, 652.

Symbolic figures expressing the nature of the structure sit one on either side. Milton devotes lengthy descriptions to each, outlining the emblems that decipher their natures. Although an analogue to Sin as porter of Hell's gate is found in Fletcher's Apollyonists, the outstanding difference between Fletcher's Sin and Milton's draws attention to the more formal dramatization of Milton's poem. Fletcher's Sin is a compound of Milton's Sin and Death; Milton chooses the symmetrical shape made available by two figures placed one on either side of an arch.

Each stage of Satan's journey is described in terms of ceremony. At Hell's gate he is challenged by the guards, though a comparison with the gentle greeting of the versifier's mayor of Bristol shows the parodic and indecorous behaviour of these figures and the perverted nature of their ceremony. Satan steps up first to prevent any ceremonial challenge with rude words:

Whence and what are thou, execrable shape,
That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated Front athwart my way
To yonder Gates? through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave askt of thee. (II.681-85)

Death replies by calling Satan "traitor" and menaces him in turn:

Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of Scorpions I pursue
Thy ling'ring, or with one stroke of this Dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.
(699-703)

The confrontation ends without a blow dealt, for it is a ceremonial challenge rather than a battle. When Sin takes her symbolic keys and allows Satan to pass through, her movement towards the gate is accomplished with a kind of grotesque dignity as she moves towards the

gate "rolling her bestial train". The doors themselves open to music, although a suitably discordant music making a "jarring sound" and grating on their hinges with "Harsh Thunder" (II.873, 880, 882). A fanfare might be appropriate in such a ceremony, but Hell's gates open for Satan to ominous Jovian thunder, portending doom.

What Satan sees through these gates is both a "dark / Illimitable Ocean without bound, / Without dimension" (891-93) and a battle field outside a city wall. The gates open so wide that "a Banner'd Host / Under spread Ensigns marching might pass through / With Horse and Chariots rankt in loose array" (885-87). Yet it is also an expanse of air, for this army of foot soldiers, cavalry and charioteers is angelic and would pass "with extended wings" (885). If this host were marching, it would evidently issue forth into a battlefield where Night and Chaos have set up a pavilion and where a tournament is in progress:

hot, cold, moist, and dry, four Champions fierce
Strive here for Maistry, and to Battle bring
Thir embryon Atoms; they around the flag
Of each his Faction, in thir several Clans,
Light-arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift or slow,
Swarm populous" (898-903).

Here a whole army, enlisted or "levied" under four champions, battles under flags and banners with various arms. In this symbolic tournament Chaos sits as umpire in his pavilion, surrounded by his "consort" Night, his "high arbiter" Chance and the nobility of his realm. Illustrative of his nature as "anarch old" he directs procedures with as much success as a man with a megaphone might have attempting to control a riot.

Chaos and his nobles in their pavilion are arranged as the figures were arranged in symbolic pageant cars. In the most complete description of this triumphal car the costume of Night, the many-mouthed

masque of Discord and the appropriate placing of the figures is typical of such pageant cars. Satan comes upon

the Throne

Of Chaos, and his dark Pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful Deep; with him Enthron'd
Sat Sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
The Consort of his Reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Rumor next and Chance,
And Tumult and Confusion all imbroil'd,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths. (959-67)

One might compare such an arrangement with the figures on the Mount of Truth in Middleton's Triumph of Truth:

That grave, feminine shape, figuring London, sitting in greatest honour: next above her, in the most eminent place, sits Religion, the model of a fair temple on her head and a burning lamp in her hand, the proper emblems of her sanctity, watchfulness and zeal; on her right hand sits liberality, . . . on her left side sits Perfect Love, his proper seat being nearest the heart . . . upon his left hand stand two billing turtles, expressing thereby the happy condition of mutual love and society; on either side of this mount are displayed the charitable and religious works of London . . . and on the two heights sit knowledge and modesty, knowledge wearing a crown of stars, in her hand a perspective glass, betokening both her high judgement and deep insight: the brow of modesty circled with a wreath of red roses expressing her bashfulness and blushings, in her hand a crimson banner filled with silver stars, figuring the white purity of her shamefastness. . . .⁵

Upon his throne surrounded by allegorical figures symbolically arranged, Chaos is reminiscent of the chief allegorical figure on a pageant car, and indeed his speech also recalls the greetings many such a figure delivers to the honoured guest as he passes by a pageant station. In Dekker's London's Tempe there is a station representing Apollo's palace, in which are enshrined Apollo and the seven liberal sciences. Through their spokesman Apollo these extend an appropriate greeting to the mayor:

⁵Thomas Middleton, Works, VII, 252.

Go on in your full glories: whilst
 Apollo, and these mistresses of the Learned Sciences,
 Waft you to that Honorable Shore, whither
 Time bids you hasten to arrive.⁶

Chaos' greeting is equally appropriate as he gives Satan's project his blessing: "go and speed; / Havoc and spoil and ruin are my gain" (1008-09).

Satan's entry into the world is accomplished by means of sleights of perception similar to his crossing of Chaos. Here again he is sailor, flying angel and pedestrian, the consequent ambiguity as to the mode and direction of his movements making the real geography of his journey difficult to follow; and in fact Milton is ambiguous about the exact shape of the cosmos he is describing. This ambiguity is particularly evident in the imagery used to describe the movements and location of Satan when we rediscover him half way through Book III. On a "windy Sea of Land" the fiend "Walk'd up and down" rather like the "cany Waggons light" (III.440, 441, 439) of the Chinese which are both ship and land vehicles, and yet at the same time that he is ship and car, Satan is also a vulture. The only certainties in this ambiguous territory are the allegorical stations from which action is directed and which sum up the meaning of each stage of the voyage. Book III, in which Satan descends to earth, is a series of changing perspectives as we switch from a stance before one station to that before another. As Book II ends Satan looms large before us with spread wings, while "far off" are the walls of Heaven, and earth which, in comparison with Satan, is as small as "a Star / Of smallest Magnitude" (II.1052-53) beside the

⁶Thomas Dekker, The Dramatic Works, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), IV, 112.

moon. At III.418 Satan alights on the globe of the world, seen at the end of Book II so distantly:

a Globe far off
It seem'd, now seems a boundless Continent
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
Starless expos'd (III.422-25).

Satan "long wanders" in this wilderness, where he is represented as the first in a long line of deluded pilgrims seeking false gods. Satan wanders alone as archetypal pilgrim, "for other Creature in this place / Living or lifeless to be found was none, / None yet" (III.442-44). Then Milton gives us a preview of the later inhabitants of this wasteland in a procession of foolish men. First hither come the Giants, "the builders next of Babel" still designing new Babels as they wander, an activity that indicates who they are. "Others came single", among whom Milton names Empedocles and Cleombrotus before leaving his catalogue to expand into a general description of costumed friars and pilgrims who stream towards the promised city and are whipped away rather spectacularly by a crosswind. Satan himself follows, or rather precedes their footsteps, wandering until he perceives light and that heavenly ascent which the deluded wanderers had been unable to climb. On the convex curve of the world's outer surface, like a scout atop a hill, Satan stands at the foot of these stairs ascending to Heaven's magnificent gates; and in this symbolic setting we witness him make an equally symbolic choice, selecting the easy path to the world over the ascent to Heaven, and the darkness of the world, covered by "the circling Canopy / Of Night's extended shade" (III.556-57), over the light of Heaven.

From the setting of this foolish choice, illustrated both by Satan's action and the erring pilgrims, Satan journeys to the sun from

where we view the universe in yet another perspective. His journey there is as ambiguous as that through Chaos; his flight is "precipitant" yet "winds with ease". Milton refuses to give its length or direction except to say that it is towards the sun:

Thither his course he bends
Through the calm Firmament; but up or down
By centre, or eccentric, hard to tell,
Or Longitude (III.573-76).

It is a journey which is at the same time a flight and a sea voyage, passing "stars" in the firmament, or "worlds" in the universe, or "isles" in a sea. Yet as Milton more specifically describes the Sun, it is seen as a centre of light, a "station bright" about which these stars are figures in dance. On this bright station Uriel, with his golden tiara and flowing locks, stands cogitating. Characteristically entering by a back way, Satan comes behind Uriel and changes a dark cloak, which makes him appear like a sun spot, for a cherub disguise. The little drama that follows between the hypocritical, disguised Satan and the ingenuous Uriel, like that before Heaven's staircase, also serves to make a moral point about the entry of evil into the world. Then Uriel, like Chaos, interprets the area he controls to Satan and guides him further upon his journey.

Satan's adventures on earth will be discussed in Chapters XI and XII below in the context of the Paradisal material; for the present it will be sufficient to pick up his voyage at his triumphant return from Paradise in Book X. As preparation for his return, we first watch Sin and Death bridge Chaos with their grotesque structure. Sin and Death, who have long sat as silent allegories at their posts, seem suddenly to come to life:

Within the Gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,
 In counterview within the Gates, that now
 Stood open wide, belching outrageous flames
 Far into Chaos, since the Fiend pass'd through (X.230-33).

At this "station" there has been no activity since Satan's exit; but now, in anticipation of his return, these figures spring to life: "Sin opening, . . . thus now to Death began. / O Son, why sit we here each other viewing / Idly" (234-36). Sin and Death commence the building of a "Monument / Of merit high to all th' infernal Host" (258-59), a bridge to ease Satan's passage over the gulf of Chaos. From one perspective, the bridge and the activities of this allegoric couple building it are comic; from another, terrifying. They sweep all the flotsam and jetsam of Chaos into a great "mole" or breakwater in a very haphazard fashion:

what they met
 Solid or slimy, as in raging Sea
 Tost up and down, together crowded drove
 From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell.
(285-88).

These lines suggest at least two, and possibly three visual images. On one hand, as a cosmic spectacle their actions are powerful and frightening as a stormy sea; on the other hand, the visualization of their action as two human figures shoving away at the sea's wastes, and the further suggestion of the ambiguous reference of "as in raging Sea / Tost up and down" that Sin and Death themselves are tossed in the seas of Chaos, render their action comic, even puny. The idea of Death alternately hammering at this mess with his "Mace petrific" and fixing it with his Gorgonian stare, while it refers the human audience to the horror of the Gorgonian effect of Death upon the human body, is also comic. The comedy potential in the stare of the allegorical figure of Death in the context of bridge building is also present in the

description of his animal snufflings at the smell of the now decaying, fallen world.

As Satan enters, Sin and Death have their bridge well in position and wait at its end to greet him. There follows a series of inverse compliments parodying the ceremony of triumphal occasions and the language of praise but revealing the perversity of the scene. True to convention, the chief personage to be honoured comes disguised and unannounced, but he and his worth are immediately recognized by those stationed to greet him.⁷ The compliment is double edged here, for Satan's disguise is "of an Angel bright" (327), a disguise by which his children are not in the least taken in. The presentation of the bridge is performed with due ceremony. Sin presents it to her father as a monument to his merit:

O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy Trophies, which thou view'st as not thine own,
Thou art thir Author and prime Architect (354-56).

The "stupendous" structure's grotesqueness makes parody of the praise. Satan's reply as he sends his offspring to rule his new kingdom emphasizes the symbolic identification between the obscene bridge and his conquest of earth. He praises the action of his children, who "so near Heav'n's door / Triumphal with triumphal act have met, / Mine with this glorious Work" (389-91).

After this grand yet bathetic ceremony Satan walks on over the causeway and through the desolate landscape of Hell to the anticlimax of

⁷When Elizabeth I arrived at Harefield she was recognized as the best housewife in the company, although the "country clods" pretended not to recognize her identity. See Nichols' account of "The Queen at Harefield Place 1602", The Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, III, 586-88.

the reception in Pandemonium. This reception is full of comic possibilities. The disguises assumed by this arch magician to move through his troops, and his invisible march from hall door to throne, are comic in view of his followers' anticipation and the grand reception which the reader assumes should be staged for the return of a victorious emperor. The shame of this unceremonial entry is augmented in that there is no clear indication in the text that this lack of ceremony is intentional on Satan's part. It is Satan's habit to assume disguises, so that this unobserved entry can be interpreted as his ploy to make spying on his troops possible: "Down a while / He sat, and round about him saw unseen" (447-48). However, the whole passage is syntactically ambiguous, another example of Milton's habit of describing his vision so as to leave it open to more than one interpretation. Milton does not say explicitly that Satan deliberately disguises himself, merely that he is at this moment "In show Plebeian Angel militant / Of lowest order" (442-43). His entry is described as "unmark't", his march to the throne "invisible", and his enthronement at first "unseen"; and although this state does give him opportunity to view his troops, unobserved himself, there is no clear indication that this was his intention. Whether or not the spectacular final discovery of his enthroned person is an effect willed by him is again left open to interpretation; the passive construction and the description of his glory as "permissive" leave Satan's control of the situation in some doubt. If Satan expects to be recognized, the loud acclaim and congratulations due to a returning adventurer are comically late in bursting forth from his followers. The

bustle of the hall continues as this emperor moves up to his throne of state and seats himself in its regal lustre--a most shameful lack of decorum and a most humiliating situation for an emperor. To the lack of nobility and grandeur of Satan's entry is added the shame of his troops' reaction when "permissive" glory is finally granted him. The uncouth and hasty flattery of Hell's peers, which his person inspires only when enthroned in a glitter of bright light, has to be silenced by Satan before he can begin his solemn victory address.

The satire created by the bathos of Satan's welcome becomes more pointed as the address ends. The expected applause turns to a hiss of scorn as God shows this act of triumph to be an act of shame and provides a spectacle illustrative of their shame and punishment for the carnal creatures of Hell who can only interpret their world literally. To the fallen angels, Satan interprets his success in Eden in a literal sense:

Him by fraud I have seduc'd
From his Creator, and the more to increase
Your wonder, with an Apple; he thereat
Offended, worth your laughter, hath giv'n up
Both his beloved Man and all his World (485-89).

His interpretation of God's judgement of this act is just as literal; he believes that God's judgement will not fall upon him but upon the serpent. God's answer to such blind perversity is to provide a punishment that enables the fallen angels to interpret the events of the fall in the only way of which they are capable: by physical experience of the bitter taste of disobedience. Milton graphically describes how Satan feels during his transformation into a serpent:

His Visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
His Arms clung to his Ribs, his Legs entwining

Each other, till supplanted down he fell
A monstrous Serpent on his Belly prone (511-14).

Satan experiences first the taut visage of envy; then the imprisonment of his limbs by his encroaching serpentine nature, and finally lies monstrous in the bestial indignity of his fallen and vermiform state.

The triumphal procession of Satan, now turned to a humiliation, issues forth onto an open field where the expectant crowd

in station stood or just array,
Sublime with expectation when to see
In Triumph issuing forth thir glorious Chief (535-37).

They expect some glorious spectacle, but see something far different as the loathesome serpents writhe forth and they themselves are drawn into the humiliation as they catch the "dire form" like a contagious plague. Before this crowd rendered thus helpless by their own crimes, hissing, prone, and with the reasoning of beasts, appears a final spectacle which Milton describes in the Argument to Book X as "a show of the forbidden Tree springing up before them". The now manifestly bestial imaginations of the fallen angels interpret this "delusive" show in a carnal fashion. They reach out and eat, searching for sustenance in things ephemeral and unreal. Celebrating Satan's triumphant return from conquest, this show makes a mockery of his vain ambitions. In reaching for the fruit the fallen angels are beguiled, just as was Adam whose fall this show, featuring the instrument of mankind's destruction, should have triumphantly celebrated. The show in Hell is a parody of the original act in Eden, featuring monsters who writhe and hiss, eat the fruit that is not what it seems, and demonstrate their distaste in vomiting and grotesque jaw movements. The display is a ritual of humiliation; Milton suggests such a function when he refers to the tradition of an

annual rite of humiliation in Hell. The fallen hosts are

enjoin'd, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling certain number'd days,
To dash thir pride, and joy for Man seduc't. (575-77)

That this yearly time of Lenten humbling is necessary for fallen man again focuses the satire of Satanic actions upon the contemporary sinner.

The events in Hell end with a look from a heavenly perspective at the entry of Sin and Death into our world. The purport of the conversation of these cannibalistic monsters is savage and gruesome when viewed from the perspective of mankind; but presented, as Milton presents the scene, as a theatrical spectacle in which the two quasi-human shapes discuss earth's potential as food, with Sin showing maternal concern for her son's diet, the exchange has the comic potentiality of the conversations of the vices of the morality play. This dreadful event, interpreted from a heavenly perspective, is seen as part of an orderly and controlled plan. God looks at a fair world into which the folly of man has allowed to enter the mockery and misrule of the Prince of Hell with his rout, and describes the function of the grotesque pair who now come on as that of hounds, called to "lick up the draff and filth" (630) shed by man's sin. Sin and Death enter the world as the result of Satan's perversion of mankind, but they come as menials called to clean up the house, not to take up a triumphal occupation.

The actions of the Hellish hosts in Book X are, like those in the earlier books, focused in a series of allegorical encounters in iconographically appropriate settings. Hell, as it was in Books I and II, is an infernal court where pomp and ambition are mocked, at

Pandemonium palace, in a series of spectacles and shows. Sin and Death, following the path of Satan to the world, we see as we saw their parent, in a series of suitable settings: before Hell's gates, in the comedy surrounding the broad causeway to Hell, and finally, grotesquely savage and ugly in looks and in speech amid the contrastingly pleasant landscape of Eden.

The activities of Satan and his hosts on one hand recall the martial exploits of epic heroes: conquest, sea voyage and a final triumphant occupation of the new kingdom. However, these epic exploits are not enacted in the realistic terrain of the classical epic, but are presented as symbolic gestures in richly allusive tableaux. In the actual realization of these scenes which make up the progress of Satan, Milton probably owes much to the techniques of the poetry of dream visions and allegorical pilgrimages where one scene melts away as the succeeding one looms large. However, in certain of the icons, and particularly in the major dramatic situations, Milton is clearly influenced by the triumphs of seventeenth-century governors. Certain icons, for example, the allegorical entrance-way, the triumphal throne like that of Chaos, and the triumphal monument, occur in other allegoric contexts; but the dramatic encounters that take place before them in Paradise Lost bear a striking resemblance in form to the ceremonial greetings that were given in the context of such allegorical tableaux in seventeenth-century pageantry. The same mock-ceremony that occurs in these stations is more specifically represented in the activities that occur in Pandemonium: the procession, formal debate, the entertainments of Book II and the reception and show of Book X.

Those martial and imperial themes typical of the epic which Milton has presented in debased form in the activities of the Hellish hosts were commonly the subjects of the triumphal entertainment. Evident in the shows that illustrate Satan's progress are the allegorical methods by means of which such themes were presented in the seventeenth century. Satan's achievements are compared to types in history and legend, and his worth is measured in the tableaux settings in which he appears, whether by the appropriateness of the mock-triumphal monument, or by contrast with the glorious globe of the sun. Milton's subject allows him both to find types which exemplify the characters of his protagonists, and to work his allegory in an inverse manner, which can create great potential for satire; for each of the types of evil from history or legend is judged by being discovered to approach so closely to the evil archetype. The narrative of Satan's journey is fictitious, consisting of action before a series of stations in which some aspect of evil, particularly of ambition and fraud, is analyzed. Satan's assault upon the world becomes a point of departure, not the subject of the narrative. The significance of the journey is not to show how he gets from point A to point B but to provide an occasion for discussion of the advent of evil in a world created by a just and providential God. The court fête used allegorical tableaux and ceremonial action to glorify the monarch's achievements and to proclaim the fame and virtue of his court; Milton uses similar devices to present Satan's infamous victory and vicious empire in a context of parody.

VI

THE EPIC MACHINERY

Like the classical epic, which begins by introducing the epic machinery, Paradise Lost begins with a description of the activities of the wrathful "god" who sets out to wreck the kingdom Adam has been created to found. Milton's epic machinery concerns the opposing forces of Christ and Satan. Although they are more unequally matched, the depiction of their conflicting efforts to affect the destiny of mankind follows the pattern of the intervention of the gods in the classical epics.¹ However, when Milton in his particularly dramatic poem portrays the interest of the gods in the actions of men he is demonstrably influenced by the representation of such intervention in the theatre. One dramatic form in which the intervention of the gods in human affairs was frequently and suggestively depicted was the court entertainment. The entrances and actions of Milton's immortals often recall the way in which the gods were represented in the court masque, while his method of organizing the actions of the immortal beings of Paradise Lost suggests the influence of the masque's structural conventions. The court masque, in fact, hinges upon a relationship established between the heavens and the earth. The argument of Beaumont's The Masque of the Inner Temple,

¹Cf. Harding's comparison of Satan's rôle with that of Juno in the Aeneid, in The Club of Hercules, p. 37.

produced in 1613 to honour the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth and the Count Palatine, illustrates the function of the heavenly intervention, the hinge of most masques. In this masque, as in the epic, a glimpse of the participation of the gods serves to broaden the scope of an earthly action and points to the favoured status of the nation. In the epic, as Pope declares with blunt satire,

The Machinery, Madam, is a Term invented by the Criticks, to signify that Part which the Deities, Angels, or Daemons, are made to act in a Poem: For the ancient Poets are in one respect like many modern Ladies; Let an Action be never so trivial in it self, they always make it appear of the utmost Importance.²

Beaumont, introducing the myth behind his marriage masque for the Princess Elizabeth and the Germanic Prince, begins: "Jupiter and Juno, willing to do honour to the marriage of the two famous rivers Thamesis and Rhene, employ their messengers severally, Mercury and Isis, for that purpose".³ In Beaumont's masque, as in the epic, the marvellous machinery which attends upon the principal historic event celebrated gives it greater importance and scope.

The masque writers borrowed their gods from the ancients, but dramatized them in their own peculiarly ritualistic way. In the action of this masque, Iris and Mercury appear in the court banquet hall to act alternately as the presenters of antimasque and main masque spectacle. In Paradise Lost, when Milton's thunderer looks benevolently upon events in the kingdom of Eden, he too sends his messengers Raphael and Michael; like the masque gods they act as presenters of instructional dramas to mankind.

In the court masque the intervention of hostile and benevolent

²The Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 217.

³A Book of Masques, p. 133.

gods was dramatized in terms of their participation in, or instigation of, disorderly antimasque cavorting and beautiful masque dancing. Ben Jonson's Lovers Made Men opens by establishing a context which clearly refers to the epic descriptions of the journeys and trials of heroes. Mercury appears leading the lovesick masquers who, because of their malady, are temporarily the antimasquers. They have been "Tossed upon those frantic seas / Whence Venus sprung" (ll. 28-29).⁴ The masquers have endured trial by water and are now enthralled by Venus' son Cupid. The action of these gentlemen in their predicament is symbolic, not realistic. The action of the masque develops in dances illustrative of order and disorder, while the respective powers of Mercury and Cupid over the lovers are demonstrated in the course of a brief debate between the two gods. In Paradise Lost too the battle of hostile and benevolent "gods" is dramatized in terms of contrasting spectacle and debate. The poem begins with the extended spectacle of the activities of Satan, opponent of God's interest in founding the kingdom of earth. This lasts through Books I and II until it is banished temporarily in Book III by reference to the glorious spectacle of God upon his throne in the heavens. Here we witness, in a ceremonial form, the intercession on his behalf of mankind's heavenly champion. The dramatized offers of Satan in the Hellish court and Christ in the Heavenly one, the one seeking to destroy man and the other to restore him, provide a contrast similar to the actions of the antimasque with the main masque spectacle.

The intercession of Christ at this early point in the epic to

⁴Ben Jonson, The Complete Masques, p. 258.

counteract the hostilities of the immortal opponents of the poem's human protagonist has epic precedent; one might compare it with the intercessions of Pallas in the Odyssey (I.16ff.) and particularly of Venus in the Aeneid (I.223ff.) as she intercedes for Aeneas and Rome with Jupiter who sits pondering on his view of the world from the heavens. However, the dramatization of the epic incident of Christ's intercession in the fate of Adam and mankind is influenced by the masque dramatizations of such heavenly interest in the affairs of men. The scene in Heaven resembles a ceremony rather than the recording of spontaneous action. The formal scene represents a general truth or a state of affairs by means of symbolic action and does not attempt to recreate the dynamics of heavenly discourse. Christ asks for mercy for an act not yet committed, and while he demonstrably offers himself for mankind, the action, in fact, is yet to be made. God's speech is formal and rhetorical.⁵ As the Argument to Book III indicates, it consists first of a rhetorical description of the event of the poem, analogous to the prologue narrations of some masques where the myth that governs the action is outlined. This is followed by declarations, a ceremonial acceptance of Christ's offer of ransom, ordination, pronouncement and command. The scene moves toward the dramatic silence among the angelic choirs which highlights the offer of the Son, and climaxes in the shouts and the worshipful gestures of the angels as they cast down their crowns and bow towards the double throne. The whole action is ritualistic, made up of debate and dance, and concludes in dancing about the throne of God

⁵See Irene Samuel, "The Dialogue in Heaven: A Reconsideration of Paradise Lost III.1-417", PMLA, LXXII (1957), 601-11.

that has been described as a heavenly revels.⁶

This glorious and decorous ceremony in Heaven bears yet another resemblance to the masque in that it is preceded by a spectacle of evil and darkness. Milton uses such an antithesis as a means of unifying those actions in his poem that extend into the realms of the marvellous, beyond the scope of the central action of Paradise Lost performed by man in Eden. The activities of Hell provide an antimasque foil to the glorious pattern of perfection we see in Heaven. Much attention has been drawn to the elements of parody in the dramatization of the Infernal Trinity and in the activities of the hosts of Hell.⁷ John M. Steadman, studying the nature of the heroism of the characters of Milton's heroic poetry in the context of that of the heroes of the classical epics, comes to the conclusion that Milton in Paradise Lost is setting up a new definition of heroism, which takes Christ as its ideal and condemns the pagan heroism as Satanic. However, Steadman believes,

Milton does not reject the heroic ideal per se; he denies only to affirm, and refutes Satan's heroism merely to establish the perfect standard set by the Messiah. As a foil to Milton's heroic Christ, Satan is really the 'counter-hero' of Paradise Lost.⁸

Steadman describes Satan's heroism as "false-heroic" and, although he does not mention the masque antithesis, the contrast that he sets up

⁶John G. Demaray, "The Thrones of Satan and God: Backgrounds to Divine Opposition in Paradise Lost", Huntington Library Quarterly, 31 (1967-68), 30.

