

MILTON'S 'SATANEID':
THE POET AND THE DEVIL IN 'PARADISE LOST'.

A Study of Milton's Use in 'Paradise Lost' of Dante's
'Divina Commedia', and of Three Italian Renaissance
Chivalric Epics: Boiardo's 'Orlando Innamorato'
Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso' and
Tasso's 'Gerusalemme
Liberata'.

by

NEIL HARRIS

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Neil Harris, Milton's 'Sataneid': The Devil and the Poet in 'Paradise Lost'. A Study of Milton's Use in 'Paradise Lost' of Dante's 'Divina Commedia' and of Three Italian Renaissance Epics: Boiardo's 'Orlando Innamorato', Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso' and Tasso's 'Gerusalemme Liberata'.

In this thesis I study two themes: first the influence of the Italian chivalric epic on the figure of Satan; second Milton's use of Dante and Ariosto in the figure of the narrating poet.

I explore how within Paradise Lost the Archfiend acts out a 'Sataneid' modelled on a series of traditional epic encounters and exploits. Satan's encounter with Sin and Death at the gates of Hell hints at a reversal of the epic catabasis. When the episode is related to its Virgilian model, the guardians of Hell appear as a Cerberus and a Charon, but the analogy also shows Satan's virtus to be modelled on Aeneas. Therefore Milton hints at a Herculean descensus to be undertaken by the Son.

A study of the Commonplace Book shows that Milton did not know Boiardo's text of the Orlando Innamorato but used Berni's rifacimento. Milton's use of this poem in the 'Fontarabbia' (I.587) and the 'Albracca' (PR.III.337) similes identifies Satan's armies with chivalric exemplars, but deliberate 'errors' also expose weakness and Satanic untruth. I compare Milton's 'Great Consult' and his War in Heaven to episodes in the Orlando Innamorato.

Milton's simile of the 'Tuscan Artist' (I.587) identifies astronomy not with Galileo but with Catiline and other types of Satanic rebellion which seek forbidden knowledge and power. Milton's 'Vallombrosa' (I.303) simile, drawing on conventions established in Virgil, Dante, and Ariosto, alludes: first to the QI Tophet and Gehenna; second to the Psalmist's 'valley of the shadow of death' (23.4); finally, through Dante's identification of Florence in his encounter with Brunetto Latini as a type of the biblical Sodom, to the 'great city that spiritually is Sodom and Eygpt' (Revelation 11.8).

If Satan's entry into the Limbo of Vanity signposts a transition into a chivalric role, then the enchanted gardens of Alcina, Armida and Acrasia in the chivalric epics, which all rework the classical account of Ulysses finding Achilles in the court of king Lycomedes, serve as models for Milton's treatment in a brilliant vue renversee of the intruder, the couple and the garden in Paradise Lost. Allegorical criticisms of the gardens in Ariosto, Tasso and Spenser indicate a more complex allegorical pattern in Milton.

TECHNICAL NOTE.

This thesis was prepared on Leicester University's PDP 11/44 with the 'Word 11' programme supplied by Data Processing Design, Inc. This programme, primarily intended for the scientific project, caused some problems for a thesis on comparative Renaissance literature. No Hebrew characters were available for the citation from Psalm 23.4 at page 285. The Greek character set was prepared with the needs of the modern physicist in mind and so proved an awkward instrument for the writing of the classical language, especially in the absence of a final sigma. Therefore, as with the Hebrew, this character, the breathings and the accents have been added by hand. The other major drawback of this system emerged when a large number of footnotes were concentrated on certain pages so as to occupy more than 45% of those pages. Therefore on pages 262-4, 276, 270-2, 293-4, footnotes have been placed in single spacing to overcome this difficulty.

This system allows an electronic count of characters which showed that the thesis contained approximately 730,000 characters. A word count taken on samples of the text gave an average of around 7.5 characters per word, so I estimate that the whole thesis contains 95,000 words.

From the final print-out two further copies were made on the University's Minolta EP 4502 photocopier. After photocopying had actually begun an unfortunate error in pagination was noticed. Rather than prepare a fresh print-out, which would have taken over a week and wasted a

large quantity of paper, it was agreed with Dr Campbell and Dr Everson that the error should be corrected by hand.

Two articles from this thesis will shortly be published. Chapter 2, part I, Milton's Reading of the 'Orlando Innamorato' (with minor alterations) will appear in Bibliofilia, January 1986. Chapter 3, part I and a summary of part IV, under the title: Galileo as Symbol: The 'Tuscan Artist' in 'Paradise Lost' is due to appear in the Annali dell'istituto e museo di storia della scienza di Firenze, November 1985 (this issue has not yet appeared). A lecture on Milton and Vallombrosa using material from chapter 3, parts II-III was delivered at the Society of Renaissance Studies' Milton conference at the Warburg Insitute on the 22 November 1985.

Throughout the thesis footnotes and references have been set out according to a simplified method of the criteria recommended by the publishing house Olschki.

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CHAPTER 1.

Satan's Ascent from Hell and the Classical Catabasis.

This thesis illustrates the presence of the Italian chivalric epic in Paradise Lost.¹ It concentrates on three major works: Boiardo's Orlando Innamorato, Ariosto's Orlando Furioso and Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata.² I contend that in spite of Milton's dismissal of the chivalric poem in the famous proem to book IX as "chief mastery to dissect | With long and tedious havoc fabled knights | In battles feigned" [IX.29-31], the plots and characters of the romance epics play their part in defining the 'Sataneid' perceived within Paradise Lost by critics such as Dennis Burden. Inevitably this thesis focuses on the figure of Satan. It is his exploits that are 'heroic' in a bad classical and chivalric sense. His progress is charted through the poem with analysis of the various false heroic guises or modes adopted by the Archfiend. Therefore, in order to complete this portrait, three other works are also considered: Virgil's Aeneid, Dante's Divina Commedia and Spenser's Faerie Queene.³ Throughout this thesis the six

¹Throughout this thesis I cite Milton from The Works of John Milton, 18 vols., Columbia University Press 1931-8 (hereafter Columbia). Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained form vol.2 of this edition.

²M.M.Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, ed.A.Scaglione, 2nd.ed., 2 vols., Turin, UTET 1963; L.Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, ed.S.Debenedetti & C.Segre, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua 1960; T.Tasso, Opere, ed.B.Maier, Milan, Rizzoli 1963-5.

³P.Vergilius Maro, Opera, ed.R.A.B.Mynors, OUP 1969;

works cited in this first paragraph are considered in the critical and textual context available to Milton.

Within this thesis two critical assumptions are made: first, that in Paradise Lost the poet is in full control both of his poem and of the effects realised; second, that Milton displays a highly refined sense of dramatic irony which can in Paradise Lost lead to brilliantly contrapuntal reversals of a classical or romance source³. Both of these assumptions are essential to the interpretation of Paradise Lost which I shall offer in this thesis. However a critical work on Milton cannot consider his Archfiend in isolation. I show how Milton counterbalances the conventional heroic ethic present in the Satanic epic with a new set of heroic values that revolve around the figure of the poet. Therefore the second major contention of this thesis is that the 'Milton' seen in the figure of the poet is the poem's heroic organising principle. I consider how Milton manipulates his own biography in the construction and direction of this figure modelled according to the images Dante and Ariosto create of the poet. But I shall begin with a consideration of how criticism of the Gerusalemme Liberata might have shaped some elements of Paradise Lost.

Paolo Beni, Torquato Tasso and the interpretation of the "Gerusalemme Liberata".

³(continued)

D.Alighieri, Opere, ed.E.Moore, OUP 1894; E.Spenser, The Faerie Queene, ed.A.C.Hamilton, London, <Longman's Annotated English Poets> 1977.

There seems to be no justifiable reason to challenge Paolo Beni's claim that he did encounter Torquato Tasso in the flesh during a session of the Accademia degli Animosi in Padua. What one could legitimately wonder is whether at that time (as in Boswell's first meeting with Dr Johnson) the young critic realised how many of the coming years he would spend in the defence of his fellow academician's masterpiece. In particular Beni's Comparatione Di Homero, Virgilio e Torquato⁴ extends the polemic beyond the initial clash with the devotees of Ariosto to challenge the supremacy of the usually revered ancients. Though profoundly partisan, Beni's defence of the Gerusalemme Liberata in the Comparatione and a later unfinished commentary on Tasso's poem⁵ are probably the most important pieces of critical writing on epic theory between Tasso and the publication of Paradise Lost, which apart from

⁴The full title is Comparatione Di Homero, Virgilio e Torquato, Et a chi di loro si debba la Palma nell'Heroico Poema Del quale si vanno riconoscendo i precetti: con dar largo conto de' Poeti Heroici, tanto Greci, quanto Latini & Italiani. Et in particolare si fa giuditio dell'Ariosto, Padua, Appresso Lorenzo Pasquati 1607. There followed a second enlarged edition, Comparatione di Torquato Tasso con Homero e Virgilio insieme con la difesa di Ariosto paragonato ad Homero, Padua, B.Martini 1612.

⁵Il Goffredo overo La Gerusalemme Liberata del Tasso, Col Commento del Beni. Doue non solamente si dichiara questo nobil Poema, e si risolvono vari dubbi e molte oppositioni, con spiegarsi le sue vaghe imitationi, & insomma l'artificio tutto di parte in parte: Ma ancora si paragona con Homero e Virgilio, mostrando che giunga al sommo: e perciò possa e debba riceuersi per esempio & Idea dell'Heroico Poema, Padua, per Francesco Bolzetta 1616. Despite the title this is not an edition of the Liberata, but a incomplete commentary on the

the obvious difference of language is in many ways the heir of the great Italian Renaissance epics. It seems possible that Milton was influenced on two points by Beni's praise of Tasso: first in the identification of Satan and the forces of evil with traditional heroic virtues; second in the avoidance of a single hero for a system where various heroic types, Satan, Adam, the Son (to cite the basic trio of a mean and two extremes), are balanced against each other.

In the commentary on the Liberata, as well as in the Comparatione's first lecture, Beni argues that the two ambassadors, Alete and Argante, sent to Godfrey by the Sultan of Egypt mark Tasso's intention to discredit Achilles and Odysseus, the protagonists of the Homeric epics, by identifying them with the pagan warriors.

E però non dubito io che Torquato nel conuertir' Vlissee & Achille in Alete & Argante hauesse etiando l'occhio a mostrarci tacitamente che con pace di Homero questi perniciosi affetti non fossero di saggi e veri Heroi quali esser doueano quelli che in Heroico Poema venian principalmente contati: posciache Vlissee piuttosto di astuto, & Achille di fiero e superbo, campione, meritaua il nome.⁶

Beni also observes how well Argante corresponds to the character of Achilles defined in the Ars Poetica by Horace as <impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, | iura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis>⁷ and indicates Silius'

⁵(continued)
first ten books. Note also the commentary on Aristotle's Poetics: In Aristotelis Poeticam Commentarii In Quibus Ad Obscura Quaeque Decreta planius adhuc dilucidanda, Centum Controversiae Poeticae interponuntur & copiosissime explicantur, Padua, Per Franciscum Bolzettam 1613.

⁶P. Beni, Commento, p. 341.

Hannibal, Statius' Capaneus and Ariosto's Rodomonte as further examples of the same heroic type. From this initial assault on the standing of Homer's heroes, dismissing Achilles as <iracondo, & acerbo, & il qual pose tutta sua ragion nella spada> and Ulysses as <a maraviglia astuto, & oltr'ogni dovere sagace, per non dir pronto alle fraudi & inganni>,⁸ in the Comparatione Beni proceeds to list their faults in detail, condemning Achilles for his conduct over the body of Hector and the <tante lagrime con le quali deplora la perdita Briseide> that lead him to abandon the <nobile & bellicosa impresa per una feminella>, while a similar catalogue of shortcomings is heaped on the head of the unfortunate Odysseus:

per tacer quanto bruttamente obliasse la patria, il figliuolo e la pudica consorte per l'insidiosa & impudica Circe; per lasciar anco le tante astuzie e menzogne di cui fu sì egregio e nobil fabro.

On the other hand Beni has to admit that even without <la perfettione delle virtù Christiane> Aeneas, endowed by his author <di rara pietà e religione>, is not only superior to his Greek counterparts, but in some respects even to Tasso's Godfrey. But he has to blame Virgil:

per essersi Enea lasciato indurre da Didone ad atto dishonesto, con porgere indegno esempio al giouanetto Ascanio, & esponendosi a gran pericolo di restar perpetuo mancipio e drvdo d'vna femina.

⁷Q.Horatius Flaccus, Ars Poetica in Opera, ed.E.C.Wickham, OUP 1903,, 11.121-2.

⁸P.Beni, Comparatione, pp.3-4.

⁹Ibid., pp.10-11. See J.M.Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero, OUP 1967, pp.17-8.

In contrast in Beni's eyes Tasso rightly restricts amorous adventures to <alcun personaggio inferiore> such as Tancredi or Rinaldo and thus, though Godfrey might admire Armida's beauty, neither his resolve nor his dignity are imperiled.¹¹ In the sixth lecture Beni does admit that their heroic faults might make Achilles, Odysseus and Aeneas more human <che i Goffredi, i quali per l'inaudita prudenza e virtù ben tosto si scoprono superiori ad ogni humana imitatione>,¹² but there is no place in his didactic vision for the usual critical complaint that Godfrey's perfections cast a pall of monotony over the poem.

This issue brings Beni back to the division of heroic roles and the idea that <le virtù e gl'ornamenti dell'animo si possono nel poema rappresentar'in diuersi personaggi e soggetti>.¹³ He distinguishes between two types of plot or favola where heroic actions are performed either by a single hero, which he dismisses as untruthful since whoever wrote such a poem <sarebbe astretto a finger'il tutto, senza punto fondarsi su l'historia>, or by <varij e diuersi Duci e Capi> where the poet depicts the hero as <Principe e Duce di molti inferiori: il quale per mezzo di questi faccia gloriosa impresa> ~~1821~~. Beni demonstrates that both Achilles and Odysseus appear as leaders of armies and that neither can claim to be solitary heroes.

In the context of such theories any later poet taking the Gerusalemme Liberata as his model would necessarily consider

¹⁰Beni, Comparatione, p.14.

¹¹Ibid., p.17.

¹²Ibid., p.216.

¹³Ibid., p.217.

not simply the issue of individual heroism but also the complex relationship between the heroic leader and the hierarchy he commands.

Tasso's own Allegoria del Poema, published in the first complete Venetian edition under the title of Il Goffredo,¹⁴ distinguishes between the various roles assigned to the warriors of the Christian army. Since, Tasso argues, the Heroic poem is the fusion of imitatione and allegoria, through these two mediums the poem must accurately reflect the human situation:

si come l'Epica imitatione altro giamai non è, che
somiglianza, & imagine d'attione humana, così suole,
l'Allegoria de gli Epici, dell'humana Vita esserci
figura.

Developing the theme of the reconciliation of microcosm and macrocosm in the plot of the Heroic poem, Tasso explains that the crusading army stands for the uomo civile and the capture of Jerusalem for the attainment of felicità civile. Within this broad allegorical structure each commander has a specific role. Godfrey stands for the <intelletto, & particolarmente...quel intelletto, che considera; non le cose necessarie; ma le mutabili, & che possono variamente avvenire>, whereas the army of soldiers men nobili represent the body and the other commanders the altre potenze dell'anima, especially Tancredi and Rinaldo who symbolize the concupiscibile and irascibile passions. What seems important,

¹⁴Il Goffredo del S. Torquato Tasso. Novamente Corretto. Et Ristampato. Con gli Argomenti, & Allegorie à ciascun Canto d'incerti Autori, Venice, Appresso Gratiano Perchachino 1581, ff.**1-4.

with regard to Milton's handling of Satan, is Tasso's insistence that no warrior (or potenza dell'anima) should usurp another's role. Even Godfrey himself, though he stands for the controlling intelligence, cannot become the executor of his own directives.

Si come la parte ragionevole non dee...escludere l'irascibile dalle attioni, né usurparsi gli uffici di lei, che questa usurpation sarebbe contra la giustitia naturale; ma dee farsela compagna, & ministra, cosi non doveva Goffredo tentar la ventura del bosco egli medesimo, né attribuirsi gli altri uffici debiti à Rinaldo.

Thus in the poem Tancredi and the other Christian champions fail to overcome the enchanted wood, while in the first assault on Jerusalem Godfrey is wounded and the attack fails, since both these tasks are assigned to Rinaldo.

In the light of these Italian theories on the construction of the heroic poem can we pass a judgement on Satan's moment of transcendent glory when, after the silence of his comrades in the "great Consult", he offers himself as Hell's sole champion? We know that, even though it is actually proposed by Beelzebub, Satan is the moving intellect behind the scheme to corrupt mankind, thus by rights (or according to Tasso) Satan can hardly pretend to be the executor of the same scheme. This idea may well be behind Gabriel's taunting description of Satan as "fit body to fit head" when the latter is captured in Eden and claims to be "A faithful Leader, not to hazard all | Through wayes of danger by himself untried" [IV.933-4]. It also proves that Hell's claim to be an ordered hierarchy (or even a libertarian democracy) is mere rhetoric since there can be no tiers of subordinate but complementary powers where Satan effectively represents the whole and brooks

no assistance which might detract from his own glory. Inversely the complementary scene in Heaven where God's request for one who will pay the ransom due for mankind's sin is answered by the Son's offer of himself does respect the Renaissance criteria. In Milton's theology the Son stands for a deity, which if still supreme nevertheless remains subordinate to the Father. Likewise the Son is cast as executing or creating power through the course of the poem.

Tasso's theories of the equivalence of military and spiritual hierarchies may be ironically relevant when we come to Milton's catalogue of the major infernal deities who parade before Satan. The words "Say, Muse, thir Names then known, who first, who last" [I.376] (in imitation of Homer, Virgil and Tasso himself)¹⁵ act as a signpost to the learned reader that Milton is parodying the classical catalogue, listing not heroes or ships but vices, the "prime in order and in might" [I.506] after Satan and his lieutenant Beelzebub. Twelve deities in the parade are identified by name: Moloch, Chemos-Peor, Baalim, Ashtaroth, Astoreth-Astarte, Thammuz, Dagon, Rimmon, Osiris, Isis, Orus and Belial, who "came last" [I.490]. But even an initial count of twelve proves unreliable, since according to Milton Baalim and Ashtaroth are "general names" for pluralities of Syrian male and female cults, while the others all manifest ambiguity of name and shape. Such ambivalence is prompted by Milton's desire to underline the fissiparous and Protean nature of evil. Each of

¹⁵Homer, Iliad, ed.T.W.Allen, OUP 1931, V.703, catalogue of the ships II.484-877; P.Vergilius Maro, Aeneidos, XI.664, catalogue of the Italian army VII.641-817; Tasso, Gerusalemme Liberata, catalogue of the Christian army I.36-64.

these twelve names is potentially legion. Now on the one hand these twelve names may travesty, as Professor Fowler suggests,¹⁶ Jesus calling the disciples on the shore of another sea, but another possibility is a glance at Spenser's planned division of the Faerie Queene into twelve books with twelve different heroes who each stand for a single virtue, the whole being gathered together in the person of Prince Arthur, who stands for "magnificence...which vertue for that...it is the perfection of all the rest and conteineth in it them all".¹⁷ Such a structure implies that Satan is the sum of all his subordinate vices and this thesis is perhaps confirmed in the infernal council by the conformity of the speeches of Moloch, Belial and Mammon to the vice of the particular speaker.¹⁸

In view of these critical and theoretic traditions, espe-

¹⁶The Poems of John Milton, ed. J. Carey and A. Fowler, 2nd impr., London, Longmans' Annotated English Poets 1980 (hereafter Carey-Fowler), p.485. In the 1st impression (1968) Professor Fowler omits both Chemos-Peor and Rimmon and confuses Milton's distinction between Ashtaroth (I.422) and Astarte-Astoreth (I.437-46) by making a single name "Ashtoreth". He makes up the twelve by including Titan, Saturn and Jupiter from the lesser deities. Milton treats Ashtaroth and Astarte-Astoreth as separate deities, whereas in fact the former was the Masoretic pointing (by analogy of bôsheth, shameful thing) of the Phoenician name Astarte, see Carey-Fowler, note I.421.

¹⁷E. Spenser, The Faerie Queene, ed. A.C. Hamilton, London, Longmans' Annotated English Poets, 1977, pp.737-8.

¹⁸J.M. Steadman, Pandaemonium and Deliberative Oratory, Neophilologus, XLVIII, 1964, pp.159-76, reprinted in Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol, University of North Carolina Press 1968, ch.16.

cially Beni's assertions about Tasso's pagan warriors and their Homeric prototypes (although he does fail to note that in the Gerusalemme Conquistata Argante acquires a wife, a son and other appanages of a tragically doomed Hector), it should hardly surprise us in Paradise Lost that when Satan's sense of injured merit leads him to rebellion and war against God the mutinous archangel is characterised as a kind of Achilles, nor that when he slips into the enemy citadel and with stealth and cunning encompasses the downfall of man the image which immediately springs to mind is that of polytropos Odysseus. What is surprising is that he should so often remind us of Aeneas. Obviously, like all Renaissance poets, Milton is deeply indebted to the author of the Aeneid and the echoes may simply be the consequence of this cultural debt; but, just as the parallels with Achilles and Odysseus have structural meaning, so the parallels between Satan and Aeneas may comment further on Satan's system of heroic values. The rest of this chapter therefore explores this possibility.

Satan, Aeneas and the Heroic Catabasis.

Many a patristic and medieval text allegorically equates the fall of Troy with the fall of the angels. Satan's first words in Paradise Lost underline that tradition, when, waking on the lake of fire, he addresses Beelzebub: "If thou bee'st he; But O how fall'n! how chang'd!" [I.84]: words which, as Milton's commentators have often noted, recall Aeneas' sight of the ghost of Hector on the last night of Troy: <ei mihi, qualis erat! quantum mutatus ab illo | Hectore>. ¹⁹ When Satan reassembles his defeated forces on the burning marl of hell

and sees "Thir Glory witherd" [I.612], he struggles in vain not to weep yet "Thrice he assayd, and thrice in spight of scorn, | Tears such as Angels weep burst forth" [I.619-20], where these tears may have classical instances, such as Xerxes weeping at the mortality of his army,²⁰ but the insistent thrice...thrice reminds the alert reader of Aeneas attempting in vain to embrace Creusa in the flames of Troy.²¹ When Aeneas' tale to Dido reaches the climax of the last terrible battle for his native city, the Trojan leader breaks off to call on the spirits of his fallen comrades to excuse his own escape and claims that defeat came through no failure of his own.

Testor, in occasu vestro nec tela nec ullas
vitavisse vices, Danaum et, si fata fuissent
ut caderem, meruisse manu.

Aen. II.432-4.

We can hear an echo of the Virgilian phrase when Satan declares to his followers that their defeat and fall is likewise through no want in courage or resolution of his own: "For mee be witness all the Host of Heav'n, | If counsels different, or danger shun'd | By me, have lost our hopes" [I.635-7].

Satan's ability to offer immediately to his defeated and demoralized forces new objectives, a new world to conquer, following the swift construction of Pandaemonium as the hub of

¹⁹Virgil, Aeneid, II.274-5; cf. Isaiah XIV.12.

²⁰Carey-Fowler, p.620; M.Weidhorn, Satan's Persian Expedition, Notes and Queries, CCIII, 1958, p.391.

²¹Virgil, Aeneid, II.792-3, cf.VI.700-1; Homer, Odyssey, ed.W.W.Merry, OUP 1888, XI.206-7; Dante, Purgatorio, II.80.

the new infernal empire which will rival Heaven just as in the Aeneid Carthage rivals Rome, shows that a "Sataneid", albeit orchestrated in the basement, is being set in motion that will provide a continuous if weakening (and eventually obsolete) counterpoint to Milton's true heroic throughout Paradise Lost.²² The construction of cities and foundation of empires are not Homeric concerns. But they are the first concern of secondary epic. Even in the Gerusalemme Liberata the objective is not the destruction but the capture of the city which becomes the capital of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. From this point of view Paradise Lost is an epic where the traditional heroic action is the prerogative of evil. The prelapsarian universe is balanced in a kind of dynamic stasis where a single action of disobedience (the plucking and eating of the apple) upsets this perfect status-quo and makes way for the primitively heroic action, the Sataneid where evil triumphs over good, where Carthage overcomes Rome, as if the "Gyant had foiled the Knight, and driven him out of his strong hold, to wander through the World with his Lady Errant".²³

Therefore the Satanic rhetoric has some deliberate interest in echoing the Aeneid, since by implication their defeat and imprisonment ^{of the fallen angels} can be attributed not to divine providence but to untoward fate and Olympian malevolence. It is not fortuitous that the first mention of the "new Worlds; whereof so rife | There went a fame in Heav'n" [I.650-1] alludes to Juno's alarm

²²Carey-Fowler, p.950; D.H.Burden, The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of Paradise Lost, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1967, p.64.

²³J.Dryden, Dedication of the Aeneis in The Poems of John Dryden, ed. J.Kinsley, OUP 1958, vol.III, p.1010.

at the rumoured foundation of Rome and the consequent and inevitable (though remote) destruction of Carthage.

Progeniem sed enim Troiano a sanguine duci
Audierat, Tyrias olim quae verteret arces.
Hinc populum late regem belloque superbum,
Venturum excidio Libyae: sic volvere Parcas. Aen. I. 19-22.

In the diabolic conclave of the second book the theme of the new world and the rumours in heaven before the fall of the angels is re-elaborated by Beelzebub.

There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav'n
Err not) another world, the happy seat
Of some new Race call'd Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favour'd more
Of him who rules above... I. 345-61.

Beelzebub also emphasizes the remoteness of this new world and the obstacles that must be overcome to arrive there. He confutes the folly of Moloch's claim "The ascent is easy then" [II.81] and finally asks who will go. The Virgilian echoes pave the way for a heroic action which should imitate the wanderings of Odysseus and Aeneas himself in their respective searches for Ithaca and Italy; but they also hint at an ascent that will reverse the classical descent to the Underworld. When after the silence in council Satan offers himself for the difficult and dangerous mission, his speech underlines the Virgilian theme and sets the appropriate heroic parameters (my italics).

O Progeny of Heav'n, Empyreal Thrones,
With reason hath deep silence and demurr
Seis'd us, though undismaid: long is the way
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light;
Our prison strong, this huge convex of Fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold, and gates of burning Adamant
Barr'd over us prohibit all egress.

II. 430-7.

The "ninefold...convex of fire" alludes to the <novies Styx interfusa> [Aen.VI.439] winding around the Underworld where Aeneas sees Phlegethon the river of fire enclosing Tartarus <rapidus flammis ambit torrentibus amnis> [Aen.VI.550] and the unassailable gate <ingens solidoque adamante columnae>.

When Satan finally returns (like a triumphant Hannibal reporting the fall and enslavement of Rome) to describe his deception and seduction of man, the momentary reiteration of the Virgilian passage underlines the seeming triumph of evil and the demons' realisation of a new empire.

thence...I found
The new created World, which fame in Heav'n
Long had foretold, a Fabrick wonderful
Of absolute perfection, therein Man
Plac't in a Paradise, by our exile
Made happie; Him by fraud I have seduc'd
From his Creator,...