⁷B. Rajan, "Paradise Lost" and the Seventeenth-century Reader (London: Chatto and Windus, 1947), pp. 46-48, lists most of these parallels and argues that to see the perversion and parody of Heaven found in Hell is to "penetrate to the heart of the epic, to seize on that massive and symbolic symmetry to which Paradise Lost was intended to conform".

⁸Milton and the Renaissance Hero (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 170. Steadman's chapter "Heroic 'Archetype' and 'Prototype'", pp. 161-76, most systematically discusses the rôle of Satan as "false hero".

between Christ and his foil Satan is similar to that in the court masque between masque and antimasque leaders. Looking at Satan from this perspective, of the false heroic, Steadman interestingly concludes that Satan is thus rendered a partially comic character. In The Masque of Queens Jonson described his witches representing allegorized evil who rose from a hell mouth to a dark scene as a "foil or false masque",⁹ and their function was to set off the true heroic virtue of the masquers.

The court masque is a glorious spectacle and the antimasque, by contrast, a "spectacle of strangeness".¹⁰ It presents deformed and grotesque characters who provide a contrast to offset the grace and nobility of the court masquers. In Paradise Lost Milton describes events that are invested with similar pageantry as were the state occasions at the Stuart court. Book III climaxes in a scene of formal adoration followed by song and dance. In Book V Raphael describes an imperial summons in the courts of Heaven in terms of pageantry and ceremony; thousands of bright angels encircle the throne of God, the "glittering tissues" of the standards and gonfalons "stream in the air", and following the elevation of the Son, they dance more intricate dances than the Stuart courtiers ever danced at the investiture of a Prince of Wales;¹¹

⁹Ben Jonson, The Complete Masques, p. 122.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 123.

¹¹Cf. the mysterious mazes and labyrinths of the dances in Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue and the lines of the Genius of the Wood in Arcades, who hopes to learn from the harmony of the spheres music to celebrate the noble occasion of the performance.

That day, as other solemn days, they spent
 In song and dance about the sacred Hill,
 Mystical dance, which yonder starry Sphere
 Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheels
 Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
 Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular
 Then most, when most irregular they seem:
 And in thir motions harmony Divine
 So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear
 Listens delighted. (V.618-27)

The actions of Satan and his followers in the ceremonies in Hell are a parody of such perfection and could therefore be understood to function as does the antimasque of a court masque. The bestial nature of the fallen angels, their clouded glory and the gloomy scene provide a contrast to the glorious light and colour of Heaven. The sweet music and graceful dancing of God's revellers is provided with a foil in the discordant music and grotesque movements in Hell. The intricate yet concerted mazes of the angelic dances have their foil in the haphazard entertainments of the Satanic hosts which come to an anticlimax in the disintegrating activities of their wandering explorations of Hell.

A number of the conventions which operated in the antimasque of masques at court, or which governed the allegorizations of evil provided as a foil in civic pageantry, are evident in the characterization and actions of the fallen angels of Paradise Lost. The characters of the antimasque were traditionally deformed and often bestial. Satan, like Comus in both Comus and Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, is lord of Misrule, and his followers are similarly grotesque, many half man and half beast like the rout in Milton's masque. The fallen angels rise up like "a pitchy cloud / Of Locusts" (I.340-41) and some are described as "bestial Gods" (I.435) and "Gods disguis'd in brutish forms" (I.481). They include such grotesques as "Moloch, horrid

King besmear'd with blood" (I.392), "Astarte, Queen of Heav'n, with crescent Horns" (I.439), "Dagon . . . Sea Monster, upward Man / And downward Fish" (I.462-63) and Egypt's "bleating Gods" (I.489). Thammuz with his following of lovesick maidens recalls the theme of the mad lover in a number of court masques; Davenant's Salamacida Spolia has a dance of four mad lovers, Campion's The Lords Masque includes a dance of frantics one of whom is a lover, and Jonson in Love's Triumph Through Callipolis has a dance that is a catalogue of foolish lovers. Discordant music attends the fallen angels as we first see them, Belial reigning "where the noise / Of riot ascends" (I.498-99) and Moloch, worshipped with "the noise of Drums and Timbrels loud" (I.394). Only later, when the poem deals with the fraudulence of this rout, do they appear to march in ranks to firm and gentle music. However, at that stage we should not be impressed by infernal accord, for we first discover them in ridiculous postures, prone upon the flood. Satan's ridicule draws attention to their plight:

Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror? who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the Flood
With scatter'd Arms and Ensigns" (I.322-25).

Their response to Satan's call is an undignified display of shame and guilt:

up they sprung
Upon the wing; as when men went to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake. (331-34)

In the court masque the conventions of the antimasque limit the power of its characters. They are like intruders in the magnificent banquet hall, suffered for the sake of variety and entertainment. They

are related to the rustic performers of mock plays for Tudor monarchs on progresses and to the journeyman players of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Although they are intruders, they are unaware of their being there only on sufferance and act their parts unconscious of any irony created by this ignorance. Opinion and Confidence in The Triumph of Peace, two such characters, believe they have the authority to present the masque, as do the antimasquers in Jonson's Masque of Augurs. The noble audience, for whom they provide unconscious entertainment and instruction, merely tolerates them. In Paradise Lost God indicates that the actions of the fallen angels in the universe of the poem are to be viewed in a similarly ironic context. Like the antimasque characters, they are acting only by royal permission and are unconscious of the ironies of their position. One might appropriately imagine a note of laughter in God's voice as, perfectly aware of Satan's preparations for war, he advises the Son to arm lest they "unawares" lose their omnipotent throne. For all his power, and Milton describes it as considerable in worldly terms, Satan is placed firmly in an ironic and limited context by the reader's awareness of God's omniscient presence. Like the antimasquer, Satan's elaborate plans are ridiculed by the dramatic irony created by the presence of a wiser audience. Like low and evil characters in a play, or antimasquers, or a Prince of Misrule interpreting his festive laws, Satan's vision is limited to a literal perception of his world. Because Satan believes that he has triumphed over God by means of an apple and that God is laughably foolish when he passes judgement on the serpent, God has to show him by physical means suited to such idiocy the bitterness of that triumph and the identity of that serpent. The Son's brutal flinging of the children of

Satan from the world again follows the convention by which the low characters who usurps a nobler place is disgraced and expelled physically. The brutal expulsion of Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo in The Tempest is of a similar kind. Satan becomes a lord of misrule, a riotous parody of God's own rule, allowed to exist only so long as he is useful as God's servant. As God makes his final comment on the hosts of Hell, before Milton devotes the remainder of the poem to the history of man, he explains their existence in the universe in terms of misrule lords:

I suffer them to enter and possess
 A place so heav'nly, and conniving seem
 To gratify my scornful Enemies,
 That laugh, as if transported with some fit
 Of Passion, I to them had quitted all,
 At random yielded up to their misrule (X.623-28).

Both the parody and irony which derive from this convention of misrule into which Satan's actions fall render his efforts at heroism consistently mock heroic. The hellish council is mere bravado because it takes place as the devils suffer the pains of Hell, because they are unwittingly furthering God's design (I.210-20, e.g.), and also because it takes place within this convention of misrule parody. Like the councils of the princes of misrule of the inns of court in Tudor and Stuart England, and like the mock ceremonies of the university wits on festive occasions, the hellish council mimics genuine ceremony. Like God, Satan addresses his hosts with due ceremony as "Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heav'n" (II.11), although he is forced to add anticlimactically that "since no deep within her gulf can hold / Immortal vigor, though opprest and fall'n, / I give not Heav'n for lost" (II.12-14). When Beelzebub pleads his "devilish Counsel" (II.379) to hosts persuaded to materialistic apathy by Mammon, he is a parody of

"princely counsel". Characteristics that would once have made him an allegory of this quality in Heaven are now represented in a grotesque and ruined state. As he rose to speak in Hell he seemed

A Pillar of State; deep on his Front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care;
And Princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin (II.302-05).

He begins his speech in a parody of the ceremony of V.600ff.: "Thrones and Imperial Powers, off-spring of Heav'n, / Ethereal Virtues" (II.310-11). However, the rousing start is undermined by a sneer that more appropriately expresses their titles: "or these Titles now / Must we renounce, and changing style be call'd / Princes of Hell?" (311-13). The powers of Hell imitate and assume a dignity to which they are not entitled. Even before the council Satan appears as a parody of an emperor as he decides it is "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n" (I.263) and assumes a royal "we" in addressing his nobles:

But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
Th' associates and copartners of our loss
Lie thus astonisht on th' oblivious Pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy Mansion (I.264-68).

Much of the comedy of Hell springs from the contrast between what Hell's dignitaries are and what they pretend to be.¹² Satan's pretence to dignity is illustrated by the physical conditions under which the speech is offered. Such pomp is bathetic when addressed to the "copartners of our loss" who are welcomed to their "unhappy Mansion". Beelzebub's answering speech of compliment, addressing Satan as the hope of these bright armies, serves only to remind the reader that these inglorious associates lie "grovelling" on the lake where Satan himself lay all too

¹²Cf. Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero, p. 174.

recently. Beelzebub's stolidly materialistic assessment of their situation is potentially comic, having the same unconscious humour as the wise sayings of low characters from comedy:

they will soon resume
 New courage and revive, though now they lie
 Groveling and prostrate on yon Lake of Fire,
 As we erewhile, astounded and amaz'd;
 No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious highth. (I.278-82)

As Satan exults in his recovered powers, the dramatic irony created by God's omniscience and omnipotence as against Satan's perverse discounting of the torments he suffers render him ridiculous. This often exuberant comedy of ceremony parodied is found throughout in the speeches of Satan and the fallen angels, in the rousing encouragements of the fallen troops, the overheard plans of the debates of Pandemonium, and particularly in the inverted ceremony of the challenge at Hell's gate and the presentation of the triumphal bridge.

Satan and his fallen hosts, like figures of misrule, are comic figures; but the comedy is satirical and the ridicule of the forces of evil is often savage and brutal. Satan is a ridiculous comic character; his first appearance is made lying prone on Hell's lake, and in subsequent appearances he is dropped from one cloudy chariot he audaciously aspires to ride and catapulted into the quagmires of chaos by another. He is described as sneaking into Eden like a thief onto a roof, and is caught by the angelic guard while crouching like a toad in Eve's boudoir. Such activities are far from decorous for one who sets himself up as "Alone th' Antagonist of Heav'n, nor less / Than Hell's dread Emperor with pomp Supreme" (II.509-10). The comedy of evil is also found in other characters: Mammon hunch-backed from admiring the riches of Heaven's pavement, and Chaos with "falt'ring speech and visage incompos'd" (II.989). Sin and

Death are often grotesquely humorous. They are described in Book X making their way to earth, Sin leading with Death snuffing, dog-like, behind. Death's delight in carnage is comic in a macabre fashion when he is dramatized with "upturn'd nostril, the "grim Feature" (X.279-80); the same macabre imagination is seen at work in the representation of Sin and Death's conversation upon arrival on this earth, discussing its culinary possibilities. The final ejection of the bloated bodies of this vicious pair, however, puts the reader's sympathies in proper focus. Their power is susceptible to comedy because they have power only over folly and evil. The comic conventions surrounding the fallen angels in Paradise Lost provide a metaphor by which Milton can express their rôles in the order of the universe. They are primarily ridiculous rather than fearsome because of the constraints Almighty omnipotence puts upon their actions; and they are scorned as they fail to take account of his omniscience.

The comedy of misrule is appropriate in Paradise Lost for the loss is not tragic from a sublime perspective, and the antimasque-like grotesque figures of evil are banished and superseded by the glories of Heaven. While the leadership of Satan is ridiculed in Book X the heavenly hosts look forward to the final triumph of Christ when, his "victorious Arm" vanquishing Sin and Death and sealing the mouth of Hell, Heaven and earth will be renewed. The comedy of misrule in Paradise Lost is not light laughter, but is marked by a stream of savagery continually present in the descriptions of the evil hosts. Ridiculous as they may be from a cosmic perspective, Milton must also express the fearful power they hold over frail man, and the strength of Christ who rids man of their threat.

The actions of Satan and the hellish hosts occur, then, within certain literary and dramatic conventions which define these characters in terms of their rôles in the order of God's well-governed universe. Like comic characters in an antimasque or pageant, they represent the forces of misrule. In the pageantry such grotesque figures of evil, ugliness and disharmony provided a foil to the illustrious rule of the monarch celebrated in the main spectacle of glory. Such a conventional contrast is basic to the structure of Paradise Lost, which celebrates the just rule of God. The grotesque spectacle with which the poem commences continues until Book III, which opens with a dramatic change of scene and perspective. The darkness of Hell and Satan's limited vision are superseded by the blinding splendour of God's throne with a perspective of the whole universe and of all time. It is as if, having watched the performance of an antimasque on a darkened stage in the dark hall of the universe, our eyes are directed to the brightness of the lighted dais to admire the royal viewer of this performance. As he sits viewing his universe from the raised and illuminated throne, surrounded by his angelic nobility, God is like a royal guest of honour occupying the seat of state at a court entertainment:

Now had th' Almighty Father from above,
 From the pure Empyrean where he sits
 High Thron'd above all highth, bent down his eye,
 His own works and their works at once to view:
 About him all the Sanctities of Heaven
 Stood thick as Stars, and from his sight receiv'd
 Beatitude past utterance; on his right
 The radiant image of his Glory sat,
 His only Son (III.56-64).

Like a king with his royal family at a performance in his honour, for all creation serves as a witness to the glory of God (VII.608-16, III.164),

God graciously bends his eye to view his subject "works" perform their works. Milton describes God in terms similar to those used to describe the chief guest at royal masques and entertainments of the period. In Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, James is the brightest star, shedding light from his royal state upon his subjects; his courtiers are lesser lights. The climactic discovery of the masque occurs:

here in the sight
Of Hesperus, the glory of the west,
The brightest star, that from his burning crest
Lights all on this side the Atlantic seas
As far as to thy pillars, Hercules,¹³
See where he shines. (ll. 170-75)

James shone because traditionally the image of the sun or the brightest light was a way of expressing the glory and supremacy of the king; but additionally, at the performance of a masque he was seated on a lighted and raised seat from which light would be shed upon the audience. Using imagery similar to Milton's at III.56ff. describing his enthroned God, Shirley describes the royal party at The Masque of Flowers thus:

a sun and moon and stars
Are met within the palace of a king,
In sev'ral glory shining each on other
With rays of comfort and benign aspects (ll. 79-83).¹⁴

In Milton's entertainment Arcades the Countess honoured by the evening's entertainment sits in such state amid lights and radiates her benign influence. The approaching Arcadians sing:

Look Nymphs, and Shepherds look,
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook:
.....

¹³Ben Jonson, The Complete Masques, p. 270.

¹⁴A Book of Masques, p. 161.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,
 In circle round her shining throne,
 Shooting her beams like silver threads.
 This, this is she alone,
 Sitting like a Goddess bright,
 In the center of her light. (ll. 1-4, 14-19)

Though she is enthroned apart, the Countess is an integral part of the entertainment, the goal of the Arcadians' "solemn search". Yet like a goddess the Countess is regally inaccessible; even those members of her own family who come to honour her may approach only so far as to "kiss her sacred vesture's hem" as she sits in "glittering state". A comparable position at the centre of Paradise Lost belongs to God, who is the centre of angelic adoration, yet who is so remote in his glory that at the brightness of his very skirts "brightest Seraphim / Approach not, but with both wings veil thir eyes" (III.381-82). In Paradise Lost one of God's chief attributes is imperfectly expressed by human sight. God's omniscience and omnipresence are represented by his "eternal eye". At V.711-15 he is an invisible viewer screened behind a blaze of light, from there continually viewing and understanding his universe:

Meanwhile th' Eternal eye, whose sight discerns
 Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy Mount
 And from within the golden Lamps that burn
 Nightly before him, saw without thir light
 Rebellion rising.

God is symbolized by his eye, which indicates both his perfect knowledge and the mystery of his simultaneous stillness and movement. At this moment in the narrative he is both within and without the golden lamps. At III.56-79, where God perhaps seems most human as an enthroned king, he views the world through this one mysterious eye, seeing all his works at once, beholding past, present and future and shedding all around "Beatitude past utterance" (III.62). In this last attribute the eye of

God is like a sun,¹⁵ an identification that intensifies the irony of Satan's address to the sun in his soliloquy at the opening of Book IV: "O thou that with surpassing Glory crown'd, / Look'st from thy sole Dominion like the God / Of this new World" (32-34). God is similarly represented as a single, mysteriously perfect eye at X.5-7 when the "Eye / Of God All-seeing" and his "Heart / Omniscient" perceive the sin of Adam and Eve.

This double rôle of honoured spectator which Milton assigns to God to express his omnipotence and omniscience in the universe is precisely that of the king at a court entertainment, where the scale is of course the much smaller one of the court banqueting hall. The terms that the masque writers employed to portray the power of the king were often derived from the symbols used to portray the attributes of God, the supreme ruler. This was particularly so in the Stuart reigns when the masque was an expression of the divine right of kings. When Edgar Wind examines the mystical hieroglyph of the eye of God, one interesting use he cites occurs in Ben Jonson's masque Love Freed. The rôle of James I as "God's icon" is expressed in the riddle put to Cupid:

First, Cupid, you must cast about
To find a world the world without,
Wherein what's done the eye doth do,
And is the light and treasure too.
This eye still moves and still is fixed,
And in the powers thereof are mixed
Two contraries, which time, till now,
Nor fate knew where to join, or how.
Yet if you hit the right upon,
You must resolve these all by one. (ll. 146-55)

Wind explains that the solution to the riddle is an icon of God, or, in

¹⁵Cf. Shakespeare's 18th Sonnet: "Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines".

the context of the Stuart court, James I.¹⁶ By re-attributing such icons of kingship to God, Milton is directing the deification and worship of kings to the heavenly throne where, for the Christian believer, such worship belongs.

God the spectator is like a king honoured at a court entertainment. But the monarch's masque rôle is also an expression of his influence upon his world, and so it is with God. Paradise Lost is not complete without reference to the Deity it honours, for all the action in Hell and Paradise gains meaning from its focus upon Heaven. Indeed, God's works honour him even by default. The angels, singing his praises after the creation of the world, see the rebellion of the fallen angels as a foil to the might of God, now manifest in the creation he made for his glory (see III.164). The angels singing, ask

Who can impair thee, mighty King, or bound
Thy Empire? easily the proud attempt
Of Spirits apostate and thir Counsels vain
Thou hast repell'd, while impiously they thought
Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks
To lessen thee, against his purpose serves
To manifest the more thy might. (VII.608-15)

Not only do the events in Heaven narrated by Raphael in Books V to VII demonstrate God's glory, but so also does even the apparently tragic spectacle of the fall which the God of Book III is about to witness. Speaking to his only Son, forseeing the events of the drama about to occur, God outlines what is to happen in Paradise. He points to Satan as he nears "the happy Garden" where Adam and Eve are "Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love" (III.66-67) and tells how

¹⁶Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, pp. 218-35; Love Freed in Ben Jonson, The Complete Masques, p. 179.

Man will heark'n to his glozing lies,
 And easily transgress the sole Command,
 Sole pledge of his obedience: So will fall
 Hee and his faithless Progeny (III.93-96).

The antimasque figures are about to spoil this view of the golden age. Yet this tale of "disobedience" and "woe", the narrator indicates at the very outset of the poem, is to become, amazingly, a means to "assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to men" (I.25-26). God's synopsis of the events of the poem as he foresees the drift of the action in Book III (80-134) ends with a similar assertion. Through the intervention of Christ, the "greater Man" whose restorative action is awaited in the opening invocation, the destruction of the golden world will become the occasion for a new demonstration of God's glory:

Man therefore shall find grace,
 The other none: in Mercy and Justice both,
 Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glory excel,
 But Mercy first and last shall brightest shine (III.131-34).

The final revelation of Christ in glory does not form part of the action of Paradise Lost, for the poem ends with the world in its tragic state of woe, the "blissful Seat" of Eden destroyed. As Milton indicated was to be the case, in the work on the fall as first planned (the drafts of which are found in the Trinity MS.) man is instructed and given hope in his imperfect world through visions and masques. In the "Nativity Ode" the second coming is prophesied in a vision of Mercy, Justice and Truth, who descend in bright raiment from the skies. In Paradise Lost Milton similarly shows the restoration of the blissful seat and God's Mercy and Justice in a series of signs and forshadowings. The heavenly ceremony of Book III is one such vision of divine mercy and justice, providing a masque-like contrast to the antimasque offer of Satan, and his subsequent demonstration of intent to destroy the world. As the poem

continues, messengers descend from the skies to present this theme, generally in typological allegory and signs. Michael relates the history of the kingdom of God's chosen people. He not only tells of the coming of Christ incarnate and of the final judgment, but in the progress of history from "shadowy Types to Truth" (XII.303) shows God's justice and mercy shadowed forth in Old Testament times also. Raphael shows the defeat of Satan and the establishment of Heaven upon earth in one context, and this serves to shadow forth what will happen upon earth in the history of mankind.¹⁷

God's justice and mercy are discovered in other visitations and messages from the eternal ruler that appear in the landscape of Paradise. God hangs out his scales in the heavens to demonstrate that, although his angels may be prevented from defeating Satan in battle in Paradise, justice will nevertheless be done (IV.995ff.). When Christ himself descends to earth to judge man, he speaks in terms of signs and symbols, first cursing the serpent in the words of Genesis iii, 15--a text that became a mysterious prophecy of the resurrection of Christ and of his second coming.¹⁸ The mercy of God shown even in his judgement on the serpent is further attested in his commuting of the death penalty and his action in clothing Adam and Eve; the latter foreshadows his assumption of the rôle of servant in his incarnation. In this gesture, Christ clothes Adam and Eve both physically and metaphorically:

then pitying how they stood
Before him naked to the air, that now

¹⁷See William G. Madsen, From Shadowy Types to Truth, p. 110.

¹⁸See John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes, Introduction to Paradise Lost, p. 197 and n. to ll. 168-81, p. 410.

Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin
 Thenceforth 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, or slain,
 Or as the Snake with youthful Coat repaid;
 And thought not much to clothe his Enemies:
 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 (X.211-23).

Christ's brief appearance upon the soil of the golden world of Paradise is not unlike the masque appearance of a heavenly being, for he comes to deliver a riddling judgement and perform a symbolic act. When the masque gods descended and acted within a symbolic setting they were also prophesying that the abstract qualities they represented would be seen influencing the country's political life. Christ's actions in the golden world of Eden, his curse upon the serpent (which Satan is notoriously incapable of interpreting) and his clothing of Adam and Eve express God's justice and mercy as it is manifest in this scene, and as it continues to manifest itself in the present fallen world.

Thus the coming of man's champion is prefigured in each of the heavenly apparitions to visit Paradise; and these prefigurations of his triumph form an antidote to the disharmony which the actions of Satan and his hosts are pictured as bringing into the world. To justify God's providence in the fallen world of woe Milton refers, paradoxically, to the fall of man. This historical event is seen, however, in the context provided by the machinery of the epic, a context which directs the reader to celebrate the providential rule of God. In Paradise Lost the just government of God is demonstrated in the contrasting spectacles of Heaven and Hell, and of good and evil angels, the grotesquely comic ceremonies of

evil and misrule becoming a foil to the glorious spectacles of Heaven's ceremonies. Although the fallen world is demonstrated to be yet in the control of the leader of the forces of misrule, prophetic spectacles look forward to the restoration of bliss, so that in the context of such visions the fall is proved to be a felix culpa, and an appropriate event to recall in a celebration of God's providence.

VII
THE EPISODES

i

The episode, or inserted narrative, is a characteristic of the epic in the classical tradition, and such episodes are prominent features of Milton's Paradise Lost. Almost the whole of Books VI, VII and XII are occupied with such material, and parts of Books V, VIII and XI. In the classical epic, which begins in medias res, such episodes provide flashbacks to earlier events, usually in the form of tales told by heroes at banquets, although often these inset narratives take the form of prophecies of future events vouchsafed men through the intervention of the gods. The narrative of the archangel warrior Raphael, at the banquet in Eden, falls into the first of these two categories; similar narrations in classical epics are those commencing in Book II of the Aeneid and Book X of the Odyssey, in which Aeneas and Odysseus narrate the story of the fall of Troy. The vision that Michael grants Adam in Books XI and XII falls under the second category, and has an analogue in the vision of the future of Rome presented to Aeneas in the Elysian fields (Aeneid VI.754-854). While using this traditional epic device Milton adapts it to his own purposes implying, as he does each time he invokes epic precedent, the superiority of his subject. For the godlike hero of old Milton substitutes an angelic warrior; the history of Rome's great destiny is made puny in the context of the history of

the world from the fall to the day of judgement, while the fall of Troy becomes a poor foil for the Triumph of Christ in the battle in Heaven.

However, it is not only the subject matter of these episodes that Milton adapts to suit the aim and subject of his epic. More than merely narrating history, Milton exploits it for its allegorical possibilities. In fact, he chooses to present his histories, despite their tremendous scope, in a curiously static and theatrical manner, electing to show action within a series of frames rather than as an uninterrupted sequence. Within these tableaux-like divisions Milton often insists elaborately upon details which even impede the flow of events and, by consistently drawing typological parallels in details large and small, robs his history of much of its sense of progression.

In the episodes presented by Raphael and Michael a superhuman perspective is briefly granted the reader. In Raphael's account of the battle in Heaven events are described as if from a perspective just before God's throne. This is true also of his account of creation, despite the descending movement of the invocation to Book VII; for only a few lines later, Raphael is recapitulating the conclusion of the heavenly battle and recounting events in the courts of God prior to the riding forth of Christ in his chariot to create the world. He cannot be describing this scene from the perspective viewed "Standing on Earth" (VII.23) for earth has not yet been made. Michael leads Adam to a spot on earth from which he might view history, but it is a mountain so high that from it the whole hemisphere of the earth is visible, almost as if viewed from the heavens:

So both ascend
In the Visions of God: It was a Hill

Of Paradise the highest, from whose top
 The Hemisphere of Earth in clearest Ken
 Stretcht out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.
 (XI.376-80)

The kind of response the reader should have to character and event in these episodes is indicated by the manner in which they are presented. The theatrical manner in which events are projected urges the reader to detach himself from them, for both Michael and Raphael are presenters rather than narrators. Unlike Odysseus and Aeneas who tell the sad tales of their own adventures in a personal tone, Raphael's account of the war in Heaven and of creation is quite impersonal; so much so that his own contribution to the battle is mentioned in the third person.¹ The only personal touches in Raphael's story occur when he aligns himself on the side of God on the second day of the battle and describes in first person plural the reaction of his side to Satan's cannons (VI.571-81). This part is in the plural because Raphael is indicating the alignment of his sympathies, rather than describing his own particular actions and reactions on that day.

A more personal narrative told at the banquet, corresponding more nearly in tone to those of the classical epic heroes, is Adam's reminiscence of his creation. This uses the first person consistently and there is much emphasis on what the teller felt and experienced.

¹In his edition of Paradise Lost in The Poems of John Milton, Alastair Fowler attributes this to Raphael's modesty, for Adam and Eve do not know his name (see p. 746). The assumption that Raphael narrates personal experience gets Fowler into difficulties later, when he is forced to admit that "the account of the sixth day of creation (Day 19) [in Fowler's chronology of the events of the poem] is not an eyewitness report, for according to viii.229 Raphael was on that day absent on a mission to the gates of hell" (p. 802).

As he tells his tale Adam is bound by the limited vision of the human senses. The narrative itself, keeping within the world of Eden, tells of earthly characters and experience from a stance with which the human reader can readily identify.

The prophetic history, as inherited from Virgil, already had theatrical possibilities; Aeneas learns of Rome's future greatness from Anchises who indicates the future participants in Roman history as they wait in Elysium, and describes their characters and fate. Milton uses a similar tactic, although he elaborates upon places rather than upon persons. In the Aeneid the episode begins: "Anchises ceased, and drew his son and, with him, the Sibyl into the midst of the concourse and murmuring throng, then chose a mound whence, face to face, he might scan all the long array, and note their countenances as they came" (VI.752-55).² Imitating this scene,³ Milton has Michael lead Adam to the summit of a high hill from where "His Eye might there command wherever stood / City of old or modern Fame, the Seat / Of mightiest Empire" (XI. 385-87); Michael's history is a series of scenes rather than a procession of persons.

When Raphael recounts earthly history it too is in the form of illustrative tableaux. With its action divided into days and God's word written as direct speech, the biblical narrative is inherently suited to adaptation as a series of tableaux. Making use of this structural division into days, Milton dramatically frames each day with the sound

²The Loeb Virgil with English translations by H. Rushton Fairclough, 2 vols., revised edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

³See Davis P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p. 38.

of the divine voice and the songs of the heavenly choirs. The theatrical nature of the material is further enhanced as action is decorated with dance, song and costume, and allegorized by heraldic and emblematic designs.

Furthermore, the epic episode of the story of the great battle told at a banquet is quite transformed in Paradise Lost until it resembles in some ways the kind of theatrical entertainment one might have expected to witness during a contemporary festive banquet. In Milton's vision of Hell (Books I and II), that place is presented in terms of the vainglorious pomp and circumstance of proud earthly monarchs. Heaven, too, has its pomp and ceremony; indeed, one way in which Milton builds up his picture of the opposing natures of Good and Evil is by the contrasting spectacles of the two regions. Like Satan in Book II, God is enthroned in state, receiving the homage of his court. Just as Satan's epic journey is described in terms of a progress, so Christ's triumph in the battle of Heaven is described in terms of the battles which entertained monarchs and graced ceremonial occasions. As in a tournament or mock battle, costumed human actors fight to show skill and superiority, but not to kill; and they do battle under ensigns, suggesting the allegorical significance behind the fighting. Each of the battle's three days brings forth a new scenic device: on the first, Satan's sun-bright chariot; on the second, Satan's cannons; and on the third, the chariot of Christ. Like such a tournament, the shape of the action illustrates moral truths. In summing up his tale of the battle, Raphael indicates that the tension is not merely one in history: "that thou mayst beware / By what is past, to thee I have reveal'd /

What might have else to human Race been hid" (VI.894-96); his resumé of the narrative implies typological resemblances among future "things on Earth":

The discord which befell, and War in Heav'n
Among th' Angelic Powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring, who rebell'd
With Satan, hee who envies now thy state (VI.897-900).

Finally he points to lessons of conduct that may be learned from the examples of history and legend:

let it profit thee to have heard
By terrible Example the reward
Of disobedience; firm they might have stood,
Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress. (VI.909-12)

The purpose of the narratives of both Raphael and Michael is clearly didactic. Raphael's tales fulfill God's command to

such discourse bring on,
As may advise him of his happy state,
Happiness in his power left free to will,
Left to his own free Will, his Will though free,
Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware
He swerve not too secure; tell him withal
His danger, and from whom, what enemy
Late fall'n himself from Heaven, is plotting now
The fall of others from like state of bliss (V.233-41).

Similarly, Michael is sent to give Adam and Eve such instruction as will comfort them:

Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
To Adam what shall come in future days,
As I shall thee enlighten, intermix
My Cov'nant in the woman's seed renew'd (XI.113-16).

Directed to pre-Christian Adam and Eve in the narrative, these didactic passages are in fact aimed at the Christian reader. As inserted into the context of the fall of man in the garden, these narratives adumbrate themes touched upon by the action of the tragedy of the fall of Adam and Eve, which is bound by time and place, and extend that action to

universal dimensions. In function these inserted narrations are not unlike those masques and dumb shows in Renaissance dramas, which serve to introduce a note of allegory into the realism of the drama, adumbrating the play's themes in a more symbolic context.⁴ In Milton's Trinity MS. plans, in which the proposed work on the fall of man is set out as if it were to be a drama, there are in fact elements of such a dumb show, which are arranged within the tragedy of the fall of Adam and Eve, in the same position as the histories of Books XI and XII. The angelic narratives provide a universalized context in which to understand the drama of progenitorial sin; the one shows the archetypal "deep fall / Of those too high aspiring" (VI.898-99), and the other hints at every subsequent tragic fall. In addition, Raphael's portraits of the splendour of Heaven and of the goodness of the created world provide an ideal against which the world inhabited by Adam and Eve is measured. This chapter, which discusses the allegoric texture of Raphael's portrayal of battle and ceremony in Heaven, and the following three chapters, will deal with the episodes in greater detail, examining the way each is organized to praise God and instruct mankind.

ii

Despite the poet's mastery in depicting the battle in Heaven, the imaginative skill coupled with the philosophical consistency with which he has created his Heaven, the liveliness of the events and the skilfull modulations of metre and tone to give variety to the dialogue

⁴See Inga-Stina Ewbank, "'These Pretty Devices': A Study of Masques in Plays" in A Book of Masques, especially the section entitled "The Masque as Entertainment and Allegory", pp. 412-23.

and action, the battle has bothered readers since the poem was first published. This unease nearly always concerns the literal level of the narrative. Readers have been dismayed to find in Milton's presentation of Heaven and the angels a disturbing mixture of fact and fiction. His picture of Heaven is neither wholly reliable as a doctrinal depiction of the Christian Heaven, nor able to be taken as merely symbolic; it is, instead, a confusing mixture of the literal and symbolic. The whole concept of the battle itself is disturbing, for while the angels retain an ethereal nature, able to contract at will, they arm themselves with spears and shield of quite another substance, and this inconsistency leads to narrative difficulties. Samuel Johnson deemed that "the confusion of spirit and matter which pervades the whole narration of the war of heaven fills it with incongruity"; and, implying that it was a vivid but puerile picture of Heaven, he added that "the book, in which it is related is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increased."⁵ It is the narrative inconsistency which bothers Johnson, and he chooses for particular criticism the two occasions on which first the good angels and then the evil angels, although they are incorporeal spirits, are trapped in their armour. However, such inconsistency in the details of the narrative is much less disturbing than that the whole epic battle is rendered futile⁶ by the ineffectiveness of the weapons upon ethereal substance, and the presence of "th' Almighty Father where he sits / Shrin'd in his Sanctuary of

⁵Lives of the English Poets, I, 185.

⁶See John Peter's analysis of the battle in A Critique of "Paradise Lost" (London: Longmans, 1960), pp. 73-79.

Heav'n secure, / Consulting on the sum of things" (VI.671-73), who had "forseen / This tumult, and permitted all, advis'd" (673-74), who had known the futility of the even outcome of the battle of angels yet permitted it, in order to honour his son.

Robert West, countering the reading of Dr. Johnson, suggests that Milton's portrait of angels is a mixture of literary conventions used to portray spiritual beings, and some "special pictorialization" by means of which he portrays certain metaphysical ideas. Significantly, as a general justification of this position, West refers to the Trinity MS. drafts; if these were plans for a drama, Milton would have had angels represented by human actors. In a stage production, West points out,

Angels are presented outwardly like men; they may without contradiction be thought of as spirits. Similarly in Paradise Lost when Satan and the other angels have size and shape and when they perform man-like actions, Milton is simply telling his story in the only way a story can be told, and the reader may suppose that so far as the "philosophy" is concerned his angels are abstract intelligences. The well-understood convention of the stage on this matter shows that such anomolous adaptations in Paradise Lost do not prejudice any "philosophy" Milton may join to them.⁷

Thus the material arms, the man-like shapes and the action of the battle modelled on the struggles of heroes of classical epics are means by which Milton dramatizes battle among the angels; and while the reader "sees" the action in material terms, he is to understand it in terms of a struggle among ethereal beings.

However, even granted that Milton is presenting Heaven in terms analogous to the theatre, where angelic are represented by human forms

⁷Robert H. West, Milton and the Angels (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1955), p. 110.

and supernatural actions by human equivalents or imitations, there yet remains the awkwardness that on a literal level the narrative contains factual and historical inconsistencies. I have already noted the continued objections to, and attempts to explain away, the appearance of the allegorical characters Sin and Death in the context of characters angelic and human (see above, pp. 15-17). This battle in Heaven also contains such personifications who move, during their brief appearances, among the angels of the narrative with complete ease. Victory, for example, accompanies Christ in his chariot to battle. However, even within the manipulation of the biblical narrative and of biblical characters, problems of the historical and theological authenticity of the narrative level arise. For example, on the narrative level, Satan's fictional battle with Abdiel is given equal status with the battle of Michael and Satan; the latter has biblical authority.⁸ And while one might explain the cannons and war chariots as aiding the dramatization of the heavenly war, the inclusion of duels between angels recognized and obscure, and the misplacing of events of the Bible in order to provide some of these duels,⁹ renders the dramatization misleading if it is indeed an attempt to dramatize the battle of Revelation xii. Indeed, the event that forms the pivotal point of Raphael's entire narrative is of questionable historical authenticity.¹⁰

⁸See B. Rajan, "Paradise Lost" and the Seventeenth Century Reader, p. 31.

⁹Raphael and Asmodai (Asmodeus) encounter each other in quite another context in the apocryphal book of Tobit.

¹⁰The difficulty lies in the interpretation of the word "begot" (V.603) in view of Abdiel's conflicting statement that the Son created the angels (V.837); and, if one interprets the begetting metaphorically as Milton's De Doctrina allows, there still remains the problem that in

The begetting of the Son is, on a literal level, the cause of the battle and hence of the creation of earth. At the same time the scene itself is, in turn, the focus of the display of might and creative power of the battle and of creation. So important an event in Raphael's narrative cannot be explained away as a mere device to get the story going or enliven a theological point. The inclusion of this metaphorical event in a narrative including also true events and allegorizations raises questions about the nature of the narrative and how to interpret it; this is particularly so as biblical authority is invoked to justify events true and fictive alike. For Rajan, this is the crux of the problem raised by the begetting of the Son in Paradise Lost:

We still have to explain why Milton uses the authority of displaced scriptural texts and the special authority of a statement by God the Father to describe an event in which there is no proof of his having believed. And if it is retorted that the poet is not tied to historical reality, that he is free to amalgamate fact with fiction in his fable, then the answer must be that this makes the fable misleading as a means of collecting and exhibiting the poet's beliefs.¹¹

Such criticism certainly forces us to examine the way in which the literal narrative is used as metaphor or allegory; furthermore, we must

the council at the opening of Book III there is a confusingly similar ceremony. Maurice Kelley, in This Great Argument (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1941), discusses earlier attempts to come to terms with this unhistorical event (pp. 95-97). His own conclusion is that it is invented "to make the dry and meagre bones of his theology live in the feigned image of poetry" (p. 100). In his edition of The Poems of John Milton, p. 713, Fowler suggests that Milton seems to have envisaged a series of "metaphorical generations" and exaltations and includes the triumph at the end of Book VI as well, although in his chart of the time scheme of the poem's events, p. 444, he includes only the "first exaltation" of Book V.

¹¹B. Rajan, "Paradise Lost" and the Seventeenth Century Reader, p. 31.

also re-examine the literal level itself to find how to interpret the inclusion of historical material in a narrative that is, in effect, merely a literary device.

As a guide to the interpretation of this narrative we can turn to the contemporary theatre, to the masque and pageant. In writing his epic Milton is influenced by the Renaissance poets and in particular by his direct English predecessor, Spenser. His fable is an allegory of a consistency similar to Spenserian allegory, where a historical Saint George can fight an allegoric Orgoglio and the encounter refer equally to contemporary or legendary/historical encounters, or even concurrently illustrate a mental or a moral conflict. The masque and pageant theatre similarly had a literal level of mixed characters whose action might convey meaning on a number of levels. In such a genre there would be little problem in mingling the biblical encounter of Michael with the fabled encounter on the obscure Abdiel, whose name portrays a moral quality, rather than with a recognized "historical" angel. Milton's own Comus is such a work; here, on a literal level, the narrative tells of the encounters of the fictional attendant spirit, of Comus of Greek legend, of Sabrina of Celtic legend, and of the Lady, who is partly allegory and partly the Lady Alice Egerton. While the meaningful level of Comus is allegory, this allegory is more complex than a mere one-to-one correspondence between a literal and an abstract level of narrative, and it does not neglect entirely the stories of the three historical characters. In such a narrative, which includes characters of differing degrees of reality and from different historical periods, the elevation of the Son to kingship is actually, on the level of narrative, a fictive event; in

creating this fictive event, Milton invokes biblical authority to demonstrate the fact of Christ's elevation. As in a masque, the narrative reasons for the battle and the creation springing from this scene, although supported by the legendary reasons of Satan's jealousy and God's desire to fill the vacant seats of Heaven, are more importantly an expression of the influence and centrality of the Son in this action. The Son's rôle in this allegory expressive of his might is in fact very like that of the guest honoured at an entertainment. Just as the narrative of Comus, performed to honour the Earl of Bridgewater, is based on a device which focusses all the action upon him--his children prove themselves while lost in a fictional forest on the way to his actual investiture--so the battle, using material of different historical densities, is organized in a fictional manner about the fact of the kingship of the Son. Raphael's narrative, although it refers to historical events and contains material from history as the court entertainment does, is, like such entertainments, an allegorical fiction.

Like the allegorical entertainment, the narration of the battle in Heaven organizes dramatic representations of heavenly persons and activities, but does not attempt to reproduce Heaven. The dramatization of the battle, like such entertainments, does not attempt to create and sustain realistic characters, although it may refer to real persons with their legendary attributes and depict character types in circumstances that elicit instructively typical reactions. However, despite Milton's commitment to this type of non-realistic narrative, he maintains, often in a manner which seems unnecessarily obtrusive, a semblance of narrative consistency, in imitation of his classical epic sources. Such efforts to incorporate imitation of the ancients within his contemporary allegoric

structure are to be construed as a demonstration of narrative skill, and enjoyed as such, rather than as attempts at verisimilitude. Two delightful examples of such realism occur when the angels must jiggle the hills of Heaven to and fro to wrest them from their foundations (VI.643), and when the animals, as they are created, emerge from the earth leaving little mounds of soil behind them (VII.468). Such realism is used with similar intent as was the realistic perspective scenery which Inigo Jones created for the court masques. Stephen Orgel writes of Jones' stage sets:

That Jones should have relied, in so profoundly symbolic a form, on the realistic properties of perspective is an important index to his sensibility and that of the age as a whole. It suggests to begin with that the "realness" of perspective lay less in its naturalism than in its power to project something that was recognized to be an illusion.¹²

Although Milton creates a too tangible Heaven in his description in which both fictive and factual events are to be read as part of an allegory, this should not prevent us delighting in the imaginative depiction of Heaven or mean that we must read only to be instructed. Part of this delight is in the sensuous beauty of the music of the poetry, and in the vivid and sometimes humorous spectacle Milton creates. But the principal delights of Milton's depiction of Heaven are intellectual. There is a continual intellectual play as he creates a scenic spectacle to represent Heaven and peoples it with angelic actors. The reader, while he is presented with a vision, is also invited to appreciate the speculations that lie behind the projection of any idea into its given form. The opening of Raphael's narrative sets the tone. The poet invites the reader to delight in the imaginative world while he remains conscious that this world is in

¹²"The Poetics of Spectacle" in Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court, I, 11.

fact an illusion. Raphael's narrative begins in Milton's grand style, a style suited to his sublime subject: "As yet this World was not, and Chaos wild / Reign'd where these Heav'ns now roll, where Earth now rests / Upon her Centre pois'd" (V.577-79). The three clauses build towards an expected grand opening to the action, only to be abruptly checked by the folk-tale-like beginning, "when on a day". If Milton had wished the reader to accept completely the dramatic illusion he was building up, he could have commenced his tale with a more resonant phrase, such as his later "on such day / As Heav'n's great Year brings forth" (V.583-84). However, he has deliberately shattered the illusion of grandeur and further, perversely digressed in order to analyse the offending phrase. The digression, directed at his "fit audience though few", explains how time may measure things in eternity: "For Time, though in Eternity, appli'd / To motion, measures all things durable / By present, past, and future" (V.580-82). Why has Milton chosen to spoil the pleasure of the resonant verse of the opening of the narrative with this piece of reasoning, couched in so dry and ungainly a style? The timing, as much as the information itself, is important, for in this parenthesis Milton is indicating the way in which language becomes stretched beyond earthly sense when used to measure eternity. When he returns to the grand style in which the passage opened, the narrative has lost its merely pictorial nature, "on a day" constituting a piece of metaphysical wit; and Milton, having proved by intellectual sleight of hand that one can have days in Heaven, now caps the notion with "Heav'n's great Year".¹³ Like the metaphysical poets,

¹³The annus magnus platonicus in the cycle of heavenly bodies measures the time they take to return to their original positions. See Fowler, The Poems of John Milton, pp. 711-12, for the suggestion that this idea is not idly introduced.

Milton uses a similitude to measure an idea which does not correspond in all ways, which in many respects is incongruous, and yet extends this similitude as he argues so that his reader can enjoy the ensuing paradoxes and distortions provided by the comparison.

This delight in metaphysical wit, and the desire to keep his readers detached from and critical of his narrative of Heaven, is seen in the similarly anticlimactic nature of Raphael's often rather prosaic asides. In effect these are an alienating device, reminding the reader that this is a tale that is being told by bringing to mind the teller and the audience. As many critics have pointed out, these asides are a charming extension of Raphael's character, and contribute to the imaginative portrayal of the manner in which an angel might recount the traditional epic episode; this is a tribute to Milton's narrative skill as he creates an epic in the classical pattern which will serve his more complex task. But these asides actually have a distancing effect upon the descriptions of heavenly things which they purport to enhance. In reality they do not aid the hearer's comprehension of Heaven but, like the asides to the audience which punctuate a masque, form a compliment to Raphael's listeners, informing them that many of the features of their kingdom are heavenly. A number of these asides contribute to the continuation of the first metaphysical conceit, explaining away irregularities caused by Milton's original introduction of days to measure the movement of his narrative of events in Heaven. Significantly, Milton's description of the courts of God, laid out like a superlatively beautiful pastoral retreat, ends with a return to the "day" idea, with the extraordinary picture of numberless angels

scattered over the vast plains of Heaven, asleep in the comfort of their tabernacles. The elaborate description of the material comforts of Heaven for spiritual beings, while having point as an illustration of the goodness of certain earthly pleasures, is in its specificity, partly witty. The tabernacle is indeed an apt dwelling-place for an angel, but the idea of a Heaven filled with multitudes of these very materially "sudden rear'd" (V.653) before our eyes is incongruous. For all the allegorical appropriateness of the illustration, the description of Heaven ends on a note of hyperbole. As in a metaphysical poem, an abstract idea is embodied in material similitudes and extended in an apparently logical manner until the incongruity of the comparison stretches the first level of the similitude to absurdity.

Although Milton believes that there is some similarity between Heaven and earth, that in some ways earth shadows Heaven, the actual features of his Heaven and the events of his battle are merely devices. As well as indicating the allegorical meaning of these heavenly tableaux and actions, Milton is also anxious to show that they are in fact only illusions. That is why the description of Heaven is punctuated by alienating devices: Raphael's asides, similes extended to demonstrate their incongruity, and moments of humour which arise from the conscious manipulation of the absurdities inherent in the narrative device. These last-named arise particularly in the battle, where the matters of angelic armour and wounds in the ethereal body undermine the whole concept of the battle. The first occasion on which an angel is wounded comes as a surprise; Milton does not gloss over the incident to suggest that it is merely a metaphor, but insists upon explaining the matter of

angelic bleeding in such detail, to the length of describing the bloodstains, that the reader is obliged to visualize it all in very earthly terms. Yet at the same time, the metaphysics of his explanation force the reader to question the whole concept of wounding in this extraordinary battle, to inquire, indeed, what kind of battle it is that can display so much blood while permitting no maiming wound to be dealt. Dr. Johnson found those awkward moments when the angels become trapped in their armour disconcerting, as indeed they are. Probably they are meant to be taken with the same delight in the absurdities of the similitude as the example of the thousands of comfortable angelic tabernacles. In indicating the "inconvenience" of Milton's design, Dr. Johnson has perceived this duplicity in the narrative:

It requires description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not show angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This, being necessary, was therefore defensible; and he should have secured the consistency of his system, by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts.

But Milton's first aim is not to build up a consistent narrative. Like the metaphysical poets, and "unhappily" in the opinion of Dr. Johnson, Milton consciously "perplexes his poetry with his philosophy".¹⁴ The wit that this perplexity causes is part of the delight of the poem. While Milton uses allegorical techniques to suggest that earth is a shadow of Heaven, he continually undermines his corporeal representation of the invisible world in order to show that it is merely an instructive fiction. His picture of Heaven veers between tastefully constructed allegoric illusion, and the humour of conscious hyperbole which occurs

¹⁴Lives of the English Poets, I, 184.

when his insistence upon developing the realism of some detail of this allegoric world temporarily shatters the illusion. The battle of the faithful and the rebel angels, like the battles of the forces of Truth and Error, Christian and Pagan, loyal hero of national legend and tyrant invader in the court pageantry of the seventeenth century, measures present realities in a context of eternal verities as they were often exemplified in legendary victories. Like such pageant battles it demonstrates a contrast of abstractions in an entertaining fictional spectacle.

The battle itself constitutes only part of a whole ceremonial allegory of Heaven. In this war of spirits, formal challenges and ritual gestures form part of an allegoric spectacle which demonstrates eternal verities. Raphael's account opens with the formal ceremonies of the "solemn day" upon which the Son is elevated to the right hand of the Father, and continues with an account of the battle allowed by God in order to honour his Son, in which the Son is indeed proved to be "dextrous". The creation is part of this demonstration of the Son's power for, as he returns in the chariot which enthrones him from his first entry into the action at VI.762, the angels' hymn of praise elaborates upon the meaning of what we have just seen:

Great are thy works, Jehovah, infinite
 Thy power; what thought can measure thee or tongue
 Relate thee; greater now in thy return
 Than from the Giant Angels; thee that day
 Thy Thunders magnifi'd; but to create
 Is greater than created to destroy. (VII.602-07)

Further,

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.
 Witness this new-made World (VII.613-17).

The wrath of God is an incomplete demonstration of his might; with this must be demonstrated his creative power. When Milton portrayed Hell he did so by displaying there the vainglorious perversion of ceremony for the praise of unworthy ends. Heaven is expressed in terms of ceremony illustrative of its glory. The "solemn day" of Heaven is like a solemn day of festivity at a seventeenth-century court. The Son's elevation is demonstrated in a series of ceremonies that are not unlike those which proclaimed James I's sons the Prince of Wales. The events that celebrated the investitures of Charles and Henry were typical of the times; there were ceremonial processions, masques, tiltings and mock battles staged upon the Thames. Both Princes were also honoured in Wales. Henry went upon a progress and was honoured by a civic pageant.¹⁵ The ceremonial that attends the elevation of the Son is patterned on such ceremonies as these.

Throughout the ceremonies in Heaven the Godhead is seated upon his raised and lighted seat of state. About him his angels dance and make music, and the Son demonstrates the power of the royal household.¹⁶ The elevation of the Son is followed by the suggestion of a masqued ball in Heaven.¹⁷ The angels even adjourn to a banquet after dancing, where the King of Heaven displays his bounty. Demaray notes that the

¹⁵See John Nichols, ed., The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First, His Royal Consort, Family and Court (London, 1828), II, 291-323 and III, 207-24.

¹⁶Milton differentiates the two persons of the Godhead for dramatic purposes. See Patrides, Milton and the Christian Tradition, pp. 22-25. Significantly, one of the traditions that Patrides suggests as a source from which this dramatization derived is allegorical in nature: the traditional debate among the four daughters of God.

¹⁷See Demaray, "The Thrones of Satan and God: Backgrounds to Divine Opposition in Paradise Lost", Huntington Library Quarterly, 31 (1967-68), 30-31.

comparisons made between the festivities of the Stuart court and the heavenly one need not necessarily be blasphemous:

The figure Comus had argued against the Lady, in favour of excess; but Milton in his epic takes care to explain that the angels partake of the banquet with a temperance similar to that urged by the Lady

They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
Quaff immortality and joy, secure
Of surfeit where full measure only bounds
Excess, before th' all bounteous King. . . .
(V.637-640)

This among other heavenly episodes is presented, as the angel Raphael tells Adam, "by lik'ning spiritual to corporeal forms" (V.537). Milton in this way is able to make use of his knowledge of earthly masques while, at the same time, denouncing the excesses of "Mixt Dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight Ball" (IV.678).

On the other hand, as I have shown, some contemporaries certainly thought that the Stuarts, and particularly Charles I and his court, were guilty of a form of blasphemy in deifying the king in the court entertainment. Therefore, in setting his seat of state in Heaven, Milton is placing the worship of gods in the region where it belongs.