X.480-6.

This autobiographical self-proclaimed Sataneid has now come to its adulatory self-congratulating end and, if it conflicts with the true heroic ethos of "Patience and Heroic Martyrdom" [IX.32], we should marvel at Milton's ability to take conventional epic norms to their literal extremes, affirming the distortions and absurdities of hell, and within the epic mode using heroic conventions to turn the right ending back to front, inside out.

In the rest of this chapter I consider Satan's escape from Hell and its relationship to the heroic catabasis; but it should also be observed how the activities of Satan's followers refer to the Virgilian Underworld, especially Elysium. Milton's Hell has classical forms, but the classicism has a new logic. The classical rivers which in

Virgil and Dante act as barriers to the intruder here are placed inside Hell (obviously they are not going to present a serious obstacle to a winged fiend); but this also means that the traditional barriers are already behind Satan and therefore we must expect something different. Since Satan's capacity, mobility and power are infinitely greater than that of any classical hero (even Hercules has to cross in Charon's boat, though it nearly sinks), so the obstacles he must pass will be infinitely more formidable. The real change is one of scale, not of role. But above all, where the classical hero had to get in, Satan has to get out.

Sin and Cerberus.

When the Archfiend's lonely journey finally brings him towards the outermost point of Hell and the exit proper, we have come to expect some tremendous barrier and in no way are we disappointed. In the Aeneid the shadowy figures on the threshold of the Underworld (there are no gates) are powerless to prevent the entrance of the hero, though they do frighten him. In the Divina Commedia, despite the terrifying inscription over the portal, the gates stand wide open, but as in the Aeneid Dante and Virgil later find their way barred by the river Acheron. Satan, who (so to speak) is coming from the other direction, finds no such trifling obstacle, but in the distance appear "thrice threefold the Gates; three folds were Brass, | Three Iron, three of Adamantine Rock, | Impenetrable, impal'd with circling fire, | Yet unconsum'd" [II.645-8]. But worse than the gates are the porters.

The one seem'd Woman to the waste, and fair,

But ended foul in many a scaly fould
 Voluminous and vast, a Serpent armed
 With mortal sting: about her middle round
 A cry of Hell Hounds never ceasing bark'd
 With wide Cerberian mouths full loud, and rung
 A hideous Peal: yet, when they list, would creep,
 If aught disturb'd thir noyse, into her woomb,
 And kennel there, yet still bark'd and howl'd,
 Within unseen. Farr less abhorrd than these
 Vex'd Scylla bathing in the Sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore:
 Nor uglier follow the Night-hag, when call'd
 In secret, riding through the air she comes
 Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance
 With Lapland witches, while the labouring Moon
 Eclipses at thir charms.

II.650-66.

Various critical studies have unravelled the complex literary, mythological, allegorical and iconographical traditions involved in the figure of Milton's Sin.²⁴ I wish to comment only on her role and the relationship of this role to the classical descensus. In simple terms the figure of Sin combines three different traditions: first the classical

²⁴S.P.Tatlock, Milton's Sin and Death, Modern Language Notes, XXI, 1906, pp.239-40; G.McColley, "Paradise Lost", Harvard Theological Review, XXXII, 1939, pp.181-235; J.F.Gilliam, Scylla and Sin, Philological Quarterly XXIX, 1950, pp.345-7; L.R.Muir, A Detail in Milton's Description of Sin, Notes and Queries, CCI, 1956, pp.100-1; J.M.Patrick, Milton, Phineas Fletcher, Spenser and Ovid, Notes and Queries, CCI, 1956, pp.384-6; A.Gossman, Milton, Prudentius and the Brood of Sin, Notes and Queries, CCII, 1957, pp.439-40; J.M.Steadman, A Milton-Claudian Parallel, Notes and Queries, CCI, 1956, p.202; idem, "Sin" and the Serpent of Genesis 3, Modern Philology, LIV, 1957, pp.217-20; idem, Milton and Saint Basil: The Genesis of Sin and Death, Modern Language Notes, LXXIII, 1958, pp.83-4; idem, Grosseteste on the Genealogy of Sin and Death, Notes and Queries, CCIV, 1959, pp.367-8; idem, Tradition and Innovation in Milton's "Sin": The Problem of Literary Indebtedness, Philological Quarterly, XXXIX, 1960, pp.93-103;

(Footnote continued)

serpent-woman, second traditional Viper lore, third Ovid's Scylla and its Renaissance allegories. However I suggest that her role is intended to be that of a Cerberus.

The serpent-woman first appears in Hesiod as < Εχίδνα >, < ἥμισυ μὲν νύμφηεν ἑλικώπιδα καλλιπάρηον, | ἥμισυ δ' αὖτε πέλωρον ὄφιν δεινόν τε μέγαν > [298-9], who keeps watch within a cave (on what we are not told) far from the < ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν θνητῶν τ' ἀνθρώπων > [302]. She mates with Typhon to bring forth the Hydra, the Chimaera and the two Hell-hounds, Geryon's dog, Orthus, and < Κέρβερον ὠμηστήν, Ἄιδεω κύνα καλκεόφωνον, | πεντηκοντακέφαλον, ἀναιδέα τε κρατερόν τε > [311-2]. An incestuous union with Orthus produces the Sphinx, the Nemean lion and other horrors.²⁵ Since Satan lying on the lake of fire is "in bulk as huge | As whom the fable name of monstrous size, | Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on

²⁴(continued)

idem, Sin, Echidna and the Viper's Brood, Modern Language Review, LVI, 1961, pp.62-6; idem, Spenser's Errour and the Renaissance Allegorical Tradition, Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, LXII, 1961, pp.22-38; J. Illo, Animal Sources for Milton's Sin and Death, Notes and Queries, CCV, 1960, pp.425-6; R.C. Fox, The Allegory of Sin and Death in "Paradise Lost", Modern Language Quarterly, XXIV, 1963, pp.354-64; T.J.O'Keefe, An Analogue to Milton's Sin and more on the Tradition, Milton Quarterly, V, 1971, pp.74-7; R.M. Frye, Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts, Princeton University Press 1978, pp.111-24.

²⁵Hesiod, Theogony, ed. M.L. West, OUP 1966, ll.298-9; cf. Bacchylides, Poems, ed. R.C. Jebb, Cambridge University Press 1905, v.60-2, describes Cerberus as the < καρχαροδόνια κύν'...υῖον...Ἐχίδνας >. See Sophocles, Trachiniae in Fabulae, ed. A.C. Pearson, OUP 1946, ll.1098-9, where Hercules describes < τόν θ' ὑπὸ χθονὸς | Ἄιδου τρίκρανον σκύλακ',

Jove, | Briareos or Typhon" [PL.I.196-9], his incestuous relationship with Sin, the birth of Death and further rape of Sin by her son to produce the monsters howling around her cast Hesiod as a mythic archetype (or the faint reflection of a greater truth).

Two other serpent-women frequently compared to Milton's Sin are Spenser's Errour and Fletcher's Hamartia. The former, an "ugly monster...| Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide, | But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine, | Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine" [I.i.14], is found in a cave by the Red Crosse knight; but there is no question of the knight being tempted by the feminine upper body and then being caught unawares by the concealed "mortall sting". The latter, supposedly the daughter of the Dragon and Eve "The foulest bastard of so fair a mother", comes first in the mighty army vomited up by the great Dragon.²⁶ Her upper female half conceals the serpentine tail "pointed with a double sting". Neither Errour nor Hamartia has a specific role as guardian or porter any more than the curious monsters of the Libyan desert described by Dio Chrysostom (popularized by Valeriano) that employ the feminine blandishments of the upper half to attract unsuspecting travellers who are suddenly enmeshed and killed by the previously concealed serpentine coils.²⁷

²⁵(continued),
 ἀγρόσμαχον τέρας, | δεινῆς ἑχίδνης θρόνον >; E.Spenser,
Faerie Queene, VI.vi.9-12, also V.xi.23.

²⁶P.Fletcher, The Purple Island in The Poetical Works of Giles and Phineas Fletcher, ed. F.S.Boas, CUP 1909, vol.2, XII.26-31.

²⁷See appendix 1.

In classical and Renaissance zoological texts the Viper (in Greek < Ἐχίδνα > which naturally meant that Renaissance writing equated the snake and the serpent-woman) attracted particular attention for two traditions linked with the procreation and birth of its young. Ancient Greek accounts, such as Nicander's Theriaca, claimed that in the act of copulation the male placed its head in the mouth of the female who in the fury of mating bit off her consort's head, only to suffer the vengeance of the young who at birth broke through their mother's flanks, killing her in the process: < διὰ μητρὸς ἀραιήν | γαστήρ' ἀναβρώσαντες ἀμήτορες ἐξεγέροντο >. ²⁸ Both 'facts' are erroneous, though alone among serpents the Viper does give birth to live young (thus Vipera derives from the Latin vi pariat). Even in the classical era these stories did not go unchallenged, since many Renaissance accounts repeat Aelian's record of the scepticism expressed by Theophrastus (in a work now lost) on the second count, the matricide at the birth of the young. ²⁹ Around these two basic points accreted other tales, often contradictory: for instance when danger threatened the mother viper was supposed to protect her young by taking them in at her mouth. These various legends were summarised by Sir Thomas Browne in the Pseudodoxia Epidemica.

That the young Vipers force their way through the bowels of their Dams, or that the female Viper in the act of generation bites off the head of the male, in revenge whereof the young ones eat through the womb and belly of the female is a very ancient tradition... notwithstanding which authorities, transcribed relations and conjectures, upon enquiry we ³⁰ finde the same repugnant unto experience and reason.

²⁸ See appendix 2.

²⁹ See Appendix 2.

However Browne accepts as true the popular tradition that the young when frightened sought refuge in passing through the mother's mouth to hide in her belly.

The young ones supposed to break through the belly of the Dam, will upon any fright for protection run into it; for then the old one receives them in at her mouth, which way the fright being past they will returne againe; which is a peculiar way of refuge; and though it seem strange is avowed by frequent experience, and undeniable testimony.³¹

Though Browne's own experiments on the Viper were unsuccessful - "for though we fed them with milke, branne, cheese, etc. the females alwayes dyed before the young ones were mature for this eruption"³²- he refutes the well established tradition by citing the observations of other authorities. However neither classical nor modern scepticism had prevented writers from turning these traditions to allegorical use: Theodore Beze's Emblemata, for example, contrast the doom of the mother Viper with the Church.³³ Sandys thought vipers suitably expressed

³⁰Sir Thomas Browne, Pseudodoxia Epidemica, ed.R.Robbins, OUP 1981, vol.1, book III, ch.xvi, pp.220-1.

³¹Ibid.

³²Browne, op.cit., p.221.

³³Theodore Beze, Icones id est Verae Imagines Virorum Doctrina simul et pietate illustrium...quibus adiectae sunt nonnullae picturae quas Emblemata vocunt, Geneva, apud Ioannem Laonium 1580. Emblem 32 shows the dead female with ther young and the moral:

Viperi excedunt ceu matris viscera foetus,
Sic quos ipsa suo fovit alumna sinu,
Roditur heu! nimium sanctorum Ecclesia multis,
At non eventu nec ratione pari:
Vipera nam salva infelix prole interit, illis
(Footnote continued)

lasciviousness.

Nor is pleasure and lust unaptly expressed by serpents; not onely for their naturall subtilty and inveterate hatred to man; but also for their inbred lasciviousness: the femal viper (our Adder) according to Pliny, out of a frantick delight, biting of the head of the Male in the time of their coiture.³⁴

When we assess this body of traditional viper-lore against the portrait of Sin, we can recognise that Milton's dependence on Spenser is less pronounced than might appear at first sight. For instance, Milton does not have the young hide by passing through their mother's mouth to seek refuge in her womb, as happens in the Faerie Queene at the light cast by the sword of the Red Crosse knight. "Soone as that uncouth light on them shone, | Into her mouth they crept, and sudden all were gone" [I.i.15]. Nor does Sin die at the birth of her viperous offspring. Instead the "cry of Hell Hounds (a clever pun since catuli can refer to both puppies and young serpents) ...if aught disturb'd their noyse" [II.654,657] hide within the gaping breach made at their birth, only to re-emerge once danger has passed, thus making, as Sin herself complains, the exit and re-entry of their birth and mating into a continuous process.

These yelling Monsters that with ceasless cry
Surround me, as thou sawst, hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me, for when they list into the womb
That bred them they return, and howle and gnaw
My Bowels, thir repast; then bursting forth
Afresh with conscious terrours vex me round,

³³(continued)

Haec contra extinctis non peritura manet.
See also Gabriello Symeoni, Le Imprese Heroiche e Morali, Lyons 1559, p.50.

³⁴G.Sandys, op.cit., p.319.

That rest or intermission none I find.

II.795-802.

Contrary to the tradition Sin survives this second monstrous birth, though her complaint of how the monsters continue to gnaw "My Bowels, thir repasts" [II.800] echoes the classical descriptions of how the young vipers gnaw (roditur) through their mother's flanks and womb at birth. What Milton also emphasises are the canine qualities of these monsters which "kennel" in Sin's womb.

The third tradition derives from Ovid. In the Metamorphoses Circe's jealousy of Glaucus' love for the maiden Scylla drives her to enchant the pool where the nymph used to bathe. When the unsuspecting virgin steps into the water she finds her lower quarters suddenly transformed into barking monsters from whom she seeks in vain to escape.

Cum sua foedari latrantibus inguina monstribus
Aspicit; ac primo credens non corporis illas
Esse sui partes refugitque abigitque timetque
Ora proterua canum; sed quos fugit, attrahit una
Et corpus quaerens femorum crurumque pedumque
Cerbereos rictus pro partibus invenit illis;
Statque canum rabie subiectaque terga ferarum
Inguinibus truncis uteroque extante coerces.

XIV.60-7.

The simile where Sin's monsters are more "abhorrd" than those which "vexed Scylla" evidently refers to the Metamorphoses, especially since the "Cerberean mouths" translates the Ovidian cerbereos rictus. After her transformation through Circe's spells Scylla lies in wait on the Calabrian shore of the straits of Messina to devour unsuspecting ships and sailors. Homer describes Scylla's greed when she snatches and devours six of Odysseus' crew.³⁵ In the Aeneid Helenus warns the Trojans against passing Scylla, whom he describes as a

<pulchro pectore virgo> in the upper body with the lower body <immani corpore pistrix | delphinum caudas utero commissa luporum> [III.427-8]. Natale Conti notes a version according to which <Scyllam pulcherrimam fuisse mulierem, at sex habuisse canum capita, reliquam corporis partem fuisse serpentum>.³⁶ Virgil also places biformes Scyllae [Aen.VI.286] among other shadowy fantasms at the entrance to the underworld. But Milton is also drawing on Renaissance allegorizers of Ovid, such as George Sandys:

Scylla represents a Virgin; who as long as chaste in thought, and in body unspotted, appeares of an excellent beauty...But once polluted with the sorceries of Circe; that is, having rendered her maiden honour to be deflowered by bewitching pleasure, she is transformed to a horrid monster...That the upper part of her body, is feigned to retaine a humane figure and the lower to be bestiall; intimates how man, a divine creature...can never so degenerate into a beast, as when he giveth himselfe over to the lowe delights of those baser parts of the body, Dogs and Wolves, the blind & savage fury of concupiscence.³⁷

In order to understand how Milton hints at Sin's Cerberus role in Paradise Lost we must look at a wide variety of Greek,

³⁵Homer, Odyssey, XII.245-59, cf.85-110.

³⁶Natale Conti, Mythologiae, VIII.xii, p.253.

³⁷G.Sandys, Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologiz'd And Represented in Figures, Oxford, John Lichfield 1632, p.475. Sandys translates XIV.64-6: "in stead of them she found | The mouthes of Cerberus, inviron'd round | With rav'ning Curres". N.Conti, Mythologiae, VIII.xii, p.254:

Dicitur Scylla in hoc monstrum à Circe conuersa fuisse, cum mulier esset pulcherrima, quod omnes que declinavit a ratione, rectoque vivendi instituto, brutorum animos induant. Quid enim Circen esse dicebamus? an non titillationem naturae ad voluptates incitantem?

However the allegorization of Scylla as libido goes back to the Ciris, ll.68-9: <hoc in carmine toto | inguinis est uitium et ueneris descripta libido>.

Latin and medieval sources, especially Dante. We already know that Cerberus is the offspring of Typhon and Echidna and that in the Theogony he is described as the < πεντηκοντακέφαλος >³⁸ monstrous dog, who fawns on those entering the Underworld and savagely attacks those seeking to leave. In this sense Sin's "charge to keep | These gates for ever shut" [II.775-6] and Death's initial challenge to Satan mark a return to an older role.

In the Aeneid the heads are reduced to three, but Cerberus acquires a mane of serpents which hiss and bristle <horrere...iam colla colubris> [Aen.VI.419]. In the Odes Horace speaks of <Cerberus, quamvis furiale centum | muniant angues caput eius atque | spiritus taeter saniesque manet | ore trilingui>.³⁹ Where the snakes on Cerberus' mane hiss at the approach of Aeneas, the monsters around Sin bark "With wide Cerberian mouths full loud", recalling the Virgilian <latratu regna trifauci | personat> [Aen.VI.417-8]. On the other hand allegorical interpretations of Cerberus all drew on Servius' gloss at Aeneid VI.395, where the grammarian interprets Hercules' last labour, the capture of Cerberus, as an allegory of man conquering his own desires:

Quod autem dicitur traxisse ab inferis Cerberum, haec ratio, quia omnes cupiditates et cuncta vitia terrena contempsit et domuit: nam Cerberus terra est, id est consumptrix omnium corporum. Unde et Cerberus dictus est, quasi < κρεοβόρος >, id est carnem vorans: unde legitur ossa super recubans: nam non ossa citius terra consumit.⁴⁰

³⁸Hesiod, op.cit., ll.311-2; cf.769-73.

³⁹Q.Horatius Flaccus, Carmina, III.xi.17-20; cf.II.xiii.33.

⁴⁰Servius Grammaticus, In Vergilii Carmina Commentarii, ed.G.Thilo and H.Hagen, Hildesheim, Georg Olms 1961, VI.395.

The etymology of flesh-devourer, albeit incorrect, proves an enduring one.

Though the Aeneid of course refers to Hercules' descent as a past event, the most authoritative account of the Herculean catabasis available to the Renaissance was in fact Seneca's post-Virgilian Hercules Furens,⁴¹ in which Theseus describes the capture of Cerberus and his own liberation. Though the play is a paraphrase of an original by Euripides, Seneca introduces a Virgilian Cerberus with plentiful and gruesome additional detail, for example a mane of vipers and a long tail with a serpent's head hissing at its tip: <sordidum tabo caput | lambunt colubrae, viperis horrent iubae | longusque torta sibilat cauda draco> [785-7].⁴² Following this description, the Renaissance iconography of Cerberus often shows the hell hound's tail as a snake's head and body (see

⁴¹L. Annaeus Seneca, Hercules Furens in Tragoediae, ed. R. Peiper and G. Richter, Leipzig, Teubner 1902, ll. 782-812. Iacobus Bonus, De Raptu Cerberi in Bartholomeo Bologninus, Metamorphoseon Libri...in Epitomen contracti, Basle, Officina Roberti Winter, March 1538, pp. 88-127: 107, describes the approach of Hercules:

....triformis
Cerberus, humano depastus sanguine sternit
Membra subexesa scabri testudine saxi:
Quo Stygias prostratus aquas custodit, & alta
Atria latratu triplici gentesque sepultas
Deorat, & tenues horrendus territat umbras.
Isque ubi mota pedum propius vestigia sensit
Accessisse dei, lapsas mox suscitatur aures,
Captavitque sonum, & paulatim gutture clauso
Infremuit, uibrat caudam draco uerbere torto,
Viperis stant colla iubis: procurrit, & altos
Edit in aduersum latratus eminus hostem.

⁴²On Cerberus' serpentine qualities see: Ovid, Metamorphoses, X.20-2, where Orpheus says <descendi...nec uti villosa colubris | Terna Medusaei vincerem guttura monstri>. Sandys, p.338, translates "Nor bind that scouling Curre, who barking

ill.1). If Milton intends this feature rather than the more evident scorpion-like stinging tail when he divides Sin into female torso, serpentine coils and "mortal sting", then we should recognise another subtle allusion in the figure of Sin to the serpent of Genesis. At the approach of Hercules the serpents in the mane hiss furiously <sibilat totos minax | serpens per arnos>, and the barking of the three heads is so ferocious that it even terrifies the spirits in Elysium: <Vocis horrendae fragor | per ora missus terna felices quoque | exterret umbras>. Where Seneca has Cerberus fleeing from his cave at the arrival of Hercules to hide under Pluto's throne, Giraldi's Herculis Vita claims that the dog hid in its cave: <nomen Herculis adeo formidabat, ut se in speluncam abdidit>.⁴³ Though Sin's offspring have no cave, at the approach of Satan they flee into their mother's womb and "kennel" there.

In medieval accounts and versions of the Harrowing of Hell Cerberus appears among the demons who bar the entrance against Christ's entrance, a liberty which in turn reappears in translations or popularisations of the Aeneid.⁴⁴ One

⁴²(continued)

shakes | About his triple browes Medusa's snakes"; Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, De Deis Gentium, Basle 1548, p.296: <Cerberus Medusaeum monstrum appellatus ideo est, quod uillas ac pilos serpentinos habere dicitur>, citing Tibullus (III.iv.87) as proof: <Nec canis anguinea redimitus terga caterua, | Cui tres sunt linguae, tergeminumque caput> (cf. I.iii.71); idem, Herculis Vita, Basileae, Apud Mich. Ising. 1539, p.49: <Sunt qui ei draconis cauda attribuant, dorsumque varijs serpentum refertum>.

⁴³Giraldi, Herculis Vita, pp.49-50.

interesting example is the Libro chiamato el Troiano, a chivalric paraphrase popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, where the Virgilian Cerberus' role as guard-dog (before a gate) is filled by <un gran serpente> who threatens to attack and is only prevented by the <pan d'avischio> thrown by the Sibyl⁴⁴. A little further on ~~they~~ ^{Aeneas and the Sibyl} come to the gates of the Castle of Pluto which are kept by Cerber demone, whose frightening appearance (derived from Dante's Lucifer or frescoes of Hell and the Last Judgment such as that in Pisa's Camposanto) daunts Aeneas.

Vedendol con si brutta vista lui
E tanto grosso e grande smisurato,
Tutto era nero come carboni bui,
Pel cui gittava fuoco e bruto fiato.
Vn braccio havea d'un occhio a dui,
Il terzo ochi ha nella fronte serrato.
La bocha fessa con le guanze grande,
Per bocha, ochi e naso fuoco spande.

E un serpente si gli esce del bellico,
Ch'en bocha si tenea un peccatore,
Vn'altro per la schiena el uero ui dico,
Il qual si staua in simil tenore,
Sopra la testa un'altro n'hauea unico,
Che gran stridir facea con dolore.
Duo code ch'era di fuoco ardente,
E piedi e man con gli unghion pungente.⁴⁵

⁴⁴See D.D.R.Owen, The Vision of Hell: Infernal Journeys in Medieval French Literature, Edinburgh-London, Scottish Academic Press 1970, pp.143, 171, 237-9, 242, 264-5.

⁴⁵Libro chiamato el Troiano in rima hystoriado el qual tratta la destrution de troia fatta per li greci: & come per tal destrution fo edefichada roma padoa e Verona & molte altre citade in italia: & tratta le bataglie che furono fatte in italia per enea & come ando & torno da linferno con molte altre & diverse hystorie lequale forono de verita come molti poeti & auctori descriveno &c, Venice, Manfrino de Monte Ferato da Strevo, 20.III.1509. The first known edition was printed in 1483. In Bunyan's Holy War, ed.R.Shattock and
(Footnote continued)

But once Aeneas and the Sibyll have established their credentials, Demon Cerber acts as a courteous guide to the castle and obligingly points out the pains suffered by sinners in Hell. A similar theatrical Cerberus can be seen in the fresco of Hell by Nardo da Cione in Santa Maria Novella, where, though the topography is inspired by Dante, this figure has one head, bat's wings, horns and goat's legs (see ill. 2).

It is unlikely that Milton could have been interested by such medieval renderings of the Aeneid, but he certainly knew the Divina Commedia, where Dante and Virgil find Cerberus, displaced from the task of guard-dog of Hades, ruling over the gulosi in the third circle of the Inferno.

Cerbero, fiera crudele e diversa,
 Con tre gole caninamente latra
 Sopra la gente che quivi è sommersa.
 Gli occhi ha vermigli, la barba unta ed atra,
 E il ventre largo, e unghiate le mani;
 Graffia gli spiriti, ingoia, ed isquatra.

Inf.VI.13-18.

In the Divina Commedia the mythological figures of the Homeric and Virgilian underworlds preside as what Castelvetro termed <gli ufficiali dello'nferno>.⁴⁶ In the Odyssey Minos acts as

⁴⁵(continued)

J.F.Forrest, OUP 1980 (first ed. 1682), Cerberus is the porter at the Brazen gates of Helgate hill, see pp.164, 171-2 "the Dog of Hellgate", 178-9, 187 (Cerberus is one of the "superiour Captain's" in Diabolus' army), 226, 228. Some early illustrations of the Divina Commedia also show Cerberus not as a dog but as a three-headed winged demon, cf. Venice, Petro Chremonese detto Veronese, 18.XI.1481, f.F3r.

⁴⁶L.Castelvetro, Spositione di XXIX canti dell'Inferno

the wise judge < χρύσεον σκήπτρον ἔχοντα θεμιστεύοντα
 νέκυσσι > [Od.XI.569]. In the Aeneid he sentences the crimes
 committed in the world above. But in Dante his classical form
 is fused with a demonic entity where the Homeric nobility and
 Virgilian sternness are replaced by bestiality, half monster,
 half man: <Vede qual loco d'inferno è da essa: | Cignesi colla
 coda tante volte | Quantunque gradi vuol che giù sia messa>
 [Inf.V.10-12].

The opposite process occurs in Cerberus. He is the
 guardian and torturer of the gulosi, but also the epitome of
 their plight. The language of the description with its
 emphasis on the barba, ventre and mani show that the dog
 possesses all the attributes of a degraded bestial humanity.⁴⁷
 The early commentators recognised in Dante's Cerberus the
 traits and manners of the medieval drunkard and glutton.
 Francesco da Buti characterises him as:

lo tentatore di sì fatto peccato...con gli occhi ver-
 migli, che significano l'ardore del desiderio del
 goloso; con la barba unta, che significa la ghiotton-
 eria, atra che significa la sozzeza; col ventre largo
 che significa la voracità, con le mani unghiate che
 significa la rapacità.⁴⁸

⁴⁶(continued)

Dantesco, Modena 1886, p.56.