Milton's heavenly ceremony is an open-air occasion. The courts of God are described as plains with "living streams" and trees of life among which the angels seem to camp out in their pavilions during the celebrations. God is enthroned on a hill amid this scene in a manner not unlike the Countess of Derby during the performance of Arcades (see above, pp. 36-37). It all sounds very like some sort of pastoral entertainment. The buffet-style banquet is alfresco, like that of Adam and Eve in their pastoral paradise. The angels eat and drink "On flow'rs repos'd, and with fresh flow'rets crown'd" (V.636). A tournament would be very much in order for a royal entertainment in this outdoor setting.

On the "day" that begins Raphael's account the angels, called by

the imperial summons, arrange themselves formally in order of rank about the throne of God; their "hierarchies", "orders" and "degrees" and their deeds of merit are displayed on the glittering tissues of their standards and gonfalons. This tableau of angelic merit has as its focus the elevation of the Messiah, the announcement of who is king in Heaven. The scene, like some main masque spectacle, illustrates the rank of the deity in the physical terms of his elevation and of his position as the focal point of all angelic activity. The Son on his bright throne occupies his traditional place at God's right hand so that both share the praise as the angels demonstrate their homage to the highest in Heaven. The rôle of Heaven's king is further illustrated as the speeches of the tableau give way to song and dance. The celebratory activity that follows, like the orbs of angels, is focussed on the mount of God. They dance "about the sacred Hill" as the Stuart courtiers danced before the king's state, while to the harmony of their motions "God's own ear / Listens delighted" (V.626-27). Then they banquet "before th' all bounteous King, who show'r'd / With copious hand, rejoicing in thir joy" (V.640-41).

The battle takes place in the context of this spectacle of courtly dancing and banqueting in Heaven and, like the song and dance, it honours God whose "eternal eye" observes from the holy mount. Ironically, it is Satan who first helps the reader to recognize the appropriateness of a tournament to honour the newly created Messiah. He suggests, as a camouflage of his rebellious withdrawal, that the newly crowned Messiah might expect to have entertainments in his honour, or receive the homage of his subjects while on a progress through his

kingdom. Tell my troops, he commands, that "I am to haste" "homeward" to the north,

there to prepare
 Fit entertainment to receive our King
 The great Messiah, and his new commands,
 Who speedily through all the Hierarchies
 Intends to pass triumphant, and give Laws. (689-93)

The troops behave as if this were a most reasonable suggestion.

Satan believes the statement to be false, and sees himself as leader of a more substantial threat to God than the instigator of some entertainment to honour the Son; as he moves northward, he dissociates his "great Hierarchal Standard" (l. 701) from those that focus on the holy hill. However, the Father and Son who watch his movements cast him in just such a rôle. God, who is like some monarch on a lighted dais watching an entertainment "from within the golden Lamps that burn / Nightly before him" (713-14), seeing Satan's move turns to his Son with smiling confidence. At first his words appear to be a straightforward call to battle; but closer examination of their ambiguities reveals that God cannot see Satan as a real threat. God's avowal of the need to "be sure / Of our Omnipotence" (721-22) is a contradictory statement; but the exercise is God's demonstration of his power, not a real struggle. In the context of the Father and the Son's overview of Satan's movements, the suggestion that they might "unawares" lose their sanctuary and throne, as Satan hopes, is ridiculous, and its function can only be to ridicule Satan and stress their very awareness. The Son makes more explicit the demonstrative nature of the projected battle, speaking of it as illustrating his glory: the designs and tumults vain of Satan and his hosts shall prove "Matter to mee of Glory" (738). In this conflict,

Satan's hate will serve to "illustrate" the glory of the Messiah by providing a foil to it, while the battle will enable him to demonstrate his right to the place nearest God. The battle over, the Son has indeed proved himself "dextrous", and Raphael describes how "he celebrated rode / Triumphant" (VI.888-89) into the courts of God as the angels

Sung Triumph, and him sung Victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him Dominion giv'n,
Worthiest to Reign (VI.886-88).

The invisible exploits Raphael describes are so arranged and put into such a context that they are like a martial display, illustrating the royal might of Christ. They end fittingly with an equally ceremonial Triumph.

W. G. Madsen has made an important contribution to an intelligent reading of the battle in Heaven by indicating the element of historical typology which operates in the description. Madsen, in fact, rejects the notion that the narrative is in any way accomodative or that Milton is attempting to describe Heaven at all. In his view,

The purpose of Raphael's narrative is not merely to demonstrate to Adam the consequences of disobedience; a recital of the first two books of Paradise Lost would have been a much more effective means to that end. Nor is its purpose to reveal that there is a Platonic idea of War in Heaven, of which mere earthly wars are an imperfect embodiment. Milton, I venture to say, is not really interested in the particulars--if there were any particulars--of Satan's first battle with God. What he is interested in, and what he wants his readers to be interested in, is Raphael's account of that war, which is a different matter. Raphael's account is not a moral allegory, nor is it primarily a metaphorical description of what happened a long time ago in Heaven. It is a shadow of things to come, and more particularly it is a shadow of this last age of the world and of the Second Coming of Christ.¹⁸

However, in order to pursue his thesis of the importance of historical typology and to reject the notion that Milton intends to reproduce the

¹⁸From Shadowy Types to Truth, pp. 110-11.

details of heavenly life, Madsen is a little too exclusive. Milton must make certain statements about the nature of Heaven before he can move on to what is undoubtedly the most important aspect of the battle, its relevance to things on the still to be created earth.

Raphael's pageant-like narrative is "a shadow of things to come", "a shadow of this last age of the world and of the Second Coming of Christ", but at the same time as it demonstrates the shape of all history, this narrative demonstrates the state of things in Heaven. The heavenly tableaux and rituals define the participants' rôles as the fictive events of the court masque did. Milton arranges the persons of Heaven in a fictional context that is suggestive of their status, their power and their rôles in the universe. The demonstration of God's omnipotence and Satan's relative impotence projects a pattern of the perfect kingdom and a picture of the fate of the rebellious. It is through an understanding of the "politics" of Heaven, as demonstrated in the allegorical ceremonies of Raphael's narrative, that we can predict with confidence a similar outcome on earth.

VIII

THE INVISIBLE EXPLOITS OF WARRING SPIRITS

Because the battle in Heaven bears resemblances to the entertainments and pageants which honoured seventeenth-century rulers, it will be instructive to examine some of those entertainments which took the form of a mock battle or tournament before discussing Raphael's narrative itself. In fact, the mock battle was not uncommon as a means of paying homage to a visiting dignitary or celebrating a festive occasion. An interesting example, one which had a pastoral setting, was staged for a visit of Elizabeth I to Elvetham during a royal progress. The queen was seated under a special canopy of state to view the battle, which took place in an artificial pond built especially for the purpose. This pond featured three island-structures built as stations for the action. Like the battle of Paradise Lost, the battle between the wood gods, who emerge from the nearby trees, and the sea gods of the pond, whose presence forms a compliment to Elizabeth's naval might, is resolved not in the conflict itself but by reference to the monarch. In this entertainment one of the characters parts the fray "with a line or two, grounded on the excellence of her Majesty's presence, as being alwaies friend to peace, and enemy to Warre." ¹

¹See Nichols, Progresses of Elizabeth I, III, 115. An engraving, which follows those in the sixteenth-century editions of the entertainment, is found facing III, 101. It is of interest because it depicts this symbolic battle amid the various allegoric stations constructed for it.

Another battle performed before Elizabeth is of interest because it occurs over the symbolic period of three days. This battle was staged by the City of Bristol for the Queen in 1574 and shows traces of the medieval influence upon civic pageantry. It is performed on an open space between two opposing forts set up for the occasion, the fort of Peace, which was on the side of the Queen, and a fort called "Feble Pollecie" manned by "Dissension" and her forces. These mock wars represent "the wickedness of the world". Each day's battle began with a series of challenges which established the allegory and centred about some new aspect of the show. On the first day a land battle was fought, on the second day this was joined by a sea battle on the adjacent river, and on the third day a peace is negotiated.²

Several battles of a similar nature staged by civic authorities are recorded in the reign of James I. A 1610 celebration for Prince Henry's investiture as Prince of Wales featured a water fight between merchant ships and a Turkish pirate helped by a Turkish castle on shore, appropriately decorated to designate its nationality and pagan patron. The show ended with the defeat of the Turks; in a fireworks display the Turks' castle was blown up. A similar battle was staged for Queen Anne at Bristol in 1613. In a piece of doggerel verse describing the entertainment of the Queen, the allegory of this battle between galleys and merchant ships is suggested:

This Water-fight (by fame divulg'd full many a thousand drew,
Both farre and neere for to behold and take a perfect view)
Of Turkes and Turkish gallies both, describ'd in lively wise,
By worthy Brutes who oft have seene their habit, forme, and guise;

²Ibid., I, 400-06.

Nay, many a Christian Marchantman have too too often knowen
 (Though by constraint) to Christ his flocke their love and
 kindness shewen
 When with the losse of all their goods, (O barbarous cruelty!)
 These cursed Turks (more deer then life) from them their liberty³
 With endless bondage have restrain'd for gally-slaves condemn'd.

Any onlooker who could recognize the Turk and his galley could probably perceive that this battle was more than a mere water fight staged to delight the thousands who came to take a perfect view; they would know that it showed the conflict between Good and Evil, Christianity and paganism, "worthy Brutes" or Britishers and barbarous cruel Turks, and that the victory was one for Christianity and the nation.

A feature of the Jacobean court was the tilt or barriers. An annual tilting was held to celebrate the King's accession while barriers and tilts were often staged to honour a noble marriage, or performed on an occasion like the creation of a Prince of Wales. Here the fighting was patterned upon the tournament of chivalric romance and often included elaborate sets: tents, horses with decorative caparisons, chariots, trumpeters, and a retinue of attendants to accompany each participating knight. There is evidence that these shows each had an allegorical theme; the elaborate barriers for Prince Henry's creation featured an allegory of the revival of Chivalry (discovered asleep in a cave in the splendid set) by the valour of Prince Henry, in the glorious reign of James I. The participants wore fancy dress and designed for themselves a suitable impresa which they bore upon their shields. The fighting itself was an athletic display, of course, not a battle, and usually consisted of orderly combat in pairs or fours.⁴

³Nichols, Progresses of James I, II, 659. For the 1610 celebrations see II, 315-23.

⁴Accompanying Inigo Jones' designs for Jacobean tilts and

An elaborate tilting which is of interest here, because it shows distinct similarity in theme and in the devices used to the battle of Paradise Lost, occurred in 1581. It is not very probable that this was a direct source for Milton's battle; it simply illustrates that in the traditions of the pageant battle and tournament in Britain there are instances of similar uses of allegoric devices and patterns of action, and it provides a context within which to understand Milton's descriptions of wars. The aim of the challengers was to besiege the royal box, the gallery of the tilt yard in which the Queen sat, which they called the "Castle or Fortress of Perfect Beautie". On the first day the challengers, who called themselves Foster Children of Desire, contrived a machine on which two cannons were placed, and after speeches of challenge they assaulted the Fortress of Beauty with music and flowers, suitable ammunition for Desire to hurl at Beauty, while the cannons discharged sweet water and sweet powder. The second day's tilting began with the entry of a triumphal chariot, probably not an unusual feature of the tilt, for the use of one is recorded among the sparse information available on the furnishings of the Jacobean tilts. After the athletic displays, the whole entertainment ends (as an allegory of an assault on the Queen's majesty must) with an admission of the challengers' error and speeches in praise of her Majesty.⁵

Although the last of these tiltings at court seems to have occurred in 1622, they were part of a long and continuous tradition of

barriers, Orgel and Strong provide descriptive analysis and contemporary records of these entertainments; see Inigo Jones. The Theatre of the Stuart Court, I, 158-89.

⁵This entertainment is recorded in Nichols, Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, II, 312-29.

allegorical tournament, a heritage of the Tudor reigns, and it is not improbable that less elaborate versions were performed in the houses of the nobility. Such a long tradition of allegorical tiltings at court must have informed the way in which combat in drama and literature could be interpreted. When Milton dramatizes the heavenly struggle between good and evil and the fall of the angels, his battle exhibits many of the features of these pageant battles with their medieval heritage. Many of the physical features of the battle suggest the influence of this kind of theatre: the armed combat between the forces of Good and Evil; the opposing thrones between which the struggle takes place; the symbolic chariots of Christ and Satan; and the firing of missiles symbolically suitable as arms of the side that fires them. Some of these features, such as the armed angels and triumphal chariots, occur also in the visual arts. The influence of pageantry is further suggested in the shape of the narrative and by the meaning the frame of the celebration of Heaven's solemn day gives to the action.

Like these pageant spectacles and tiltings, the spectacle in Heaven is basically an opposition of allegorical figures followed by a triumphant conclusion which aims to compliment the person seated in state. It is fought, as so many pageant battles were, upon an open space between two opposing forts, one representing truth and the other falsehood. Satan's Mount of the Congregation is set up in opposition to God's mountain and, like many an allegorical representation of falsehood, it parades as the truth. Satan,

Affecting all equality with God,
 In imitation of that Mount whereon
Messiah was declar'd in sight of Heav'n,
 The Mountain of the Congregation call'd (V₂:763-66).

Even in the opening of his imperial announcement Satan imitates the formal opening of God's decrees. Such parading of vice as virtue is a commonplace of the morality play and is seen often in the court and civic entertainment. Two of Jonson's speeches to precede tilts and barriers are constructed about such a device. In the Hymenaei barriers Opinion swears that she is Truth, while in A Challenge at Tilt two cupids vie as to which is indeed the little god of love.

Against Lucifer's splendid palace of false light, blazing with diamonds and gold, is set God's bright mountain. In fact, Book VI opens by re-establishing the picture of God's throne in order to stress this opposition. This throne is set up as the source of all light, in opposition to the "blazing" seat of Lucifer. While Lucifer, who is compared to a star, has a throne of diamonds that merely reflects light, God's mount is shown, in terms of actions and personified figures, to contain and control both light and darkness. The figure of Morn is "Wak't by the circling Hours," who were often portrayed as dancing female figures. With "rosy hand" she "Unbarr'd the gates of Light" who dwells in a cave within the pastoral throne. Light issues forth from a door in this mount while darkness, described as "obsequious", enters at an opposite door. This little tableau provides an elegant contrast to the vainglory of Lucifer, whose seizure of power we have just witnessed.

The action of Abdiel forms the dramatic link between these two opposing thrones of light. One can identify probable sources for the name of this obscure angel, but the incident of his defying Satan and informing the troops of God of the rebel angels' insurrection is purely fictional. The bodily movement of Abdiel links the two thrones, but his

action has a more important allegorical function. The name Abdiel is chosen for its etymological significance, "servant of God".⁶ Not only this, but Abdiel also embodies a particular moral quality, as is evident in the emblem that marks him at his first appearance:

among the Seraphim
Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal ador'd
 The Deity, and divine commands obey'd,
 Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
 The current of his fury thus oppos'd. (V.804-08)

The flame is an iconographical detail that accompanies representations of the allegorical figure of Zeal. In Middleton's Triumph of Truth, for example, such a figure appears on horseback as a champion on the side of Truth, against the supporters of Error in the battle which is the focal point of that pageant. Middleton describes the figure thus:

Zeal, the champion of Truth, in a garment of flame-coloured silk, with a bright hair of his head, from which sprout fire-beams . . . his right hand holding a flaming scourge, intimating thereby that as he is the manifester of Truth, he is likewise the chastiser of Ignorance and Error. (Works, VII, 239)

Abdiel, like this figure, shows himself to be the chastiser of Ignorance and Error, not in the emblematic nature of his appearance, but in the encounter with Satan when he brings that erring angel to his knees. Like the contemporary pageant, Milton's allegory may have typical as well as universal reference. Steadman suggests of Abdiel that

his verbal and physical encounter with Satan embodies the epistemological conflict between truth and error--a conflict given historical expression in the struggle between the wisdom of the world and the small sect of true believers armed with

⁶Hughes notes its occurrence at I Chron. v.15 as a human name meaning "servant of God" and adds that Milton "invented his character as an embodiment of that 'ardent desire of hallowing the name of God, together with an indignation against whatever tends to the violation or contempt of religion', which Milton says in De Doctrina Christiana II. vi is called Zeal". See John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 321.

the wisdom of God, between the kingdom of the world and the true church.

This dramatic encounter may also foreshadow "the rôle of the Nonconformist 'dissenter' in England as well as the Protestant position against the Church of Rome".⁷ The movement of Abdiel dramatizes the choice of sympathies available in this material battle while his words, and the allegory of his nature, provide a reasoning which presses us to make the right choice in more philosophical matters. Satan's fate demonstrates "the reward / Of disobedience" (VI.910-11) while one may learn from the picture of the faithful Abdiel that "firm they might have stood, / Yet fell" (911-12).

The first two days of the battle dramatize Satan's challenge to God, each day representing a different aspect of that challenge and a new device. For the first day of the battle, Satan and his warriors seem to be dressed à l'antique with spears, helmets, swords and impresa shields. Their exploits are patterned on the battles of the classical epic and feature troop encounters, individual duels and some chariot warfare. The focal point of the Satanic troops as they gather for battle is the blasphemy of Satan's sun-like chariot, which draws Abdiel's wrath and indignation:

High in the midst exalted as a God
Th' Apostate in his Sun-bright Chariot sat
Idol of Majesty Divine, enclos'd
With Flaming Cherubim, and golden Shields (VI.99-102).

His chariot is an imitation of that of God pictured at VI.750ff. and, like his Mount of Congregation, pretends to represent the true god-head.

⁷Milton and the Renaissance Hero, p. 66.

Satan's chariot later becomes the vehicle in which his ignominious defeat and retreat are dramatized. The first day's battle ends with Satan writhing in pain in this symbolic station while all about him his troops are overrun. The sun-bright chariot allegorizes Satan's revolt in terms of pride and ambition, recalling the myth of Phaeton. Allegorical tradition had already linked Phaeton and Lucifer, and Milton exploits this tradition in several places in Paradise Lost. Sandys, in the allegorical commentary to the 1632 edition of his Ovids Metamorphosis, interpreted the myth of Phaeton thus: "This fable to the life presents a rash and ambitious Prince, inflamed with desire of glory and dominion: who in that too powerful, attempts whatsoever is above his power; and gives no limit to his ruling ambition".⁸ The humbling of Satan in his chariot provides a fitting dénouement to a representation of "ruining ambition".

The dramatization of ambition and usurpation presented in this central spectacle is adumbrated in the encounters of opposing angels which complete the day's battle. Gabriel, whose name means "Strength of God" and to whom Milton gives a warlike function, is opposed to the most warlike of the fallen angels, Moloch. Raphael takes on Asmodai, by whom Milton probably indicates the heavenly name for the fallen Asmodeus, who is Raphael's antagonist in the apocryphal Book of Tobit.⁹ Uriel, guardian of the sun, fights Adramelec, a pagan sun god mentioned in II Kings xvii.31 while Abdiel, the faithful servant of God, defeats "The Atheist crew" (VI.370) Ramiel, Ariel and Arioch.¹⁰

⁸Quoted in Davis P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp. 90-91.

⁹See Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 281.

¹⁰Cf. Robert West, Milton and the Angels, p. 154: "In having Abdiel overthrow Ariel and Arioch and Ramiel Milton is appealing indirectly to the time's association of those devils with wizardry and superstition".

The second day's battle, featuring as its central device Satan's cannons, begins with the ceremonial presentation of this spectacle. The surprise of this "modern" form of warfare to the good angels who arrive, in all innocence, attired in the arms of a more glorious age is a delightful piece of wit. This day's battle represents the attempts of fraud to obtain the throne which the ambitious force of the preceding day could not procure. A vein of comedy penetrates the whole of the second day's presentation, from the wily Satan's nocturnal changing of the rules of the game to the good angels' arming for a continuation of the previous day's war. The presentation of the day's device is comic. Satan's puns turn his challenging speeches to parody of ceremony and, even on the level of Raphael's description of the event, puns and inflation (for example, "pernicious with one touch to fire"--VI.520) teach the reader to regard the action with amusement. All the same, the comedy presents a serious allegory. Milton develops a clear contrast between the rebel and the good angels. As morn approaches, Satan's hosts ready their dark and secret work "and in order set, / With silent circumspection unespi'd" (VI.523-24). By contrast with this picture of the sinister operations of fraud, the victor angels arm to the sound of trumpets in the clear light of morn. The struggle between Fraud and Zeal is riddled with amusing contretemps. The angels who have so publicly and so carefully prepared themselves for battle are surprised by Satan's machines and toppled with such indignity that "down they fell / By thousands, Angel on Arch-Angel roll'd" (VI.594-95). The dramatization of the upsetting of the well-intentioned zealot is funny even when he is an angel, particularly as these angels fall in hyperbolic thousands, "the

sooner for their arms", which they have been seen to don in such innocent valour so few lines previously. The human tendency to ridicule overturned zeal, a very common device by which the Puritan was made the butt of satire in contemporary drama, is chastized by Milton in the events which follow. The comedy of the situation is not allowed to continue to undercut the angels' dignity. Satan's forces indeed attempt to do this but their derision, like an overtaxed joke, turns back upon themselves so that they become objects of ridicule.

Satan's choice of weapons introduces the note of comedy into the representation of the second day's battle with its allegory of fraud. However, I am not sure that Milton's picture of the righteous indignation of the angels, who threw down their arms in rage and "loos'ning to and fro" the hills of Heaven raise them from their foundations to hurl at the forces of Satan, does not have its measure of comedy too, despite the obvious allusions to the war of the giants against Jupiter in which hills were thrown. The double force of this scene, at once entertaining and instructive, is indicated by the recurrence of the alienating devices which remind the reader of the first level of the narrative. The fiction builds up from the anachronism of the cannons in Heaven, which Raphael explains so carefully to Adam and Eve, to the wresting up of the hills, to the final hyperbolic note on which Milton leaves the battle still raging: "So Hills amid the Air encounter'd Hills / Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire" (VI.664-65); and under this seething mass of earth the angels still battle, so "That under ground they fought in dismal shade" (666). As the fiction augments the asides from Raphael become more frequent. On one hand, the hyperbole of angelic hill-throwing

expresses quite seriously "the excellence, the power / Which God hath in his mighty Angels plac'd" (637-38); on the other hand, the parenthesis of l. 640, providing reasoning for the situation of such hills ("For Earth hath this variety from Heav'n / Of pleasure situate in Hill and Dale"), with its prosaic concern for detail at so dramatic a point, indicates the same tone of speculative inventiveness as Milton showed earlier (V.627-57) in his presentation of the entertainment in the courts of Heaven. The literal level of the narrative is by turns comic or hyperbolic; but it is most suitable for a framework on which to build a structure indicating both the grotesqueness and power of Satanic fraud.

The third day of the battle depicts a triumphal procession rather than a victory at war. It is modelled upon the Renaissance Triumph. Such triumphs imitated the triumphal processions of imperial Rome, but they derived many of their iconographical details from later adaptations of such processions, particularly from Petrarch's Trionfi and its illustrators. Theatrical versions of the Triumph in the seventeenth century included both the masque and the civic procession. In the visual elements of the action of the third day the influences of both these types of entertainment can be seen, as well as the iconographical tradition handed down in the visual arts. As in any Triumph, the central device of the third day is a triumphal chariot which in its decorations allegorizes the personages it enthrones. In Milton's triumph the splendid vehicle is the chariot of God in which the Son is symbolically elevated to ride victor over his enemies. The chariot that enthrones Christ not only forms the climax of the battle, but in its position in the poem at the very mid point of the text, it

forms a climactic point for the whole poem. This vision of Christ Triumphant establishes his supremacy in the heavens, and at the same time, "if Earth / Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein / Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought" (V.574-76), this vision presages the triumph of Christ upon earth; so that this central appearance gives hope to the tragic events that occupy the second half of the poem. In fact, as he intercedes on Man's behalf in Book III, the Son envisages such a triumph to come on earth. God will look down and smile as the Son demonstrates a victory over his enemies in a similar manner: "I through the ample Air in Triumph high / Shall lead Hell Captive maugre Hell, and show / The powers of darkness bound" (III.254-56).

The chariot of Christ in Books VI and VII, like the Triumphal chariot of Renaissance iconography, is a wheeled vehicle ridden by legendary and allegorical figures. Such chariots are always decorated and motivated in a manner appropriate to the figure that triumphs: a sea deity may ride in a scallop drawn by dolphins, a warrior in a chariot drawn by horses, a god of love in a bower drawn by cupids. Milton's chariot of God is framed after the authority of Ezekiel, and is "convey'd / By four Cherubic shapes" (VI.752-53). Milton dwells upon the decorative aspects of his ornate chariot, the precious stones of which it is formed and the armour worn by the Son. It has "Wheels / Of Beryl", a "crystal Firmament, / Whereon a Sapphire Throne, inlaid with pure / Amber" (VI.755-59). Christ's splendid celestial armour is "Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought" (761) and he bears arms emblematic of God's power. He is attended by the allegorical figure of Victory, represented

in the traditional manner with wings.¹¹ These details suggest a pageant chariot in which splendid costume combines with the emblematic and allegorical significance of the trappings to glorify the fêted prince or hero. In this chariot, the precious stones are imbued with symbolic significances that make their function more than merely decoration. They, and the other details, are grounded on the authority of Ezekiel's vision of God, especially Ezekiel i and x, where the whirlwind sound (i.4), the flame and brightness (i.4), the sapphire throne (x.1), the cherubim (x.2), the crystal firmament (i.22) and the wheels within wheels (i.16) can all be found.

The hyperbolic note is discovered in this tableau also. Many of the details extend the vision beyond human imagination. The Son is attended by multitudes of saints and by lesser chariots, "ten thousand" on either hand. The wondrous chariot is not merely wheeled but has "Wheel within Wheel, undrawn"; and, because wheels were an order of angels,¹² the four cherubic shapes and the wheels of beryl become mysteriously confused. The cherubim themselves are extraordinary creatures:

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 (VI.753-56).

The star-like eyes with the firmament above recall earlier metaphors

¹¹Cf. the representation of Victory in Edward A. Maser's edition of the 1758-60 Hertel edition of Ripa's Iconologia, Baroque and Rococo Pictorial Imagery, Emblem no. 78, which has a fatto depicting a Roman triumphal procession in which winged Victory accompanies the fêted hero in his chariot.