⁴⁷A.Vallone, Il VI dell'Inferno in La Critica Dantesca nel
 Settecento ed altri saggi, Florence, Olschki 1961, pp.90-103.
 Sandys also describes Cerberus as a symbol of greed, op.cit.,
 pp.322-3:

From hence we may collect, that the reason and virtue
 of the Mind, which is Hercules subdues all vice and
 base earthly affections (Cerberus being taken for the
 Earth) but especially Gluttony (his name importing a
 devourer of the flesh) which is said to have three
 heads, of his triple desires, consisting in the
 superfluity of quantity, of expence of time, and the
 pleasing of the Palat.

⁴⁸Francesco da Buti, Comento su Dante, Pisa 1858, vol.1,

Guido da Pisa explains the attacks on the victims under Cerberus' charge as the hostility of the glutton towards the virtues of others: <quia gulosus et ebriosus famam et laudem bonorum denigrando consumit>. ⁴⁹

When Cerberus challenges Dante and his guide, Virgil silences the monster, not with the sop medicated with honey and poppy-seed of the Aeneid, but bending down gathers two handfuls of earth and <con piene le pugna | La gittò dentro alle bramose canne> [Inf.VI.26-7]. The purport of this curious substitution can only be comprehended in terms of the Genesis ontology: <pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris>. ⁵⁰ Therefore in biblical terms Virgil is duly satisfying the appetite of the "devourer of flesh". Just as significantly Virgil is compelling Cerberus to act out the curse and punishment of the serpent in Genesis, condemned to crawl on its belly and eat dirt all the days of its life: <terram comedes cunctis diebus vitae tuae>. ⁵¹ Another term - <Cerbero il gran vermo> - links Cerberus both with the serpent of Genesis and with the <vermo reo che'l mondo fora> [Inf.XXXIV.108], Lucifer pinned to the centre of the earth.

The ravenous appetite of Cerberus and his rule over the gulosi emphasises that aspect of the Fall which is due to the

⁴⁸(continued)
p.181.

⁴⁹Guido da Pisa, Expositiones et Glose super Comediam Dantis, ed. V.Cioffari, New York 1974, p.122.

⁵⁰Genesis 3.19; K.Kleinhenz, Infernal Guardians Revisited: "Cerbero, il gran vermo", Dante Studies, XCIII, 1975, pp.185-99.

⁵¹Genesis 3.14.

same physical appetite, greed in devouring the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Thus, just as the birth of Sin from the head of Satan is alluded to in the creation of Eve from Adam's side, so Eve's hunger for the fruit - "Greedily she engorged without restraint, | And knew not eating death" [PL.IX.791-2] - as later that of Adam, re-enacts the ravenous appetites of Sin, Death and their numerous and horrendous offspring.

Dante's Cerberus is also an important numerological symbol. He lies in the terzo cerchio; he barks con tre gole (a trinitarian antitype which looks back to the three beasts of the first canto, the leopard, the lion and the wolf, where the latter <che di tutte brame | Sembiava carica nella sua magrezza> [Inf.I.49-50] is the manifestation of a wider-reaching greed not confined to the physical appetite); he anticipates the three furies on the wall of the city of Dis, Geryon (another hybrid of man, beast and serpent), and finally the three heads of Lucifer who <Da ogni bocca dirompea coi denti | un peccatore a guisa di maciulla> [Inf.XXXIV.55-6], where the tortured victims prove to be the three arch-traitors, Judas, Cassius and Brutus.⁵² In Dante the recurrence of the Trinity through this series of antitypes affirms the controlling presence of God even in the very depths of Hell. It is counterbalanced by the vision of the three-in-one in the final

⁵²P.Priest, Dante's Incarnation of the Trinity, Ravenna, Longo 1982; idem, Looking back from the Vision: Trinitarian Structure and Poetry in the Divina Commedia, Dante Studies, XCI, 1973, pp.113-30; S.Mussetter, Dante's Three Beasts and the Imago Trinitatis, Dante Studies, XCV, 1977, pp.39-52.

Sandys translates Met.VII.414: <Implevit pariter ternis latratibus aura> as "Thrice howles, thrice barks at once, with his three heads" (p.240).

canto of the Paradiso;⁵³ but Milton skilfully adopts the same numerological symbolism to parody a doctrine he refutes in the De Doctrina Christiana.⁵⁴ The gates of his Hell are made up of "thrice threefold" layers, three folds of brass, three folds of iron, three folds of "adamantine rock"; like Dante's Cerberus Sin displays a trio of human, canine and serpentine qualities; her body can be divided into female torso, serpentine coils and mortal sting; with her son Death and the arrival of her father Satan she forms an infernal and incestuous Trinity.

Finally, in his translation and commentary on Ovid George Sandys applies a number of epithets to Cerberus: "the three-headed Hell-hound"; "the infernall Porter"; "th'Echidnean Dog"; the poison of Tisiphone is the "surfet of Echidna, with the fume | Of hell-bred Cerberus".⁵⁵ In Paradise Lost Sin is termed the "Portress of Hell Gate" [II.746], though such imagery is commonplace⁵⁶ and Satan contemptuously terms Death as "hell-born" [II.687]. However where initially the "cry of hell-hounds" applies only to the offspring of Sin and Death, by the tenth book as the Father watches the ravening descent of "these Dogs of Hell" [X.616]

⁵³Paradiso XXXIII.115-20.

⁵⁴Milton, De Doctrina Christiana, book I, ch.V in Columbia XIV, pp.177-364, and in The Complete Prose Works of John Milton, 8 voll., Yale University Press 1953-82 (hereafter Yale), VI, pp.203-80; M.Kelley, Introduction in ibid., pp.47-73.

⁵⁵G.Sandys, op.cit., pp.162, 162, 240 (<Illud (Aconite) Echidneae memorant e dentibus ortum | Esse canis>, VII.408-9), 124 (IV.501).

⁵⁶P.Fletcher, The Locusts, I.10.

into the created universe and prophecies their final defeat and destruction, the term is extended to parents and offspring alike.

...I call'd and drew them thither
 My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
 Which mans polluting Sin with taint hath shed
 On what was pure, till cramm'd and gorg'd, nigh burst
 With suckt and glutted offal, at one sling
 Of thy victorious Arm, well-pleasing Son,
 Both Sin, and Death, and yawning Grave at last
 Through Chaos hurl'd, obstruct the mouth of Hell
 For ever, and seal up his ravenous Jaws. X.630-6.

Though the language is heavily biblical, it may also draw in part on Sandy's discussion of Cerberus and his allegorical significance.

His name doth signifie...a devourer of the flesh; and allegorically is taken for the graue: whom Hercules inforceth; in that virtue breakes through death and oblivion, and gives to it selfe a glorious immortalitie. The Graue is ever ravenous, but never satisfied: and such is Cerberus the type of covetousnesse; tormented and mad with griefe, when inforced to bounty: for this cause said at the sight of light to vomit his poyson".⁵⁷

Death and the Renaissance Charon.

The other shape,
 If shape it might be call'd that shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joynt, or limb,
 Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
 For each seem'd either; black it stood as Night,
 Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as hell,
 And shook a dreadful Dart; what seem'd his head
 The likeness of a Kingly Crown had on.

II.666-73.

If on the one hand Sin performs a Cerberean role, it is reasonable to suppose that Milton may intend Death to travesty

the other guardian of the Virgilian underworld, Charon. The objection arises that some features of Milton's Death are more appropriate to the classical Cerberus, for instance his ravenous appetite where the whole world "all too little seems | To stuff this Maw, this vast unhide-bound Corpse" [X.600-1]. However Milton's infernal duo are not intended to re-enact literally their distinct classical originals. Instead a series of fluid analogies hints at roles which magnify and parody the classical source. However, as I shall demonstrate below, Renaissance interpretations of Charon do suggest various affinities with Milton's Death. More subtly the correspondences between the infernal guardians of the classical underworld and the porters of Milton's Hell comment directly on the heroic stance adopted by Satan.

The figure of Charon, the infernal boatman, was known to the Greeks though he is not a Homeric personage (in turn they may have adopted him from the Egyptians). The death rites of both Greeks and Romans included the obol placed in the mouth of the corpse to pay for the passage across the Acheron or Styx. In Aristophanes' Frogs Dionysis and Xanthia descend to the underworld only to have Charon refuse to take the latter,⁵⁸ while in Lucian's dialogue < Χάρων ἢ Ἐπίσκοποινες > Charon tires of his humdrum labour as the infernal ferryman and takes a day's holiday to see the world with Hermes as his guide.⁵⁹ When the Romans adopted Charon from the Hellene

⁵⁷G.Sandys, op.cit., p.259.

⁵⁸Aristophanes, Ranae in Comoediae, eds.F.W.Hall and W.M.Geldart, OUP 1951, 11.180-270.

⁵⁹Lucian, Contemplantes in Opera, ed.M.D.Macleod, OUP 1972,

culture they seem to have merged him with the sombre Etruscan deity Charun, whose influence has been noted in Virgil's depiction of the portitor in the Aeneid:⁶⁰

Portitor has horrendas aquas et flumina servat
Terribile squalore Charon: cui plurima mento
Canities inculta iacet; stant lumina flamma;
Sordidus ex humeris nodo dependet amictus.
Ipse ratem conto subigit, velisque ministrat,
Et ferruginea subvectat corpora cymba,
Iam senior; sed cruda Deo viridisque senectus. VI.298-304.

Charon sees Aeneas and the Sibyll approaching from afar and orders them to halt and declare their intentions: <fare age quid venias, iam istinc, et comprime gressum> [Aen.VI.389]. When Aeneas identifies himself by the golden branch and the Sibyll praises the hero's virtus and his piety, Charon's anger subsides and he willingly accepts this mortal passenger. However Charon's suspicion and anger is well justified when Aeneas' conduct is compared with that of previous heroes.

Nec vero Alciden me sum laetatus euntem
Accipisse lacu; nec Thesea, Pirithoūmque:
Diis quanquam geniti, atque invicti viribus essent.
Tartareum ille manu custodem in vincla petivit,
Ipsius a solio regis traxitque trementem:
Hi dominam Ditis thalamo deducere adorti. VI.392-7.

In the Hercules Furens the hero demands a passage and is indignantly refused by Charon who orders him to stay where he is: <Quo pergis audax? Siste properantem gradum>.⁶¹ As ever

⁵⁹(continued)

vol.II, no.26; cf. D.Erasmus, Charon in Colloquia, Munich 1729, pp.553-9.

⁶⁰Virgil, Aeneid VI, ed.R.G.Austin, OUP 1977, p.125. Portitor means 1) ferryman, 2) harbour-master or toll-gatherer.

⁶¹Seneca, op.cit., 1.772. J.Bonus, De Raptu Cerberi, p.106, presumably on the authority of Aeneid VI.129-31, provides

Hercules wastes no time on words and summarily beating the boatman with his own oar, steps into the craft and forces the reluctant Charon to take him across. Servius relates that Charon had to wear fetters for a year as punishment for allowing Hercules to pass,⁶² so in the Aeneid the boatman's alarm at the sight of the hero's glittering arms in the distance seems fully justified.

Therefore the classical hero, arriving on the banks of the Acheron and wishing to cross, must choose between ~~either~~ force, as in the case of Hercules, Theseus and Pirithoos, or virtus, as with Aeneas who brings the golden branch as a talisman. Which of these two methods does Satan employ? At first the former, as his contemptuous words to Death show.

Whence and what art 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 assur'd, without leave askt of thee:
Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heav'n.

II.681-7.

This is without doubt the necessary degree of Herculean arrogance; but Death is not impressed and, despite his immense might and prowess, against this opponent Satan does not possess the unquestioned supremacy of a Hercules. Therefore it is as well for the rebel archangel that, as the "mighty combatants" stand on the brink of battle, Sin intervenes like a grotesque and serpentine parody of the Virgilian Sibyll to divide them, warning Satan that this is a battle he could not

⁶¹(continued)
Hercules with the golden branch.

⁶²Servius, op.cit., 392.

hope to win.

But thou O Father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright Arms,
Though temper'd heav'nly, for that mortal dint,
Save he who reigns above, none can resist. II.810-4.

At Sin's revelation Satan abruptly changes tactics. Just as the revelation of the golden branch identifies Aeneas to Charon, so Sin's words identify herself and Death to Satan and Satan to Death. For the guardians of Hell the unknown intruder suddenly proves to be more than a friend. The technical term for this situation is an agnitio or <ἀναγνώρισις>, which together with <περίπτεσις> and <πάθος> Aristotle defined as the essential turning points of "complex" epic and tragic plots.⁶³ In the epic catabasis the hero traditionally meets old acquaintances who are often able to inform him of events, sometimes in the future, he does not know of or correct his mistaken interpretation of the past. In the Odyssey Odysseus goes to consult Tiresias, but he is also able to speak to Achilles and weeps on seeing the ghost of his mother since he was ignorant of her death. In Virgil Aeneas' three encounters with his past purge that same past and prepare the hero for the vision of the future awaiting him in Elysium. The first meeting among the unburied dead is with the steersman Palinurus drowned in the journey from Africa to Italy; the second with his mistress Dido, where the sight of her wandering in the wood of unhappy lovers with her wound

⁶³Aristotle, De Arte Poetica Liber, ed. R. Kassel, OUP 1965, 10-11 (1452a-b). See J.M. Steadman, Recognition in the Fable of "Paradise Lost", Studia Neophilologica, XXXI, 1959, pp. 159-73.

still fresh is the first intimation Aeneas has of her untimely suicide; the third with his brother Deiphobus, who had married Helen after the death of Paris, and died in the fall of Troy, but terrible wounds make this ghost virtually unrecognisable.

Atque hic Priamiden laniatum corpore toto
Deiphobum videt et lacerum crudeliter ora,
ora manusque ambas, populataque tempora raptis
auribus et truncas inhonesto uulnere naris.
vix adeo agnouit pauitantiem ac dira tegentem
supplicia...

VI.494-9.

Up to this point Aeneas has believed that Deiphobus died fighting heroically <super confusae stragis acervum> [VI.504]; but to his horror the mangled shadow now describes how, after Helen had concealed his sword, he was ignominiously butchered in her bedchamber by Menelaus and Ulysses, <Aeolides hortitor scelerum> [VI.529].

In the Divina Commedia Dante's journey through the three realms is marked by a similar chain of meetings (though he finds no relations closer than Cacciaguida in the Heaven of Mars), sometimes with friends or enemies, sometimes with those known to him by fame, where Dante often hears prophecies or warnings on his own fate and that of his native city. Some of those Dante meets are made virtually unrecognisable by the tortures of hell or the pains of purgatory, for instance Ciaccio or Brunetto Latini, but often the initial recognition is followed by a tale of misfortune.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Inf.VI.43: Ciaccio: <L'angoscia che tu hai | Forse ti tira fuor della mia mente, | Sì che non par ch'io ti vedessi mai>; VIII.34-9: Filippo Argenti; XV.25-30: Brunetto Latini: <Ed io... | Ficcai gli occhi per lo cotto aspetto | Sì che il viso abbruciato non difese | La conoscenza sua al mio intelletto>.

If these materials are compared with the agnitio in Paradise Lost, Milton's talent ^{for} ~~at~~ macabre epic comedy emerges. Where Aeneas meets a friend, a mistress and a brother in different parts of the Underworld, where Dante meets friends and enemies spread through the three realms of the afterlife, at the gates of Hell Satan finds in the infernal duo, rendered unrecognisable by defeat and the consequences of their own evil, his daughter, mistress, son, son-in-law, grandson and an innumerable brood of viperish grand or great-grand children (depending on how the relationship is viewed), a confusion which Sin's first words do little to clarify:

O Father, what intends thy hand, she cry'd,
Against thy only Son? What fury, O Son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal Dart
Against thy Fathers head?

II.727-30.

When Satan fails to recognise her and indeed denies all knowledge of her and her offspring - "I know thee not, nor ever saw till now | Sight more detestable than him and thee" [II.744-5] - Sin reminds him of her birth, of the "joy thou took'st | With me in secret" [II.765-6], of their defeat in heaven (where her dismissal of the defeat as inevitable is the first contradiction of previous Satanic rhetoric), and describes her transformation through the birth of Death, her consequent rape and further deformation. The "suttle Fiend"'s change of style from aggression to the acknowledgment of his "Dear Daughter... | And my fair Son...the dear pledge | Of dalliance had with thee in Heav'n" [II.817-9] demonstrates his cunning. This admission of kinship now serves as the proof of virtus (but Machiavellian not Virgilian!) that turns Sin and Death from a Cerberus and Charon into willing allies.

Nevertheless this agnitio does identify Satan's ascent as Virgilian in mode which, as I shall show below, naturally leaves some place for the greater heroics of a Hercules. However first we should note Dante's Charon and his Renaissance vicissitudes.

In the Divina Commedia Acheron marks the barrier between hell proper and the sciaurati who are accepted by neither heaven nor hell. Caronte only carries those who <muoion nell'ira di Dio> [Inf.III.122] where the fear of hell is outweighed by a greater fear of God's wrath: <Si che la tema si volge in disio> [Inf.III.126]. As both Landino and Velutello note in their commentaries on the Purgatorio, the antithesis to Caronte is the angel boat that carries the saved to the mountain of Purgatory. Caronte's shout as he appears on the waters of the Acheron plays on the ambiguity of life, death, eternal life, eternal damnation:

Guai a voi anime prave:
Non isperate mai veder lo cielo!
I'vegno per menarvi all'altra riva,
Nelle tenebre eterne, in caldo e in gelo.
E tu che se' costì, anima viva,
Partiti da cotesti che son morti. Inf.III.84-9.

We know that this boat only takes the damned, the <mal seme d'Adamo>, and Virgil confirms this with the remark <Quinci non passa mai anima buona> [Inf.III.127], while the phrase anima viva can refer to both physical and spiritual death, on the one hand to the Virgilian <corpore vivo..nefas>, on the other recognising Dante as one who will be saved.

Though Milton's *Death* draws on a variety of sources such as the Book of Revelation and Spenser's Faerie Queene, the

treatment of Charon in Italian art may have influenced Milton. In Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Charon appears with Cerberus in the frescoes by Nardo da Cione (see ill.3). In 1500 Luca Signorelli completed the frescoes left unfinished by Fra Angelico in the Cappella di San Brizio in the cathedral at Orvieto. Subjects include the preaching of Antichrist, the end of the world, the Resurrection, the Last Judgement, Hell and Paradise. Charon appears over the altar to the right of the window in a fresco otherwise devoted to angels blowing the last trump. Evidently inspired by the Divina Commedia, a white-bearded demonic figure poles a red boat across dark waters and in the background we see the sciaurati of the same canto running after the <insegna, | Che girando correva tanto ratta | Che d'ogni posa mi pareva indegna [Inf.III.52-4] (see ill.4). In the foreground we see the <mal seme d'Adamo> who curse <Iddio e lor parenti | l'umana specie, il luogo, il tempo e il seme | di lor semenza e di lor nascimenti> [Inf.III.103-5]. The artist's main innovation is to add a pair of black wings to Charon's shoulders, probably as a tribute to his demonic status. This fresco influenced Michelangelo when he came to do the altar wall of the Sistine chapel with his great Last Judgement and here we find another Charon driving the damned into his boat (see ill.5). But how changed! The white beard and hair have gone. The blazing eyes and the oar swung back over his shoulder belong to Dante, but the bulging muscles, the blackness, ferocity and menace of his stance have lost all trace of their classical origins. The terribilità of Michelangelo's inspiration suggests Milton's Death "black...as Night | Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell" who "shook a dreadful Dart" [II.670-2].

As with Cerberus, Milton probably knew the interpretations of Charon available both in the Renaissance mythographies and in the commentaries on Virgil and Dante. Though early and important works on Dante such as the *Ottimo Comento*, Pietro and Iacopo Alighieri, Boccaccio, Benvenuto da Imola and others remained in manuscript up to the eighteenth century or later, many were consulted for the major Renaissance commentaries by Landino and Velutello. Moreover on his Italian journey Milton met Benedetto Buommattei whose lecture notes frequently cite the early manuscript and incunable commentaries on Dante's poem.

In his commentary on the *Aeneid* Servius had declared Charon to be "loss of joy": < κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν > quasi < ἀχαίρων >. ⁶⁵ However the truly dominant interpretation of Virgil's Charon in the middle ages and Renaissance was first suggested in Fabius Planciades Fulgentius' *Virgiliana Continentia* (c.510 A.D.), described as an <exposition virgiliana continentiae secundum philosophos moralis>. Incorrectly deriving the name from the greek *Chronos* Fulgentius states that Charon is Time.

Caron vero quasi ceron, id est tempus, unde te Polidegmonis filius dicitur; Polidegmon enim Grece multae scientiae dicitur. Ergo dum ad tempus multae scientiae quis peruenerit, in temporales gurgitum cenositates morumque feculentias transit. ⁶⁶

On this authority the medieval world saw in Charon the symbol of the *fuga temporum*. In the *Genealogiae Deorum Gentilium*

⁶⁵Servius, *op.cit.*, 299.

⁶⁶F.Planciades Fulgentius, *Virgiliana Continentia* in *Opera*, ed.R.Helm, Stuttgart, Teubner 1970, p.98.

Boccaccio elaborated this theme and made Charon the destroyer Time who carries man through life to death.

Quod autem Charon corpora deferat ex una in alteram Acherontis ripam, ideo fictum est ut intelligamus, quoniam tempus confestim ut nascimur suo nos sumit in gremio, et in ripam defert oppositam, id est in mortem, que quidem est natiuitati contraria, cum illa deducat in esse, et hec corporibus auferat esse. Vehimur praeterea a Charone per Acherontem fluuium, qui absque gaudio interpretatur...quoniam a tempore trahimur per vitam labilem et miseriis plenam.⁶⁷

In the Comento su Dante (not published until after Milton's death) Boccaccio repeats this view in a more elaborate form:

E perciò si pone nocchiere sopra questo fiume; perciocche dir si puote il tempo esser quello che in se il di della nostra natività ne riceve, e con le sue rivoluzioni avendone dalla riva del nostro nascimento levati, ne mena per la presente vita, qual più e qual meno, e trasportalo all'altra riva, cioè al di della morte.⁶⁸

Boccaccio attaches allegorical values to the Acheron: <la vita presente>, the oar <la sollecitudine di coloro li quali all'acquisto delle cose temporali son tutti dati>, and notes that the boat only carries those who die in mortal sin.

Other early commentaries agree that Charon is Chronos, but differ in their emphasis. Pietro Alighieri interprets Charon as Time bringing man to death and damnation over the river of his own desires:

Nam tempus quodammodo, in quantum sit in diabolico motu, ut nauta nos trahit per hujusmodi concupiscentiam mundanam ut per flumen ad Infernum.⁶⁹

⁶⁷G.Boccaccio, Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri, ed.V.Romano, Bari, Laterza 1951, I.xxxvii, p.62. Boccaccio wrongly attributes the etymology Charon = Chronos to Servius.

⁶⁸Idem, Comento sopra la Commedia, ed.G.Milanesi, Florence, Le Monnier 1863, vol.1, p.286.

An anonymous fourteenth-century commentary sees Time as the maker of false promises:

Il tempo, figurato per Carone, accenna all'umini, cioè gl'invita con false promissioni, mostrando loro onori, potenzie, guadagni; di qui a un anno sara'ricco, sarai possente, et simiglianti sogni fanno credere gli uomini a se medesimi; onde pare loro mille anni che sia passato il di, che sia passato l'anno, per venire a quelle false loro intenzioni, non considerando che continuamente mojamo.⁷⁰

Some commentators subscribed to the medieval opinion that the four rivers of the Virgilian underworld mark four progressive stages in sin and damnation. Iacopo della Lana made the Acheron <la delectatione carnale la quale è principio a tutti i vicij> and Charon therefore <la voluntade o vero cupiditate dogni dellelectatione carnale>.⁷¹ Francesco da Buti sees Charon as <lo amore disordinato> guiding the soul towards vice. The boat symbolizes:

la colpa della congregazione, e collegazione de'sette peccati mortali, e della loro specie, sopra la quale passano tutte l'anime dannate: imperò che ciascuna à peccato in una o più di quelle specie,⁷² per la colpa del quale peccato è dannato all'inferno.

Though Benvenuto da Imola discusses Boccaccio's interpretation

⁶⁹Pietro Alighieri, Commentarium, ed.R.della Vedova and M.T.Silvotti, Florence, Olschki 1978, p.84.

⁷⁰L'Ottimo commento della Divina Commedia: testo inedito d'un contemporaneo di Dante citato dagli Accademici della Crusca, ed.A.Torri, Pisa 1827-9, vol.1, p.79.

⁷¹Comedia di Dante degli Alagherii col comento di Iacopo della Lana, Bologna, Regia Commissione per la pubblicazione di testi di lingua 1866.

⁷²Francesco da Buti, Commento, vol.1, p.100.

- <Charon quasi cronon, idest tempus> - he notes an alternative theory, which makes the Virgilian Charon an allegory of Death.

Et hic nota quod aliqui dicunt et exponunt quod per Charonem intelligitur mors, quae transit omnes ad aliam vitam, quae habet oculos flammeos quia omnia debentur morti. Unde Virgilius in simili dicit: terribile squalore, idest sorde, quia omnia corpora mortuorum putrescunt et resoluuntur.⁷³

He comments that Charon symbolizes eternal and spiritual rather than just physical death.

The influence of such interpretations is evident in Frezzi's Quadriregio, where the poet describes a Dantesque journey through the four realms (hence the title) of Amore, Satanasso, Vizi and Virtù with Minerva as guide. In the second realm the travellers find themselves on the banks of Acheron with a company of <Anime...| ch'avean sette persone e sette facce; | e queste su in un ventre eran congiunte>.⁷⁴ Charon with his <faccia grande, guizza e nera> [VII.35] appears as Time the destroyer and is termed by Minerva <consumator ingordo> [VII.67]. On the crossing the poet sees the heads of the heptacephalic bodies melting away to one like smoke <sicche di lor rimase un sol vecchiaccio; | non sette più, ma un tutti parieno> [VII.89-90]. Curiously therefore Death's greed, which seemed appropriate only to Cerberus, is anticipated in medieval and Renaissance allegories which make

⁷³Benvenuto de Rambaldis de Imola, Commentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comoediam, Florence, Barbera 1887, vol.1, pp.125, 128.

⁷⁴F.Frezzi, Il Quadriregio, ed.E.Filippini, Bari, Laterza 1914, II.vii.4-6.

Charon into the manifestation of devouring Time.

In the neo-platonic Disputationes Camaldulenses Christoforo Landino had expounded the fall of Troy and Aeneas' wanderings as an allegory of the soul's passage from the vita voluptuosa of Troy to the vita activa of Carthage and finally the vita contemplativa of Italy. Aeneas' journey to the underworld becomes the purgation of the soul through the contemplation of evil. When Landino comes to comment on Dante he offers a similar exposition, though he also cites the opinions of earlier commentators.

Describe dunque Charone, & la barca guidata da lui pel fiume Acheronte, doue molti pongano Charone per la morte: laqual separando l'anima del peccatore dal corpo, la conduce all'Inferno. Alcuni vogliono che Acheronte sia il disordinato appetito. Ma a me pare dargli il medesimo senso, che gli demmo nei nostri dialoghi scritti sopra Virgilio. Diremo dunque che intendendosi per Acheronte il moto, che fa l'animo di passar nel peccato, Charone si è il libero arbitrio, & la nave sia la volontà, & il remo l'elettione...Et ha Acheronte due ripe, il fiume è mobile, le ripe sono immobili, ma nella prima ripa non si fermano se non tanto che Charon le passi, ma giunte a l'altra ripa vi rimangono in eterno. E dunque la prima ripa, l'inclination del depravato consiglio, nelquale si lascia andar l'animo corrotto dalle lusinghe della sensualità, laqual lo fa dilettere nelle cose mondane, che gli sono pestifero ueneno. Giunto dunque in questo consiglio, il quale è ripa, cioè cosa ferma, perche riman fermo nell'animo tal giudizio: cioè che sia bene andar a tal operatione. Dope è il fiume ch'è il moto, & gli atti che lo guidano a l'habito. Et dopo il fiume è l'altra ripa: dove comincia l'eterna habitatio⁷⁵ de'peccatori. Il che non è altro che l'habito.

⁷⁵Dante con l'espositioni di Christoforo Landino, et d'Alessandro Velutello, Sopra la sua Comedia dell'Inferno, del Purgatorio, & del Paradiso, Con Tauole, Argomenti, & Allegorie, & riformato, riueduto, & ridotto alla sua vera Lettura, per Francesco Sansovino Fiorentino, Venice, Appresso Giovambattista, Marchio Sessa, & fratelli 1564, (hereafter Dante), ff.21v-22r. The first edition of Landino's commentary was Florence, Nicholo di Lorenzo della Magna 30.VIII.1481 with

Alessandro Velutello notes the varia opinione of his predecessors and suggests that Charon is il vizio driving the sinner on to damnation (the detail of water seeping into the boat in fact comes from the Aeneid and not Dante).

E perchè in questo è stato de gli espositori molto uaria opinione, hauendo alcuni inteso per Acheronte il moto che fa l'anima di passar nel peccato, per Charon, il libero arbitrio, per la nave, la voluttà, & per lo remo la elettione, Altri Charon per la morte, altri per il tempo, & altri per diverse altre cose, talmente che ciascuno ha detto la sua tutta diuersa da quelle de gl'altri, onde s'il medesimo faremo ancora noi pensiamo, che tanto piu ageuolmente ne debba esser perdonato. Intenderemo adunque Acheronte per la mondana concupiscentia, laqual sorbe, & inghiottisce in parte la nave, cioè, l'humana fragilità condotta da Charon, cioè dal vizio, Che batte col remo qualunque s'adagia, cioè, ilquale molesta con lo stimolo delle tentationi ciascun che tarda a volerlo seguire. Il vizio adunque col suo stimolo conduce per la mondana concupiscentia, mediante la fragilità humana, l'huomo a l'Inferno, cioè, a l'habito vitioso, nelqual consiste la morte de l'anima.⁷⁶

Though the edition of Dante with the commentary by Bernadino Daniello cited by Milton in the Commonplace Book notes only the Virgilian origin of Dante's Caronte, in Of Education Milton praises Iacopo Mazzoni whose second Difesa di Dante defends the inclusion of classical features in a Christian poem and, citing patristic authority, expounds the four rivers of the earthly paradise as the four cardinal virtues with the antithetical <quattro fiumi Infernali per quattro sorti

⁷⁵(continued)

woodcuts designed by Botticelli, see also C.Landino, Disputationes Camaldulense, ed.P.Lohe, Florence, Sansoni 1980, pp.237-4. Velutello had the first edition of his work printed by Francesco Marcolini, Venice 1544.

⁷⁶Dante, f.22r.

de'vitij...che si ritrovano ne gli huomini peccatori>.⁷⁷

Therefore each infernal river is the moral antithesis of a specific cardinal virtue. Acheron symbolizes the vices opposite to temperance:

ci dimostra tutta quella sorte de'vitij, che si contrapongano alla temperanza, e nascono dalle passioni della potenza concupiscevole.

In this case Charon becomes the symbol of incontinence and sensuality.

E Charone governatore della nave, nella quale si passa questo fiume, ha il sentimento della incontinenza, & con che della intemperanza disordinatrice della sola concupiscenza. E vien descritto questo Demonio Vecchio, perche la incontinenza, e la intemperanza dell'appetito concupiscibile è il primo peccato, di che l'huomo senta tentatione, poiche egli si commette nell'uso di quelle cose, che ci sono necessarie per mantenersi in vita.

Likewise Mazzoni interprets Dante's Styx as the <vitij... contraposti alla fortezza> and Phlegias as symbolic of <quel vitio, che è solito a disordinare l'appetito irascibile, & a guastare & a corrompere la debita proportione>. The analysis concludes by making Phlegethon <quella sorte di peccati che nascono dal vitio opposto alla prudenza...la frode dunque è il vitio opposto alla prudenza>, where <per mezo di Gerione si passa il precipitio fatto dal fiume de'vitij dell'intelletto pratico>, and finally Cocitus <il quale significa quella sorte di peccati, che nasce dal vitio contraposto alla giustizia>.

⁷⁷Columbia IV.286; Iacopo Mazzoni, Della Difesa della Comedia di Dante distinta in sette libri, Cesena, Appresso Bartolomeo Raueri 1587, pp.618-23. This edition contains the first three books only. The remainder were printed as the Seconda parte postuma, Cesena, per Severo Verdoni 1688.

where the two poets go down <nel pozzo sul fiume agghiacciato de' vitij dell'ingiustitia>.

A final note on the Renaissance Charon and Cerberus could perhaps be taken from other Renaissance mythographies, which consistently interpret the pagan deities as allegories of spiritual or psychological states. Most accounts reiterate opinions which also found their way into the commentaries, but one text interesting for the sheer variety on offer is Alexander Ross's Mystagogus Poeticus.⁷⁸ Ross offers five allegorical interpretations for Charon: time, death, joy, a good conscience or drunkenness, and in the second cites Hercules and Aeneas as types of Christ who overcomes Death.

But so it is made by Christ, for in itself, death is the childe of Hell and Night; and as Charon is described by the King of Poets, Aeneid.6. to be old, but yet vigourous, ugly, sad, covetous; so is death. That which they fable out of Aeneas, Hercules, &c. was true in our Saviour, who overcame Charon, or death, by his piety, strength, power of his Word, &c.

Addison commented ironically that Ross "discovers in him (Ovid) the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion, and finds almost in every page some typical representation of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil".⁷⁹ However some affinity does exist between Ross' fatuities and Milton's handling of mythographical themes. For instance in the entry on Cerberus

⁷⁸Alexander Ross, Mystagogus Poeticus, or The Muses Interpreter: Explaining the historicall Mysteries, and mysticall Histories of the ancient Greek and Latine Poets, 2nd ed., London, T.W. for Thomas Whitaker at the Kings Arms in Pauls Church-yard 1648, pp.71-2.

⁷⁹J.Addison, Notes on Ovid's Metamorphoses in Works, London, Bohn's British Classics 1862, vol.1, p.141.

Ross argues that, besides vigilance, greed, avarice, the grave, the hell-hound of deceit, an evil conscience and time, the infernal watchdog also stands for Death:

Death is Cerberus, which is Pluto's dog, Satan's mastiff, by which he bites; Typhon, that is, the Devil, begat death upon Echidna the serpent, in which he poysoned our first parents: his 3 mouths or hundreds rather, do shew the many wayes that death hath to seize us: the snaky hairs do shadow out the ugliness and fearfulness of death, it lieth in hell-gates, for the wicked must by death come to hell: this dog doth suffer all to go in, but none to return, from hell is no redemption; but Hercules by his strength overcame and bound him, and Sybilla by her wisdom cast him asleep; so the son of God, by his power & wisdom hath overcome death, & taken away his sting.⁸⁰

Christ's descensus and Hercules' catabasis.

Up to this point I have sought to demonstrate Milton's use of the classical heroic catabasis from the Aeneid (influenced by Dante and Renaissance interpretations) as the framework in which Satan's ascent and escape from Hell are inserted and inverted. I have sought to show that in the circumstances Milton's employment of agnitio and peripeteia create a curious and macabre element of comedy. Some final element is required for the whole to make sense. As a first step we should remember that the desire of seventeenth-century authors such as Ross and Sandys to see in Hercules (and sometimes Aeneas) types of Christ continues a process begun by the earliest Church fathers. When Ross treats Hercules' abduction of Cerberus as a type of Christ spoiling Limbo he is repeating a Christian commonplace:

Satan is the hell-hound, whose many heads and snakes, doth shew the many malicious and cunning ways he hath to destroy men; he is begotten of the Giant Typhon and

the snake Echidna, because as parents live in their children, so violence and craft live in him; he is the vigilant door-keeper of hell, lying in wait to toll in souls, but never to let them out. The true Hercules, Christ, by his strength and wisdom hath bound him, at the presence of whose light, he foams and frets, and was forced to vomit, and restore those souls which he held in captivity.⁸¹

In the Hymne à l'Hercule Chrétien Ronsard likewise draws a series of detailed correspondences between the life of Christ and that of Hercules.⁸² In the Purple Island Fletcher illustrates the final defeat and chaining of the old dragon with an appropriate simile: "As when Alcides from forc't hell had drawn | The three-head dog, and master'd all his pride: | Basely the fiend did on his Victour fawn, | With serpent tail clapping his hollow side".⁸³

Other Renaissance traditions use Hercules as a type of moral excellence. In the Faerie Queene Arthur is identified with Hercules in the victories over Souldan, Malengin and Geryoneo, where the Hercules motif asserts the ascendancy of virtue over the brutishness of vice.⁸⁴ On the other hand Renaissance writers also warned that many of Hercules' deeds must be interpreted allegorically and that his value as a

⁸⁰A.Ross, op.cit., pp.62-3.

⁸¹ibid., p.63. In the Rome 1526 edition dedicated to Leo X Bonus' De Raptu Cerberi is entitled Praeludium in treis distinctum libros, trium gratiarum nominibus appellatos, atque herculis labores & gesta in Christi figuram, mystice ac pulcherrime eodem carmine continentes.

⁸²P.Ronsard, Hercule Chrestien in Le Premier Livres des Hymnes in Oeuvres, Paris, Gallimard 1966, vol.2, pp.206-12.

⁸³P.Fletcher, Purple Island, xii.66; cf.E.Spenser, Faerie Queene, VI.xii.35.

⁸⁴E.Spenser, Faerie Queene, V.viii.18-24, ix.5, x.9-11.

moral exemplum must^{be} limited to typology, since if the mythical hero had ever existed, he "scarce deserved the name of a man, if we consider his adulterous birth, his whoredoms, oppressions, murthers, gluttony, and other sins".⁸⁵ The preacher John Trapp condemned poets who glorify Hercules as accomplices of Satan.

To elude, or eleuate at least, this sweet promise (Genesis 3.15)...the Devil, no doubt, devised, and by his Factors, the Poets, divulged that frivolous fable of Hercules his clubbing down the Lernean Serpent, and cutting of his many heads. But Christ alone is that stronger man, that, drawing the Dragon out of his Den, hath crackt his crown, destroyed his works, made him to fall as lightning from the heaven of mens hearts, and will tred him also under our feet shortly.⁸⁶

We noted above how in the Aeneid Virgil contrasts the hero's pietas and legitimate possession of the golden branch with the violence employed by Hercules and Theseus. In the Divina Commedia, as in all medieval literature involving the descent to Hell, when the classical underworld is identified with a Christian Hell, the heroic ethos attached to the descent is also reversed. From a Christian viewpoint this use of force (especially with typological implications) becomes a positive virtue. Just as in Dante the names of Christ and God are never spoken in the Inferno, so classical forms serve as an external accommodation for Christian truths. Dante's journey through the Inferno lasts from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, the three days in which Christ himself was underground. During the journey the two poets have to bypass obstacles such

⁸⁵A.Ross, op.cit., p.172.

⁸⁶John Trapp, Annotations Upon the Old and New Testaments, London, Robert White for Nevill Simmons 1662, vol.1, p.25.

as the collapse of the bridges over the sixth bolgia after the earthquake at Christ's crucifixion. In Limbo Virgil describes how a few years after his own arrival in Limbo <ci vidi venire un possente | Con segno di vittoria coronato> [Inf.IV.53-4] who took the patriarchs with him. When the gates of the City of Dis are slammed in the face of Virgil and his terrified companion, the senior poet comments ruefully on a previous example of such behaviour.

Questa lor tracotanza non è nuova,
 Che già l'usaro a men segreto porta,
 La qual senza serrame ancor si trova.
 Sopr'essa vedestu la scritta morta...

VIII.124-7.

As Velutello's commentary explains, Virgil alludes to the account in the pseudepigraphical Gospel of Nicodemus of how the devils refused to open the gates of Hell to Christ.

Perche la medesima prosontione uol inferire, che haueuano usato a questa, quando Christo ui discese a spogliar il limbo; onde è scritto; Attollite portas principes vestras, & eleuamini portae eternales, & introibit rex gloriae, &c. Et trouasi ancor senza serrame, perche furon rotte da lui, acciò che senza alcuno impedimento ne potessero uscir quelli, che innanzi al suo auuenimento, in lui haueuano creduto.⁸⁷

Meanwhile on the walls of the infernal city appear the three Furies and the cry goes up for Medusa as they lament their failure to avenge <in Teseo l'assalto>; but they all flee at the appearance of the messaggiero celeste, who opens the gate. Yet the outward guise of the angel is that of the classical Mercury psychopompos. The messaggiero's rebuke reminds the devils not of their failure to prevent Christ entering but Hercules' capture of their watchdog.

Perche ricalcitrare a quella voglia,
 A cui non puote il fin mai esser mozzo,
 E che piu volte v'ha cresciuta doglia.

Che giova nelle fata dar di cozzo?
 Cerbero vostro, se ben vi ricorda,
 Ne porta ancor pelato il mento e il gozzo. Inf. IX. 94-9.

Just as Milton concentrates in Orpheus his own poetic fears and ambitions, so not only in Paradise Lost but all through his poetic career he consistently identifies Christ with Hercules, the paragon of pagan virtue. In On the Morning of Christ's Nativity Christ, like the infant Hercules who strangles the snakes sent by Juno, "Can in his swadling bands controul the damned crew".⁸⁸ In an unfinished poem, the Passion, Milton alludes to the twelve labours of the classical hero when he describes Christ as "Most perfect hero, tried in heaviest plight | Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight".⁸⁹ A continuous Hercules motif runs through Paradise Regained and culminates in the final triumphant simile of Hercules overthrowing Antaeus - "to compare | Small things with greatest" [IV.563-4] - as a type of Christ's triumph over Satan.

If we see that the agnitio which prevents the duel with Death characterises Satan as an inferior Aeneas-like hero who escapes from hell through the connivance of Sin and Death, we should recognise a vacancy for a greater Hercules-like hero who scorns such helpmates. Within Paradise Lost this hero can only be the Son. In book III the Son promises that:

I through the ample Air in Triumph high
 Shall lead Hell Captive maugre Hell, and show
 The powers of darkness bound. III. 254-6.

⁸⁷Pante, f.52^v.

⁸⁸Columbia I.10, 1.258.

⁸⁹Columbia I.23, 11.13-4.

The description of Hell's formidable gates in fact prefigures his irresistible entrance since the folds of brass, iron and "adamantine rock" together with "every Bolt and Bar | Of massie Iron or sollid Rock" [II.877-8] hint at the text sung in the gospel of Nicodemus, where Christ is he <qui contrivit portas aeras, et vectes ferreos confregit>.⁹⁰ Milton's careful allocation of the classical roles of Cerberus, Charon and Aeneas to Sin, Death and Satan means that we should have some "true Hercules" to balance the equation. Where in the Aeneid this lies in the past, so in Paradise Lost it lies in the future.

When Satan and Death stand face to face on the brink of an epic battle, Milton intervenes to point to the greater foe who one day will defeat them both (my italics):

So frownd the mighty Combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at thir frown, so matchd they stood
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe: and now great deeds
Had been achiev'd, whereof all Hell had rung...

II.719-22.

In romance terms this hardly flatters the two opponents; but it anticipates Christ who will destroy both "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" and the "last enemy...death".⁹¹ Why however should a confirmed Protestant such as Milton take a dubious pseudepigraphical text such as the Gospel of Nicodemus (acceptable to a medieval Catholic such as Dante) as his authority? After all in book III the

⁹⁰Psalm 24.7, Matthew 16.18; Gospel of Nicodemus in The Apocryphal New Testament, 2nd ed., London, Reeves s.d., chs.13-20; J.Monnier, La Descente aux Enfers, Paris 1905.

⁹¹Authorized Version, Hebrews 2.14; I Corinthians 15.26.

description of the Son's resurrection and triumph does not hint at a Catholic or Dantesque Harrowing of Hell. Professor Schaar, who first shows how the encounter at the gates of Hell evokes the fifth-century gospel, suggests that though Milton might reject the doctrine he finds it acceptable literary material.⁹² But is Milton not more subtle? What more fitting place could there be for a false doctrine (even if it shadows forth a greater truth) than Hell itself? Just as in the Inferno even Dante's messaggiero celeste adopts a classical form and cites classical instances, so the apocryphal falsehood of the Gospel of Nicodemus is as near the truth as Hell can come.

⁹²C.Schaar, The Full Voic'd Quire Below, Lund 1982, pp.26-8.

CHAPTER 1. Appendix 1

Pierio Valeriano's Account of the Viper Woman.

Ioannes Pierius Valerianus, Hieroglyphica Sive De Sacris Aegyptiorum, Aliarumque Gentium Literis Commentarii, Paris, Apud Bartholomaeum Honoraty 1579, f.108v, gives the following account^{of} this Libyan monster in his chapter on the Viper. The original can be found in Dio Chrysostom, Dicourses (vol.1), ed.J.W.Cohoon, <Loeb Classical Library> 1949, V, A Libyan Myth, pp.236-49.

Eius vero monstri natura faciemque forma esse huiusmodi conspicuam: corpus quidem muliebre: idque admodum formosum, lasciue tumentes papillae, totumque pectus ac cervix pulcherrima, colore cutis nitidissimo: mira ab eius oculis prosiliebat hilaritas, quae intuentem quemlibet in amorem procliviter alliceret: reliquum autem corporis horridum, & squamarum scabritie asperum & intractabile: inferne demum in longum anguem desinebat: cuius caput in extrema parte positum acre admodum esset & mordacissimum: alis non esse praeditum, sed sphyngis instar factum, neque tamen eloqui, vt illae faciunt, sed draconium in morem sibilum tantum aedere acutissimum...vnum hominem dolo tantum blanditiisque adoriuntur, & superant, vtpote quae pectoribus tam amabilibus ostentatis. Spectatores vti praestigiis implicant, fallacissimosque amoris laqueos intentant conciliandis congressibus admodum idoneae in hos quippe cum inciderint, nullum cient tumultum, nihil hostile minantur, immotae vero manent oculis interni ad terram magna cum modestia deiectis, instar speciosae lepidaeque foeminae ad colloqui congressum inuitant, lenociniisque omnibus alliciunt: simul ac vero quis, vt voluptuosorum hominum imprudentia est, cominus accesserit, extemplo eum arripiunt, iniectis quas aduncis vngvibus praeditas habent manibus, tamdiu prius occultatis, quoad praedae capiundae oblata sit occasio: insurgit extemplo serpens a tergo aggressus, apprehensumque lethali morsu transfigit, venenoque immisso necate vestigio, mox cadauer miserabile serpens & ferae ipsae laetantes vna socialiter depascuntur.

The same anecdote is repeated and illustrated in Cartari, Imagini delli Dei De Gl'Antichi, Venice, Presso il Tomasini 1647 (reprinted Graz 1963), p.157.

CHAPTER 1. Appendix 2: Milton, Spenser and Renaissance Viper Lore.

The relevance of classical and Renaissance Viper lore to the portraits of Spenser's Errour and Milton's Sin was first shown by Professor Steadman in three articles in Philological Quarterly 39 (1960), Modern Language Review 56 (1961) and Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 62 (1961). This appendix reassesses the classical sources, looks at zoological and popular Renaissance texts and tries to determine the state of Renaissance viperology and scientific attitude of the time to such well established lore.

This popular view of the female Viper's conduct to her spouse and the retaliation wrought by the young was available to the Renaissance from two basic classical sources:

- 1) Nicander, Theriaca in Poems and Poetical Fragments, eds. A.S.F.Gow and A.F.Scholfield, CUP 1953, ll.138-4. Renaissance editions of Nicander included a latin translation: Nicandri Verteris Poetae Et Medici Theriaca Et Alexipharmaca, Cum Scholiis, Interprete Iohanne Lonicero, Cologne, Opera Iohan. Soteris 1531, p.9:

Quando coeunte cum foemina echide, pernicioso & furibundo dente impetuosa mordicus inhaerens, caput sui coniugis abscidit. At ubi uitae primordia habuerint echiees, partusque appetiuerit tempus, parentis sui interitum ulciscuntur, quoniam illi mollicula matris suae aluo corrosa, vel orbi matre sua nascuntur.

- 2) Herodotus, Historiae, III.109: < τῷ γονεῖ τιμωρόντα ἐστὶ ἐν [τῇ] γαστρὶ ἔοντα τὰ τέκνα διεσθίει τὴν μητέρα, διαφαγόντα δὲ τὴν νηδὺν αὐτῆς οὕτω τὴν ἐκδυσιν ποιεῖται >.

In the Historia Naturalis Pliny only repeats the first legend: <viperae mas inserit in os, quod illa abrodit dulcedine> (X.82), but the other is mentioned by Servius, Georgics III.414: <Vipera autem species est serpentis quae vi pariat. Nam corosis eius lateribus exeunt pulli cum matris interitu>. Isidore of Seville, Etymologiarum sive Originum, ed.W.M.Lindsay, OUP 1911, XII.iv.10-12, gives a detailed description:

Nam et cum venter eius ad partum ingemuerit, catuli non expectantes maturam naturae solutionem conrosis eius lateribus vi erumpunt cum matris interitu...Fertur autem quod masculus ore inserto viperae semen expuat; illa autem ex voluptate libidinis in rabiem versa caput

maris ore receptum praecidit. Ita fit ut parens
uterque pereat; masculus dum coit, dum parturit,
femina.

This is repeated in an important medieval text such as
Brunetto Latini's Li Livres dou Tresor, ed. F.J.Carmody,
Geneva, Slatkine 1975, p.135:

Et quant si faon on vie et k'il en voelent issir, lors
desrompent et brisent a fine force le cors de lor mere,
et vont hors, en tel maniere que son pere et sa mere
meurent par aus.

Christoforo Landino's commentary on Virgil in Virgilii Opera
cum commentariis quinque, Venice, per Bartolomeum de Zanis de
Portesio, 31.VII.1493, cites Herodotus:

Ait enim Herodo[tus] quod in coitu mas caput in os
foeminae immittit: at ipsa in emissione seminis illud
percidit: foeta vero vipera non parturit: sed catuli
lacerata matrice per ilia erumpunt.

During the Renaissance even zoological studies of the Viper
treat such lore with caution, but do not challenge it.

Pandolfo Collenuccio, De Vipera Libellus, Venice, Io. Petrus
Quarenngius Bergomas, Eidibus Iunii 1506, and Baldo Angelo
Abati, De Amirabili Viperae Natura, et De Mirificis Eiusdem
Facultatibus Liber, Urbino, Apud Bartholomeum Ragusum 1589,
both cite the tradition, the latter stating (p.6):

cum enim venter Viperae ad partum intumesceret, eius
Catuli non expectantes maturam partus solutionem,
corrosis lateribus, erumpere existimabantur cum matris
interitu.

Both these works reproduce (with minor variants) a curious
poem on the Viper's mating and death attributed to one Aurelio
Clemente.

Si licet exemplis uti sic uipera (ut aiunt)
Dentibus emoritur fusae per viscera prolis
Mater morte sua non sexu fertilis aut de
Concubitu distenta uterum: sed cum calet igni
Percita foemineo: moriturum obscoena maritum
Ore sitit patulo: caput inferit ille trilingue
Coniugis in fauces atque oscula fervidus intrat.
Insinuans oris coitu genitale venenum
Nupta voluptatis ui saucia mordicus haustum
Frangit amatoris; blanda inter foedera guttur
Infusaque bibit caro pereunte salivas
His pater illecebris consumitur: at gentricem
Clausula necat soboles. Nam postquam semine adulto
Incipiunt calidis corpuscula parva latebris
Serpere; motatusque uterum vibrata ferire.

Aestuatur interno feritatis crimine mater
 Carnificemque gemit damnati conscia sexus
 Progeniem septi rumpentem obstacula partus:
 Nam quia nascendi nullus patet exitus: alius
 Foetibus in lucem nitentibus excruciat
 Carpitur atque viam lacerata per ilia pandit.
 Tandem obitu altricis prodit; grex ille dolemus
 Ingressum vitae vix eluctatus & ortum
 Per scelus exculpens: lambunt natale cadaver
 Reptantis catuli; proles dum nascitur orba.
 Haud experta diem; misere nisi postuma matri.

These stories were still commonplace in Milton's day, see Edward Topsell, The History of Serpents. Or, the second Book of living Creatures: Wherein Is Contained Their Divine, Natural, and Moral descriptions, with their lively Figures, Names, Conditions, Kindes, and Natures of all venomous Beasts: with their severall Poysons and Antidotes: their deep hatred to Mankinde, and the wonderful work of God in their Creation, and Destruction, London, Printed by E.Cotes 1658, p.800:

The Grecians say, that the Viper is called Echidna... because to her own death she beareth her young one in her belly; and therefore the Latines do also call it Vipera, quasi Vi pariat: because it dyeth by violence of her birth or young: and they attribute unto it venom and pestilence.

However Professor Steadman's valuable studies fail to emphasise the extent of classical and Renaissance scepticism, available from Renaissance editions of Aelian, De Animalium natura libri XVII. Petro Gillio Gallo & Conrado Gesnero Heluetio interpretibus, Cologne, s.n. 1616, book I, ch.24 De Viperae coitu & partu where Aelian cites Nicander or his source:

In ipso enim partu matris alium distrahant, & lacerant, perque disruptum ventrem erumpunt, vlciscentes patrem in hunc modum.

But in a later chapter the same author cites the authority of Theophrastus in a work no longer extant to argue that, though sometimes the belly of the viper might burst with the pressure of the young, they do not gnaw their way out. He also dismisses all Herodotus says as fables, see Aelian, On the Characteristics of Animals, ed. A.F.Scholfield, Loeb Classical Library, 1958, XV.16. This scepticism became standard in many medieval and Renaissance works: Albertus Magnus, De Animalibus Libri Viginti, Venice, Heirs of Octavian Scotto, 27.V.1519,

book XXV, cites Pliny and others on the viper, but dismisses all these authorities as lies. Therefore though Renaissance works continue to cite these popular legends about the viper, considerable scepticism also existed; cf. C.Gesner, De Serpentium Natura, 1587; J.Bustaminus, De Reptilibus Sacrae Scripturae; U.Aldovrandus, Serpentum et Draconum Historia, 1642.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO CHAPTER 1.