¹²Cf. Robert West, Milton and the Angels, p. 158.

which compare the action of the battle to the movements of the heavenly bodies. The final routing of Satan's troops is achieved with a similar mixture of the cosmic and the anthropomorphic. The chariot of the Son "rolled" forth with an earthly rumble, although magnified to be as loud as "torrent Floods" or "a numerous Host". Mysterious significances, however, are hinted at in the "burning Wheels" and "Starry wings" and in the storm imagery which describes the movement of the vehicle; the wings are spread out "With dreadful shade contiguous" (828) like a great thundercloud before the loosing of Christ's thunderbolts, and the rumbling of the chariot's passage suggests thunder in such a context.

Christ does not do battle in this chariot, but he establishes his might in a number of symbolic gestures. His army "attends" him like a train rather than as a fighting force. At the presence of his chariot the face of Heaven renews itself, an occurrence recalling the many masques in which the entry of the chief masquers or the glory of the king miraculously restores order from disorder and causes the discovery of the splendours of a main masque spectacle. The astonishing of the rebel forces with the emblematic thunderbolts of God is reminiscent of the magic gestures by which antimasquers are banished and masque scenes conjured up. The function of this chariot as an allegorical triumph chariot rather than as an instrument of war is finally illustrated as it leads a great procession of attendants which escorts the Son through the courts of God and up to the seat of his Father. The first two days of the battle, in which the chief devices belong to Satan, describe Satanic ambition and fraud with their effects. Christ's entry into the battle centres on the device of the chariot of God and in the miraculous

banishing of the forces of evil demonstrates the triumph of God in the person of Christ the Son.

Like the pageant battle, Milton's is a tournament not a war. Characters parry verbal challenges and sword thrusts and are surprised by a hail of missiles, but nobody is maimed or killed. Defeat is measured in terms of public humiliation. Satan's defeat on the first day is demonstrated by the double humiliation of his being carried writhing from the field and by the routing of his troops. The defeat of the Satanic hosts does not involve loss of life and limb, but they are described as being bodily overturned and forced to retreat:

And now thir Mightiest quell'd, the battle swerv'd,
With many an inroad gor'd; deformed rout
Enter'd, and foul disorder; all the ground
With shiver'd armor strown, and on a heap
Chariot and Charioter lay overturn'd
And fiery foaming Steeds (VI.386-91).

The fallen angels are defeated on the first day because of a moral rather than a physical disadvantage, although this moral disadvantage is expressed in physical terms. On this day the Satanic hosts were

Then first with fear surpris'd and sense of pain
Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
By sin of disobedience, till that hour
Not liable to fear or flight or pain. (394-97)

By comparison,

Far otherwise th' inviolable Saints
In Cubic Phalanx firm advanc'd entire,
Invulnerable, impenetrably arm'd:
Such high advantages thir innocence
Gave them above thir foes, not to have sinn'd,
Not to have disobey'd; in fight they stood
Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pain'd
By wound, though from thir place by violence mov'd.

(398-405)

Action expresses moral truths. While the obedient angels demonstrably

retain a superior dignity and beauty, the defeat of evil is expressed in the piles of overturned evil angels, in their ignominious flight and in their fear. It is also expressed in such vignettes of grotesquerie as Moloch's bellowing with pain and Satan's gargoyle-like grimaces.

On the second day of the battle defeat is caused by the paradoxical ineffectiveness of the arms that Milton has given to his angels in order that they may be seen to fight their battle. Both sides become trapped in their armour, which causes their bodily downfall. Even the good angels suffer temporary defeat by being made to look ridiculous. After this stalemate the final defeat of the rebel hosts is accomplished by the sort of magic gesture typical of the masque and pageant. As in many such entertainments the "magic" that brings about the resolution of conflict and the triumph of Virtue has its source in the power of the personage enthroned in the seat of state. Christ appears in his chariot and looses God's thunderbolts. The rebel hosts are astounded, "astonisht all resistance lost, / All courage; down thir idle weapons dropp'd" (838-39). The humiliation and defeat is first presented iconographically: "O'er Shields and Helms, and helmed heads he rode / Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate" (840-41). Such a picture is borrowed from pictures of Triumphs rather than from theatrical representations, but the final banishment of the hosts of Satan is reminiscent of the symbolic routing of the antimasquers or forces of evil at entertainments. Christ rouses the fallen angels in order to drive them before him, so that they resemble the bestial creatures of an antimasque. They are driven "as a Herd / Of Goats or timorous flock together throng'd" (856-57), and, in a most theatrical manner, they are shepherded through a magic opening in

the walls of Heaven and into the awaiting Hell-mouth.

The fierce encounters of duelling angels are similarly without any maiming effect and result in humiliation rather than bloodshed. Gabriel leaves Moloch "Down clov'n to the waist, with shattered Arms" (361), but Moloch is still able to flee, bellowing with "uncouth pain". "Uncouth" means both "unknown" and "unseemly", and Moloch's flight has the comedy of the banishings of morality play devils and pageant Vices. When Uriel and Raphael "vanquish" Adramelec and Asmodai these are also able to flee, although "Mangl'd with ghastly wounds through Plate and Mail" (368). Presumably in these cases too angelic substance unites again. The "ghastly" wounds, then, are both fearful and such as incorporeal beings can safely receive.

The two duels of Satan are similarly encounters where evil is ridiculed rather than battles to the death. In the first encounter Abdiel lifts high a noble stroke which falls "On the proud Crest of Satan" (191), following Abdiel's jeer, "This greeting on thy impious Crest receive" (188). Satan is forced backwards onto his knees by this blow. On one level Abdiel's taunt recalls the jibes of epic heroes in the great battles of classical epics, while the description of the bringing of Satan to his knees echoes the passage in Spenser's Faerie Queene describing the fall of the dragon at the hand of the Red Cross Knight. Such echoes broaden the allegory of this conflict between the Faithful Servant and the Apostate by allusion to types in history and legend.

Abdiel's blow brings Satan to his knees and humiliates rather than physically defeats him, and the same may be said of the blow which Michael deals Satan. The two powerful angels stand portentously with

next to almighty arms, uplifted ready to determine with one stroke that strife styled by Satan "The strife of Glory" (290). Satan, however, is ridiculed by Michael's one swift stroke, which cuts his sword cleanly in half and "with swift wheel reverse, deep ent'ring shear'd / All his right side" (326-27). The humiliation of this stroke, which leaves Satan so quickly weaponless, is completed in the spectacle of his pain indicated by his bodily contortions and gnashing teeth. In the chariot that had first enshrined him in glory he is laid

Gnashing for anguish and despite and shame
To find himself not matchless, and his pride
Humbl'd by such rebuke, so far beneath
His confidence to equal God in power. (340-43)

His shame makes Satan comic, but so also does the information that "soon he heal'd" (344), which robs the scene of any tragic proportion, for the fact that nobody is ever maimed in this battle keeps the action on the level of comedy.¹³

While Milton allows an element of comedy to intrude upon the literal level of his narrative, to delight his audience and to suggest the absurdity of it as a pictorial representation of Heaven, the profounder levels of speculation and teaching are not impaired. Because the physical battle is only a means of providing a vehicle for his allegory, Milton frequently alienates the reader from this literal level of the narrative. The detailed description of angelic bleeding is one of these moments. Here is the first major indication of the farcical nature of

¹³Arnold Stein, in "Milton's War in Heaven: An Extended Metaphor" (from his Answerable Style: Essays on "Paradise Lost") reprinted in Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Arthur E. Barker (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 264-83, maintains that the battle is comedy, that its dominant note is ridicule, not grandeur. He overextends his thesis attempting to show that the battle is an extended metaphor of good and evil in terms of discipline and disorder.

the literal level of the battle of armed angels duelling with swords and shields. Robert West, in his study of Milton's angelology, notes his generally conventional protestant position on the subject of angels in De Doctrina Christiana, and his reserve about angelic matter and orders, as a whole, in Paradise Lost. For some of the passages regarding the nature of angels in the latter, he explains the borrowings from unorthodox sources as necessary if Milton was to give consistency and plausibility to the picture of angels he presents. Such borrowings as that from the Neoplatonic philosopher Psellus, utilized to describe the nature of the wounds the angelic body may have received, West suggests, do not demonstrate any following of a particular school of thought on such matters. Rather, he is just picking up "handy scraps" from the work of such philosophers to give a show of "science" to his narrative.¹⁴ However, as with the problems of angelic eating and love-making, Milton could have chosen to remain silent upon the problem of wounds and bleeding in Heaven. This display of science is, furthermore, perversely placed at a climactic point in the narrative and, like the problem of heavenly days in the description of celestial activities and the discrepancy between angelic bodies and their armour (which Milton highlights with his scientific reference to the angelic ability to contract), this description of angelic wounds undermines the action of the battle. The scientific description of the nature of angels seems to be included here to puncture and not to sustain the narrative. Milton climaxes the description of the first day's battle with a piece of information which renders the whole day's action futile. His science provides an explanation that gives

¹⁴Milton and the Angels, pp. 146-47.

apparent consistency to the visible level of the narrative, on which Satan is seen to be wounded by a "gash" on the right side, and bleeds so as to stain his armour; and yet, although he is carried off the field on a stretcher, he is able to rise whole and ready for fight on the next day. Satan's healing is quick because

Spirits that live throughout
 Vital in every part, not as frail man
 In Entrails, Heart or Head, Liver or Reins,
 Cannot but by annihilating die;
 Nor in thir liquid texture mortal wound
 Receive, no more than can the fluid Air:
 All Heart they live, all Head, all Eye, all Ear,
 All Intellect, all Sense, and as they please,
 They Limb themselves, and color, shape or size
 Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare. (344-53)

As an explanation of angelic nature it is a convenient borrowing, but when applied to the literal level of the text it raises more problems than it solves. If Satan can "limb" himself, why choose so inconvenient a mode, and why not change from the shape in which he has so humiliatingly to be carried from the field? Milton's pseudo-scientific¹⁵ explanation of angelic blood (332-34) in the context of such beings who are later described as "all Heart, all Head, all Eye, all Ear, / All Intellect, all sense", is absurd, the more so since this pure substance stains armour of a less pure nature. It was probably intended as yet another piece of metaphysical humour. Thus, more problems of narrative consistency are raised than are solved by these explanations of the scientific nature of Satan's wound. The chief question this philosophical digression raises,

¹⁵Pseudo-scientific because it justifies a comparison between angels and nectar-eating, ichor-bleeding gods of mythology, by means of a contemporary theory of human physiology. "A stream of Nectarous humor issuing flow'd / Sanguine" merely tells us that blood "such as Celestial Spirits may bleed" is red and derived from the concoction of nectar. See The Poems of John Milton, pp. 744-45, notes to VI.331-34 and 328-34.

however, is, if angels cannot receive mortal wounds, then what is this battle about? That the reader should ask the question is, I believe, partially the point of the apparently scientific parenthesis. If the parenthesis has point, it is as an allegorical illustration of the persisting and ever resurgent nature of evil.

The actual encounters of Milton's fighting angels are symbolic, rather than expressive of dire combat. Abdiel with rather irregular swordsmanship knocks Satan upon the "proud Crest" and causes him to kneel. This is a visual presentation of pride humbled, not a reconstruction of angelic battle. Similarly, when Michael defeats Satan, his sword stroke is patterned on the blow with which Aeneas shatters the sword of Turnus (Aeneid XII.741), the more miraculous sword and more magical stroke of Michael demonstrating the might of God and the greater heroism of his forces. The sword from God illustrates also that the forces of good are favoured by the supreme powers, as was Aeneas.

The three days of the heavenly battle are Milton's means of arranging his discussion of rebellion. The "symbolic vehicle" on which each day's action focusses (the proud chariot of the usurper Satan, the secreted cannons, and God's chariot like a pageant car), forms the centre point of an allegoric tableau. Within each of the three scenes, each smaller action and attribute forms part of a more intricate allegorical discussion of ambitious rebellion and fraud, and of the omnipotence of God. The entertaining action is not an attempt to reproduce "invisible exploits", but refers to such legendary and historical exploits as part of a series of events designed to analyse the nature and destiny of proud rebellion in God's universe.

IX

THE PAGEANTRY OF CREATION

Raphael's account of the creation of the world, which forms a sequel to the war in Heaven, is related to this war and to the elevation of the Son which both narratives illustrate, yet is set apart from the account of the war as being matter of a different order. In the context of the epic as a whole, the two related yet different narratives are presented as separate yet sequential tales told during the Edenic banquet. Adam urges Raphael to continue this narration, a commonplace gesture by the host to a teller of heroic tales in the classical epic (see, for example, the Odyssey XI.372-76). The sequential nature of the tales is emphasized as Raphael begins his second narrative by recapitulating the events of the battle he has just recounted. His narrative of creation opens with a description of Christ riding forth in the same chariot that provides the climax of Book VI.

Although Milton, by these devices, asserts the relationship between the two narratives, other devices serve to break the continuity of the dramatic illusion in order to ease the reader into a sequel that is narration of a different kind of material, told in a somewhat different manner. Between the two narratives the reader is recalled to the framework fiction of the banquet in Eden. He is also recalled from the delights of Eden to his own fallen world by the invocation to Book VII and the direct intrusion of the persona of the narrator, calling

on his muse and alluding to his own woe and the sinful times in which he lives. The invocation itself indicates a general change of tone over the whole second half of the poem and a greater concern with visible things and earthly days: "Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound / Within the visible Diurnal Sphere" (VII.21-22). For the second half of the poem, Milton deals more with earthly than with heavenly history, and this history of earth begins with an account of the creation of the earth itself. Although the lines "Standing on Earth, not rapt above the Pole, / More safe I Sing with mortal voice" (VII.23-24) are somewhat problematical, for Milton neither spends the entire first half of the poem describing the heavens nor the second half describing only from an earthly perspective, yet from Book VII on a smaller proportion of the matter is concerned with Heaven. However, the second half is basically concerned with those earthly happenings that shadow the heavenly fall of Satan, both in the fall of Adam and Eve and in the following history of the world. The description of creation adds the world and mankind, "a Race of Worshippers" (VII.630), destined to fill the vacant seats in Heaven, to the angelic chorus of praise about God's throne. In doing so it sets in motion a revolt among God's earthly worshippers paralleling the heavenly revolt.

There should be fewer problems involved in describing creation than in describing the battle in Heaven. There is a detailed biblical account to follow and the poet can fill out this account with description based upon man's observation of nature and its laws, so that there is no great necessity to introduce fictional material. Despite this, the material that Milton has added to the biblical account of creation is

not entirely of a factual nature. First, he has set the description within the context of a Triumph. The biblical Spirit of God brooding upon the waters is contained, in order to illustrate the triumphant creative power of the Godhead, in the vision of the Son in a triumphal chariot (VII.165). He is presented armed, not with the Thunderbolt, which in Book VI emblemized the wrath of God, but with the golden compasses which illustrate God's creative powers. The spectacular arrival and departure of this chariot frame the whole description of creation. To begin creation the Son rides through the gates of Heaven into chaos with "all his Train / Follow'd in bright procession" (VII.221-22). At the arrival of this magnificent procession the gates of Heaven open magically, like some masque stage set, to the sound of harmonious music. The end of the act of creation is marked by the return of the triumphal procession to the music of the angels and the harmony of the newly created spheres:

Up he rode
 Follow'd with acclamation and the sound
 Symphonious of ten thousand Harps that tun'd
 Angelic harmonies: the Earth, the Air
 Resounded, (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st)
 The Heav'ns and all the Constellations rung,
 The Planets in thir station list'ning stood,
 While the bright Pomp ascended jubilant. (557-64)

The seventh day of rest becomes a day of triumphal hymning.

The chariot ride into chaos is not entirely a fiction and its purpose is not merely to make the account of the creator more vivid. To the spirit moving upon the waters of Genesis 1.2 Milton has added, among other biblical allusions, the chariot of Ezekiel i and x, realized after the manner of the contemporary triumphal chariot, the compasses of God

of Proverbs viii.27 as they were pictured in contemporary iconography,¹ and the opening of the everlasting gates to discover the King of Glory of Psalms xxiv.7 as they might be portrayed in contemporary theatre. Milton has constructed this vision in the same manner as he constructed the fable of the battle of Heaven. He has added to the original biblical history matter of different historical consistency, creating a fictional framework that uses biblical history in an allegorical fashion. Creation becomes the central legend by which the glory of the Son is demonstrated while the other matter is added to enhance this theme of the glory of God's creative power. As Raphael introduces his narrative, his remarks suggest that his account is not to be taken literally, that it is a device for the description of something beyond earthly description: "though to recount Almighty works / What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice, / Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?" (112-14). Describing the creative act of God, Milton is referring to that which must be accommodated to man's understanding. His description is contained in a series of fictive tableaux tailored for a purpose. Raphael outlines that purpose as being to "glorify the Maker" (116) and that man may "infer" his own happiness.

The acts of creation are framed by the fictional drama of the Son in his chariot, which recalls the triumphal entertainments of the seventeenth century. Like the chief masquer in a court masque or a royal participant at a court *fête*, Christ makes a spectacular entrance through the gates of heaven, issuing forth in an allegorical chariot. But even the historical creation is presented as a theatrical fiction rather than as an attempt at realism. Milton uses the theory of an instantaneous creation

¹See G. W. Whiting, Milton and this Pendant World (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), plate facing p. 102, for one such icon.

to suggest that the six days of creation, at least in the account of Raphael in this poem, are a meaningful device. The "Acts of God, more swift / Than time or motion" (176-77) are measured in Raphael's account in terms of human speech so as to be understood by human minds. Although the historical action was instantaneous, Milton's theatrical fiction draws out the effects of the creative Word so that we can indeed see it taking effect. The six days of the biblical creation already provide Milton with a framework which served to demonstrate the order and wisdom of the creative action. Merritt Hughes notes, regarding the belief in an instantaneous creation as expressed at VII.176, that

A mass of Jewish and Christian commentary on Genesis declared that creation was instantaneous--that, as Du Bartas said, "His Word and Deed, all in an instant wrought" (Divine Weeks, p. 164). But commentators generally held either that the instantaneous work was later revealed by the stages of the six days of creation in Genesis, or--as Bacon thought--that while God's power was manifest in the making of "the confused mass and matter of heaven and earth on a moment," his wisdom was manifest in "the order and disposition of that chaos or mass" in "the work of six days" (Advancement I, vi, 2).²

Milton dramatizes this six day demonstration of the orderliness of God's creation in a series of tableaux. In fact, each day's act becomes like the act of a drama, preceded by the sounding forth of the Word and usually concluded with the choric praise of the angels.

Within each of these "acts" of creation we witness first the effect of God's creative power and then a demonstration of the goodness of the created world. The effect of God's power is generally suggested in terms of spectacle, the goodness of creation in terms of the beautiful attributes of created things and their harmonious and orderly actions. This two-fold function of each tableau is most clearly

²The Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 350, n. to l. 176.

expressed on the fourth day of creation. We see the creative acts of God as he frames the mighty sphere of the sun, forms the smaller globe of the moon, and sows the heavens with stars, then transfers from the cloudy shrine of Light the liquid which, as it is absorbed by the sun, gradually transforms the "unlightsome" sphere to a great sphere of light. Like goddesses with their urns, the stars repair to the sun as to a fountain. The tableau concludes with the heavens spectacularly lit up, a show of light. Immediately following the dramatization of the creative act, the creation itself becomes alive to express in its beauty and its movements the order and bounty of the universe. The lighting of the stars and of the sun is in itself a tableau demonstrating the orderly interdependence of creation. Following this the processions of the regents of night and day cross the sky, the sun preceded by the dawn and dancing Pleiades, the moon amid her company of stars. These heavenly bodies as they dance, run "jocund" or spangle the hemisphere, proclaim the glory of the creation of light in the ceremony of their glad procession across the skies. These royal processions celebrate the fourth day's creation: "then first adorn'd / With thir bright Luminaries that Set and Rose, / Glad Ev'ning and glad Morn crown'd the fourth day" (384-86). Similarly, when God creates the animals they first spring spectacularly from the earth, a demonstration of their origins and of the creative power of God, then they are described as they make the earth glorious in their lovely costume and ceremonial movement. While these "acts" of creation do not resemble the plot of any pageant or masque, the division of the action into a series of presentations, in each of which a certain part of creation enacts its origin and praises God, recalls the stations and pageant cars in which the guilds produced their contributions of a mystery play to God's praise, or

later a tableau to the praise of an earthly king. The influence of pageantry is further suggested by certain images which Milton uses in his dramatic representation of the creation of the world as a theatrical encomium to God the creator.

The biblical account enumerates the sequence of creation. Du Bartas in his Divine Weekes enlarges upon this, describing species in greater detail, giving their habitation and characteristics and suggesting the moral lessons which many of God's creatures impart. In Milton's account, the listing of created things is a description of nature in action, but nature performing ceremonial and stylized actions. The characteristics of each species are displayed through their song and dance and stylized movement as they join the throng of created things praising God. The lady insects come in procession: "First crept / The Parsimonious Emmet" (484-85), "swarming next appear'd / The Female Bee that feeds her Husband Drone / Deliciously" (489-91). The storks fly in wedge formation and the waters obey God's command "as Armies at the call / Of trumpet . . . / Troop to thir Standard" (295-97). The dramatic nature of Milton's description is evident in the tenses he uses. The account slips occasionally from the past to the more dramatic present. Although the present tense generally describes actions of created things which continue through all creation, as compared with those that might be said to have occurred on the actual day of creation, this modulation does add to the immediacy of the action. God "sowed" the stars, but in the poem they enact a little pantomime as they "draw" light from the sun. Similarly, after the egg "disclosed" the bird which soon "despised" the ground, the following display of birdlife is described in the present, using a combination of participles and the present tense. When Milton reports the

things created on each day he describes a show, a moving tableau in which each species praises God and demonstrates by some brief action its place within God's universal scheme.

For his depiction of creation Milton draws upon the scientific learning of his day. However, he uses this science in a way similar to the use of history in the historical episodes of the poem. The science of his time is a mine of information and authority on which he draws for the details of his allegorical tableaux. Like writers of hexamers, Milton's lists of the species created upon each day are not mere catalogues; each material object is chosen for its rich tradition of significance.³ Often Milton prefers to create an imaginative world in terms of literary formulae rather than to reproduce the world he sees about him. This is particularly the case in the arrangement of his list of fishes. The perfection and bounty of another world under the sea is expressed through the literary convention of the piscatory pastoral. Here in the underwater world are coral groves, sea weed pastures and pearly palaces; the sea creatures display the same moral tendencies as exist in the surface world. Some bank in schools like tiers of angels, others err below in sensual activities resembling those of mankind.

Each creature in Milton's account of creation is chosen for its allusive potential. Some creatures allegorize a certain quality: the martial reed, prudent crane, subtle serpent. Others pictorialize a quality, like the lion emerging rampant as on a heraldic device, expressive of aggressiveness, or the sound of the cock's clarion which aurally

³In his edition of Paradise Lost, Alastair Fowler draws attention to many of these potential allegories. See The Poems of John Milton, p. 800, n. to VII.423-30, where he notes that each of the seven birds in Milton's list is symbolic of some virtue.

represents his vigilance. Other creatures add to the suggestive significance of a whole tableau. A theme that runs through the description of creation is that of governance, order and the common good. The theme is appropriate in the context of the depiction of creation as Adam's kingdom, and many of the allusions suggest that Milton is also referring obliquely to the kingdom of Christ, the second Adam. In a number of these tableaux creatures are arranged to present a contrast between those whose preference is for self-indulgence or solitary life on the one hand and those who prefer communal life on the other. The free roaming and aggressive lion is contrasted with the pastoral flocks and herds, the eagle which "loosely" wings the air with the "more wise" (425) crane which flies in formation, the schools of fish are contrasted with the fish which alone or with mate "stray" or "sport" or banquet at ease in pearly shells or, more warlike, wait in armour for their food. When each creature's characteristic, whether derived from literature or science, is seen as part of the complete tableaux pattern, it becomes allegorically significant of a moral quality. These allegories tell of the tendencies of the fallen world and of fallen men in particular. Even though the world described is the new creation, the characteristics of birds and animals are sometimes specifically those found in the fallen world: the crane flies in formation "Intelligent of seasons" that do not exist in the newly created world. In the descriptions of Leviathan and the serpent Milton includes ominous reminders of their association with Satan, even though these are as yet harmless to Adam and Eve.

The emblematic possibilities of earth's creatures are exploited, and in each of the resultant allegorical tableaux of the days of creation the movement of the emblemized creatures is described by means of

imagery which suggests that they form part of something analogous to a pageant which praises the creator. Within the frame of each day's "act" of creation, the things God creates take on a life of their own and move as personifications, or in quasi-human movement. Inanimate objects and the heavenly bodies are portrayed as allegorical figures. On the first day, Light sprang "from the Deep, and from her Native East / To journey through the airy gloom began, / Spher'd in a radiant Cloud" (245-47). Light is designated by a feminine personal pronoun; on her journey from her native land she appears to ride in a cloudy chariot like an allegorical figure of pageant or painting. While Milton does not anthropomorphize the whole of creation, to each creature he gives some animating metaphor. On the one hand, when mountains rise and floods decline they are natural phenomena, on the other hand the mountains appear also to be great giants heaving their "broad bare backs . . . / Into the Clouds" (286-87) and the floods, "the wat'ry throng", move "as Armies at the call / Of Trumpet . . . / Troop to thir Standard" (295-97). In this animate creation, many commonplace personifications are used with new life. Often the context extends and strains conventional personification so that the reference stands out. The earth is "dressed" in the vegetation the Lord creates on the third day and, personified, has a "face". The combination of these two conventional personifications, however, produce a curious picture:

the bare Earth, till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,
Brought forth the tender Grass, whose verdure clad
Her Universal Face with pleasant green (313-16).

A more coherent picture is formed as the flowers "made gay / Her bosom smelling sweet" (318-19). In this personified world, trees dance as do

the Pleiades, gourds creep and the "corny Reed" stands "Embattl'd in her field" (321-22). Like goddesses to a fountain the stars repair to the sun in order to "in thir gold'n Urns draw Light" (365) while the morning planet with almost a certain vanity "gilds her horns" at the same source.