- 1) V.Cartari, Imagini delli Dei degli Antichi, Lyons, B.Honoraty 1583, f.232.
- 2) Florence, Santa Maria Novella: Nardo da Cione, Inferno, detail of Cerberus.
- 3) Ibid., detail of Charon.
- 4) Orvieto, Duomo, Cappella di San Brizio: Luca Signorelli, Inferno, detail of Charon.
- 5) Rome, Vatican, Sistine Chapel: Michelangelo Buonarotti, L'ultimo giudizio, detail of Charon.

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CHAPTER 2. PART I.

Milton's Reading of the "Orlando Innamorato".

From the top of a high mountain in Paradise Regained Satan, offering Christ an earthly realm and wishing to demonstrate the temporal power wielded by the kingdoms of this world, brings before the eyes of "our second Adam" [PR.III.301] the immense host gathered in the Parthian capital, Ctesiphon, to wage war against the Scythians "whose incursions wild | Have wasted Sogdiana" [PR.III.301-2,310-1]. Christ looks and sees "what numbers numberless | The city gates outpoured". The catalogue which follows is typical of Milton's erudition as he lists the many provinces which have contributed "their flower and choice" to the Parthian phalanxes. "From Arachosia, from Candaor East, | And Margiana to the ^eHyracanian cliffs | Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales, | From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains | Of Adiabene, Media, and the South | Of Susiana to Balsara's hav'n" [PR.III.316-21,322,330]. As if in a film being run at twice its usual speed the Parthians "in their forms of battle ranged" sweep forward with the way levelled before them by "the labouring pioneers". As the description builds up to its climax, Milton casts around for an army in history, myth or romance which can adequately compare with the hordes shown to Christ by the Tempter and selects, not the great hosts of Hannibal or Xerxes, nor "what resounds | In Fable or Romance of Uthers Son | Begirt with British and Armoric Knights", nor the Saracen host which overwhelmed "Charlemain with all his Peerage..| By Fontarabbia" [PL.I.579-81,585-7], but the forces

brought by the Tartar Emperor Agricane to the siege of Albracca in the Orlando Innamorato.

Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
 When Agrican with all his Northern powers
 Besieg'd Albracca, as Romances tell;
 The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
 The fairest of her Sex Angelica
 His daughter, sought by many Prowest Knights,
 Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemagne,
 Such and so numerous was their chivalry. III.337-44.

According to Boiardo Agricane brings to the siege of Albracca <Vintidue centenara di migliara | De cavallier>¹ to seize Angelica by force where more amorous methods have failed. In the poem's fantastic geography the empire of the Tartar Khan stretches from Mongolia to Scandinavia; but in the end neither the huge army nor Agricane's immense efforts prevail. He falls in an epic duel with Orlando and his hordes are dispersed to the four winds.

If allusion by one poet to the narrative of another constitutes poetic flattery, then in its time Milton's tribute to the Orlando Innamorato is unique. Moreover the sheer unexpectedness of such a compliment from a poet of Milton's standing at a critical juncture in his own "brief epic" perhaps deserves closer attention than it has hitherto attracted. The English poet often highlights the common ground shared by the Satanic legions in Paradise Lost and the armies of the Arthurian or Carolingian romances, but the specific allusion (despite the generic disclaimer of "as romances tell") to the huge battles before Albracca in Boiardo's first book argues a deep affection and real familiarity with the Orlando Innamorato.

The study of this simile must be postponed until the second part of this chapter, since I should first like to raise a rather different matter, the problem of deciding which version of the Orlando Innamorato was read by Milton, whether the original text of Boiardo, whether one of its sixteenth-century rifacimenti, or whether the English poet was familiar with more than one version of the same Italian chivalric poem. The few critical studies on Milton which discuss the Orlando Innamorato always refer to Boiardo's original text (mostly in modern critical editions hardly available in seventeenth-century London, remarkable city though it was), and fail to consider that the Renaissance form of any text can be radically different, not just in the accompanying paraphernalia, but in its very substance. Although passages from Berni's rifacimento are cited in Milton's Commonplace Book, none of these critical studies has thought to mention it or to set aside their unshakeable preference for modern editions of Boiardo's original.²

There is no tradition of studies on the wider influence

¹ M.M.Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I.x.26, cf.ix.38-40.

² A.Allodoli, Grandezza e novità del Boiardo, Rinascita, III, 1940, pp.3-70; A.H.Gilbert, A Parallel between Milton and Boiardo, Italica, XX, 1943, pp.132-4; B.Lewalski, Milton's Brief Epic, London, Methuen 1966, p.267; Idem, Milton's Revaluations of Romance in Four Essays on Romance, ed. Herschel Baker, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1971, pp.57-71; A.M.Patterson, "Paradise Regained": A Last Chance at True Romance, Milton Studies, XVII, 1983, pp.187-208; cf. J.V.Mirollo, La fortuna del Boiardo in Inghilterra (e in America) in Il Boiardo e la critica contemporanea, a cura di G.Anceschi, Florence, Olschki (Biblioteca dell'Archivium Romanicum 107) 1970, pp.319-27.

exercised by Boiardo's poem, for the obvious reason that any such influence is often almost indistinguishable from its more popular continuation by Lodovico Ariosto. At the end of the last century Pio Rajna commented ironically on the fortunes of Boiardo's poem,³ but from the important edition of Panizzi in 1830-1 up to the present the welcome return to the original text has often been accompanied by the critical assertion, which I shall show to be imprecise, that from the second half of the sixteenth up to the beginning of the nineteenth century the dominant form of the Orlando Innamorato was Berni's rifacimento. What was the real shape and substance of the Orlando Innamorato available to and read by Milton?

In the Libreria Doni could well complain that <è dilettrato a molti il rassettare, ornare; o veramente guastare e storpiare l'Innamoramento d'Orlando, del Conte di Scandiano, il qual libro è mirabile>,⁴ but his was a voice crying in the wilderness. The emergence of Tuscan in the early sixteenth century as the real Italian lingua franca and the censures directed at the linguistic imperfections and dialect forms of many non-Florentine writers, which in Ariosto's case led to

³P.Rajna, L'Orlando Innamorato del Boiardo in La Vita Italiana nel Rinascimento: Conferenze tenute a Firenze nel 1892, Milano, Fratelli Treves 1918, pp.20-35: 205:

<C'è di peggio. Il Boiardo della tradizione comune ha come l'aria di un somarello dal pelo arruffato, pieno di guidaleschi, che se ne va trotterellando alla meglio, indegno di attirare gli sguardi, finchè un buffone - Francesco Berni mi scusi - non è colto dal ghiribizzo di balzargli sul dorso, e, messolo a corsa a forza di scudisciate, non si da ad eseguire su quella cavalcatura ogni sorta di smorfie e capestrerie>.

⁴La Libreria del Doni Fiorentino, divisa in Tre Trattati, Venice, appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari 1558, p.81.

the extensive revision of the Orlando Furioso between 1516 and 1532, brought many prominent literary figures of the time, including Pietro Aretino, Teofilo Folengo and Lodovico Dolce,⁵ to consider revising Boiardo's poem. Evidently the process did not have to stop at the linguistic purging of the objectionable elements, but could be extended to the injection of new material reminiscent of Ariosto's masterpiece, which even in the 1516 and 1521 editions had established itself as the to be aspired to poetic. This is the real purpose of Francesco Berni's rifacimento, probably completed by 1531 (though only published in 1542 in dubious circumstances after Berni's death in 1535), which apart from the linguistic Tuscanizzazione consciously "improves" and allegorizes Boiardo's original.⁶

In 1545 a further rimaneggiamento (including the three

⁵G.Ferrario, Storia ed analisi degli antichi Romanzi di Cavalleria e dei poemi romanzeschi d'Italia, Milan, tipografia dell'autore 1828, vol.II, p.215; A.Virgili, Francesco Berni, Florence, Le Monnier 1881, pp.303-5.

⁶Orlando Innamorato Già Dal S.Matteo Maria Boiardo Conte di Scandiano. Et hora rifatto tutto di nuovo da M.Francesco Berni, Venice, Eredi di Giunta 1545 (hereafter Berni). In current parlance the linguistic revision is termed a rimaneggiamento and anything more extensive a rifacimento. A third category of rafazzonamento is self-explanatory. See M.Belsani, I rifacimenti dell' Innamorato, Studi di letteratura italiana, IV, 1902, pp.311-403, V, 1903, pp.1-56; E.B.Weaver, Francesco Berni's 'rifacimento' of the "Orlando Innamorato": why and how, Pacific Coast Philology, X, 1975, pp.53-8; Idem, The Spurious Text of Francesco Berni's Revision of Matteo Maria Boiardo's Orlando Innamorato, Modern Philology, LXXV, 1977, pp.111-31; Idem, Erotic Language and Imagery in Francesco Berni's 'Rifacimento', Modern Language

books by Nicolò degli Agostini which had been printed together with Boiardo's original since 1521) was prepared by the polygraph Lodovico Domenichi for the Venetian printer Girolamo Scotto. Since after the editions of 1541-2 and 1545 no more editions of the Berni rifacimento were printed until 1725 (possibly because Berni's name appeared on the Index Librorum Prohibitorum⁷), Domenichi's version, which confined itself (though often very inconsistently) to linguistic revision, in fact became the usual form of the Orlando Innamorato for over a century, completely displacing both the original and Berni's rifacimento.⁸ Thus any comparative study on Milton and the Orlando Innamorato is spoilt for choice (even without considering the various continuations) between the claims of the original text (very scarce), Berni's rifacimento (well known and admired, but not read) and Domenichi's rimaneggiamento (leaden and pedantic, but successful).

Fortunately two circumstances allow us to find a solution. First, Milton might have owned a copy of the Domenichi

⁶(continued)

Notes, IC, 1984, pp.80-100; F.H.Woodhouse, Language and Style in a Renaissance Epic: Berni's Corrections to Boiardo's 'Orlando Innamorato', London, MHRA 1982.

⁷See Appendix 1.

⁸Orlando Innamorato Del Signor Matteo Maria Boiardo Conte di Scandiano, insieme co i tre libri di Nicolo de gli Agostini, nuouamente riformato per M.Lodovico Domenichi, Venice, Appresso Girolamo Scotto 1545. Further editions (all printed in Venice) are: Scotto 1545, 1546-7, 1548-9, 1553; Bartholomeo detto l'Imperatore 1550, 1554; Comin da Trino 1553, 1559, 1560, 1565; Alessandro da Viano 1562, 1566; Vincenzo Vianni 1571-2, 1574; cf. note 22.

revision printed in Venice in 1608 (now owned by the University of Illinois), but the inscription on the fly-leaf may well be spurious.⁹ Second, and more helpfully, we can decide whether Milton read the original text, Berni's rifacimento, Domenichi's rimaneggiamento, or some combination (even if we cannot identify an individual edition), by comparing the various texts with the four citations from the Orlando Innamorato in Milton's Commonplace Book, where materials from the poet's reading were collected and ordered under various headings for future reference.

The Commonplace Book was rediscovered only in the last century and is now in the British Library.¹⁰ The entries are from two different periods of Milton's life, one autograph and the other three in an elegant hand labelled "Amanuensis A" by J.H.Hanford,¹¹ who also dated the autograph entry at

⁹Orlando Innamorato Del S.Matteo Maria Boiardo, Conte di Scandiano. Insieme Co I Tre Libri Di M.Niccolo de gli Agostini, già riformati per M.Lodovico Domenichi, Venice, Appresso Domenico Imberti 1608. The inscription reads: "Bought at Venyce by Mr. Francis Gherard | for Daniel Oxenbridge and by hym sent to his good | Freynd Mr. John Milton, in London, p. the Golden Lyon, | Thomas Whiting, Mr., the 19th June, 1643, in Lyvorne"; cf. W.R.Parker, Milton: A Biography, Oxford, University Press 1968, p.861.

¹⁰British Library: Mss.Add.36354. The Columbia, which transcribes each entry in the original language (not always accurately) with an English translation in parenthesis, offers only incomplete notes on erasures and corrections. The Yale only offers a translation supported by ample footnotes.

¹¹J.H.Hanford, The Chronology of Milton's Private Studies Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XXXVI, 1921, pp.251-314: 280-1. Hanford's nomenclature is followed by the editors of the Yale. No identity has been

approximately 1644. In view of the propaganda battles Milton was to fight in future years this entry (see ill. 1) has a prophetic quality, since it shows Milton gathering material on the true nature and duties of kingship, citing not Boiardo, but one of the proems added by Berni to the first book.

vide etiam Orland. § inamorat. | del Berni Cant. 7. stanz. 3^x
 un re se vuole il suo debito fare, non è re veramente | ma
 fattore del popolo &c. ¹²

The other three entries were dated by Hanford as around 1650, years when Milton's failing eyesight made him increasingly dependent on the labours of others. An interesting feature of the entry from the Orlando Innamorato in the section on Aulici is that it shows Milton or his amanuensis commenting on and comparing different texts of the poem. Berni's rifacimento is set against some other version of the text, which the amanuensis (and Milton) attribute to Boiardus Poeta Italus (see ill. 2).

Aulicorum bene merita citò frigescere ostendit lepidis
 versibus Boiardus Poeta | Italus in Orlando Innamorato.
 1.2. Cant. 21^{mo}.

Ogni servir di Cortigiano
 La sera e grata e la mattina e vano.

his addit ejus reformator Bernia Hetruscus

Si suole in Spagna un certo detto usare
 (Certo quegli Spagnoli han di bei'tratti)

¹¹ (continued)

found for Amanuensis A, whose hand is known only from these three entries. Hanford suggests that the sonnet copied out on p. 28 of Milton's copy of Della Casa's Rime et Prose, Venice, D. Farri 1563, now in the New York Public Library, is in the same hand (see Columbia XVIII.345).

¹² Milton, Commonplace Book, f. 182; Columbia XVIII.174; Yale I.439; Berni, I.vii.3.

Ch'un servizio val piu che s'habbia a fare,
Che cento mila milion de fatti.¹³

The distinction in this passage between Boiardus Poeta Italus and the reformator Bernia Hetruscus indicates some understanding of the salient points in the debate over the language in sixteenth-century Italy. A brief comparison of the various readings for the first line in the original text and the rifacimenti shows that the first text, supposedly by Boiardo, in fact comes from the Domenichi version.

Boiardo: Pero che ogni servire in cortesano
Berni: Non sapea che'l servir di cortigiano
Domenichi: Pero che ogni servir di cortigiano

Even though we cannot identify the specific edition, we should note two important points: firstly that there is no evidence that Milton knew Boiardo's poem in its original form, therefore any comparative study using a modern critical text of the Orlando Innamorato could be risking dangerous inaccuracies;¹⁴ secondly the amanuensis (possibly under Milton's instructions) was reading the poem with some care to separate Berni's additions from what was believed to be by Boiardo.¹⁵ Therefore it seems all the more surprising that

¹³Milton, Commonplace Book, f.187; Columbia XVIII.188; Yale I.463; M.M.Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.xxi.37.

¹⁴Even before the end of the sixteenth century Boiardo's original text was extremely rare, as can be shown by a letter from Giovanni Vincenzo Pinello to Aldo Manutius asking him to obtain a copy on his behalf, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Autografi Manuziani, E.34.Inf.f.93r, cited in G.Melzi-P.A.Tosi, Bibliografia di Romanzi di Cavalleria, Milan, G.Daelli e C. Editori 1865, pp.94-5.

¹⁵This is a feature of Milton's reading in Italian. Another
(Footnote continued)

when making an entry under De Maladicientia on leaf 77 of the Commonplace book the amanuensis should erroneously attribute to Boiardo the proem Berni added to book II canto 21 (see ill. 3).

Belli sunt imprimis versiculi isti quibus Poeta Italus Boiardus in Orlando Inamorato, lib: | 2^{di} cantum 21^{mum} incipit, [contra maledicen] monetq prudenter [de maledicendi | am vide] ne quis temere [mal] | cuiquam maledicat.

Chi ha troppo al parlar la lingua sciolta,
Com'ho gia detto, [molto] <spesso> se ne pente
Che colui di chi [pende] parla, stà tal volta
Dietro ad un uscio, & ogni cosa sente,
E quando non v'e altri, Iddio l'ascolta,
Iddio che tien la parte d'ogni gente
E serba la vendetta dell'offeso
Quando v'e m[al] <en> pensato, e men atteso.

Sempre si vuol favellar con rispetto
D'ogniuno, e de gli absenti [a (?)] <sopra> tutto
Ne voler per non perdere un bel detto
Guadagnar qualche scherzo, et fatto brutto,
Che molte volte l'huom si trova stretto,
Anzi riman com'un pesce all'asciutto,
Quando egli e sopraggiunto al improvviso,
E si dipigne in mille fogge il viso¹⁶

Why, given the care shown to attribute authorship correctly elsewhere, should Milton or the amanuensis make a mistaken

¹⁵ (continued)

entry in the Commonplace Book, f.182, comments on the suppression of passages in Boccaccio's Vita di Dante by the Inquisition (see ill.1), Columbia XVIII.174; Yale I.438-9:

authoritatē regiam a Papā non dependere scripsit
Dantes florentinus in eo libro cui est titulo Monarchia
| quem librū Cardinalis del Poggietto tanquam scriptū
Haereticu comburi curavit | ut testat' Boccatus in
vita Dantis Editione priore nā e posteriori mentio
istius | rei omnis est delata ab inquisitione.

¹⁶ Milton, Commonplace Book, f.77; Columbia XVIII.145; Yale I.391; Berni, II.xxi.1-2. Erasures are indicated in italics between square parenthesis, i.e. [male], insertions are indicated between quotation marks, i.e. <sopra>.

attribution here? The explanation is simple and the blame can be laid on a Venetian printer called Michel Bonelli, a scion of the large printing family of the same name, who in about 1573 set up his own operation. The following year he issued what he claims in the printer's introduction is his first publication in proprio, an edition of Domenichi's rimaneggiamento in ottavo with new allegories and prefatory material furnished by the printer and based largely on the editions of Ariosto of the same period.¹⁷ In 1576 the same printer brought out another edition which according to the title-page is still the Domenichi revision. However, under the pretext of restoring the text to its original integrity¹⁸ and in fact plagiarising passages (in particular the proems) from the Berni rifacimento, he in reality produces what is to all intents and purposes a new rimaneggiamento, or rather rafazzonamento.

It seems likely that the rafazzonatore was no other than the printer himself, who possibly desired to make a name for himself as a man of letters. The sonnet Cantate o Ninfe by Antonio Cammelli da Pistoia, which had originally offered

¹⁷ See appendix 2c; f.a2r:

Et se forse nella stampa vi si vedesse errore, mi farete degno di scusa, essendo questa la prima opera da me stampata, sperando che (come si suol dire) io uadi sempre per l'auenire migliorando in ogni altra, oue che il principio è picciolo, & debole.

¹⁸ See appendix 2g; f.a2r:

percioche è mio costume di migliorar le Opere in quanto ch'io posso, desiderando di dargli la sua perfettione, & ridurlo alla sua integra bontà, non ho risparmiato nè fatica, nè spesa. Si è dunque riueduto tutto con gran miglioramento [...] & in tai luoghi ritrouato mancarui per fino dodici stanze, & oue quatro, e sei, e più, e manco, come leggendo si potrà uedere [...] si come incontrandolo con gli altri per auanti stampati si potrà uedere.

comfort and advice to Camillo Boiardo, the son of Matteo Maria, appears in a revised (and badly botched) form on leaf a7^r, signed M.(ichel) B.(onelli) V.(eneziano).¹⁹ Since the extent of the revision increases as we progress through the poem (there is only one proem pirated from Berni in the first book compared to fifteen in the second), it appears probable that the revisions were carried out as the work went through the press. On examination they prove to be very poor stuff. Sometimes changes even ignore the rhymes already present in the octave. The reviser worked through Domenichi's rimaneggiamento not only according to his own critical lights (and a convenient copy of Berni's rifacimento), but from time to time he may have consulted an edition of Boiardo's original text as well.

These revisions curiously illustrate the continuing consequences of the moral climate of post-Tridentine Italy for secular literature. What had been written in the laxer atmosphere of the turn of the century and only received a light face-lift in the 1540s from Lodovico Domenichi is rigidly excluded or reworked in the 1570s. The results can be comical, especially in the three books by Nicolò degli Agostini where (without Berni as a useful crib) the rafazzonatore had to depend on his own limited invention. The

¹⁹The last three lines become <Non pianger più, non t'oscurar Tranquillo, | Che'l gran Signor MATTEOMARIA risplende, | Nel ciel con l'onorato suo Vesillo ?>, which is mere gibberish; cf. A.Cappelli-S.Ferrari, Rime edite ed inedite di Antonio Cammelli detto il Pistoia, Livorno, Francesco Vigo editore 1884, p.54.

most amusing example to my mind is the wedding night of Ruggiero and Bradamante in the fourth book. In contrast to the protracted agonies of the Orlando Furioso (where the wedding of the couple is delayed for forty-six cantos), Ruggiero stumbles on Bradamante in the company of Fiordelisa (exactly as Boiardo left them at the end of the Orlando Innamorato), Bradamante reveals her true sex and identity, the Spanish princess rushes off in tears and that very night the progenitors of the Este dynasty, after plighting their troth, vigorously consummate their marriage under the light of the stars, a scene where Nicolò spares us few details. Lodovico Domenichi had prudently omitted the most compromising stanza²⁰ from the account of the couple's pleasures, but left untouched the essential description of how <Cosi tutta la notte sollazzaro | Senza dormir, & riposar niente>. Bonelli substitutes for the sexual ecstasies a rather less exciting <Parlar d'Amore, e di cavalleria>, which seems to keep the

²⁰ Il quarto Libro, VII.48, in Tutti li Libri de Orlando Innamorato. Del còte de Scandiano Mattheo Maria Boiardo, Milan, Rocho & Fratello da Valle ad Instantia de Meser Nicollo da Gorgonzola, 2.VI.1518. To save the reader's curiosity going unassuaged, I shall quote the relevant stanza (the punctuation is mine).

Ma nel scoccar de la balestra lei
 "ahime!", grida, "ahime! ch'io moro!
 ahimè! ch'io moro! miserere mei!
 dolce speranza, mio charo thesoro!
 io moro de dolceza! ome! omei!
 ahimè! ch'io me disfacio! ahimè! m'acoro!"
 e mentre che a rugier dicea questo,
 la posta redoppiava e trasse el resto.

On the continuations, see R.Bruscagli, Ventura ed inchiesta fra Boiardo e Ariosto in Stagioni della civiltà Estense, Pisa, Nistri-Listri 1983, pp.87-126.

protagonists equally happy (but how disappointing for the reader!), and tells how <Cosi tutta la notte via passaro | Con ragionar senza dormir più niente>. A wit might wonder if the transition from action to conversation is not symbolic of the whole age!

It seems almost a shame that so enterprising a printer should not have enjoyed greater success (though this would certainly have meant the decimation of further texts). Apart from the editions of the Orlando Innamorato, the British Museum Italian Short Title Catalogue and Pastorello only list another six works from the press of Michel Bonelli between 1573 and 1576.²¹ But since all the editions of the Domenichi revision after 1576 in fact follow his text,²² Michel Bonelli should perhaps be remembered by posterity as the man who unwittingly made a fool of John Milton's amanuensis.

The explanation of the error in Milton's Commonplace Book should by now be clear. Among the proems from Berni plagiarised by Bonelli and substituted for Boiardo's original were the opening two stanzas of book II, canto 21. Finding the text in both the rifacimento and what, he, she or Milton treated as the original Orlando Innamorato, the amanuensis

²¹Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in Italy and of Italian Books printed in Other Countries from 1465 to 1600 now in the British Museum, London, Trustees of the British Museum 1958, p.791; E.Pastorello, Tipografi, editori, librai a Venezia nel secolo XVI, Florence, Olschki 1924, notes five which are listed in the hand-list left in the Marciana, cf. Appendix 1.

²²All printed in Venice: Zoppini 1580, 1584; Alberti 1588; Imberti 1602, 1608, 1611, 1623; Miloco 1618; Brigna 1655; Prodotti 1676.

assigned the passage to Boiardo, whereas other texts found only in the Berni rifacimento he or she assigned correctly to the Florentine poet.

However the stanzas copied into the Commonplace Book are still not an exact transcription of any of the printed texts available. A comparison of the variants shows that the procedure of the amanuensis (probably under Milton's instructions) was to compare the two texts and choose the best alternative. The following table of variants (based on the 1608 Imberti) shows the most important differences between the three texts.

<u>line</u>	<u>CP.</u>	<u>Berni</u> (1545)	<u>Imberti</u> (1608)
2	Com'ho gia detto	(Com'ho già detto)	Com'ho già detto
2	[<u>molto</u>] spesso	spesso	molto
3	stà	sta	stà
8	men atteso	meno atteso	men'atteso
10	absenti	absenti	aþenti
13	stretto	stretto	spento
14	pesce	pesce	preso (α)
15	egli e	gliè	gliè (β)
16	sopraggiunto	sopraggiunto	sopraggiunto
16	dipigne	dipigne	dipinge (γ) ²³

23

(α) 1576, 1580, 1584 pesce; 1588 pese.

(β) 1576, 1580, 1584, 1588 egli è.

(γ) 1576 dinpinge.

The 1608 also has a compositor's error in line 11: voelr for voler. To save Milton from complete embarrassment I should add that (in the absence of a critical edition of Nicolò degli Agostini) modern critics are in danger of making the same mistake. One example is M. Tomalin, The Fortunes of the Warrior Heroine in Italian Literature, Ravenna, Longo 1982, who cites the 1548-9 Scotto edition of Domenichi's rimaneggiamento for books IV-VI.

This is hardly conclusive evidence, since most of the differences can be explained by carelessness on the part of the amanuensis. For instance how much Italian did he or she know? Presumably a little. Nonetheless it does seem that the amanuensis was comparing the two texts and exercising his/her own judgement. It is also possible (though more unlikely) that the passage was dictated from memory without reference to the printed texts and then corrected (the large number of corrections might confirm this). Further speculation seems idle, unless some new fact such as the real identity of "Amanuensis A" emerges. What is evident is that once or twice Berni's version is preferred to that believed to be by Boiardo, i.e. the deliberate substitution of spesso for molto and the preference for the more Tuscan dipigne instead of dipinge. This process would have been encouraged (if the edition in question is the 1608) by the patently incorrect non-rhyme in line 14 preso instead of pesce.

This interpretation of the amanuensis' error is confirmed by the final citation from Berni's rifacimento in the section of the Commonplace Book dedicated to the evils of lying (see ill. 4).

Similiter Bernia Hetruscus, poeta nobilis in Orlando
inamorato l.2. Canto 20. | stanz:2.

La verità e bella ne per tema
Si debbe mai tacer, ne per vergogna.
Quando la forza e l'importanz*a* prema
Tal volta avien che dirla non bisogna,
Per fittion non cresce il ver ne scema,
Ne sempre occulto è d[e]*i* chiamar menzogna,
Anzi valente molte volte viene
Et savio detto quel che occulto il tiene.
D'ambe due queste parti d[e]*i* prudentia²⁴
Il figliuol di Laerte esempio danne &c.

This passage was not purloined by Bonelli and thus Milton or his amanuensis assigned it to its correct source.