In all of these descriptions of the creation and operations of natural phenomena there is painted a double vision; that of the world as man sees it in daily life, and the world as it is mythologized and emblemized in the literature and art of the Renaissance. Milton does not attempt to present creation as a series of allegories and emblems, but he does suggest this possibility within a description of the spectacular appearance of created things and an enumeration of some of them. Even within each dramatic "act" the allegorizations do not form a coherent allegoric spectacle. On the third day, for instance, while the "broad bare backs" of the mountains may be equated with the "bare", "unsightly", "unadorned" earth, it is suddenly the "face" of the earth that is clothed, and the vegetation which is clothing in this context takes on a life of its own as gourds creep, the corn stands embattled, bushes are coiffured and trees "gemmed" with blossoms dance gracefully. The device of personification is used here to suggest that nature is paying homage to God in a kind of pageant, each plant in its characteristic movement or attribute adorning the earth so that it becomes "a seat where Gods might dwell, / Or wander with delight" (329-30).

The allegorical figures and personifications of the natural, created world move with the pomp and spectacle of a courtly entertainment. The trees and stars dance, cornfields and floods move as a military display, the rivers flow in a perpetual procession, passing with their "humid

train" between their banks. As Milton describes them, the creatures of earth appear to be wearing ceremonial costume which, like the costuming of pageantry, illustrates the glory of the ruler in the spectacle's luxury. Gold and gems abound in creation: blossoms are gems on trees that dance, waters rise in crystal walls, the palace of the sun is of gold as are the urns of the stars. The underwater landscape is adorned with jewels and the scales of the fish shine like bright metal. In this splendid region crustacea wear armour, and "sporting" fish wear coats adorned with heraldic patterns,⁴ which during this exercise present a fine spectacle as with "quick glance" they "Show to the Sun thir wav'd coats dropt with Gold" (406). In the world above water the little birds have "painted wings" (434), the peacock is adorned with a "gay train" and insects creep forth "In all the Liveries deckt of Summer's pride / With spots of Gold and Purple, azure and green" (478-79).

To the same end of evoking the glorious spectacle that nature provides, some of her marvels are described in terms of the mechanical marvels of the court entertainment. I have already cited Light in her radiant cloud, whose vehicle resembles the bright clouds of the masque scene, which were fashioned from paper made translucent by the application of oil and made to radiate light by the placing of candles to shine through the oil cloth.⁵ Leviathan both reminds the reader of the moral fable of the whale that seems a land (alluded to in I.201) and adds to

⁴See Fowler's note to VII.406-10 in The Poems of John Milton, p. 799: "A subdued allegoria in which the colour-patterns of the fish are likened to various heraldic patterns or coats. Thus waved, though it may also directly express the appearance of fish glimpsed through the waves, at the level of the vehicle means 'divided undy or wavy''; and so becomes a heraldic term.

⁵See J. G. Demaray, Milton and the Masque Tradition, p. 39.

the seascape a spectacular fountain, as he "at his Gills / Draws in, and at his Trunk spouts out a Sea" (415-16). The swan propels herself with "Oary feet" (440) like a magnificent state barge. The birth of the animals is portrayed in similar spectacle, but here the marvellous is given an illusion of reality; as the animals push through the earth with fantastic suddenness they realistically cast aside the soil in little mounds as they emerge.

This six-act demonstration of the orderliness and glory of God's creation reaches a climax in the creation of man, the "Master work" (505). At the end of the sixth day the world is described as a lovely spectacle which awaits its focus, "the end / Of all yet done" (505-06):

Now Heav'n in all her Glory shone, and roll'd
Her motions, as the great first-Mover's hand
First wheel'd thir course; Earth in her rich attire
Consummate lovely smil'd (499-502).

The chief figure that God has envisaged for this scene is its governor. In this picture of man as "chief / Of all his works" it is in the aspect of governance that Milton principally draws the "similitude" (520) between God and man, who is made in his image. Before the creation of man the voice of God is heard, saying

Let us make now Man in our image, Man
In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the Fish and Fowl of Sea and Air,
Beast of the Field, and over all the Earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground. (519-23)

God's blessing on the newly-created couple again emphasizes this theme of rule:

Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth,
Subdue it, and throughout Dominion hold
Over Fish of the Sea, and Fowl of the Air,
And every living thing that moves on the Earth. (531-34)

As if to pictorialize this similitude, God places man upon his own earthly throne and sanctuary on a mountain in the garden of Paradise.

The splendour of God's creation, displayed in all its harmonious and glorious order, a haunt fit for gods, culminates in the picture of man erect and god-like in his place as chief created thing. The newly-created earth becomes a shadow of Heaven, "another Heav'n / From Heaven Gate not far" (617-18). The obedient and praiseful activity of this other Heaven is purposeful, for earth is "founded in view" of God and his angels. Each created thing instinctively performs its appointed rôle to God's glory. Adam later describes how instinctively he fulfils his rôle in the universe (VIII.257ff.), first springing upright as if aspiring heavenwards, and exulting in the life he feels running and speaking, and so performing an unsolicited act of praise.

This perfect world contains within it prophecies of the fall. The disaster of man's fall from pride of place in this other heaven is ominously foretold in God's warning to be obedient. The eventual rupture of this whole glorious fabric of creation is demonstrated elsewhere in Paradise Lost, in God's changes in the universe in Book X, in the bestial behaviour of Adam and Eve when fallen, in the history of mankind in Books XI and XII, and most vividly in Book X, in the picture of that gruesome, indecent couple Sin and Death, entered into the lovely and orderly landscape of Eden. In Milton's treatment of the creation the allegoric use of history, which shapes the rest of Raphael's narration and is basic to the focus of the whole poem, is evident. The historical event is set in a fictional allegorical frame which depicts the triumph of Christ the creator, and is clearly influenced by the Renaissance triumph. Within

this framework the six days of creation are displayed as if in tableaux, in which the emblematic possibilities of nature are exploited, and in which metaphors, particularly the frequent personifications, suggest that the actions of the creatures of the perfect new world are analogous to the spectacle, dance, song and martial display which honours monarchs in civic pageantry.

X

THE PAGEANT OF HUMAN HISTORY

The histories that occupy the greater part of Books XI and XII are patterned, as were Raphael's narratives, upon episodes of the classical epic. In their function within the epic structure they resemble the visions of the future history of Rome that are presented to Aeneas, and imitations of these found in later epics, such as the histories of Britain which Spenser includes in Books II and IV of The Faerie Queene. The force of the history in the traditional epic was nationalistic, its aim being to glorify the nation's achievements and, in doing so, to honour the present ruler, whose reign is depicted as the splendid summit of the national achievement. Virgil's Rome climaxes with Augustus, Spenser's England with Elizabeth. Both the Virgilian and the Renaissance epic present the exploits of the founders of an empire which receives its full glory in the age celebrated. Milton intended at one time to write such an epic "to Gods glory by the honor and instruction of my country".¹ However, by the time he had come to write Paradise Lost he had obviously decided that this might be better achieved in glorifying the spiritual kingdom than vaunting the temporal one. He continues to use the form and devices that glorify the empire in the epic and imperialistic art, but he uses them to glorify the spiritual

¹See The Reason of Church Government in Works, I, 810; and also "Manso" in Complete Poems and Major Prose, pp. 127-30.

kingdom. His epic, like the traditional one, is about the founders of kingdoms; and the history recounted in the episode narratives presents the history of that kingdom up to the present age and its glorious prince. He is, of course, writing of the kingdom of God and of the coming of Christ the King. In this context, the form that praised worldly glory now condemns it; the epic heroes of old who found mighty empires are, in this epic, the instigators of the world's ruin, so that in worldly terms this epic is tragic, not glorious. As the chief action of the epic, "man's first disobedience", is about to take place in Book IX, Milton's invocation draws attention again to the unusual "tragic" note of his epic. Heaven, which usually aided the glorious empire in the Renaissance and classical epic, is unsympathetic, even antipathetic to man's worldly kingdom:

On the part of Heav'n
 Now alienated, distance and distaste,
 Anger and just rebuke, and judgment giv'n,
 That brought into this World a world of woe,
 Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery
 Death's Harbinger (IX.8-13).

The aim of his heroic poem is not to celebrate wars and the pomp of kings, but "Patience and Heroic Martyrdom", spiritual strengths. As the aim of the epic celebrating the Christian kingdom and spiritual glory differs from the epic of imperial power and glory, so the aim of the histories differs from those in the secular epic. Their rôle within the structure of the epic is, however, similar.

When Milton recounts the history of the world in the last two books of Paradise Lost he is not merely retelling events. There is a temptation to read the last two books as a sudden rush on Milton's part to cover the action of centuries, and to find the histories, by contrast with the leisurely accounts of the rest of the epic, unsatisfactory

and dull summaries.² The histories are of little interest for event alone, and like Chaucer's Monk's long series of tragedies their repetitiousness makes the tragic matter dull and gloomy. The histories are designed to reconstruct events in a meaningful way for those who are already familiar with the story. Each episode is designed to provide moral instruction, fictionally instructing Adam, in reality instructing the reader. Basic to this instruction is the continual contrast drawn between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world.

The history is first necessary to demonstrate to Adam and Eve the effects of their sin, and yet is designed to offer them hope while demonstrating the seriousness of their crime. God asks Michael to

reveal
 To Adam what shall come in future days,
 As I shall thee enlighten, intermix
 My Cov'nant in the woman's seed renew'd;
 So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace
(XI.113-17).

In the early drafts for the work in the Trinity MS. the place of these histories is taken by a gloomy "mask of all the evils of this life and World" which, in "Adam Unparadised", causes Adam to despair. The histories also describe the evils of this life and world in their pictures of the continual tyranny, corruption and destruction of the kingdoms of mankind. However, the drafts in the MS. indicated that some form of Christian instruction would be offered to Adam to provide hope in his despair; and in the finished work Christian faith is shown as the hope of the fallen world. The procession of persons in the drafts, more suited to a drama, is replaced in the epic by the more comprehensive

²Cf. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to "Paradise Lost" (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 129.

vision of the fate of empires, more typically the subject matter of the epic. Instead of the allegoric figures of Mercy, Faith, Hope and Charity, who offer comfort in the drafts, in the epic Adam is comforted by the promise of a glorious kingdom of God.

Both the persons of the draft masque and the empires of the epic histories offer comfort or despair, depending on how they are revealed to Adam. The "procession" of empires becomes allegorical, like the procession of persons, for the physical reality is conjured up to display a moral quality. The episode as a whole follows naturally from the historical allegory of Raphael's narrative, thus completing the scope of the allusive material brought to bear upon the tragedy of the Fall of Man. It articulates the hope offered in the triumph of Christ and in the creation of the new world, by demonstrating that these patterns are also present upon earth; and thus, even though the vision ends with the world a "conflagrant mass", these histories enable Adam to look forward with confidence to a final Christian triumph.

The way in which we are to read the sequel of Adam's sin is demonstrated by Adam's own reactions to the visions Michael presents, and by Michael's directions as to how they should be read. Seeing the tableau of the murder of one of his own sons, Adam does not enquire into the facts. He interprets the tableau as if it were an emblem: "But have I now seen Death?" (XI.462). To whom Michael replies, "Death thou hast seen / In his first shape on man" (466-67). Book XI contains no place names, although the fact that the reader knows, or can guess, the historical names and places lends the visions historical authenticity and authority. Thus events are not narrated as history, but marshalled

to demonstrate the moral consequences of the fall. In Book XII, when Michael moves from the general to specific types, the narratives are resonant with the sounds and evocations of names. Even so, this is not merely a chronicle, for Milton is showing how the men of the Old Testament are shadowy types of the covenant of God, that the growth of the race of Israel shadows the spiritual kingdom of Christ.

At first glance the histories of Books XI and XII seem to lack proportion, inordinate amounts of time being given to some events, particularly to the earliest events of biblical history treated very cursorily in the Bible itself, while other major events in biblical history are glossed over or even forgotten. From the point of view of the literal level of the narrative, the most satisfying explanation is that of H. R. MacCallum:

The proportions of the story reveal Milton's concern with decorum. Events are seen through the eyes of Adam, and this involves a reversal of normal perspective. Events farthest from us are those closest to Adam: they stand in the foreground of his vision, and are correspondingly large. Events which come late in time, even though of great magnitude, are foreshortened; the diminished scale in which the life of Christ is presented testifies to the span of time over which it is seen by Adam, a span so great that it is reduced to iconographic simplicity. The whole design might be compared to that of a Baroque staircase in which various illusionistic devices are employed to increase the sense of distance.³

This simple but apt explanation of the literal level which renders the arrangement of the histories both decorous and elegant still leaves the matter of choice of incident, and this can only be explained on the level of moral intent, or allegory. MacCallum also shows how Christian beliefs

³"Milton and Sacred History" in Essays in English Literature from the Renaissance to the Victorian Age Presented to A. S. P. Woodhouse, ed. Millar MacLure and F. W. Watt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), pp. 167-68.

about history are operating to provide an effective and meaningful schema for Milton's histories. Milton selects events from biblical history to make "doctrine coalesce with aesthetic pattern". MacCallum points out that one of the most significant patterns in these two books lies in the divisions of the history, which conform "to the traditional Christian chronology of the world in which history is envisaged in terms of six ages, corresponding to the six days of creation",⁴ a view of history which pointed to the typological parallels between the Old Testament ages and the age of Christ. This view also implies that typological parallels exist between the ages themselves, so portraying on the level of the history of the material world a cyclical pattern of the fall of each age and the renewal of the succeeding age, while at the same time stressing a progressive manifestation of God's grace "From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit" (XII.303). The six tableaux of Book XI examine the first of these ages of Christian history, the age from Adam to Noah, in some detail. In Book XII Milton treats more briefly the following four Old Testament ages: the Flood to Abraham, Abraham to David, David to the Captivity, and the Captivity to the Advent of Christ. The visions naturally culminate in an account of the life of Christ and in a prophecy of the final coming of his kingdom.

The visions of Book XI, a series of tableaux depicting events from the first age of history, are conjured up by Michael upon the empty

⁴Ibid., pp. 150-54. MacCallum discusses this view of history as it appears in the work of St. Augustine and seventeenth-century theologians and compares the views of these writers with Milton's historical schema in Books XI and XII. MacCallum notes that Milton, with his emphasis on Moses and Mosaic law, and on the captivity in Babylon, suggests a particularly Puritan view of history and compares him in this respect to Cotton Mather.

landscape by means of symbolic magic such as one often sees in a dream vision allegory or a symbolic entertainment. Michael

from Adam's eyes the Film remov'd
Which that false Fruit that promis'd clearer sight
Had bred; then purg'd with Euphrasy and Rue
The visual Nerve, for he had much to see;
And from the Well of Life three drops instill'd. (XI.412-16)

Adam then sees the ensuing visions in a trance. The sense of sight is not entirely superseded when the episode continues in Michael's narrative of Book XII.⁵ Michael refers to Babylon a second time in this book as "that proud City, whose high Walls thou saw'st" (XII.342), and Adam discovers, following Michael's description of Abraham and his seed,

now first I find
Mine eyes true op'ning, and my heart much eas'd,
Erewhile perplext with thoughts what would become
Of mee and all Mankind; but now I see
His day, in whom all Nations shall be blest (XII.273-77).

In Book XII Adam is seeing with a visionary penetration more rarefied than that he enjoyed in Book XI. In the latter book he interprets the tableaux to discover moral truths for the conduct of this life, learning of death, of sin, of punishment and hope. In Book XII he is able to see signs of a spiritual kingdom shadowed forth by historical events.

One might compare Michael's purging of Adam's sight with the sort of symbolic magic found in allegory and pageantry.⁶ In Comus such magic surrounds the use of the herb moly and is evident in the way in which Sabrina releases the Lady from her chair with three drops of

⁵See B. Rajan, The Lofty Rhyme (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 85, where he outlines some of the reasons given for this change in method of presentation.

⁶Cf. J. G. Demaray on magic in the masque in Milton and the Masque Tradition, pp. 89-91.

water. The visions which are conjured up by Michael in a fashion so reminiscent of masque magic are moving tableaux, but are probably inspired as much by painting as by theatre. A. S. P. Woodhouse suggests an epic analogue in the pictures on Achilles' shield.⁷

Each vision presents action against a symbolic background. The first represents the historic act of the first murder against a patterned scene: a field half arable, half grazing land with an altar in the middle. The second vision is incontestably allegoric, and its inclusion serves to demonstrate the allegoric implications of the whole series of historical scenes. In this tableau Death is portrayed with his dart, triumphant over a lazar house of personified diseases who are tended by the person of Despair. The third vision becomes more complex, both in meaning, as Adam's wrong reaction to it indicates, and in content. A lively, colourful scene showing the activities of the tribe of Cain, it depicts a wide, hill-rimmed plain on which tents of graziers, musicians and smithies are situated. But although the tableau is a composite of a number of busy scenes, it is set in a landscape that conveys a very clear allegory and is basically simple in design. The movement of the picture focusses on a descent from the hills to the plain. The hill is iconographically associated with virtue, the plain with luxury and pleasure. Jonson's masque Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, with its Hesperidian plains before Mount Atlas, uses such an allegorical setting for its action concerning Pleasure and Virtue. Thus the works of the men on the plain are to be read in the context of this contrast, while the whole allegory is crystallized in the descent of the virtuous

⁷See "Pattern in Paradise Lost", University of Toronto Quarterly, 22 (1953-54), 109-27.

men to the plain and in the amorous dalliance and hymeneal festivities which follow and provide a foreground action. The seductive graces of pleasure were often emblemized in the Hercules myth. In Whitney's emblem illustrating Hercules' choice between pleasure and virtue, pleasure appears in the guise of Venus, who makes her appearance in Milton's allegory as "th' Ev'ning Star / Love's Harbinger" (XI.588-89). Whitney describes Hercules' temptation in terms of such a landscape as Milton depicts:

When Hercules, was dowlfull of his waie
 Inclosed rounde, with vertue and with vice;
 With reasons firste, did vertue him assaie,
 The other, did with pleasures him entice:
 They longe did strive, before he could be wonne,
 Till at the lengthe, ALCIDES thus begonne

Oh pleasure, thoughe thie waie bee smoothe, and faire,
 And sweete delights in all thy courtes abounde:
 Yet can I heare, of none that have bene there,
 That after life, with fame have bene renoum'de:
 For honor hates, with pleasure to remaine,
 Then houlde thy peace, thow wastes thie winde in vaine

But heare, I yeelde oh vertue to thie will,
 And vowe my selfe, all labour to indure
 For to ascend the steepe, and craggie hill
 The toppe whereof, whoe so attaines, is sure
 For his reward, to haue a crowne of fame
 Thus HERCULES, obey'd his sacred dame.⁸

The scene of the nuptials of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Cain elicits a very natural reaction from Adam:

Such happy interview and fair event
 Of love and youth not lost, Songs, Garlands, Flow'rs,
 And charming Symphonies attach'd the heart
 Of Adam, soon inclin'd to admit delight
 The bent of Nature (XI.593-97).

But to the informed reader the biblical event and the symbolic setting

⁸Geffrey Whitney, A Choice of Emblems, emblem no. 40.

which directs how it is to be read, demonstrate yet another type of sin in mankind. Milton uses history to demonstrate a truth often revealed by classical myth, but by using biblical types he confers special authority upon his allegory. When Adam begins to interpret the history as Milton has organized it, he finds it particularly relevant to his own case: "But still I see the tenor of Man's woe / Holds on the same, from Woman to begin" (XI.632-33). Michael promptly corrects him by reminding Adam of man's sufficiency to withstand temptation. Man's woe is his own responsibility:

From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,
Said th' Angel, who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superior gifts receiv'd. (634-36)

The moralized Hercules myth which is evoked by the allegory of virtue on the hills and pleasure on the plain, also provided an allegory of "effeminate slackness" in Hercules' lapse into the pleasurable bondage of woman's wiles. Hercules was often portrayed with a distaff in his hand, an emblem of the hero made womanish by love.⁹ The moralized Hercules myth is not referred to directly in this tableau, but the backdrop to the action and the qualities of pleasure and virtue contrasted within this setting use the suggestions of this moralization as a commentary upon the historical action. The backdrop, so appropriate to the Hercules emblems, provides a measure for the historical event and indicates a method of reading it. The tableau, with its particular relevance to Adam, becomes a re-enactment of the archetypal sin, but the picture of moral deterioration is also relevant to later epochs.

⁹Henry Peacham, Minerva Britanna (1612), emblem no. 95, Vis Amoris.

The fourth vision comprises a busy landscape of cities, towns and rural works-- a whole kingdom, in fact. Here war rages in the various guises of plunder, open war and cities besieged; and the politicking of a council of war occupies the foreground. The point of this central council is to contrast Enoch, man of peace and righteousness who ascends heavenward, with gigantic men of might whose goals are "renown on Earth" (698). The series of visions in Book XI pictures a moral progress at the same time as it follows the progress of history. These giants, Michael reveals, are the product of marriages depicted in the previous tableau:

Where good with bad were matcht, who of themselves
Abhor to join; and by imprudence mixt,
Produce prodigious Births of body or mind.
Such were these Giants, men of high renown;
For in those days Might only shall be admir'd,
And Valor and Heroic Virtue call'd (XI.685-90).

This contrast between might and righteousness is a theme central to the discussion of human conduct in Milton's epic.¹⁰ The translation of Enoch portrayed at the centre of this tableau was generally regarded as a type of the resurrection or the ascension,¹¹ but in these early tableaux Michael is discussing right conduct rather than the covenant of God and the kingdom of Christ, so that he is not explicit about the typological suggestions but merely states generally that this vision will show "what reward / Awaits the good" (XI.709-10).

¹⁰This contrast is basic to J. Steadman's discussion of the notion of heroism in Paradise Lost in Milton and the Renaissance Hero; see particularly p. 25.

¹¹See The Poems of John Milton, p. 1017, Fowler's note to XI.700-10.

The fifth and sixth visions dealing with the flood form a culmination to the progressive depiction of woe and the consequences of sin. Both tableaux form composite pictures. The fifth begins with a picture of the "Reverend Sire" amid a scene of "luxury and riot". Another vignette shows the building of the ark, afar off, perhaps on the mountain slopes near where the timber is described as being hewn. If this is so, then the action is informed by the association of virtue with the hills and pleasure with the plain. A further picture shows the entry into the ark as the storm clouds burden the air. Finally, the ark appears, riding "with beaked prow / . . . tilting o'er the Waves" (746-47) in the torrential rain. Such a vision, composed of a series of depictions of various stages of some narrative, reminds one of many of the early religious murals and windows descriptive of biblical events. If the comparison is made to theatrical modes, they resemble four discoveries of a masque-like nature rather than the extended action of a tragedy. Each scene reveals Noah or his ark contrasted against some scenic vista. The life of each tableau depends upon this contrast rather than in some dramatic conflict. Noah, for example, is revealed preaching amid riot and luxury, but there is no interest in the conflict of his character with the crowd of rioters. The importance lies in the contrasting activities of the corrupted worldlings and the man of faith which is conveyed through their respective gestures and occupations.

The final vision is also a complete picture, but less complex. It presents a reversal of the fourth vision even as it shows the sequel to the story of Noah. When Adam "looked again" to see what ensued from the despairing picture of the destroyed world he saw the ark on the

flood as before, but the storm had abated and the waters had been dried up by the sun. A second picture shows the tops of mountains through the flood and the despatching of the raven and the dove, while the vision ends with the ark on dry ground, the procession of Noah "with all his Train" descending from the ark with the rainbow above them. This series of scenes presents a contrast between the world ravaged by the flood and the signs of God's love and mercy in the skies--sun, dove, and the rainbow which replaces the clouds of wrath of the fifth vision. Against this moral landscape the ark of Noah and the procession of the saved are figured, a tableau which provides, with its "car" and procession, a fitting triumph to conclude this first group of visions.

These tableaux present history allegorically. First of all they moralize history; that is, they use history to illustrate a moral type or exemplify a moral choice with its consequences. They show very vividly the fate of intemperance, faithlessness and worldliness. The tableaux also contain typological clues, commenting on the fictional present of Adam and Eve's plight in Paradise and upon the plight of the sinner in the present age. In the third tableau Adam recognizes a striking similarity to his own sin while the flood, of course, demonstrates yet another destruction of a world and yet another hope in the depiction of the rainbow, sign of God's covenant. To the Christian reader these events present types of his own age. In Enoch he sees a type of Christ, a typological identification made very firmly by Enoch's translation to the skies in a cloud, a translation of the same kind as traditional iconography uses for the Ascension of Christ.¹² The flood becomes a

¹²Cf. Fowler in his edition of Paradise Lost in The Poems of John

type of the last judgement and God's covenant, his promise of his continuing salvation, available to his faithful remnant.

In the first part of the historical episode, to the end of Book XI, Michael visits Adam and "sets before him in vision what shall happ'n till the Flood" (Argument to Book XI). The theme of this vision is the corruption and destruction of a kingdom, although signs of God's mercy, particularly in the covenant signified in the bright rainbow, lend hope to this picture of woe and sin. Book XII demonstrates the more hopeful note of this second part of the history of the world. "The Angel Michael continues from the Flood to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain, who that Seed of the Woman shall be, which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall; his Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension; the state of the Church till his second Coming" (Argument to Book XII). This book's emphasis is God's covenant as it is revealed in the Old Testament history of Israel and in the Coming of Christ, an emphasis developed in lines 1-5 of Book XII, added in the second edition of the poem. In the first edition, before the division into two books, the new series of histories began with a recapitulation of the literal story of the first six visions: "Thus thou hast seen one World begin and end" (XII.6). In the second edition the thematic split between the two books is underlined: "here the Arch-Angel paus'd / Betwixt the world destroy'd and world

Milton, p. 1015, n. to XI.655-71: "The translation in a cloud agrees with the account of Enoch's vision translation in Enoch xiv.8f. . . . Unfortunately, however, these verses are not among the fragments of The Book of Enoch that could have been accessible to Milton." It is therefore more probable that Milton's cloud is a typological icon rather than a pictorialization of this text.

restor'd" (XII.2-3). The visions which Michael produces before Adam's eyes in Book XI are replaced by Michael's narrative of future events. Perhaps it is the replacement of emphasis on the material world's sinfulness involving its destruction by emphasis on spiritual values in this manifestation of the world's future restoration which accounts for the change in method of presentation in Book XII. However, it is also explained by necessity: Milton required a more compact method of presenting the entire history of the Old Testament and of the kingdom of Christ. Perhaps too he wished to be more explicit about the relevance of what is depicted here, where the earlier tableaux had relied heavily on signs.

Against the continued pattern of the rise and fall of nations, begun in Book XI, Milton develops the history of the nation of God's elect, culminating in the Messiah's early life and Second Coming. The pattern of destruction and renewal manifest in the age of Noah continues to be evident in the following ages of the world. The next age is represented by the tyranny of Nimrod and the collapse of his world in confusion following his audacious attempt to mould his own destiny and even worldly immortality. The repetitious folly of mankind and its destructive sequel, however, becomes occasion for the happy beginning of the Jewish race and the more lasting fame of the men of God and of the race God destined for greatness. This story of a nation in the Book XII section of the histories has more in common with the epic episodes of the Aeneid and the Faerie Queene, but the earthly national history it first presents looks forward to the spiritual kingdom and is to be interpreted as a typological manifestation of that kingdom.

As the kingdom of God is revealed first in terms of the destiny of a particular nation, a further aspect of historical allegory is explored and, for the first time in the visionary history, names appear. Just as Anchises indicates and names the figures of men who will be famous in Rome's future, so Michael indicates the tracts of land where the destiny of God's nation will be enacted and gives these things their future names:

I see his Tents
Pitcht about Sechem, and the neighboring Plain
Of Moreh; there by promise he receives
Gift to his Progeny of all that Land;
From Hamath Northward to the Desert South
(Things by thir names I call, though yet unnam'd)
From Hermon East to the great Western Sea,
Mount Hermon, yonder Sea, each place behold
In prospect, as I point them; on the shore
Mount Carmel; here the double-founted stream
Jordan, true limit Eastward; but his Sons
Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of Hills. (XII.135-46)

While elaborating upon the extent of the earthly kingdom, Michael's narrative actually points forward to a spiritual kingdom. Enlightened by this history, Adam exclaims that in these things concerning Abraham and his seed, he finds his "eyes true op'ning" and sees "His day, in whom all Nations shall be blest" (XII.274, 277). Against the physical extent of Abraham's land is set the larger extent of the spiritual kingdom to come: "This ponder, that all Nations of the Earth / Shall in his Seed be blessed" (147-48). In contrast to the physical presence of the race of Abraham in the locations that Michael indicates, the true king of Israel, "born / Barr'd of his right", when he ascends "The Throne Hereditary" reigns over a still wider region; he shall "bound his Reign / With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heav'ns" (359-60, 370, 370-71).

With the change in emphasis of the historical episode in Book XII, Michael's method of presentation also changes and the direct vision of Book XI is replaced by narration. Michael no longer teaches by the impact of picture on eye but of language upon ear. For all this, the narrative does not achieve the abstract quality of music. Michael creates scenes for Adam to imagine and, because he is narrating rather than simply presenting, he is able to be more explicitly didactic. However, Adam and Michael still discuss the history in terms of sight. "Much thou hast yet to see" (8), Michael begins, and it is because of the inadequacy of human vision that Michael must relate the rest:

but I perceive
 Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
 Must needs impair and weary human sense;
 Henceforth what is to come I will relate,
 Thou therefore give due audience, and attend. (8-12)

As Michael relates, he indicates the uninhabited tracts of land and speaks as if he sees action in progress there. "I see his Tents" he says of Abraham, and slips into the present tense to describe the action of the Old Testament, as if it were being enacted before his eyes.

Michael's account falls into five divisions, following the five remaining ages of the world. In each section one or two events important to the revelation of God's covenant with mankind are pictured. These references to biblical events refer to common icons of Christian art: the tower of Babylon, Moses and the tablets of the Law, the kings of Israel culminating in Christ as they were represented on the tree of Jesse, the crib in the stable, the cross and the Last Judgement. As in Book XI the discussion of each historic age serves to channel the reader's understanding of its spiritual relevance. In the first age

after the flood, Milton chooses the building of the tower of Babel to picture not only the emergence of the divided nations of the world, sprung from confusion, but also the beginning of the chosen nation. In the Babel scene the forces of evil that run counter to Christ's kingdom are also portrayed. Nimrod is shown as an ambitious tyrant after the pattern of Satan, of "proud ambitious heart" who "Will arrogate Dominion undeserv'd / Over his brethren" (25, 27-28). Like Satan, "Hunting (and Men not Beasts shall be his game)" and the characteristic celebrated in his name is the cause of Satan's fall: "And from Rebellion shall derive his name" (30, 36). The picture of the tower broken and this tyranny brought to confusion forms a foil to the further visions of the long dominion of God's appointed and of his chosen nation.

In the stretch of narrative which describes the third age, from Abraham to the time of Israel's kings, the emphasis is upon both the growth of God's kingdom and, as a contrast to the depiction of the lawless Nimrod, upon Moses and the law. Because Milton's chief interest is in conveying the picture of a nation, in this account place names and territories figure prominently. As Michael indicates the areas in the now empty land which the children of Abraham will people, he could almost be teaching Adam by pointing out areas on a map. The whole journey of Abraham and his sons is described in a continuous narrative, but that narrative describes more clearly the places passed and dwelt in than the appearance and actions of those who journeyed. The story's features are mountains, plains and rivers, "yonder sea", "that range of hills".

The section of the account dealing with the sojourn in Egypt concentrates upon the geographical feature of the seven mouthed river

Nile. Like the seven-headed beast of Revelation xii.3, it is a sign of Satan and his forces. In effect, Milton outlines a symbolic battle in which the ten miraculous signs of God's mercy to the Israelites, the plagues of Egypt, are seen as ten wounds. God's interest in the nation is further shown in the signs of the miracles on the journey to Canaan, the crossing of the Red Sea, the cloud and the fiery pillar. Mount Sinai provides a geographical feature contrasting with the seven mouthed Nile. Here Adam sees Moses giving Israel her laws, an incident forming an opposition to the lawless tyrant of Egypt. Michael's description of the landscape of the biblical lands reminds one of the illustrated maps of biblical regions of the Renaissance, two of which are reproduced in the Merritt Y. Hughes edition of the Complete Poems and Major Prose.

The fourth age is organized as a catalogue of kings. Only the names of David and Solomon are singled out, David because of the prophecy concerning his seed, Solomon because he housed the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple. In King David was prefigured the coming of the Messiah, in the housing of the Ark in the Temple, the Christian Church. This line of kings ends in the captivity of Babylon, and the next age reverses the pattern with the Advent of Christ the King occurring amid another period of Israel's captivity. Now the components of the traditional crib scene, showing the king born barred of his right, present a contrasting picture to the pomp of Israel's Old Testament Kings. Michael's account now consists of a series of contrasts which present the paradox of Christ's rule. The icon of the Crucifixion depicts the battle of Satan and Christ, but in curiously paradoxical terms. At the coming of Christ, Adam recognizes the instrument of God's

victory: "say where and when / Thir fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor's heel" (384-85), he asks eagerly. But Michael explains that the terms in which God's providence was revealed in Old Testament history are no longer the terms in which the heavenly kingdom is to be seen on earth. Any indications that Michael is pointing to the landscape about him as the theatre for the action he now describes ceases with the birth of Christ. He enjoins Adam to "Dream not of thir fight, / As of a Duel, or the local wounds / Of head or heel" (386-88). The Saviour shall "recure" death's wound "Not by destroying Satan, but his works / In thee and in thy Seed" (394-95). The crucifixion, a defeat in earthly terms, illustrates this. It is a victory because the death of Christ cancels out man's sin (416-19). Because the icons of Christ's victorious presence on earth are so paradoxical, necessarily much of Michael's narration is taken up with explication.

The present age of God's church is depicted in a series of allegories; names and places have disappeared. Only the Whitsunday descent of the Spirit is recalled as a specific historic event. The corruption of the church is represented in a contrasting allegory of false apostles. "Wolves" will "force the Spirit of Grace" and "bind / His consort Liberty" (525-26); they "unbuild / His living Temples" while Truth retires "Bestruck with sland'rous darts" and "works of Faith" are rarely found (535-37). This is not an age propitious for the demonstration of God's work in worldly terms. Michael condemns those who

seek to avail themselves of names,
Places and titles, and with these to join
Secular power, though feigning still to act
By spiritual (XII.515-18).

Michael's plangent attack on the church in which, we know, Milton has

his eye on his own age, leads naturally into a vision of apocalypse when Christ, returning "in the Clouds from Heav'n", dissolves the world in a "conflagrant mass" (545, 548). The reader is expected to find joy and comfort in this picture as he is in the picture of a similar conflagration in Paradise, which ends the poem. The optimistic reading of these pictures of destruction is prepared for by the whole series of tableaux which precedes them; for, as the ages of mankind are described, we see the wicked world steadily tending to this destruction and watch the emergence of a spiritual kingdom. The emergence of this realm is perceived in three stages: first, the re-establishment of better nations after the destruction of the wicked, then the paradoxical revelation of how God's word appears in the flesh in Christ, and finally the rejection as superfluous of the worldly things which have shown the way to God's spiritual kingdom until finally we see them burned.

For Adam, the progress of history becomes an illustration of God's riddling words in the garden concerning the serpent and the seed of woman. It is adapted to the sensibility of man, just as another representation of the meaning of the curse was adapted to the perverse intelligence of the fallen angels in Hell, in Book X. In both shows, the one in Hell and the visions and iconographical representations of Books XI and XII, physical things are arranged to show Christ's victory and the fate of evil. The show in Hell mocked Satan's rebellious presumption as he returned in triumph, scoffing at God's curse. The visions revealed to Adam celebrate Christ and the faithful men of his kingdom in a series of tableaux depicting the triumph of Christ and that kingdom.

XI

THE CELEBRATION OF A RURAL SEAT

Paradise Lost, retaining the traditional epic concern with rulers and government, has as its human hero and heroine a king and queen. Unfallen Adam, perfect man, is also the perfect ruler, Paradise being his perfect kingdom. When Adam and Eve are described they are repeatedly compared to legendary kings and queens, or discovered in poses, or characterized by comparisons usually reserved for noble persons. They are attended by pomp and circumstance suited to royalty; and, most particularly, the kingdom of the unfallen world, with its king and queen, is described in a number of commonplace comparisons used to glorify contemporary rulers, comparisons which abound in the masques and pageantry of the period.

Paradise is a "happy rural seat" (IV.247), a seat of government. More than simply a pleasure garden, it is a regal dwelling-place appointed for a governor. The garden, in its variety, its abundance and its well-ordered appointments, provides a rich and dignified seat for these royal persons.¹ Paradise, like a royal walled domain upon a hill, is fortified by its high walls with magnificent entrance gates and

¹Cf. Roy Daniells, "A Happy Rural Seat of Various View" in "Paradise Lost": A Tercentenary Tribute, ed. Balachandra Rajan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 3-17.

supports a defending army of angels which can be viewed, from time to time, in exercise before the royal gates. The walls enclose well laid out gardens, pastures and pleasantly contrasting "umbrageous Grotts and Caves / Of cool recess" (IV.257-58). One is reminded, by such features, of the contemporary celebrations of noble residences: Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" and Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" for example.² The royal apartments themselves, despite their rusticity, rival royal palaces in the splendid intricacies of their construction and the richness of the materials.

Adam and Eve themselves move with regal dignity and, although their habitation and occupation are rural, they are far from being country clods. Adam is a gentleman of considerable learning, as his conversations reveal,³ and Adam and Eve observe, particularly in their unfallen state, most elaborate courtesy in addressing each other and visitors. Despite the fact that men live as yet innocent of the tools wrought in the iron age, Eve does not garden with her hands but, goddess-like, with the tools of the gods.⁴ Leaving to go about her work, Eve carries

such Gard'ning Tools as Art yet rude,
Guiltless of fire had form'd, or Angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorn'd,
Likest she seem'd (IX.391-94).

Eve's tools are of a kind with the decorative and symbolic instruments which identified certain gods and which were often found in court

²See J. B. Broadbent, Some Graver Subject: An Essay on "Paradise Lost" (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), p. 184.

³Cf. Roy Daniells, "A Happy Rural Seat of Various View", p. 5.

⁴Ibid., pp. 12-13.

entertainments. One might compare these implements also with the gems in the shape of tools given to Elizabeth I when she visited Harefield to signify her the best housewife in the place.⁵

Although Adam and Eve are alone and naked in their country seat, they are described as if they were attended by regal pomp and clothed in royal splendour. At our first sight of them they "with native Honor clad / In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all" (IV.289-90). Adam's "fair large Front and Eye sublime" provide all the crown needed to express his majesty, and Eve's hair is sufficient drapery to express her feminine beauty. Theirs is a court fit to entertain an angel of the noblest rank, for even angels pay homage to Raphael as he enters Eden as Heaven's ambassador: "Straight knew him all the Bands / Of Angels under watch; and to his state, / And to his message high in honor rise" (V.287-89). Adam himself meets Raphael with due splendour, despite the simplicity of his resources:

our Primitive great Sire, to meet
His god-like Guest, 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.350-57)

Adam and Eve provide the ambassador with the Edenic equivalent of a Renaissance Triumph in his honour. There is a state reception and following banquet. The rustic banquet served by Adam and Eve is proven to be as elegant and delicious as any court banquet. The feast is as bounteous as King Alcinous could have served in his island paradise when

⁵The Progresses of Queen Elizabeth I, III, 587.

Odysseus recounted the episode tale which is analogous to the episode of Raphael's narrative. Eve is as splendid in her simplicity at this court banquet as Adam was at his triumph reception of Raphael. "Undecked" she greets the angelic ambassador, and ministers at the tables of her guests in her nakedness with royal grace. The subtle mixture of realism and illusion of the imaginative world of Paradise Lost is evident often in the picture of Paradise. Milton has made his icon of prelapsarian majesty so lively, giving such reality to Eve's action, that he now capitalizes on that realism to contrast the reactions of fallen man to such a scene with those of unfallen men and angels (V.445-50).

In the complimentary pictures of noble seats created by court poets and writers of court entertainments, gods and personifications arise from the landscape to perform symbolic actions. In Paradise, such figures attend upon Adam and Eve or perform actions which constitute a complimentary comment upon their perfect kingdom. In Book VIII, when Eve leaves her guest she is attended by a little masque of "winning Graces" with Cupids' darts:

With Goddess-like demeanor forth she went;
 Not unattended, for on her as Queen
 A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
 And from about her shot Darts of desire
 Into all Eyes to wish her still in sight. (VIII.59-63)

With this dramatized expression of Eve's majestic beauty, one might compare the gardeners who greeted and complimented Queen Anne as she moved through Caversham's gardens (in Campion's entertainment for the Queen at Caversham in 1613) or any of the representations of mythic persons assembled as a gesture of welcome and praise.

When poets and dramatists mythologized contemporary courts as

pastoral paradises, they identified the actions of the courtiers with those of the gods, imagining the landscape so like the ideal that it became a haunt for mythical beings. Paradise is such a place which gods might love to haunt (VII.329-30). In fact, we see pastoral deities dancing there in our first glimpse of the garden (IV.266-67) and Eve, walking off with her gardening tools, is likened to a dryad, or the goddess Pales, or the nymph Pomona (IX.385-96).

Milton uses the conventions of the theatre of royal encomium not only to praise prelapsarian man but also to imply contrasts between those usually praised by these means and Milton's subjects. In Paradise, Cupid's revels are performed in the nuptial bower, not the banquet hall. As they retire, the perfect married love of Adam and Eve is praised in a tableau of the revels of Cupid: "Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights / His constant Lamp, and waves his purple wings, / Reigns here and revels" (IV.763-65). In staging a masque in honour of wedded love in this situation, Milton is suggesting that the love depicted in contemporary courtly love poetry and court masques, and practised in the amorous life of the court, is a false love, perhaps even a parodic form of love such as was depicted as a foil to Cupid's revels in the court antimasques. The true Cupid does not reign

in the bought smile
Of Harlots, loveless, joyless, unindear'd,
Casual fruition, nor in Court Amours,
Mixt Dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight Ball,
Or Serenate, which the starv'd Lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain. (IV.765-70)

In his edition of Paradise Lost, Alastair Fowler argues that the early drafts of the Trinity MS. contain ideas that could have been developed into a hymeneal spectacle. In the third draft "Act 2" concerns

the characters Heavenly Love and Evening Star, and concludes with a chorus singing a marriage song. Fowler relates this to the homage paid by creation to Adam on his marriage day.⁶ Adam's royal wedding is attended by appropriate hymeneal pomp:

all Heav'n,
 And happy Constellations on that hour
 Shed thir selectest influence; the Earth
 Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
 Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Airs
 Whisper'd it to the Woods, and from thir wings
 Flung Rose, flung Odors from the spicy Shrub,
 Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night
 Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Ev'ning Star
 On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp. (VIII.511-20)

There is no human court here; instead, the creatures of the earth perform song and dance and symbolic actions to honour the pastoral marriage of Adam and Eve.

Adam is a king with a kingdom to rule. The pageantry of Paradise is more than merely decorative or symbolic of noble virtue and high rank. Milton's Paradise is a depiction of ideal government. The two principal works of prelapsarian man are gardening and government. The activities are related, for in gardening Adam and Eve control the luxurious tendencies of the plant life, and in governing the beasts they maintain the orderly hierarchy of the universe. As God shows Adam his garden "seat", the mark of his rôle as ruler, he shows him also this kingdom's extent and who his subjects are:

Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
 To thee and to thy Race I give; as Lords
 Possess it, and all things that therein live,
 Or live in Sea, or Air, Beast, Fish, and Fowl.
 In sign whereof each Bird and Beast behold
 After thir kinds; I bring them to receive
 From thee thir Names, and pay thee fealty
 With low subjection (VIII.338-45).

⁶The Poems of John Milton, p. 842, n. to VIII.519.

In effect, God presents Adam with a masque procession in order to illustrate the nature of his rule and kingdom, for each beast bows low to Adam after its own fashion as Adam gives it a name.

Our first view of Adam and Eve, standing erect and "In naked Majesty" seeming "Lords of all" (IV.290), illustrates their rôle as king and queen. This first glimpse of Eden's rulers is extended in a portrait of their rural court where they dine, served and entertained by their subjects. "Compliant boughs" serve them fruits as they recline upon a rich couch, a "soft downy Bank damaskt with flow'rs" (334), and for their entertainment "About them frisking play'd / All Beasts of th' Earth". Performing his peculiar symbolic dance, "Sporting the Lion ramp'd," and "Bears, Tigers, Ounces, Pards / Gamboll'd before them" (343-45). The "unwieldy Elephant" provides a comedy turn, and "To make them mirth us'd all his might, and wreath'd / His lithe Proboscis" (346-47). Adam and Eve amid these dancing, sportive animal subjects are like the king amid his subjects at a court revels. In Comus, the Earl of Bridgewater is honoured by the dancing of his Welsh subjects. The court entertainment is used in a similar manner by Milton to express the homage of the angels to God. The breaking of this perfect order after the fall is portrayed by the ensuing reaction of the animals, who then "nor stood much in awe / Of Man, but fled him, or with count'nance grim / Glar'd on him passing" (X.712-14).

This method of recreating the perfect kingdom of Paradise in terms of contemporary court ceremony is sustained in the behaviour of Satan in this courtly entertainment. One of Satan's many rôles is that of the false courtier. As he approaches Eve, he moves "With tract

oblique / At first, as one who sought access, but fear'd / To interrupt" (IX.510-12). He feigns to join the animal court in the sportive homage to which Eve is accustomed: "and of his tortuous Train / Curl'd many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve, / To lure her Eye" (IX.517-18). Later, "fawning", he bows and licks the ground on which she treads. At the moment when Eve is about to attend to this false courtier and fall into excess and sin through doing so, Milton refers to the myth of Circe's animal court which was often used as an antimasque to the spectacle of orderly and chaste pleasure in the court masque. Satan continues this pose not only in the fawning audacity with which he gains access to the queen's ear, but also in the form in which he first addresses his temptation to her: the profane and excessive praise of the love sonnet.⁷

When Milton describes the pomp of Hell, particularly in his description of the palace of Pandemonium, he tells us how it surpasses all the marvels of human engineering and the wonders of the world's most fabulous courts: "Not Babylon, / Nor great Alcairo such magnificence / Equall'd in all thir glories" (I.717-19). But in the inverse world of Hell the comparison only shows the super-evil of Hell and the vanity of human endeavour:

And here let those
 Who boast in mortal things, and wond'ring tell
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian Kings,
 Learn how thir greatest Monuments of Fame,
 And Strength and Art are easily outdone
 By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
 What in an age they with incessant toil
 And hands innumerable scarce perform. (I.692-99)

Pandemonium is Satan's creation which he, like God, hopes to people with

⁷See Anne Davidson Ferry, Milton's Epic Voice, pp. 141-45.

man and his seed and there entertain them. As he sees Adam and Eve so happily entertained in their rustic court, the garden of God (IV.210), he wryly speaks of the entertainment he hopes to offer them: "Hell shall unfold, / To entertain you two, her widest Gates, / And send forth all her Kings" (IV.381-83).

As when he describes Pandemonium in terms of a court, Milton dwells upon the splendour of Paradise and upon the miracles of its construction. Like its hellish anti-type it excels the art of man. The brassy splendour of Pandemonium is expressed in the sudden rising of a glorious palace. In the midst of Paradise is the fountain which by tradition watered the garden,⁸ a construction which, because of its Christian symbolism, makes an appropriate centerpiece to God's garden:

for God had thrown
That Mountain as his Garden mould high rais'd
Upon the rapid current, which through veins
Of porous Earth with kindly thirst up-drawn,
Rose a fresh Fountain, and with many a rill
Water'd the Garden (IV.225-30).

The splendours of Milton's garden are compared to the beauty of the landscape gardens which adorned the palaces of seventeenth-century noblemen, but its flowers were planted not as by "nice Art / In Beds and curious Knots" but as "Nature boon / Pour'd forth profuse on Hill and Dale and Plain" (IV.241-43). However, Milton himself mingles art and nature to depict the loveliness of this garden, for to the sound of the choirs of the birds and the "vernal airs" played by the breezes in the trembling leaves, "Universal Pan" is discovered "Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance" (IV.266-67). Paradise easily surpasses contemporary

⁸See The Poems of John Milton, Fowler's notes to IV.223-32, for an outline of this tradition.

marvels of landscape gardening, and moreover surpasses gardens of fable and legend. It is more beautiful than the "Great Salucia, built by Grecian Kings" (212) or the biblical Telessar. Far superior to the most beautiful gardens of legend, Paradise also excels the idealized landscapes of encomiastic literature: "Hesperian Fables true, / If true, here only" (250-51). The fabled Hesperides, being westerly like the British Isles, were identified in nationalistic literature with an idealized Britain. In upholding the superiority of his garden kingdom in this image, Milton is also justifying his choice of subject, Christian rather than nationalistic encomium.

Amid this garden is a bower of love in which art and nature are mingled to suggest elegance and fine craftsmanship. As Pandemonium provides a fitting scenic device in which to enshrine Satan, so this bower provides a setting for Eden's royal couple. The construction of Adam and Eve's place for repose, "Chos'n by the sovran Planter, when he fram'd / All things to man's delightful use" (691-92), is described to imply comparison with the architecture of man made palaces. The roof recalls gothic arches:

the roof
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade
Laurel and Myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf (692-95).

The walls are nature's imitation of the marble pillars of Roman buildings and of mosaic murals:

on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub
Fenc'd up the verdant wall; each beauteous flow'r,
Iris all hues, Roses, and Jessamin
Rear'd high thir flourisht heads between, and wrought
Mosaic (695-700).

Underfoot is an embossed carpet of flowers or a mosiac pavement "more

color'd than with stone / Of costliest Emblem" (702-03). This green bower represents both the simplicity of Adam and Eve's rustic state and the splendour of their royal domains.

The Stuart court entertainment used two chief means of compliment. The court could be idealized in a pastoral or, by means of a spectacle of the gods in their heavens or descending to earth, the prosperity and might of the nation and the ruler could be attributed to divinely granted powers. Many of the stage sets designed by Inigo Jones for Caroline court masques exemplify the combination of these two conventions. The sets often consist of an idealized landscape above which heavenly beings are discovered on clouds.⁹ Milton himself directs both these forms of compliment to the Earl of Bridgewater in Comus; in the fiction of the masque, Neptune has given his benediction to the Earl's authority to rule, while in the pastoral romance the children of the household and the country seat are idealized. In Paradise Lost the pastoral landscape is peopled with pastoral deities who dance attendance upon earth's rulers and illustrate the goodness of creation. From the skies angels descend to demonstrate God's interest in the welfare of his chief earthly work; and these descents and appearances of the gods each show some resemblance to the way in which such heavenly interest was dramatized in the Stuart court masque.

Uriel's intervention in human affairs is epic machinery of a peculiarly mechanical nature. Like a god or a heavenly being in a court

⁹See for example the designs, reproduced in Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court, for Salamacida Spolia (pp. 744-45 and 752-53), Tempe Restored (p. 478), Chloridia (pp. 436, 432; see also the n. to Scene I, p. 422).

entertainment he descends to bring a warning. Milton entertains his readers with a careful description of the mechanics of his descent, of how the sun, his chariot, "Slowly descended, and with right aspect / Against the eastern Gate of Paradise / Levell'd his ev'ning Rays" (541-43). On a ray of the sun, "levelled" so that it touches the gate, Uriel slides amid a spectacle of fire (555-58) to deliver his warning message to the angel Gabriel. His message delivered, Milton describes the marvels of God's engineering which lower him from the scene;¹⁰

Uriel to his charge
Return'd on that bright beam, whose point now rais'd
Bore him slope downward to the Sun now fall'n
Beneath th' Azores (589-92).

The apparition of Uriel is followed by what is, in effect, a pageant expressing the vigilance and concern of God in the affairs of mankind. Where the heavens meet the earth Milton discovers to us the station of the angel Gabriel. It is a triumphal arch:

Betwixt these rocky Pillars Gabriel sat
Chief of th' Angelic Guards, awaiting night;
About him exercis'd Heroic Games
Th' unarmed Youth of Heav'n, but nigh at hand
Celestial Armory, Shields, Helms, and Spears
Hung high with Diamond flaming, and with Gold. (549-54)

Enid Welsford compares this triumphal arch to the one on which the spoils of Cupid are displayed in the Haddington Masque.¹¹ Gabriel and Uriel ceremonially assemble their guard and march in "warlike parade" to defend Paradise, providing a short spectacle of military pomp all the

¹⁰See Roy Daniells, "Humour in Paradise Lost", Dalhousie Review, XXXIII (1953), 159-66. Daniells mentions Uriel's sunbeam and other mechanical devices in Paradise Lost, noting the humour inherent in these. He adds that "In general, Milton's machines and stage sets are in keeping with the deep love of Baroque artificers for turning life into stage effects, with their delight in garden and city design, with their large-scale theatrical appliances at once rational and scenic" (p. 161).