Naturally one would wish that a poet of Milton's genius should have been able to know Boiardo in the original instead of the butchered texts of the Renaissance rifacimenti, but if we look at the comments on language and correctness in Milton's own writings we find that he shares the prejudices of the rifacitori. For a period of his life he was after all a schoolmaster (with Italian in the curriculum) and schoolmasters always tend to be more exacting in linguistic matters than other people. In his letter to the Florentine academician and philologist Benedetto Buonmattei, who at the time was preparing a weighty tome on the Italian language,²⁵ Milton places the grammarian <qui loquendi scribendique rationem & normam probo gentis saeculo receptam, praeceptis regulisque sancire adnititur>²⁶ second only to the wise statesman. In the Apology for Smectymnuus (1642) he comments waspishly on Bishop Hall's mastery of the English language and selects an appropriate Italian analogy.

I rather encline, as I have heard it observ'd, that a Jesuits Italian when he writes, is ever naught, though he be borne and bred a Florentine, so to thinke, that from like causes we may go neere to observe the same in the style of a Prelat.²⁷

Milton's own poetical ambitions were equally directed towards

²⁴Milton, Commonplace Book, f.71; Columbia XVIII.142; Yale I.385-6; cf. Berni, II.xx.1-2.

²⁵B.Buonmattei, Della lingua toscana...libri due, impressione terza, Florence, Zanobi Pignoni 1643.

²⁶Columbia XII.3. Letter of the 10th September 1638.

²⁷Columbia III.287; Yale I.874.

the enrichment of his native tongue and in the Reason of Church Government (1641) he had even cited "that resolution which Ariosto follow'd against the perswasions of Bembo",²⁸ an allusion to the well-known (if most likely apocryphal) story that when Bembo asked Ariosto why he did not write his great poem in Latin, the latter replied "that he had rather be one of the principall & chiefe Thuscan writers, then scarce the second or third among the Latines".²⁹ We are left with an anomaly. A great English poet whose view of an Emilian original is blinkered by Tuscan spectacles, on the one hand through a famous, if little read, rifacimento, on the other hand by a lesser known, but successful, rimaneggiamento further corrupted by the brief commercial career of a obscure Venetian printer. This means that any comparative study of Paradise Lost and the Orlando Innamorato (such as part II of this chapter) must proceed with great caution. However the textual lesson is clear. To define the influence of the Orlando Innamorato on Milton (and the same is most likely true of Spenser) we must make our principal text Berni's rifacimento. The original text can only be used with caution

²⁸ Columbia III.236; Yale I.811.

²⁹ Sir John Harington, Life of Ariosto in Orlando Furioso In English Heroical Verse, London, printed by G. Miller for J. Parker 1634, pp. 414-23: 417. The story originates from G. B. Pigna, Romanzi... Ne quali della Poesia, & della vita dell'Ariosto con nuouo modo si tratta, Venice, appresso Vincenzo Valgrisi 1554, pp. 74-5.

Da questa impresa volendo il Bembo leuarlo, con dirgli che egli piu atto era allo scrivere Latino che al Volgare; & che maggiore in quello che in questo si scoprirebbe; dissegli all'incontro l'Ariosto che piu tosto volea essere vno de primi tra scrittori Thoscani, che appena il secondo tra Latini: soggiungendogli che ben egli sentiuà à che piu il suo genio il piegasse.

and within the scope defined by the Berni rifacimento and the latter rafazzonamento.

CHAPTER 2. PART I. Appendix 1.

Note on Berni's "rifacimento" and the Index.

Berni's works are included in the first Index Avctorum, et librorum qui ab officio Sanctae Rom. & uniuersalis Inquisitionis caueri ab omnibus, & singulis in universa Christiana Republica mandantur, sub censuris contra legentes, uel tenentes libros prohibitos in Bulla, quae lecta est in Coena Domini expressis, & sub aliis poenis in Decreto eiusdem Sacri Officii contentis, s.l., MDLIX, Mense Martij. In the list of <certorum auct. Libri prohibiti> we find both <Bernae Francisci carmina omnia> and <Francisci Bernae Poemata Italica>, as well as <Alcuni importanti luoghi tradotti fuor delle Epistole latine di M.Francesco Petrarca: &c. con tre sonetti suoi, & 18 Stanze del Bernia, auanti il XX. Canto, &c>; see A.Virgili, op.cit., pp.352-409. Berni's name was removed in the next issue of the Index. On the 3rd Sept. 1546 Troian de Navò for printing among other works the 1540 and 1545 editions of Berni's Opere and the booksellers Benedetto Bindoni, Tomaso di Trau and Paulo Girardo for having copies in stock had been condemned and fined by the Esecutori contro la bestemmia. The records note that since the works in question <si die considerar come opere inhoneste et di pessimo exemplo, fu terminato che non si debbino esse opere né stampare, né vendere>, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Esec. contro la best., Notatorio; Busta 56, vol.1, c.64r. See G.Pesenti, Libri Censurati a Venezia nei secoli XVI-XVII, Bibliofilia, LVIII, 1956, pp.15-30; P.F.Grendler, The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605, Princeton, University Press 1977, p.116. Nonetheless this brief appearance on the Index, which after all was often defied if the commercial incentives were great enough, can only partially explain the failure to reprint Berni's magnum opus between 1545 and 1725.

CHAPTER 2. PART I. Appendix 2.

Editions printed by Michel Bonelli.

a] Statuti e Capitoli della Militia Aureata, Angelica, Constantina, di S.Giorgio. Di Nuovo Riformati, et Approbati dall'Illustrissimo, & Eccellentissimo Signore, il Sig. Hieronimo Angelo, In Venetia, Appresso Michel Bonelli. MDLXXIII. 4^o.

The dedication by Francesco Sansovino to Girolamo Angelo, Grandmaster of the order, is dated 1st June 1573.

Copies: BL:117.b.54; Venice, Marciana: Misc.1564/11.

b] Francesco Sansovino, Historia Vniversale dell'Origine, et Imperio de'Turchi, In Venetia, Appresso Michel Bonelli, MDLXXIII. Colophon: In Venetia, Appresso Michel Bonelli. 4^o.

This is a revised edition of Sansovino's work. The dedication (again to G.Angelo) is dated 27th June 1573.

Copies: Venice, Marciana: 141.D.128.

c] Orlando Innamorato Del Sig. Matteo Maria Boiardo Conte di Scandiano; Insieme con i tre Libri di Nicolò de gli Agvstini già riformati per M.Lodovico Domenichi, & hora con maggior diligentia ricorretti, In Venetia, appresso Michel Bonelli, 1574. Colophon: In Venetia, Appresso Michel Bonelli, MDLXXIII. 8^o.

Copies: Birmingham, Public Library: Rare Books Coll., 094.1574.1; Paris, Nationale: Yd.2174; Munich, Staatsbibliothek: P.o.ital.189; East Berlin, Staatsbibliothek: Xo.5900; Wroclaw, University: 450.955.

d] Saba da Castiglione, Ricordi Overo Ammaestramenti Di Monsig. Sabba Castiglione, Cavalier Gerosolimitano: Ne i quali con prudenti, e christiani discorsi si ragiona di tutte le materie honorate, che si ricercano à vn vero gentil'huomo, In Venetia, Appresso Michel Bonelli, 1574. Colophon: In Venetia, Appresso Michel Bonelli, MDLXXIV. 8^o.

Copies: BL: 1030.c.15.

e] Vocabularium...Iuris, Venetiis, Apud Michaellem Bonellum, 1575. 8^o.

Copies: Padua, Universitaria.

f] Benvenuto Straccha: Tractatus de Mercatura, seu Mercatore, Omnia quae ad hoc Genus pertinent, fusissime complectans, Venetiis, Apud Michaellem Bonellum, 1575. Colophon: Venetiis, Excudebat Michael Bonellus, MDLXXVI. 8^o.

Copies: Venice, Marciana: 141.D.128.

g] Orlando Innamorato Del S.Matteomaria Boiardo Conte di Scandiano. Insieme Co I Tre Libri Di M.Nicolò De Gli Agostini. Nuouamente stampato, e riorretto, In Venetia,

MDLXXVI, Nella Stamparia di Michel Bonelli. Colophon: In Venetia, Nella Stamparia di Michel Bonelli, MDLXXVI. 4^o.

Copies: Forlì, Comunale: Piancastelli, P.XIX.80; Milan,

Ambrosiana: S.N.V.71; Paris, Arsenal; Perugia, Augusta:

I.J.2323; Reggio Emilia, Municipale; Vatican:

R.G.Lett.It.IV.482; Venice, Marciana: 227.D.117; Wolfenbüttel,

Herzog August Bibliothek: 165.2.Poet.; Yale

University:Hd7.94f.

h] Aymon Cravetta, Tractatus de Antiquitate Temporis, Venetiis, Apud Michaellem Bonellum, 1576. 8^o.

Copies: Pavia, Universitaria: M.N.26.B.22.

CHAPTER 2. PART I. Appendix 3.

Table describing the Bonelli 'rafazzonamento'.

This table indicates the major interpolations and omissions made in Bonelli's edition for Boiardo's three books. This table only takes account of the real interpolations and omits the many occasions when Bonelli also substitutes Berni's revision of the original text for Domenichi's rendering. It should be noted that the octave count in Domenichi is always identical to Boiardo except at I.i.4-5, 6-7, where the rimaneggiatore makes two stanzas out of Boiardo's four, and II.xxvii.48, where the omission in fact derives from the accidental omission of the stanza in the Zoppino 1521, 1528, 1532 and Nicolini da Sabbio 1534-5, 1539, 1544 editions. When the final total of octaves in Domenichi's version differs from Boiardo, the point is noted in square brackets, i.e. [48].

In the "Observations on Bonelli" Boiardo's text is without underlining, i.e. ` 48 `, whereas Berni is indicated by underlining, i.e. ` 48 `. When an alteration affects the number of octaves in Bonelli's text, the new number is given between quotation marks, i.e. ` "48" `.

Canto. Number of octaves per canto. Observations on Bonelli.

Boiardo Berni Bonelli

I.19	65	65	64	Reduces 62-3 to "62"
I.21	71	74	72	Omits 2, substitutes <u>4-5</u> .
I.29	56	57	55	Omits 48.
II.4	86	84	85	Omits 86.
II.5	67	70	69	Omits 1-3, subs. <u>1-6</u> ; makes 66-7 into "69".
II.6	65	67	65	Omits 1, subs. <u>2</u> .
II.7	63	77	77	Omits 1, subs. <u>1-6</u> ; after 31 inserts <u>37-46</u> .
II.9	62	64	64	Before 1 inserts <u>1-2</u> .
II.10	61	61	62	Omits 1-3, subs. <u>1-4</u> ; omits 27; after 58 inserts new octave <u>Credo pur che Brunel</u> .
II.11	58	60	60	Omits 1-3, subs. <u>1-5</u> .
II.12	62	64	64	Omits 1-4, subs. <u>1-6</u> .
II.13	66	68	68	Omits 1-2, subs. <u>1-4</u> .
II.14	68	73	70	After 8 inserts <u>13</u> ; after 27 inserts <u>33</u> .
II.15	70	72	72	Omits 1, subs. <u>1-3</u> .
II.18	63	61	62	Omits 1-3, subs. <u>1-3</u> ; makes 52-3 into "52".

II.19	60	65	58	Omits 1-3, subs. <u>1</u> .
II.20	60	63	59	Omits 1.
II.21	61	64	64	Omits 1, subs. <u>1-4</u> .
II.25	58	61	57	Makes 16-7 into "16".
II.26	61	61	61	Omits 1-3, subs. <u>1-3</u> .
II.27	62[61]	64	64	Omits 1-2, subs. <u>1-5</u> ; reinserts 48 from <u>Berni</u> .
II.30	63	63	63	Omits 1, subs. <u>1-3</u> ; omits 37-8.
II.31	50	53	49	Omits 49.
III.3	60	63	63	Omits 1-2, subs. <u>1-5</u> .
III.7	60	78	51	Omits 44-53, subs. <u>71-2</u> .
III.8	66	68	66	Omits 1-2, subs. <u>1-2</u> .
III.9	26	37	27	Omits 26, subs. <u>36-7</u> .

Chapter 2. Part I.ILLUSTRATIONS.

1] British Library, Mss.Add.36354, John Milton, Commonplace Book, f.182.

2] Ibid., f.187.

3] Ibid., f.77.

4] Ibid., f.71.

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what trust great courtiers may have in present pleasing & K. with violence & upstart courses, against the people on pretence of maintaining regal right the downfall of Hubert may testify. see Speed. see also of 4 judges in Rich. 2. in the chapter Leges in this book.

See also an excellent description of such an Oligarchy of nobles abusing the Countenance of ~~the~~ ^{royal} sovereignty Arcad. Sidney. l. 2. p. 119.

Aulicorum bene merita ubi frangere ostendit lapidis versibus Bonardus Porta
Italus in Orlando Innamorato l. 2. cant. 2^{mo}.

Ogni error di Corruggione

La sera e grata ala mattina e vano.
his addit ejus reformator Bernia Petriscus

Si vuole in Spagna un certo ditto udare
(Certo quegli Spagnuoli han di brava brava)
Chun servizio val piu che s'habbia fare,
Che cento mila milion de falbi.

Most Tyrants have ordinarily regard unto their owne glory, since Minors, for whom they make great account and reckonings, whom they use as springs to suck up their subjects blood, upon whom when occasion serveth, they discharge, for the good of the people, into four small pipes, as you may see in the picture. For had John 9. Bajana; Henry 8. the younger Phylis; and of late Henry King of Sweden George 3. who was to have been given by a party to the furious people, & to have been sent and borne in prison. Bodin. de Repub. lib. 1. cap. 12. c. 5. pag 226.

Antonius Caracalla the Emperor, to please the people put to death all the flatterers who had before induced him to kill his brother Mother and Caligula in better sort, by Chawbacke. pag. 226.

An excellent discourse against those Senators, who have applied justice, in their Tyranny out of ambition or avarice. J. Bonahum. l. 2. c. 2. de Arist. LXI. pag. 272.

De mendacio

35

emj veritate dicere solent, vir bonus, inquit Clemens, πλὴν ἐν μυστοῖς, ἐν ἀρεσκείας, με-
 λους λικτ ἐν, κοβαπτε, ιατος τοος νοοοντας ἐνι σωφροσιν τῶν καμνοντων
 ψευδοται ἢ ψευδος ἐστίν. 37. Strom: l. 7. p. 730.

lulus publica causa. hinc illud Torquatus ubi Sophocles introduit surrepti fidi noxa m se transferentē
 quonvis id verū non erat, ut tamen populi Christiani ab intereione liberaret, Magna
 rima menzogna, or quando è il vero si bello chesi possa ate preporre? il Goffredo
 Con. 7. Stanz. 22. Glatruseus, Poeta nobilis in Orlando innamorato l. 2. canto. 20.
 Similitur Germania Glatruseus, Poeta nobilis in Orlando innamorato l. 2. canto. 20.
 stanz. 2. La verita e bella ne per orma

Si debbe mai tacer, ne per vergogna.
 Quando la forza e l'importanza premea
 Tal volta vien che dir la non bisogna,
 Per fiction non cresce il ver ne scena,
 Ne sempre occulto e di chiamar menzogna,
 Anzi valente molte volte viene.
 Et s'io detto quel che occulto il tiene.
 D'ambè due queste parti di prudentia
 Il fighietol? Querte esempio d'anne &c.



CHAPTER 2. PART II.

Milton and the "Orlando Innamorato".Satan and his Legions: the Slide into Romance.

Viewed as a Satanic epic Paradise Lost divides into three distinct chronological phases: first, the war in heaven allows Satan to act as an Achilles nursing his "injur'd merit"; second, the awakening in hell, escape from the lake of fire, construction of Pandaemonium, infernal council, ascent to hell gates and meeting with Sin and Death characterise Satan as a dux modelled on Aeneas who reorganises his shattered followers and sets about the search for a new kingdom; third, the journey across Chaos, the series of disguises and the deception of man show the fallen archangel to be a kind of wily Odysseus, overcoming his enemies through guile not force.¹ In terms of epic structure these three phases imitate the Virgilian division of the Aeneid between the hero's Odyssean wanderings and his Iliadic conquest of Latium.² In Virgil the Homeric roles acted out by Aeneas underline the Roman poem's distance from the heroic world. In Milton the recurrence of the classical roles in the figure of Satan discredits the heroes of the Greek and Latin epics. The

¹J.M.Steadman, Image and Idol: Satan and the Element of Illusion in Paradise Lost, Journal of English and Germanic Philology, LIX, 1960 (reprinted in idem, Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol), pp.640-54: 648.

²B.Otis, Virgil: A Study in Civilised Poetry, OUP 1963, ch.6 The Odyssean Aeneid, ch.7 The Iliadic Aeneid.

instability of Satan's heroic mode accentuates this process by its tendency to degenerate into the manners and style of the chivalric romance.³ In the proem to book IX of Paradise Lost Milton speaks of his argument as "Not less but more Heroic" [IX.14] than the material of the three major classical epics, summarised as the "wrauth | Of stern Achilles" [IX.14-5], the "rage | Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd" [IX.16-7], and "Neptun's ire or Juno's, that so long | Perplexed the Greek and Cytherea's son" [IX.18-9], but follows this with an even less encomiastic disparagement of the chivalric romance as "chief maistrie to dissect | With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights | In Battels feign'd" [IX.29-31]. The martial style displayed by the fallen angels in their recovery, construction of Satan's new capital and infernal council is ostensibly classical; but they easily fall into a chivalric mode that Milton intends to mark the moral decay and degeneration from the predominantly Homeric style displayed by the loyal angels in the war in heaven and the "unarmed Youth of Heav'n" [IV.552] on guard at the gates of Eden who exercise in "Heroic Games |...but nigh at hand | Celestial Armourie, Shields, Helmes, and Speares, | Hung high with Diamond flaming, and with Gold" [IV.551-4].

This new martial style of the fallen angels is not just chivalric, but also oriental.⁴ It takes as heroic exemplars not so much the Christian paladins as the mighty pagans of the

³J.B.Broadbent, Milton's Hell, English Literary History, XXI, 1954, pp.161-92: 186.

⁴M.Y.Hughes, Satan and the "Myth" of the Tyrant in idem, Ten Perspectives on Milton, Yale University Press 1965, pp.165-95: 170-2.

Italian Renaissance epics. French medieval poems on the wars of Charlemagne and his peers against the Saracens in Spain had retained some element of historical fact, but even this is lacking in the fantastic narrations of the Italian Renaissance. Partly motivated by contemporary concern at the seemingly inexorable advance of the Turkish empire, the Italian poets turned the Charlemagne cycle into a universal war between occidental and oriental cultures. Eastern also becomes synonymous with diabolical. In the Orlando Innamorato Boiardo invents a series of mighty pagan opponents for Charlemagne's paladins, oriental monarchs such as Agricane, Mandricardo, Sacripante, and Gradasso, as well as an African emperor, Agramante, who brings Rodomonte in his suite, all characters who (apart from Agricane) are prominent in the Orlando Furioso. In the Gerusalemme Liberata Tasso moulds a historical figure such as Argante into what is now a recognisable genre, that of the fierce pagan warrior. Therefore it is quite in keeping for Milton to make the fallen legions both chivalric and oriental.

Satan is "thir great Sultan" [I.348] and "Hell's dread Emperour" [II.510]; he sits "High on a Throne of Royal State, which far | Outshon the wealth of Ormus and of Ind, | Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand | Showrs on her Kings Barbaric Pearl and Gold" [II.1-4]; his standard is "With Gemms and Golden lustre rich imblaz'd" [I.538]; when trumpets are blown, his followers "upsent | A shout that tore Hells Concave" [I.541-2]; while:

All in a moment through the gloom were seen
 Ten thousand Banners rise into the Air
 With Orient Colours waving: with them rose
 A Forrest huge of Spears: and thronging Helms
 Appear'd, and serried Shields in thick array

Of depth immeasurable.

I.544-9.

In his Satanic army Milton merges topoi familiar from the pagan armies of the chivalric epics.⁵ When Satan summons his angels with the words "Princes, Potentates, | Warriors, the Flowr of Heav'n" [I.315-6], the first three terms can refer to both feudal and angelic hierarchies, while the latter is a stock phrase from chivalric romance. In the Orlando Innamorato the hero is termed <fior d'ogni campione>, <fior d'ogni barone>, <fiore e corona de ogni paladino>, <fior del mondo>, <fior d'ogni forte>, <il fior d'ogni gagliardo>,⁶ while Feraguto and Rodomonte are <il fior de Paganìa>. The only other instance of this metaphor in Milton's poetry is the Parthian cavalry in Paradise Regained who are the "flower and choice | Of many Provinces" [PR.III.314-5].

The great hall of Pandaemonium where the fallen angels come flocking to admire 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 Panim chivalry
To mortal combat or career with Lance.

I.763.

⁵The Poetical Works of John Milton, ed. Rev.H.J.Todd, 6 voll., London 1826 (hereafter Todd), vol.2, p.73.

⁶Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I.i.27; ii.22,29; iii.11; iv.12, 46; v.7; vii.60; ix.8,43,77; xvi.4,41; xviii.27; xxiv.38,48; xxv.36; II.i.71; v.16; vii.34,49; xi.53; xv.12,13; xvii.25; xix.57; xx.14; xxi.2,58,60; xxii.4; xxiii.12,15,27,59,77; xxiv.45; xxviii.3; xxix.43; xxxi.6,8; III.i.3; iv.50; Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, III.17,42; IV.61; V.82; VII.41; X.77; XII.76; XVI.29; XXI.11; XXVI.19; XXX.95; XXXIII.24; XLII.21; XLIV.47; Spenser, Faerie Queene, I.iii.23; vi.15; viii.26; II.viii.18; ix.4; xii.44; III.ix.35; xi.6. See OED., "Flower" 7 and 9.

The simile implies that Satan is an oriental despot since these jousts and tournaments take place not in front of a Christian monarch but the "Soldan's chair". When after the fall of man Satan returns to hell he finds that his followers have fallen back defensively on Pandaemonium.

As when the the Tartar from his Russian Foe
By Astracan over the Snowie Plaines
Retires, or Bactrian Sophi from the hornes
Of Turkish Crescent, leaves all waste beyond
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
To Tauris or Casbeen.

X.431-436.

At the news of the return of "their great adventurer..| Forth rush'd in haste the great consulting Peers | Rais'd from thir Dark Divan" [X.440,456-7] where, just as the infernal council has previously been compared to a conclave of Cardinals meeting to elect a new Pope, so here the divan⁷ is an oriental council of state.

During Satan's absence his followers had been left to their own devices where "each his several way | Pursues, as inclination or sad choice | Leads him perplext" [II.522-5] - activities which can be divided into heroic games and races, wild destruction, song, philosophy and exploration. Though the heroic games start with races "As at the Olympian Games or Pythian fields" [I.530], they soon degenerate into mock battles where "fronted Brigads form". Ostensibly the simile that follows refers to the phenomena which appeared over Rome before the assassination of Julius Caesar or over Jerusalem before the destruction of the temple,⁸ but the angelic races

⁷OED., "Divan" 1 and 2.

⁸Josephus, Jewish War, ed.H.St.J.Thackeray, Harvard UP, Loeb

have already been "Part on the plain, or in the air sublime | Upon the wing" [I.528-9], so simile and reality merge. Thus the form of these aerial combats parodies the chivalric battle.

As when to warn proud Cities warr appears
Wag'd in the troubl'd Skie, and Armies rush
To Battel in the Clouds, before each Van
Prick forth the Aerie Knights, and couch thir Spears
Till thickest Legions close; with feats of Arms
From either end of Heav'n the welkin burns.

II.533-8.

This degeneration from classical to chivalric within the bounds of a simile subtly anticipates analogous developments later in Paradise Lost. How did Milton's earliest commentators and editors react to such chivalric elements in a poem about the fall of man?

Milton's early Commentators and Satan at the Gates of Hell.

Among the collaborators in Bishop Newton's edition of Paradise Lost was Robert Thyer,⁹ a perceptive critic with

⁸ (continued)
Classical Library, VI.iii.299; C.Tacitus, Historiarum Libri, ed.C.D.Fisher, OUP 1940, V.13: <visae per caelum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma et subito nubium igne conlucere templum>. See W.Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, II.ii.19-21: "Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds | In ranks and squadrons and right form of war, | Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol."

⁹ Paradise Lost. A Poem, in Twelve Books. The Author John Milton...With Notes of various Authors, by Thomas Newton, 8th ed., London 1775 (hereafter Newton). In the preface Bishop Newton praises Thyer as a "man of great learning, and as great humanity", cf. A.Oras, Milton's Editors and Commentators from

some knowledge of Italian, who noticed various analogies with the Italian chivalric epics in Satan's confrontation with Sin and Death. Thyer initially observes that the gates of hell "impal'd with encircling fire" [II.648] might have been inspired by Milton's "favourite romances".¹⁰ Dunster, who contributed to Todd's 1801 edition of Milton's Poetical Works, thought that Death's advance towards Satan where "hell trembled as he strode" [II.676] was inspired by the charge of the Giantess Erifilla in the Orlando Furioso: <E fa tremar nel suo venir la terra> [OF.VII.5]. Another of Todd's contributors, Bowle, compared the same point to the appearance of Spenser's giant, Orgoglio:

His monstrous enemy
With sturdy steps came stalking in his sight,
A hideous Giant, horrible and hie,
That with his talness seemed to threat the skie;
The ground eke groned under him for dread. FQ.I.vii.8.¹¹

Other Spenserian echoes emerge in Satan's scornful order to Death to step out of his way: "I mean to pass, | That be assur'd, without leave askt of thee" [PL.II.684-5]. This repeats the disdain of Britomart who finds her passage obstructed by Marinell: "I meane non thee entreat | To passe, but maugre thee will passe or dy" [EQ.III.iv.14].¹² Todd himself observed that Death's scornful reply - "Art thou that Traitor Angel, art thou hee?" [II.689] - recalls Turpine's sneering demands to Prince Arthur: "Art thou he, traytor, that

⁹(continued)

Patrick Hume to Henry John Todd (1695-1801), vol.1, pp.324-8.

¹⁰Newton, vol.1, p.136.

¹¹Todd, vol.2, p.160.

¹²Newton, vol.1, p.141.

with treason vile | Hast slain my men ? [EQ.VI.vi.25].¹³

Finally as a shattering conflict appears inevitable and "Each at the Head | Levell'd his deadly aime" [II.711-2] the duel is recalled between Britomart and Guyon where each "Bent his dreadful speare against the other's head" [III.i.5].

In the simile where Milton describes the rage of Satan, who "like a comet burned, | That fires the length of Ophiucus huge | In the Arctic sky, and from his horrid hair | Shakes out pestilence and war" [II.705-11], we see again the poet's ability to fuse classical and romance sources in his images. First the simile of the comet described the fury of Virgil's Turnus: <quando nocte cometae | sanguinei lugubre rubent> [Aen.X.272]; but in the Gerusalemme Liberata Tasso, translated by Fairfax, applied it to Argante:

As when a comet far and wide descried,
In scorn of Phebus midst bright heav'n doth shine,
And tidings sad of death and mischief brings
To mightie Lords, to monarches, and to Kings.
So shone the Pagan in his bright armour clad,
And roll'd his eies great swolne with ire and blood.
VII.52.¹⁴

Within Paradise Lost the simile of the comet also recalls the comparison of Satan to an eclipse that "with fear of change | Perplexes monarchs" [I.598-9].