¹¹See The Court Masque, p. 313.

more dazzling in the contrast it presents to the rustic simplicity of Adam and Eve in their bower. Whereas the splendour of the rustic palace lies in the marvels of flower and tree, the embroidery and architecture of nature, and in the naked beauty of the royal couple, that of the angelic guard, who are of nobler rank in God's hierarchy, is conveyed in terms of fire and light, jewels and splendid coats of armour.

The fight waged between Satan and the troops of Gabriel is a spectacle rather than a conflict. Satan is defeated by symbolic magic, not in physical battle. In his grotesque toad disguise in the bower of love he is typical of antimasque figures. When Ithuriel touches him with his spear there is a magical explosion and Satan is revealed in his shape as a fallen angel. As well as being a spectacular means of routing evil the act is symbolic: Satan changes to his proper shape because "no falsehood can endure / Touch of Celestial temper, but returns / Of force to its own likeness" (811-13).

God's justice and mercy to mankind is also revealed in the descent of his angelic messengers Raphael and Michael, whose flights recall masque machinery. As Michael descends Adam points to "yon Western Cloud that draws / O'er the blue Firmament a radiant white, / And slow descends, with something heav'nly fraught" (XI.205-07). Some of the cloud chariots designed by Inigo Jones were "radiant" like this cloud, the effect being obtained by placing a light behind, and fashioning the surface of the cloud of oiled cloth. Milton indicates that if Adam, and presumably his early readers too, had imagined this descending cloud to be filled (as masque clouds were) with heavenly beings, he was indeed correct:

He err'd not, for by this the heav'nly Bands
Down from a Sky of Jasper lighted now

In Paradise, and on a Hill made halt,
A glorious Apparition (XI.208-11).

Even Raphael's descent by the more usual angelic method of flight is not un-masque like. In Jonson's Chloridia Fame, who wears wings in Renaissance iconography, uses this allegorical feature as a means of locomotion when, at the climax of the masque, she "begins to mount, and waving her wings, flieth singing up to heaven" (ll. 218-19).¹² Satan, who imitates most heavenly pomp, attempts to stage his entrance to the world by such a means; and at Hell's gates

his Sail-broad Vans
He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
Uplifted spurns the ground, thence many a League
As in a cloudy Chair ascending rides
Audacious (II.927-31).

His ambition is ridiculed in comedy suited to an antimasque, for his cloudy chariot has a false bottom; "that seat soon failing" Satan "meets / A vast vacuity" and "Flutt'ring his penons vain plumb down he drops". He is finally catapulted from the scene by a favourite method of defeating Turks and pagans in the Renaissance fêtes, a fireworks explosion.¹³

The descents of Raphael and Michael to Paradise, like that of Uriel, are followed by interludes that can be seen in terms of pageantry. Not only this, but the episodes make prophecies relating to the race of man; and both, while warning Adam and Eve, also praise them. Raphael's narrative implies correspondences between Heaven and earth, and though Michael's histories depict the woe of the sinful world they also look forward to the coming of Christ in whose birth God's judgement upon

¹²Ben Jonson, The Complete Masques, p. 471.

¹³See the Progresses of James I, II, 323, for an account of a battle staged upon the Thames in Prince Henry's honour. The battle ended in a fireworks display which blew up the castle and ships of the pagan Turks.

the serpent is discovered to prophesy the restoration of the world by the seed of woman. Although the spectacle and pageantry of the heavens and heavenly beings forms a complimentary commentary on the status of Adam's race, the poem ends with the disgrace and dethroning of Eden's King. The most spectacular of all the heavenly visitations to Paradise is the awesome descent of the fiery cherubim whose blaze scorches the pleasant pastoral scene. Because man has not lived up to the rôle of the erect and wise governor, a rôle which would have enabled him to fill the place he was designed for in the fabric of the golden world, Adam is turned from the gates of Paradise, as if through the proscenium arch of a masque stage and into the world inhabited by the poem's audience. However, that audience, like Adam, has been persuaded to look forward to a restoration of this blissful seat through the actions of a second Adam.

Thus the happy rural seat of Adam and Eve is celebrated as a seventeenth-century royal seat was celebrated. Adam has been provided by God with a fair domain, a sumptuous dwelling place and attendant pomp befitting royalty. To the exquisite appointments of Adam's royal seat Milton adds several devices borrowed from court entertainments which show the earth paying homage to its natural king. Adam and Eve are attended by such pageants--masques, dances and processions--as were performed to compliment seventeenth-century rulers. If the reader of the age could recognize in Pandemonium the empty pomp of public ceremony, he would recognize in the pastoral setting of Paradise an idealized version of such homage. Not the least among the signs of Adam's royal status are the signs of God's favour to the race of mankind and of Adam's divinely appointed rule.

XII

THE FALL: THE PLACE OF THE HISTORIC ACT IN THE ENCOMIASTIC ALLEGORY

Like the other mythical and historical material in the poem, the chief historic event, man's first disobedience, is presented as part of an encomiastic allegory. This is particularly evident when one considers the place the fall of man occupies in the organization of the events of the entire poem. The presentation of the fall of man in Paradise Lost is theatrical, but it is theatre of a particular kind, resembling the allegoric theatre of pageantry both in the static quality of its action and in the kind of settings Milton provides for the action. Paradise is the goal of the progress of Satan, and events which occur there are depicted in a series of stations which are congruent with the pageant-like structure of that journey. Adam and Eve perform a sequence of highly connotative acts within a series of scenes which use the conventions of the allegoric pastoral. Even speech functions, like the speech of the debate in Pandemonium, to display the character and imaginations of the persons who speak, rather than being means of depicting conflict of personalities in an ongoing psychological drama. The paradoxical felix culpa occurs in the context of the angelic machinery, which recalls the pattern of the antimasque-masque displays of the court masque and court pageantry, and which prophesies an order in things to come that enhances the honour and glory of God the enthroned ruler of all.

The material depicting the fall of Adam and Eve is often considered in relation to the drama. Dryden's operatic adaptation of the poem focussed on this material, and in the early MS. drafts Milton himself seems to have envisaged Paradise as the setting for the entire drama. Book IV, the book that introduces the scene of Paradise and the acts of mankind, begins with the urgent cry of the narrator, "O for that warning voice," a cry which gives the narration the immediacy of an event now happening and invites the audience to experience the historic act as a present concern. In a most dramatic way, with narration in the present tense and the word "now" repeated three times in the first ten lines, Milton presents to us the Garden of Eden at that point of time when Satan is about to enter it. Yet for all this vivid immediacy of presentation, the drama of Paradise is of a curiously static kind. The events are almost eclipsed by the material that impinges upon them as Milton demonstrates their fruit and their final significance. Earthly action is continually interrupted by allusions to what is happening meanwhile in the heavens or in Hell. The dramatic impetus of the narrative of events upon earth is weakened by the insertion of the two lengthy angelic episodes and further slowed by the numerous smaller episodes: Eve's account of her creation, Adam's of his, and Raphael's lessons on astronomy and on the nature of men and angels. The attendant pomp and pageantry of Paradise render the action even more static. In fact, the interruption of the episode narration of the fall from Heaven and of the Triumph of Christ anticipates the pattern of the earthly action that follows.

Keats was struck by a peculiarity in Paradise Lost which he described as Milton's "stationing" or "statuary". Milton, he wrote, "is not content with simple description, he must station". For Keats, this is a Milton who explores a scene as a moment of sensuous experience rather than for its moral connotations, who is responsible for this tendency to freeze the action in order to elaborate upon an object or an act. From his Romantic perspective Keats attributes this "stationing or statuary" to Milton's desire to "pursue his imagination to the utmost-- he is 'sagacious of his Quarry' [PL X.281] he sees Beauty on the wing, pounces upon it and gorges it to the producing his essential verse." Keats makes his remark in connection with VII.420-23, but chooses as exemplifying this tendency "Adam 'Fair indeed and tall--under a plantane'" (IV.477-78) and "Satan 'disfigured--on the Assyrian Mount'" (IV.126-27).¹ It is remarkable that even one to whom Paradise, in Milton's poem, was more a sensuous than a cerebral creation, should have noted the moments when action is frozen. The depiction of Paradise is not "simple description", for Milton constantly pauses in the narrative to elaborate upon a scene which he has arrested in momentary stasis.

Like the action in Heaven, in Hell and in the angelic episodes, the action in Eden may be seen in terms of a succession of symbolic tableaux. While Milton re-creates his scenes in the sensuous terms so admired by Keats, this is the fleshing out of illusion that is based on symbolic arrangement. The action in Paradise opens with one of the moments of statuary that drew Keats's attention: Satan's soliloquy upon

¹Keats's Annotations to Paradise Lost, reprinted in The Romantics on Milton: Formal Essays and Critical Asides, compiled by J. A. Wittreich (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve U. P., 1970), p. 559.

the Assyrian Mount. According to Edward Phillips, the opening of this speech in Book IV was originally intended for the beginning of a tragedy on the Fall.² Satan's speech resembles the soliloquies of protagonists in Renaissance tragedies;³ and Merritt Hughes discovers a resemblance to the openings of Greek tragedies, in particular Euripides' Phoeniciae and Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound.⁴ Satan's inner turmoil is depicted in his actions, as well as in his speech, sighs, unsettled looks, "gestures fierce" (IV.128) and "mad demeanor" (129). The way in which Milton has Satan's speech portraying the fallen angel's "troubl'd thoughts" (IV.19) distracted by "horror and doubt" resembles the verbalized interior debate of the soliloquy of Renaissance tragedy. Indeed, the soliloquy often dramatized such a movement from doubt to horrible resolution as is depicted here, where Satan's doubts apparently resolve themselves in the despairing bravado of "So farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear, / Farewell Remorse" (IV.108-09).

However, a clearly defined setting frames Satan's dramatized torments. He is "stationed" on the Assyrian mount from where, though he brings Hell within him, he can view the pleasant earth and the Heaven from which he has been banished. In this setting his dark torments contrast with the light of the sun. If this first scene looks like the germ of a Satanic tragedy the resemblance, apart from the continued theatricality of the events described, soon disappears. Book IV opens

²The Life of Milton, reprinted in The Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes, pp. 1034-35.

³See Helen Gardner, A Reading of "Paradise Lost", Appendix A, particularly pp. 112-13.

⁴The Complete Poems and Major Prose, n. to IV.32-39, p. 278.

as a continuation of Satan's progress which, through Books II and III, is described as a passage past a number of allegoric stations. The soliloquy on Mount Niphates is a means of displaying the bitterness of Satan's victory even as he begins his "dire attempt" (IV.15), depicting him in the pose of the protagonist of a revenge tragedy or as the ambitious Machiavel.

As each of the tableaux marking the progress of Satan has done, the scene on Mount Niphates dissolves like a dream-vision scene and Satan is next discovered on the border of Eden,

where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, Crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access deni'd (IV.132-37).

The garden on the mount is easily seen as a symbolic station. Enid Welsford compares it to a masque setting for Shirley's Triumph of Peace, where the masquers appear sitting on the slope of a hill which is cut out like the degrees of a theatre.⁵ Not one of the features of Paradise is merely decorative; each one speaks. The depiction of Paradise as a raised garden was traditional, but this royal seat appropriately "crowns" the landscape. In a "woody Theatre" (141) ascends a catalogue of trees.

Within this allegorical station of the garden on the mountain Satan performs one symbolic act: after searching for an unguarded entrance, he leaps the hill and the high wall and lands within the garden. The act is moralized by means of the imagery Milton uses to

⁵The Court Masque, p. 311.

describe it. The progress of Books II and III is recalled in the nautical imagery which is revived when Satan, nearing Eden, is compared to a merchant ship nearing the Isles of Spice. The idea of plunder inherent in this image is reiterated in the comparisons of Satan to a wolf breaking into the fold or a thief climbing in at a window; so Satan enters the garden. The tableau within which this act occurs becomes a means of analyzing and typifying it. Like a conquering tyrant, Satan aims at a well-fortified kingdom (135-37, 145), a raised seat of state. He is seen as the wolf, bringer of death, in a pastoral locus amoenus. Amid the sweet smells of Paradise the presence of the fiend calls to mind the "fishy fume" associated with a later evil spirit. The action of Satan in this setting is thus morally typed as a first example of intent to rape, murder and plunder. The action is moralized, and also placed in a context of typological parallel: it is seen in the optimistic context of a parallel to the unsuccessful attempt of Asmodeus upon Tobit and his wife, and in the more pessimistic light of Satan's continued success in this age, in the wolves who enter the fold of God's church.

The next scene shows Satan, having reached his goal, now sitting on the tree of life amid the lovely landscape of Paradise. With the penetration of Paradise this stage of Satan's epic journey is completed, but henceforth each scene of Paradisal bliss is menaced by his presence. As a cormorant on the tree of life he hovers, an evil omen in our first glimpse of the orderly beauty of God's garden kingdom. In the form of a beast of prey he sports among the animals who form the court of the Paradisal royal couple, and he is discovered as a toad in the royal bower. Even in Books V - VIII, during his week-long flight in the night

skies, his presence overshadows the action in Eden and provides cause for concern when Eve relates her dream and Raphael is sent to warn the earthly couple. Three times in the unfallen garden Satan voices his envy and his desire for revenge. Each time it is as if he steps forth from the character of his disguise to make his perverse comment upon the tableau in which he participates and to voice the burning of his personal hell. First, he belies his disguise as angel as he vents his passion, upon the Assyrian mount (IV.9ff.). Then on his perch as cormorant "devising Death / To them who liv'd" (197-98) he voices his "Tyrant's plea" for the conquest of Eden's royal court (IV.358-92). Finally, disguised appropriately as a member of the animal court, in which guise he is later seen spying with "sly circumspection" (537) he voices his intent to bring divisive suspicion into the bliss of Adam and Eve as he sees them "Imparadis't" in God's garden in embrace. Satan's disguises illustrate his sly and protean character; perhaps more significantly, like the disguises of the masque, they are a means by which his brutish evil nature can be given an apt form in any symbolic tableau of which he forms a part.

As a supernatural being Satan might be expected to be discovered in a series of disguises when he walks the earth. However, Milton also uses the symbolic tableau and the masque-like disguise in depicting the actions of Adam and Eve. The rural landscape of Paradise is the landscape of the literary pastoral, and Adam and Eve's occupations within this landscape depict them acting within the conventions of this literary world, performing actions suggestive of the classical pastoral myths. The narrative proceeds by means of a series of tableaux in which

the protagonists are stationed, or framed as speaking statues. Adam and Eve are first discovered immobile and erect (a stance with symbolic importance) amid their animal subjects in their well-appointed garden where pastoral deities are dancing. Their costume defines their rôle, as in a masque disguise. Adam's hyacinthine locks recall the ancient Greek heroes while Eve's hair recalls the emblem of the vine and the elm, thus defining her rôle. Milton emphasizes their nakedness, emblematic of the purity of their innocent state. The tableau is expressive of the order of nature and of the rôle of man in the unfallen world. Immediately Adam and Eve move, the scene dissolves and now they sit on their damask bank, provided with the bountiful fare, the delightful entertainment and their own choice company, which are the abundant pleasures of the royal rural retreat. As the day declines they are discovered in yet another symbolic station as in their bower their embraces are celebrated in a masque to wedded love.

Thus the life of prelapsarian man is not simply described, but analyzed in a series of carefully devised pastoral scenes. Within each scene symbolic details are arranged to create a convincing illusion. Likewise the progress of events achieves a plausible sequence, although basically this fiction constitutes a literary device. Within this plausible sequence of events each episode shows Adam and Eve in some symbolic pose. For example, Eve's account of her impressions of her creation serves as an opportunity to cast her as Narcissus, a pose that proves a foil to her present situation in Adam's arms, admiring him "with eyes / Of conjugal attraction unprov'd" (492-93). The scene with Raphael, which fits plausibly into the time sequence and narrative of

events in Milton's pastoral fiction, is similarly a literary device. On one hand it provides the occasion for an epic episode and a means to introduce that part of the story that the in medias res opening left untold. On the other hand it is a symbolic tableau, depicting a rustic court entertaining an ambassador from the gods as a means of demonstrating the virtue and the favoured state of man in Paradise. Like many masque scenes, the scene also instructs by means of contrasts. For instance, Milton capitalizes on the vivid realization of his tableau of prelapsarian innocence to prod his readers into an analysis of their own sinful state. The chaste elegance of this rustic scene serves not only as a contrast to the tawdry pomp and gallantry of contemporary times, but also forms a contrast to the noon visitation of the fallen angel. In the fawning gallantry of Satan and the actions of Adam and Eve fallen, are mirrored such ungracious excesses as lust, ambition and intemperance promote among mankind.

Those sections of Books IX and X dealing with Adam and Eve are more dramatic than the earlier books in which unfallen man is portrayed. Here, when man falls, dialogue can for the first time reproduce the conflict and debate which make for a dramatic situation and which are a result of disagreement and disharmony among mankind. In earlier books the tableaux derive their dramatic interest from the contrast between the harmony and graciousness of the Edenic court and the evil intent of Satan, voiced in soliloquies. However, despite the greater dramatic tension generated by this new element of conflict in the dialogue of our grand parents, moments of "stationing" are evident in these later scenes. The action at the close of Book IX, in particular, can be seen

to be informed by earlier tableaux which presented the glory of unfallen man. The scene of lust upon the shady bank forms a contrast to the embraces of Adam and Eve in their bower of love while their clothed anger in the thickest wood contrasts with the naked courtly dalliance amid their animal court when we first see them. The first kind of dramatic interest occurs as Adam and Eve debate the advisability of her gardening proposal at the opening of Book IX. Eve's wooing hauteur is an expression of her sense of a personal slight, and she addresses her husband with some asperity, considering her unfallen state. Eve,

As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus repli'd.
Offspring of Heav'n and Earth, and all Earth's Lord,
That such an Enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee inform'd I learn,
And from the parting Angel over-heard
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then return'd at shut of Ev'ning Flow'rs.
But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear. (IX.271-81)

However, this debate takes place within the symbolic setting of their garden domains which lie waiting to be tended; the need for self discipline in man is expressed in the untended garden which is the background to the dialogue.⁶ It is apparent in Eve's letting go of her husband's hand that throughout the debate they have adopted a pose symbolic of concord and faith. The scene Milton depicts, showing Adam and Eve standing together with hands linked, might suggest the married couple of Jan Van Eyck's celebrated portrait (perhaps of Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife), standing amid a household full of symbolic

⁶On the garden as an analogy to the nature of man, see William G. Madsen, "The Idea of Nature in Milton's Poetry" in Three Studies in the Renaissance, pp. 244-45.

objects. In this same pose Adam and Eve stand in the untended garden where the serpent lies coiled. The reader's attention is called to the emblematic woodbine entwined arbour and the plot of myrtle mixed with roses which flank them. In both plots the plant emblematic of femininity requires support.

The debate of Adam and Eve does not merely dramatize the occasion which left Eve a prey to the serpent. It discusses the respective rôles and characteristics of man and woman, the parts of will and reason in resisting temptation, and the value of mutual fidelity if Adam and Eve are to retain their integrity and virtue. The dialogue certainly presents these ideas, and so also does the tableau itself in which Adam and Eve stand with joined hands. Alastair Fowler suggests that this scene may be informed by emblematic sources, in particular by the Neoplatonic Triad of Fidius reproduced in Alciati's emblem Fidei symbolium. Adam and Eve "are an emblem of integrity and faithfulness if only they stay together with linked hands". He suggests that in several passages (for example IX.358, 360-61, 385-86) Adam allegorically represents intellectus or mens and Eve ratio or anima; and, speaking of the couple with clasped hands in this scene, Fowler "suspects that the present scene is intended in part as a tableau, in which Intellectus and Ratio adopt appropriate rôles and exhibit even the physical arrangement (see ll. 385f) of the Triad of Fidius emblem."⁷

Although dramatic conflict enters into the portrayal of Adam and Eve's temptation and fall, involving lively human gesture and action, the treatment of the event is through a series of symbolic stations. In

⁷The Poems of John Milton, p. 874, n. to IX.335.

this respect the depiction of the fall resembles the allegoric progress. Like a dream-vision scene the garden, with its symbolic tendency to luxurious, excess growth, fades and we next see Eve stationed in her "Flow'ry Plat" (IX.456) amid roses illustrative of her nature. In this setting, acting in his disguise of animal courtier, Satan flatters Eve in a dance of homage about her state, with a song of courtly compliment. As this entire mode of action changes, so does the scene. For the temptation itself the tree of knowledge is depicted, beside it Satan, who now "New part puts on" (IX.667), playing the rôle of orator to persuade Eve by his eloquence to eat the fruit. The act which forms the crisis of the human action, convicting Adam and Eve of joint guilt, is framed in a new scene within the garden landscape. Adam and Eve are pastoral lovers, greeting each other with tokens of their love. He bears a garland of roses, she a bough of fruit. Adam is described ironically as like a reaper who has woven a garland for his harvest queen, and Eve, bearing the forbidden fruit, equally ironically fulfills her rôle in this pastoral scene. This frame sets up the fall of Adam as a trial of love (see IX.961). As Adam makes his choice he stands immobile, as "From his slack hand the Garland wreath'd for Eve / Down dropp'd, and all the faded Roses shed" (892-93). The garland, once indicative of his amorous desire, now fades, an emblem of the transience of earthly beauty. Then, turning to Eve, Adam chooses this transient profane love over heavenly love and obedience to God. In accord with this scene of pastoral love, Eve's proffering of the fruit is recompense for his display of love for her. The pastoral disguise of amorous reapers is chief of the literary conventions which surround this central act, categorizing it as a trial of

love, a trial in which Adam makes a wrong choice. When Adam from the "fair enticing Fruit" "scrupl'd not to eat / Against his better knowledge, not deceiv'd, / But fondly overcome with Female charm" (IX.995-99), that "fair enticing fruit" becomes identified with the fair enticing woman who proffers it. The hinge or climactic device of many a court pageant or masque featured a trial or a choice. To recall just a few: Sidney's Lady of May involved a choice between two types of pastoral lover, a forester and a shepherd; Jonson's Love Freed centres its encomium on the correct answer to a riddle; Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue refers to the legendary choice of Hercules and the Prince's impending choice of a bride; and in Lovers made Men the court revels are similarly dignified because the masquers choose to heed Hermes as well as Cupid. The central device of the encomium of Paradise Lost is also a choice, a wrong choice.

A pattern of fall and restoration is established first in the invocation to Book I and further amplified in the heavenly pattern presented in Raphael's episode narration. The crucial human act of the epic occasions the loss of an earthly kingdom. In his epic, instead of celebrating conquest, prosperity and lasting fame, Milton praises God in a sustained encomium which focusses on an act bringing loss, woe and death. Paradox is central to Paradise Lost, in which the glory of the spiritual kingdom is celebrated and in which what seems loss becomes gain, what gain, loss. Seen in its surrounding context--Hell and Heaven with what occurs in those places--the act of disobedience becomes felix culpa, part of a happy pattern. The bitter sweetness of Adam and Eve's harvest is presented in terms of the pageantry of the final three books of the poem. To now fallen man, God comes in judgement to prophesy

mysteriously in signs and riddling words the coming of the "greater man". The action in Heaven and Hell contrasts, the one showing Satan's empty victory, the other looking forward to the greater victory of the Son. The altered nature of creation is demonstrated in the changes that God causes his angels to make in the earthly skies. Sin and Death come into the pastoral landscape of Paradise, allegorically showing the fruit of man's disobedience as does Michael's pageant of human history.

When we first see the garden of Paradise from a heavenly perspective we see

Our two first Parents, yet the only two
Of mankind, in the happy Garden plac't,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrivall'd love
In blissful solitude (III.65-69).

The gardening metaphor continues to inform the action in the pastoral landscape of Paradise, until the symbolic gathering and eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The symbolism, which amplifies the action, is nowhere more apparent than in the baldness of Satan's assertion that he has conquered the world "with an Apple" (X.487). When man has fallen he can no longer be part of the golden world of Paradise. We no longer interpret the actions of Adam and Eve as they cultivate the mythical garden, but see the seeds of the spiritual kingdom and the cultivation of the human heart. Milton's description of the passions and dialogue of his human protagonists from X.714ff. demonstrates the growth of this new spirit in man. Presenting the "dimensionless" prayers of the now contrite Adam and Eve to the Father, Christ calls them the "first fruits on Earth", "sprung / From thy implanted Grace in Man"; they are

Fruits of more pleasing savor from thy seed
 Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
 Which his own hand manuring all the trees
 Of Paradise could have produc't, ere fall'n
 From innocence. (XI.22-30)

After the fall, the record of human action in the poem no longer shows symbolic acts in a golden world, but a realistic dramatic expression of the internal conflicts of an Adam and Eve who are finally expelled into our own world.

Paradise Lost is not a purely descriptive narrative, a retold history, but an allegory, a disguise, a masque. It is the kind of allegory that was eminently exemplified in the courtly entertainment of the seventeenth century, although similar patterns are also to be found in other art forms of the period. The plot presents a mixture of events from myth, history and allegory, arranged in symbolic settings and designed to serve an encomiastic purpose. In Paradise Lost Milton demonstrates the glory of God and the mercy and love of Christ through the depiction of the fall of mankind and its consequences. To demonstrate the glorious rule of his patron, the inventor of the court masque or entertainment created a mythical world which could yet incorporate the latest achievement of the monarch. To justify God's providence Milton, too, creates in effect a fictional world; his Heaven and Hell are artifices, his Paradise a golden world which operates according to the conventions of the literary pastoral. In this fictional world, characters from history, allegory and myth are displayed in tableaux, perform ceremonial dances and songs, take part in mock battles, processions or illustrative debates. The point of each of these devices is to demonstrate some truth testifying to the glory of God. Like the court entertainment, the whole is so designed that past events provide assurance of a present reality.

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