Nevertheless Robert Thyer's most intriguing suggestion is

¹³Todd, vol.2, p.162.

¹⁴Newton, vol.1, pp.142-3; E.Fairfax, Godfrey of Bulloigne, ed.K.M.Lea and T.M.Gang, OUP 1981; Tasso, Gerusalemme Liberata, VII.52-3:

Qual con le chiome sanguinose orrende
Splender cometa suol per l'aria adusta:
Che i regni muta e i feri morbi addu~~ca~~^{ce},
A i purpurei tiranni infausta luce;
Tal ne l'arme ei fiammeggia, e bieche e torte
Volge le luci ebre di sangue e d'ira.

that a simile from Boiardo's battle between Orlando and Agricane outside Albracca is the source for Milton's comparison of Satan and Death to black thunderclouds meeting over the Caspian sea.¹⁵

..and such a frown
 Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds
 With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
 Over the Caspian, then stand front to front
 Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
 To join their dark encounter in mid air:
 So frowned the mighty combatants, that hell
 Grew darker at their frown. II.714.

In the Orlando Innamorato the hero rides out of Albracca with six companions to engage the Tartar hordes with Agricane at their head. The two mighty champions charge and the thunderous crash as they meet inspires Boiardo's simile, which in the original text reads as follows:

Se forse insieme mai scontrar due troni,
 Da levante a ponente, al cel diverso,
 Così proprio se urtarno quei baroni;
 L'una e l'altro a le crophe andò riverso,
 Poi che ebber fraccassato e lor tronconi
 Con tal ruina ed impeto perverso,
 Che qualunque era d'intorno a vedere,
 Pensò che il cel dovesse giù cadere. OI.I.xvi.10.

More recent critics have expressed doubts. In his notes to the text of Paradise Lost Professor Fowler remarks that Milton's "onomatopoeic lines perhaps emulate a simile of Boiardo's", while Professor Schaar, the only critic of Milton to discuss seriously Thyer's observation, dismisses the parallel as remote.¹⁶ Other possible sources exist. In

¹⁵Newton, vol.1, p.143.

¹⁶Carey-Fowler, p.542; C.Schaar, The Full Voic'd Quire Below, Lund 1982.

Godfrey of Bulloigne Fairfax translates a simile where Tasso compared Argante's anger to a flash of lightning: "as when clouds together crusht and brused, | Powre downe a tempest by the Caspian shore", while the Caspian of the poets is proverbially stormy.¹⁷ Yet the internal structure of Milton's simile is deliberately chivalric since, apart from the hint of firearms in "Heaven's artillery", it follows the stages of preparation for a joust in the lists, where the two opponents line up "front to front" until the winds acting as heralds "the signal blow" (a clever pun!) for the combat to begin.

But if instead of Boiardo's original text we use Berni's rifacimento, we find the same simile rewritten in a more Miltonic form (my italics).

O se mai forse insieme urtar dui tuoni
 Da Levante a Ponente in cielo, o in mare,
 Onde, altrimenti dette Cavalloni,
 Che due contrarii venti fanno urtare,
 Si piegaro ambedui sopra gli arcioni,
 Su le groppe a cavai volser cascare,
 Roppersi l'haste grosse, e al ciel volorno,
 Tremò la terra, & fessi oscuro il giorno.

Berni.I.xvi.10.

The three elements added to the simile by Berni: the sea, the two opposing winds thrusting the thunderclouds together and the darkening of the day all reappear in Milton, while the value of Berni's text as a source is confirmed by another

¹⁷E.Fairfax, Godfrey of Bulloigne, VI.38. See Tasso, Gerusalemme Liberata, VI.38: <O come apre le nubi ond'egli è chiuso | Impetuoso il fulmine, e s'en fugge> (this parallel and the stormy Caspian of Horace, Odes II.ix.2, were both noticed by Newton, vol.1, p.143); idem, IX, 52 (also Fairfax); Virgil, Aeneid, X.356-61; S.P.Revard, The War in Heaven, Cornell University Press 1980, pp.179-81.

stanza (unsuggestive in the original text) where the version of the rifacitore again suggests Milton's supreme conflict.

E verso lui rivolto ancora il Conte,
Fremando vien, qual infernal Bufera,
La spada ha in mano, che fu di quello Almonte,
Ed Agricane impugnata ha Tranchera,
E l'uno all'altro già si sono a fronte,
Coppia, a cui forse un'altra par non era,
E ferno ben quel giorno esperienza
Dell'infinita loro alta eccellenzia.

Berni. I. xvi. 12.

The image of clouds or winds clashing is a locus comune in Boiardo and to a lesser degree in the other Italian chivalric epics.¹⁸ Todd added the duel between Argalia and Feraguto, where Boiardo compared the two combatants to raging lions or thunderclouds: <O ver senti nell'aria due gran tuoni | Che vengan con tempeste> [I.ii.14].¹⁹

In the first chapter of this thesis we saw how the classical structures behind the Archfiend's approach to Hell gate, the encounter with Sin and Death and Satan's exit into Chaos redound to Satan's discredit. The addition of a superficial chivalric mode extends this process. The analogies are not inappropriate. From a romance point of view Satan is like a knight sent to find an enchanted castle, which, as we all know, ^{is} ~~are~~ frequently guarded by dragons or giants or sometimes both. More importantly the use of chivalric language and allusions to the duel forms a poetic trap, preparing us for just the epic encounter or "long and tedious havoc" Milton in book IX will declare himself "Not sedulous by Nature to indite" [IX.27]. In reality the poet is true to his word. In

¹⁸~~Todd, vol. 2, p. 164.~~ Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I. xxviii. 13; xxiii. 53;

¹⁹Todd, vol. 2, p. 164. xxv. 6; xxxi. 19, 28.

this case just as conflict is about to ensue the knight finds out that the dragon is his long-lost daughter and the giant his son, thus while none of the characters live happily ever after, it does mean that the fight is averted. This sudden failure to gratify the expectations of his readers with the usual "long and tedious havoc" of the romances proves to be a consistently Miltonic tactic. Time and time again throughout the course of the epic the reader's appetite is whetted as mighty and irreconcilable opposites are brought face to face. For example, in book IV, as Satan comes face to face with Gabriel and the angelic guards, our expectations rise at the promise of: "Now dreadful deeds | Might have ensu'd" [IV.990-1]. But in every case either the duel is abruptly avoided or Satan falls with a single stroke.

This of course is precisely what Milton intends.

The Mightiest Army of all.

In the first book of Paradise Lost Satan "awakens all his legions" who "to their general's voice...obeyed | Innumerable" [I.337-8] and, reassembling on the burning floor of hell, parade not as a defeated, bestial, horrendous rabble as is usual in Renaissance descriptions of Lucifer and his legions,²⁰ but as a proud and unmatchable army under the eyes of their "mighty chief". To find an appropriate parallel Milton resorts to all the main epic and romance cycles (including the Orlando Innamorato), but the poet confesses that, alongside the Satanic legions, even assembled all together in one place, the armies of myth and the the

fantastic forces of romance would be no more than pygmies.

For never since created man,
Met such imbodied force, as nam'd with these
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warr'd on by Cranes: though all the Giant brood
Of Phlegra with th'Heroic Race were joyn'd
That fought at Theb's and Ilium, on each side
Mixt with auxiliar Gods; and what resounds
In Fable or Romance of Uthers son
Begirt with British or Armoric Knights;
And all who since, Baptiz'd or Infidel
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his Peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.

I.573-87.

Bentley dismissed this as a "heap of barbarous Words, without any ornament or poetical colouring".²¹ Newton ^{wished} ~~regretted~~ that:

our poet had not so far indulged his taste for romances, of which he professes himself to have been fond in his younger years, and had not been ostentatious of such reading, as perhaps had better never been read.²²

However in general this great simile has been admired for the splendid thunder of place-names with which it concludes and is frequently picked out as the archetypal demonstration of Milton's epic style, which undoubtedly it is. Yet the brilliance of the surface texture might sometimes have obscured more subtle hints and inferential ambiguities.

The simile enumerates five great forces, moving from myth through epic to romance, from the giants who warred against the Olympian Gods at Phlegra through the main classical cycles of Thebes and Troy to the romance versions of the Arthurian and Carolingian cycles. It is well known that Milton relinq-

²⁰See Tasso, Gerusalemme Liberata, IV.1-8.

²¹Milton's Paradise Lost, A New Edition, ed.R.Bentley, London, Jacob Tonson (and others) 1732, p.26.

²²Newton, vol.1, pp.60-1.

uished his early plans for an epic poem on king Arthur once his research had exposed the unhistorical basis of the Arthurian legends. In the History of Britain he summarises the fruits of his labours with the wry comment: "But who Arthur was, and whether ever any such reign'd in Britain, hath been doubted heertofore, and may again with good reason".²³

Inversely there could be no doubt about the historical reality of Charlemagne. Allusions to the historic founder of the Holy Roman Empire in Milton's prose²⁴ show that he was versed in the period and therefore should have been familiar with the chronicle sources for the great battle, generally known as Roncesvalles, where Charlemagne's rearguard was massacred by the Basques on the 15th August 778. But the historian's critical eye would also have observed how meagre was the source that furnished so much fable and romance. The chronicle of Eginhardus, written in about 830, gives a laconic account of Charlemagne's Spanish campaign and the following version of the tragic ambush.

Salтуque Pyrinei superato, omnibus quae adierat oppidis
atque castellis in deditionem acceptis, salvo et
incolomi exercitu revertitur, praeter quod in ipso
Pyrinei iugo Wasconicam perfidiam parumper in redeundo
contigit experiri. Nam cum agmine longo, ut loci et
angustiarum situs permittebat, porrectus iret
exercitus, Wascones in summi montis vertice positus
insidiis - est enim locus ex opacitate silvarum, quarum
ibi maxima est copia, insidiis ponendis oportunus -
extremam impedimentorum partem et eos qui, novissimi
agminis incedentes subsidio, praecedentes tuebantur
desuper incursantes in subjectam vallem deiciunt
consertoque cum eis proelio usque ad unum omnes inter-
ficiunt ac, direptis impedimentis, noctis beneficio
quae jam instabat protecti, summa cum celeritate in
diversa sperguntur. Adjuvabat in hoc facto Wascones et

²³Columbia.X.127-8.

²⁴Columbia.III.237; V.24; X.189,191-2,237;

XVIII.137,152-3,155,179,187,195,200.

levitas armorum et loci in quo res gerebatur situs; econtra Francos et armorum gravitas et loci iniquitas per omnia Wasconibus reddidit in pares. In quo proelio Egghardus regiae mensae praepositus, Anshelmus come palatii et Hruodlandus Brittannici limitis praefectus cum alis conpluribus interficiuntur. Neque hoc factum ad praesens vindicari poterat, quia hostis, re perpetrata, ita dispersus est ut ne fama quidem remaneret ubinam gentium quaeri potuisset.²⁵

At the end of the seventeenth century Stevens, the translator of Mariana's Historiae de Rebus Hispaniae, was also sceptical and remarked that French and Spanish authors:

absolutely disagree in their account of the famous battle of Roncesvalles, and even the Spaniards themselves vary much in their relations, many of which are very fabulous.²⁶

He notes that the more reliable French versions, elaborating Eginhardus' account, describe how after Charlemagne's successful campaign in Spain:

in his return, the Vascones fell upon the rear in the

²⁵Eginhardus, Vita et Gesta Karoli Magni in Corpus Franciae Historiae Veteris et Sincerae, Hannover, Typis Wechelianis apud Haeredes 1613, p.436. F.Th.A.Voigt, Roland-Orlando dans l'Épopée Française et Italienne, Leiden, E.J.Brill 1938, finds that the chronicle of Jean d'Ypres (1334) first names the battlefield as Roncesvalles.

²⁶John Stevens, The General History of Spain. From the first Peopling of it by Tubal, till the Death of King Ferdinand, Who united the Crowns of Castile and Aragon. With a Continuation to the Death of King Philip III. Written in Spanish. By the R.F.F. John de Mariana. To Which are added, Two Supplements. The First By F.Ferdinand Camargo y Salcedo, the other by F.Basil Varen de Scoto, bringing it down to the present Reign, London, Printed for Richard Sare at Grays-Inn Gate in Holbourn, Francis Saunders at the New-Exchange in the Strand, and Thomas Bennet at the Half-Moon in St.Paul's Church-Yard 1699, book VII, ch.5, p.110.

narrow passes of the Mountains, slew all that were parted from the main Body, among them Eghartus, Anselmus and Rutlandus, and that this could not be revenged, because the Vascones on a sudden were all dispersed and not to be found.²⁷

On the other hand Spanish accounts such as that of Mariana claimed that the battle took place not on Charlemagne's return but on his attempt to force his way across the Pyrenees against the united armies of the Spanish under Alfonso and the Moors.

All these Forces possess'd the Passes of the Pyrenean Mountains, and at the place called Roncesvalles, the two Armies met. Rutlandus, commonly called Orlando, Earl of Britany, Anselmus and Eginardus led the Van, the Spaniards falling Furiously on them, before they could put themselves into Order of Battle, slew Rutlandus, of whom so many Fables are Written, both by the Spaniards and the French. The Emperor seeing the great Slaughter of his Men, indeavoured to bring up the rest of the Army to their relief, but finding no hope of success, was himself forced to make away.²⁸

However the two major poetic accounts of the battle of

²⁷ John Stevens, General History of Spain, p.110.

²⁸ John Stevens, General History of Spain, p.110. See Juan de Mariana, Historiae de Rebus Hispaniae Libri XX, Toledo, Typis Petri Rederici 1592, VII.xi, p.331. Pedro Mantuano, Advertencias A la Historia Del Padre Ivan de Mariana, 2nd ed., Madrid, Imprenta Real 1613, pp.196-204, challenges Mariana's pro-Spanish version, cites the French chronicles and corrects the date of the battle from 801 to 778, cf. Thomas Tamaio de Vargas, Historia General de España del P.D. Juan de Mariana Defendida...Contra las Advertencias de Pedro Mantuano, Toledo, Diego Rodriguez 1616. All these writers place the battle in Roncesvalles. One of the enduring errors of Milton criticism is Newton's assertion, vol.1, p.60, that "Mariana and the Spanish Historians are Milton's authors for saying that he (Charlemagne) was routed...at Fontarabbia", corrected by Verity, but perpetuated by Fowler and Campbell.

Roncesvalles, the old French Chanson de Roland, which Milton could not have known though the only manuscript entered the Bodleian in 1634,²⁹ and Pulci's professedly fantastic Rotta di Roncisvalles that makes up the final part of the Morgante,³⁰ both draw on events as narrated in the pseudo-Turpin chronicle. This ascribes the defeat to Ganelon's treacherous hatred of Roland. On the French army's withdrawal from Spain Charlemagne entrusts the command of the rearguard to Roland and Oliver <ut cum maioribus pugnatoribus & viginti Christianorum millibus ultimam custodiam in Runciavalle facerunt>. Waiting for the French rearguard in Roncesvaux are fifty-thousand Saracens (Pulci multiplies the pagans to six-hundred thousand). According to the monkish chronicler God permitted the defeat to purge the Christians of their sins of fornication and drunkenness:

²⁹The Oxford manuscript of the Chanson de Roland entered the Bodleian in 1634 from the library of Sir Kenelm Digby (Digby 23), but remained unknown until 1834. The site of the battle is <Rennesvals> ll.13152-5: <De Karlemaine è de Rollant, | E d'Olivier è de vassels | Ki morurent in Renchevals>. The French number 20,000, the Saracens 100,000, including forces from Africa led by Marganices <Ki tint Kartagene...| E Etiope, une tere maldite> (1915). Italian versions such as the Spagna Maggiore and the Spagna Minore give the same account.

³⁰L.Pulci, Il Morgante, ed.R.Ramat, Milan, Rizzoli 1961, XXV.1-XXVII.216. The three final cantos which were originally published separately from the main text under the title La Rotta di Roncisvalle were added to the main text of the Morgante in the definitive edition, Ripoli, Francesco da Dino, 7.II.1483. The Saracen army, which includes <Zingani, Arbi e Soriani, | Dello Egitto e dell'India e d'Etiochia> [XXVI.47] as well as some Gascons in the first wave (Pulci claims that his source is Alcuin), number in all 600,000 divided into three

voluit illis pro laboribus suis coronam coelestis regni per passionem rependere. Illos verò qui fornicati sunt mortem permisit incurrere, quia per gladij passionem voluit illorum peccata delere...Quapropter nec decet, nec expedit habere mulieres in castris, ubi libido castranda est, impedimentum animae simul & corpori. Illi qui inebriati & fornicati sunt, significant sacerdotes & religiosos viros, contra vicia pugnantes, quibus non licet inebriari & mulieribus coinquinari. Quod si fecerint, ab inimicis suis, id est, à daemonibus, se noverint superandos, & aeterna morte plectendos.³¹

In this confusion of fact and fiction, what is Milton's source for the final tragedy of the French chivalry? In the lines of the simile preceding the defeat of Charlemagne's host, what does the roll of place-names suggest besides the magnificent assonance of "Aspramont or Montalban, | Damasco, or Marocco"?

Aspramont is the first great battle of the Roland story where the Christian forces defeat the Saracen invasion of Italy in Aspromonte, a range of mountains in Calabria. In the campaign Orlandino covers himself with glory by saving the life of Charlemagne, killing the mighty pagan Almonte and winning the famous sword Durendel or Durindana. Milton could not have known Andrea da Barberino's prose version which remained in manuscript until the last century,³² but the verse

³⁰(continued)

waves [XXV.102,106,126-30], while the Christians are only 20,600 [XXVII.78]. After the battle Charlemagne arriving in Roncesvalles curses it as a <dolorosa valle | ...bolgia o Caina d'inferno> [XXVII.201], cf. Inf.XXXI.16-8.

³¹Historia de Vita Caroli Magni et Rolandi in Germanicarum Rerum Quatuor Celebriores Vetustioresque Chronographii. Earum Descriptionem Ab Orbe Condito Usque ad Tempora Henrici IIII, ed. Simon Schardius, Frankfurt-am-Mainz, Apud Georgium Coruinum, Sigismundum Feyrabend & Haeredes Wigandi Galli 1566, ch.XXI, p.9.

Libro chiamato Aspromonte was first printed in 1490. Lodovico Dolce produced his own version entitled Le prime imprese del conte Orlando.³³ However the story was well-known and is alluded to several times in the Morgante, the Innamorato and the Furioso.³⁴

Montalban at the foot of the French Pyrenees is the home of Reynaud de Montauban (Rinaldo da Monte Albano), Orlando's cousin, ~~who is~~ In the Morgante Maggiore he retains many traces of the brigand and freebooter of the Quatre Fils Aymon; but in Boiardo and Ariosto these traits have almost disappeared.³⁵ In the Innamorato Charlemagne's forces fight and lose a great battle at Montealbano against the Spaniards under Marsilio and the Africans under Agramante. However the name is common in all poems dealing with Reynaud or Rinaldo.³⁶

Damasco most likely refers to the magnificent tournament

³²Andrea da Barberino, L'Aspramonte. Romanzo cavalleresco inedito, ed.M.Boni, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua 1951. The Libro chiamato Aspramonte Novamente Impresso Nel qual si contiene di molte battaglie: maxime delo Aduentimento de Orlando & de molti altri reali di Francia, Milan, Jo. de Castelliono ad instantiam Nicolai de Gorgonzola 10.VII.1516, is an anonymous verse version of Andrea's prose original. Editions of this version were printed in Florence: 1490, 1504; Venice: 1491, 1500, 1508, 1523, 1532 (twice), 1547, 1553, 1556, 1594, 1616, 1620; Milan 1516 (twice).

³³Lodovico Dolce, Le prime imprese del conte Orlando, Venice, G.Giolito de' Ferrari 1572.

³⁴Pulci, Morgante, I.13, XXV.103, XXVI.42; Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I.xvi.16, II.xi.8, III.v.31; Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, I.30, XII.43, XVII.14, XXVII.54.

³⁵La Chanson des Quatre Fils Aymon, ed.F.Castets, Geneva, Slatkine 1974, cf. Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.ix.32-5.

³⁶Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.xxiii.1-xxv.22;

organised in the Furioso by Norandino where <non men de le'nfedel le battezzate> [OE.xviii.56] participate.³⁷

Among Milton's editors and commentators only A.W.Verity has tried to explain Morocco (others ignore it) and suggests that it may refer to the wars in Milton's own time between Spanish and Arabs around Marrakesh. But this does not fit a romance context. I should like to hazard that Milton may be using the name generically to indicate Agramante's preparations in the Orlando Innamorato and especially the mock battle fought on the lower slopes of the Monte di Carena by the court to tempt Ruggiero out of his hiding place.³⁸

Trebisond or Trabizond is an Asian city famous for its tournaments; but if Milton knew the Italian romance the Trabisonda Istoriata the name is linked with the death of Rinaldo.³⁹ When these names culminate in the final defeat of

³⁶(continued)

xxix.23-xxxi.42; III.iv.11-40.

³⁷Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, xvii.80-xviii.7; xviii.59-134.

³⁸Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.xvi.9-57; xvii.4-37; xxi.22-61; cf.xxiii.5.

³⁹Trabisonda Istoriata Nela Quale Si contiene Nobilissime Battaglie Con la Uita E morte Di Rinaldo, Venice, Christoforo Pensa 23.II.1503. Editions were printed in Bologna 1483; Venice 1492, 1503, 1511, 1512, 1518, 1535 (twice), 1549, 1554, 1558, 1568, 1576, 1616, 1623, 1682; Milan 1518 (twice). This repeats the events of the Quatre Fils where after his exploits in the court of Trebisond Rinaldo is murdered while labouring with the masons on the cathedral of Cologne, see Quatre Fils ll.18190; I Cantari di Rinaldo da Monte Albano, ed.E.Melli, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua (vol.133) 1973, LI.18. Trebisond is mentioned in the Innamorato, I.x.38, xi.19,24. A.W.Verity (ed.), Paradise Lost, CUP 1910, app.E, pp.678-9, cites the jousting at Trebisond in G.A.Marini, Il

Charlemagne, then we can see that, beyond the geographical sweep from Italy and France to North Africa, Syria, Asia Minor and finally back to Spain, by sheer association the names form a miniature anti-romance running from the triumphs of Orlando and Rinaldo through the tournaments to death and defeat.

The orthography of the names is Italian, but in several respects neither the French, Spanish nor Italian romances and chronicles offer any authority for the innovations of Milton's account. First since, as Milton certainly knew, the historical Charlemagne died peacefully in Vienna in 811, not even the most fabulous romance account includes the Emperor himself among the fallen. Likewise, though in the Chanson de Roland all douzeperes fall with the rearguard, in most other versions some survive. For Milton to extend the massacre from only Roland and the rearguard to "Charlemain with all his Peerage" is to annihilate an entire chivalric era before their time. Second, apart from the early chronicles that fail to name the site of the battle, all other accounts agree that the battlefield was the mountain pass still known in France as Roncesvaux (in Italian Roncisvalle), some forty miles away from the important Spanish frontier town of "Fontarabbia" (Spanish, Fuenterrabia).⁴⁰ But, as Professor Fowler first

³⁹ (continued)

Caloandro Fedele, Bologna 1651, book xxi and the description of Trebizond in Bessarion's Laus Trapezuntis.

⁴⁰ Fontarabia is the usual English seventeenth-century version of the Spanish name. Note Sir Walter Scott, Marmion in Poetical Works, ed. J. Logie Robertson, OUP 1960, VI.33:

O, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
(Footnote continued)

recognised, Milton's first two "errors" are quite deliberate. By inventing a new but not totally unacceptable site for the battle and including the Emperor Charles himself among the fallen, Milton could be alluding ironically to King Charles II who in October 1659 visited Fuenterrabia to attend the Franco-Hispanic peace negotiations conducted between Cardinal Mazarin and Don Luis de Haro that were ratified in the November in the Treaty of the Pyrenees. Milton's "fit audience" would recognise the "symbolic contrast between this treating with friend and foe, and the uncompromising chivalry of the greater Charles".⁴¹

History is inevitably concerned rather with meetings that bring great results and therefore has viewed the kingdomless monarch's journey to Fuenterrabia as both fruitless and unnecessary. Charles arrived far too late to attend the negotiations and Cardinal Mazarin refused even to see him. This historical perspective however ignores the alarm news of a Franco-Spanish treaty inspired in England and the high hopes it raised among the exiled royalists. According to Clarendon both France and Spain had promised Charles that:

when it should please God to release them from that war, they would manifest to the world that they took the King's case to be their own; so that his majesty might very reasonably promise himself some advantage and benefit from this peace.⁴²

⁴⁰ (continued)

That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave and Olivier
And every paladin and peer
On Roncesvalles died!.

⁴¹ Carey-Fowler, p.78.

⁴² Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England begun in the year 1641, ed.W.Dunn MacRay, OUP 1888, XVI.56.

Naturally we should ask how well London was informed about Charles' movements and what Milton could have known about the King's incognito voyage. Charles' arrival in Spain was at once reported by the Commonwealth's ambassador, Lockhart, and the Rump parliament despatched letters of protest to both the signatories.⁴³ Milton's continuing friendship with Andrew Marvell and past service as Secretary for Foreign Tongues would leave him well placed for such snippets of news. However, as unpublished letters in the Clarendon papers show, during the autumn of 1659 the news of a treaty ending the Spanish war left both London and Paris rife with rumours that a joint Franco-Hispanic armada would soon set sail to place Charles on his father's throne.⁴⁴ Indeed such was the fragility of the Commonwealth that Hyde believed the professed

⁴³D.Masson, Life of Milton: Narrated in Connexion with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Time, London, Macmillan 1877, vol.V, pp.502-4. Lockhart was originally sent to ensure that England was included as a signatory to the treaty of the Pyrenees.

⁴⁴Oxford, Bodleian Library, Mss.Clarendon, State Papers, vol.65, f.148v, Sir R.Fanshawe to Hyde, 7/17 October 1659:

'Tis sayd heer (Paris) that don Luis de Haro made a most honorable proposition to the Cardinal for their 2 Crownes to joyne in a Warr offensive & defensive (if necessary) to restablish our King, and prest it vigorously, but the the French defended themselves all they could. This, before his majestie reached their Borders: his arrivall there in person I hope will turn the ballance on his side, & if so, that the rumour alone of such a warr impending will doe their [work]. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, State Papers Vol.III, ed. Th.Monkhouse, Oxford 1786, p.586, Samborne to Hyde, 21st October 1659:

Here (London) is a report of great preparations against us, both by the French and the Spaniard, and though the disorders among our Councils here make us take no

(Footnote continued)

intent would suffice, since:

there is no doubt if these two Crowns will but frankly declare that they will have nothing to do with these mad fellows, who have no form or order of government, nor any rules to live by among themselves, or towards other men, we should quickly make an end of the work, and a little more money than twenty years since would have served to have purchased five of our Western Manors, would now serve to purchase the Kingdom.⁴⁵

After all Milton wrote with the threat of the censor in mind. Once we acknowledge the contemporary significance of Fontarabbia, other possible levels of meaning spring to mind. For instance the memory of the threatened Franco-Spanish invasion might give weight to Milton's irony on the unity demonstrated by the devils or even suggest a parallel between the Restoration and Satan's conquest of earth with the consequent subjection of man to sin.

Finally though some romance traditions suggest that the Saracens who overwhelm Roland at Roncesvalles included troops from North Africa, Milton's attribution of the victory to those "whom Biserta sent from Afric shore" alludes to the immense army gathered by Agramante in the Orlando Innamorato to invade France. But a new objection arises. As the Orlando Innamorato anticipates ⁴⁶ and the Orlando Furioso (as well as

⁴⁴(continued)

notice of it, yet I believe when the alarm grows a little warmer, and we a little more settled, all intercourse of letters will be stopped.
See Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers Preserved in the Bodleian Library, vol.IV, ed.F.J.Routledge, OUP 1932.

⁴⁵Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, State Papers, III.p.579.

Hyde to the Marquis of Ormond, 11 Oct. 1659, cf.pp.569,572.

⁴⁶Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.i.19.

Niccolò degli Agostini) actually relates, Agramante's is not a victorious army. In Ariosto after initial successes around Montauban and in the siege of Paris, the invaders are repulsed, king Agramante is deserted by his major warriors, Charlemagne triumphs at Arles, while in Africa Biserta is captured and razed to the ground by forces under the command of Astolfo and the newly sane Orlando. Finally on the island of Lipadusa Agramante himself dies in combat at the hands of Orlando. How in Milton's simile can the defeated army of Boiardo and Ariosto possibly be identified with the triumphant victors of Roncesvalles?

Again Milton's distortion of the romance history is deliberate. His aim becomes clear if we note that in the Orlando Innamorato, while sailing towards Biserta, Brandimarte and Fiordelisa see alongside Agramante's capital the ruins of Carthage.

Presso Biserta, al capo di Cartagine,
 Son gionti, ove già fu la gran citade
 Che ebbe di Roma simigliante imagine,
 E quasi parti seco per mitade
 Di lei non se vede or se non secagine,
 Persa e la pompa e la civiltade;
 E gran trionfi e la superba altura
 Tolti ha fortuna, e il nome appena dura. II.xxvii.45.⁴⁷

Thus even Milton's shaft of contemporary political satire is consistent with his epic theme. The change in origin of the forces who supposedly overcome Charlemagne, places the simile on a par with what I described in the previous chapter as the "victory of Hannibal" or Satanic untruth distorting the fabric of "right" history. Within Milton's simile the fall of

⁴⁷See Tasso, Gerusalemme Liberata, XV.20.

Charlemagne and the victory of Africa is therefore a Satanic lie. With the Rome-Carthage antithesis in mind we should also note that the historical Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor, whereas, according to romance tradition, after his exploits in Aspramont Orlando was made a senator and is frequently referred to in the Italian epics as the senator romano. That the miniature anti-romance of the simile should claim a total victory ("Charlemain with all his Peerage") rather than a partial one (only Roland and the rearguard) is appropriate to the heroic pretensions and exaggerations of Hell. In symbolic terms the simile's real implication is that the Satanic epic repeats itself in every age.

When in the Orlando Innamorato Agramante announces his invasion he does not intend to stop at the conquest of Charlemagne:

Vinta che sia la gente battizata,
Adosso a li altri il mio cor se abandona,
Fin che la terra ho tutta subiugata;
Poi che battuta avrò tutta la terra,
Ancor nel paradiso io vo' far guerra.

OI.II.i.64.

When his immense army is gathered and parades in Biserta, Agramante's pride <Che a suo comando avea gente cotante>

[II.xxii.31]⁴⁸ is not unlike that of Satan whose "heart |

Distends with pride, and hardning in his strength | Glories"

[I.571-3]. The hordes are such that Boiardo claims <se

⁴⁸Berni, II.xxii.34:

Or quando nel moderno, o nell'antico
Tempo, mai tanto popolo fu adunato,
Per andar contra a qual si sia nimico,
Come questo, che'l mondo ha soffocato?
Qual esser dee d'Agramante la mente,
Che si vede Signor di tanta gente?

numererebbe a minor pena | Le stelle in celo o nel litto
 l'arena> [OI.II.xxii.28].⁴⁹ But, despite their vast numbers,
 the colour, the bestiality, the lack of discipline, the
 poverty of armament and of fighting ability in Agramante's
 hordes, all point within the simile to a progressive moral
 and spiritual decline in the fallen Angels who slide from the
 might of the Giants at Phlegra to the cowardice of Agramante's
canaglia.⁵⁰

When this immense force finally sets sail from Biserta
 Boiardo strikes an epic note.

La più stupenda guerra e la maggiore
 Che raccontasse mai prosa né verso,
 Vengo a contarvi, con tanto terrore
 Che quasi al cominciare io me son perso;
 Né sotto re, né sotto imperatore
 Fu mai raccolto esercito diverso,
 O nel moderno tempo, o né lo antico,
 Che aguagliar si potesse a quel che io dico.

Né quando prima il barbaro Anniballe,
 Rotto avendo ad Ibero il gran diveto,
 Con tutta Spagna ed Africa alle spalle
 Spezzò col foco l'Alpe e con lo aceto;
 Né il gran re persiano in quella valle
 Ove Leonida fe' l'aspro decreto,
 Con le gente di Scizia e de Etlopia
 Ebbe de armati in campo maggior copia.

II.xxix.1-2.

With its deliberate structure culminating in a final allusion

⁴⁹ Berni, II.xxii.31:

Hor tutta questa gran generazione
 A Biserta dintorno di distese,
 Varii di lingua, & mostacci, & persone,
 Diuersi delle vesti, & dell'arnese,
 Chi di contarli volesse la pena,

⁵⁰ Le stelle troveria meno & la rena.
 Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.xxii.3-28 (also xxix.3-20):
 xxii.7 <senza ardir son tutti e senza core>, 8: <nuda è quasi
 questa gente istolta>, 11: <La feccia qua del mondo se
 roversa>, 16: <La gente di costor è de una scorza | Nera, come
 è il carbon quando se smorza>, 18: <Un sol non vi è, che

to the very same army Milton's simile is obviously intended to outromance romance. In the simile it parodies these stanzas by adding Agramante's countless hordes to the list of great forces that would seem a band of pygmies besides the Satanic armies. Boiardo's claim that this is the greatest war <che racontasse mai prosa né verso> can also be ironically matched in Milton's "Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime" [I.16], normally understood as referring to Ariosto's audacious <cosa non detta in prosa mai, né in rima> [I.2]; but one could also note Francesco Berni's facetious <Come avvien, che né in prosa è detta, o in rima | Cosa, che non sia stata detta prima> [Berni.II.xxx.1]. Similarly Boiardo's choice of exemplars, Hannibal crossing the Alps and Xerxes being held in Thermopylae by the Spartans, are in Milton's eyes both Satanic paragons.⁵¹ Both despite immense forces were eventually defeated; both stand for the assault of a hostile culture on the West. Might the <valle | Ove Leonida fe' l'aspro decreto> even have indirectly suggested the fall of Charlemagne and his chivalry?

Agramante's armada blots out the sea. Their landing in Spain covers a hundred miles of coast <da Maliga a Taracona> [II.xxix.22]. Boiardo compares them to Hell opening and pouring forth all her legions.

Non fu tal furia mai sopra la terra.
Come se aprisse il colmo de lo infèrno,
Se far volesse al paradiso guerra,
E la sua gente uscisse tutta integra,
Qual con pallida faccia e qual con negra:

Morti e demonii, dico, tutti quanti,

⁵⁰(continued)
assembri uno omo in faccia>.

⁵¹See Milton, Paradise Lost, X.306-11.

Del fuoco uscendo e d'ogni sepultura,
 Sarebbono a questi simiglianti,
 Per contrafatte membra e faccia oscura. II.xxix.21-2.

Francesco Berni modified the second stanza to include an allusion to the battle of Phlegra.

Come s'aperto si fusse l'inferno,
 E far volesse al Paradiso guerra,
 Qual de' Giganti al tempo fessi a Flegra,
 Et fuor venisse quella gente negra. II.xxix.25.

Thus if we follow Milton in comparing different versions of the Orlando Innamorato, we can see how the romance epic becomes a real source of inspiration for the Satanic legions.

The Albracca Simile: Agricane's Tartars and the Parthian Hordes.

After the fall of "Charlemain with all his Peerage" in Paradise Lost the equally sonorous "peers of Charlemane" to describe the Parthian hordes of Paradise Regained displays Milton's bold readiness to make his epic similes cross-refer beyond the bounds of the single poem. Clearly the echo of the Satanic legions comments unfavourably on the Parthian might. Readers of Boiardo soon become accustomed to a poetic imagination that mobilises armies on a scale matched only in our century. From his own people and his subject-kingdoms that run from Mongolia in the east to Norway and Sweden in the north-west (Boiardo's awareness of distance is at times haphazard) Agricane, <il re de're, signor de Tartaria> [OI.I.x.9], assembles over two million men in arms to besiege Albracca,⁵² where the beautiful Angelica has taken refuge

after refusing the Tartar king's proposals of marriage.

In the first part of this chapter I observed that once Boiardo's original tale of Roland in love had been totally eclipsed by the immense and unprecedented success of the Orlando Furioso Milton's "poetic flattery" is one of the few proofs that the material of the Orlando Innamorato was not entirely forgotten and ignored. We should also realise how within Milton's poetic corpus such an extended compliment to the events and characters of a single romance is also without precedent. Therefore, if, contrary to his practice elsewhere, Milton deemed the matter of the Orlando Innamorato sufficiently important to base an extended simile on Agricane and his armies, it behoves us to carefully study the simile, the story it is based on and the reasons why.

In Milton's Brief Epic Professor Lewalski suggests that the comparison:

identifies Parthia with great and misused military force, for the Orlando Innamorato records that many of Charlemagne's knights were enticed to this siege through Angelica's deceit and thereby defaulted in their proper service to their king.⁵³

The single autograph entry from the Orlando Innamorato in Milton's Commonplace Book cites Berni's view that a king ought not to consider himself the lord but the steward of the

⁵²Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I.vi.42, places Albracca a day's journey from Cathay. Recent work tentatively identifies Boiardo's Albracca as the modern Bukhara; G.Ponte, La Personalità e l'Opera del Boiardo, Genoa, Tighe 1974, p.89; M.Murrin, The Allegorical Epic, University of Chicago Press 1980, p.75.

⁵³B.K.Lewalski, Milton's Brief Epic, p.267.

people. The whole octave reads as follows (Milton cites the first two and a half lines):

Un Re, se vuole il suo debito fare,
Non è Re veramente, ma fattore
Del popol, che gli è dato a governare,
Per ben del qual l'ha fatto Dio Signore,
Et non perche l'attenda a scorticare,
Anzi bisogna che sia servidore
D'ogniuno, et vegli, & non habbia mai bene,
Et de peccati altrui porti le pene.

Berni.I.vii.3.⁵⁴

Therefore Milton may well have read this romance as a work that (apart from the anarchy of love) displays the follies and selfishness of mighty kings intent on gratifying their own whims at the expense of the lives and well-being of their subjects. The Orlando Innamorato tells how three great invasion forces are assembled to achieve the personal desires of three different pagan monarchs. First Gradasso with an army of <cento cinquanta millia cavallieri> sails from Sericana (by what route is not explained) to invade Europe and win for himself Rinaldo's horse, Baiardo, and Orlando's sword, Durindana. In the opening proem of the poem Boiardo reflects ironically on what ensues when:

gran signori
Che pur quel voglion che non ponno avere,
E quanto son difficoltà maggiori
La desiata cosa ad ottenere,
Pongono il regno in grandi errori.

OI.I.i.5.

Second Agricane leads the immense forces listed in Milton's simile to storm Albracca and ~~siege~~ Angelica who has scorned his proposals of marriage. When Astolfo rides into the camp of another of Angelica's lovers, the Circassian king Sacripante who is bringing a large relief army to Albracca, Boiardo comments pithily on the disparity between the scale of

the conflict and its cause.

La cagione era di questo rumore
Non odio antiquo o zelosia di stato,
Né lo confin di regno o disonore,
Né lo esser per vittoria reputato;
Ma l'arme li avea posto in mano Amore,
Perchè Agricane al tutto è destinato
Angelica per moglie di ottenere:
Essa ha proposto più presto morire.

OI.I.ix.39.

Finally Agramante gathers the armies of Spain and all Africa for the invasion of Charlemagne's France, partly out of revenge for the defeat of Almonte and Troiano, partly out of a wanton lust for glory. Therefore it seems entirely appropriate that in Paradise Regained the simile should come as a coda to the description of the Parthian army in the temptation of the kingdoms. By recalling the abuse of great military power in the Orlando Innamorato, Milton hints obliquely at the true worth of Satan's proffered Parthian empire as the base for Christ's promised conquest of the world.

The siege of Albracca (or sieges since there are really two or three) forms the hub around which the action of Boiardo's first book revolves, though often very intermittently, so a brief summary of the principal events may be helpful.

After an initial setback when attacked by Sacripante's army, the Tartars with Agricane at their head fight their way into and capture the city of Albracca, leaving ~~on~~ the citadel in the hands of Angelica and her supporters. Angelica learns from Astolfo, who briefly joins the defenders, that after drinking a magic potion Orlando is a prisoner in the garden of the witch Dragontina. Angelica decides to rescue Orlando since she knows the mighty paladin is their only hope. She slips out of Albracca protected by the magic ring which makes her invisible and after various adventures breaks the spell on the garden, rescuing Orlando and six other knights, including Grifone and Aquilante. The small company returns to the beleaguered citadel and hack their way through the Tartar army to the gates. But they are shut out by the treacherous king Truffaldino and not admitted till they

swear to protect him against his enemies. The next day the defenders ride out to fight the Tartars. A huge battle erupts with the arrival of another relief force from India led by Angelica's father, king Galafrone. During the battle Agricane draws Orlando apart to a quiet grove where they fight an epic two-day duel that ends with the death of Agricane. Meanwhile the action is complicated by the arrival of Ranaldo who, after drinking from the spring of hate in the forest of Ardena, now hates Angelica as much as she (after drinking from the opposite spring) loves him. Ranaldo encounters the formidable amazon Marfisa and they fight a duel which is interrupted by king Galafrone who recognises Ranaldo's horse as that of his dead son Argalia. The king angrily attacks the paladin only to find both duellists turn on him. His victorious army is routed and Ranaldo (assisted by Marfisa) takes up the siege of Albracca since he has sworn to avenge an innocent victim of king Truffaldino. To their shame and horror the knights who have sworn the oath now have to defend the evil monarch. The return of Orlando, furiously jealous of Ranaldo's amatory reputation, means another combat where Ranaldo is on the point of defeat and death; but Angelica intervenes to save him and sends Orlando to destroy the wicked garden of the witch Falerina. From this point Albracca ceases to play an important part in the story.

From this complex plot Milton chooses only a small part, the first siege with the Tartars led by Agricane. I shall cite the simile again for ease of reference.

Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
 When Agrican with all his Northern powers
 Besieg'd Albracca, as Romances tell;
 The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
 The fairest of her Sex Angelica
 His daughter, sought by many Prowest Knights,
 Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemagne,
 Such and so numerous was their chivalry. III.337-44.

What does the simile tell us about the Parthian armies? As in the other Charlemagne simile, the real clue depends on two minor inaccuracies, one in the origin of Agricane's forces, one in the number of Angelica's lovers. Together they show why Milton chose to cite the Orlando Innamorato at this point in his "brief epic".

Despite the fantastic geography of Boiardo's poem, one might expect an English poet to consider the Tartar army as

eastern rather than "Northern powers", though according to the Italian poet Agricane's empire includes Mongolia, the Crimea, Russia, Moscow, Gothland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.⁵⁵ Many seventeenth-century maps such as that of Hondius⁵⁶ show Tartary as north-east Russia. But for Milton North is also the evil point of the compass. Milton's choice of adjective associates both the Tartars and the Parthians with the Satanic armies of Paradise Lost, who are in turn compared to a:

multitude, like which the populous North
 Pour'd never from her frozen loyns, to pass
Rhene and Danaw, when her barbarous Sons
 Came like a Deluge on the South, and spread
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian sands. I.351-5.

Agricane is a mighty hero from the same mould as Achilles, Rodamonte and Argante, who towers over his followers and is armed in maglia d'oro just as Satan is in "adamant and gold". On the other hand to juxtapose the inhabitants of Tartary and the denizens of Tartarus is an old and well-worn pun with a respectable ancestry.⁵⁷ When Orlando's seven knights hack their way through the opposing millions, the enemy are so numerous as to suggest that:

lo inferno li mandi di sopra,
 Da poi che sono occisi, un'altra volta,
 Tanto nel campo vien la gente folta. OI.I.xv.14.

⁵⁴Cf. Milton, Paradise Regained, II.457-65.

⁵⁵Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I.x.10-13.

⁵⁶Hondius His Map of the Christian World in Samuel Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes, London, Henry Fetherston 1625, p.115, reprinted in Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes, Glasgow 1905, vol.1, p.176.

⁵⁷The OED, Tartar, attributes the first recorded instance to Saint Louis in 1270.

This moral axis, typical of the Renaissance epic where christian-heavenly is opposed by pagan-infernal,⁵⁸ is alluded to in the Spenserian vocabulary of the simile. It recalls the fierce "paynim" trio of Sansfoy, Sansioy and Sansloy in the Faerie Queene who are matched and defeated by the "prowest knight alive, | Prince Arthur floure of grace and nobilnesse" [EQ.II.viii.18]. Could Milton be recognising a heroic paragon for Milton's Christ in Orlando whose single-handed rout of the Tartars is not unlike the Son's defeat of the rebel angels?

Obviously the preux chevalier of the Carolingian cycle could offer a serious challenge to the Christ of Paradise Regained as the archetype of true heroism. In one proem Francesco Berni, albeit tongue in cheek, dismisses the classical heroes as inferior to Charlemagne's paladin:

Perch'ogniun di color fu aiutato
Da Dei, da Dee, che facevon favore
Questa al figliuolo, e quell'altra al cognato

Berni.I.vi.3.

But in the Albracca simile Milton puts his finger (thanks to the generous imaginations of the Italian poets) on Orlando's weak point, his love for Angelica.

In a famous passage (unfortunately omitted in the Bonelli rafazzonamento) Boiardo praised the Arthurian cycle for its love interest - <Fo gloriosa Bertagna la grande | Una stagion per l'arme e per l'amore> - and criticises Charlemagne: <Perchè tenne ad Amor chiuse le porte | E sol se dette allé battaglie sante> [OI.II.xviii.2]. In the proem to the whole poem Boiardo declares that he will narrate <le mirabil prove |

⁵⁸L.Pulci, Il Morgante, ed. R.Ramat, Milan, Rizzoli 1961, XXVI.89-91, XXVII.53-5.

Che fece il franco Orlando per amore> [I.i.1] and advances the outrageous claim that Archbishop Turpin (often cited by the Italian poets as the fictitious authority for some absurd feat of arms) in this case sought to suppress the truth:

Credendo forse a quel conte valente
 Esser le sue scritture dispettose,
 Poi che contra ad Amor fu perdente
 Colui che vinse tutte l'altre cose. OI.I.i.5.

As Boiardo declares in the opening canto, the Orlando Innamorato introduces into the Carolingian cycle the dire elements of passion which annihilate Arthur's Round Table. When Ariosto reintroduces Angelica into the Orlando Furioso he pauses to list the damage caused by her loveliness.

La gran beltà, ch'in India il re Agricane
 Fece venir da le caucasee porte
 Con mezza Scizia a guadagnar la morte...
 La gran beltà, che fu da Sacripante
 Posta innanzi al suo onore e al suo bel regno;
 La gran beltà, ch'al gran signor d'Anglante
 Macchiò la chiara fama e l'alto ingegno,
 La gran beltà che fe' tutto Levante
 Sottosopra voltarsi e stare al segno. OF.VIII.62-3.

By the mention of Angelica "sought by many Prowest Knights | Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemagne" Milton could be glancing at the glorification of chivalric love that reigns supreme in Boiardo's Orlando Innamorato. But if we compare the claim made in the simile with the lovers of Angelica actually present at the first siege of Albracca, Milton's second minor inaccuracy emerges. (We should remember that the early Italian chivalric romances, especially Pulci, are notorious for their occasional inconsistencies of character.) Though in Angelica's first unforgettable appearance at the court of the French emperor <ogni barone | Di lei si accese,

ed anco il re Carlone> [I.i.32], of the five "Peers of Charlemagne" actually present at the siege only one, the eponymous hero of the poem, burns with love for her. Rinaldo has drunk from the spring of hate and loathes the beautiful witch as much as she dotes on him, while the other three, Grifone, Aquilante and Astolfo, of whom the last has previously done battle with Argalia for the hand of his sister, now all show a curious unexplained indifference that I can only attribute to inconsistency of characterisation. This lack of amorous fire in the other paladins of course allows Boiardo to concentrate on the elemental clash of passions between first Orlando and Agricane, then Orlando and Rinaldo.

It is more likely that Milton's conflation of the amorous snares laid by Angelica at Charlemagne's court with the siege of Albracca refers not to Boiardo's praise of amore, but to Francesco Berni's more critical view of Orlando's dereliction of duty and faith. From time to time Berni interrupts Boiardo's narrative to display his disapproval, as he comments in one of the proems he added to the poem.

Orlando ch'è incappato in questo laccio
 Pur conoscea che non faceva bene,
 Et di se vergogna & si riprende
 Ch'una fanciulla combatte & difende.

Dove prima combatter per la fede,
 Per l'honor suo, pel suo Signor er'uso,
 Et confessava che i termini escede
 Della ragione, & ch'egli era un'abuso
 Tutta via quel che fa, far ben si crede
 Tanto gli ha l'intelletto amor confuso.

Berni.I.xix.3-4.

In Berni's version of the night's conversation that interrupts the duel between Agricane and Orlando, the latter, revealing his identity for the first time to the Tartar king, confesses

that for Angelica he has risked his life, his country and almost his soul.

Io son Orlando, & sono
Innamorato, cosi non fuss'io,
Che per questo la vita in abbandono,
E la mia patria ho messa, & quasi Iddio,
A quella del mio core ho fatto dono,
Quello è tutto il mio bene, e' il mio disio,
Che nella Rocca d'Albracca è serrata,
Per cui tu hai tanta gente menata.

Berni.I.xviii.52.⁵⁹

It is precisely this dereliction of duty which establishes the Carolingian hero as a heroic type inferior to Milton's Christ and rather casts him as an analogue to the uxorious Adam.

Paradise Regained lacks the sexual temptation of the Fall of Man, though Belial does suggest testing Jesus with the "daughters of men fairest found" [II.154]; but the extravagant feast offered in the temptation of hunger is attended by:

ladies of th'Hesperides, that seem'd
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since
Of Fairy Damsels met in Forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot or Pelleas or Pellenore.

II.357-61.

The constant play on fair, fairer, fairest, in this description, in Belial's words or the Angelica of the simile "fairest of her sex" call up Satan's first view of Adam and

⁵⁹ Compare the original OI.I.xviii.47; see also Berni, II.ix.49:

Lo strigne, e sforza il debito, e l'onore
Alla santa, anzi necessaria impresa,
Tanto più perch'egli era Senatore
Romano, e difensore di Santa Chiesa:
Ma dal Signor di tutto'l Mondo, Amore,
Aveva sì la cieca mente offesa,
Si traviato il folle desio,
Che non si ricordava pur di Dio.
See Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, IX.1.

Eve in the garden as:

the lovliest pair
That ever since in loves imbraces met,
Adam the goodliest man of men since borne
His Sons, the fairest of her Daughters Eve. IV.321.⁶⁰

Even the name of Boiardo's heroine might glance at Satan finding Eve alone among her roses "her Heav'nly forme, | Angelic" [IX.457-8]: word-play possibly suggested by Berni's description of Orlando's emotions when he finds Angelica before him in the garden of Dragontina:

Quell'Angel vedendo in corpo umano,
Che gli ha d'amor sì forte il cor ferito,
Non sa com'esser possa, e appena crede,
Ch'Angelica sia quivi, e pur la vede.
Berni.I.xiv.53.

Milton's "Great Consult" and the Pagan Invasion Council.

Both of Milton's epics have infernal councils. In Paradise Lost Satan proposes the downfall of man, whereas in Paradise Regained he seeks advice on how to test and overthrow Jesus. The latter in its lay-out and structure conforms to the traditional topos of the infernal debate typified by the Gerusalemme Liberata, where the Devil sees the crusaders threatening his empire and sends his demons in aid of the pagans. However the "Great Consult" of Paradise Lost belongs to a different genre. Before the temptation of man is

⁶⁰In Paradise Lost "fair" is one of the poem's distinctive key-words, cf. II.748,757, IV.477, V.155, VIII.471,493,568,596, IX.608; note Richard Barnfield, The Prayse of Lady Pecunia in Poems 1594-1598, ed. E. Arber, Birmingham 1883: "I Sing not of Angellica the faire, | (For whom the Palladine of Fraunce fell mad)...

proposed, the "Consult" discusses whether to attempt revenge against heaven or the creation of a separate empire in hell. What, in my opinion, Milton takes as his model is the pagan invasion council of the romances, especially that called in Biserta by Agramante to plan the conquest of France and defeat of Charlemagne in the second book of the Orlando Innamorato.⁶¹ If the structure and development of the two debates is compared together with the solutions adopted, Milton's use of the romance epic casts severe doubts on the heroic pretensions of Satan and his followers.

In the Orlando Innamorato Agramante calls thirty-two kings to Biserta to announce in council his intention of avenging the death and defeat of his uncle and grandfather Almonte and Agolante in Aspramonte and of his father Troiano in Burgundy at the hands of Orlando by invading France once again: <Per agrandir la legge di Macone> [OI.II.i.37]. Advancing in procession to the emperor's palace: <Il sole mai non vide uno altro tale, | Di più ricchezza e più magnificenza> [OI.II.i.20], the thirty-two kings pass through bejewelled and gilded antechambers to the great hall of the Palace.

Intrarno in sala, e ben fu loro avviso
Veder il celo aperto e il paradiso.

Lunga è la sala cinquecento passi,
E larga cento aponto 'per misura:

⁶¹W.Kirkconnell, The Celestial Cycle, Toronto 1952, finds analogues to the Infernal Council in Vida, Christiados (1527); Tasso, Gerusalemme Liberata (1581); Erasmo di Valvasone, Angeleida (1590); P.Fletcher, Locustae and The Locusts (1627); Cowley, Dauides (1656). E.S.Le Comte, Milton's Infernal Council and Mantuan, Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXIX, 1954, pp.979-83, adds Baptista Mantuan, Georgius, Milan 1507.

Il cel tutto avea d'oro a gran compassi,
 Con smalti rossi e bianchi e di verdura.
 Giù per le sponde zaffiri e ballassi
 Adornavan nel muro ogni figura,
 Però che ivi intagliata, con gran storia,
 Del re Alessandro vi è tutta la istoria.

OI.II.i.20-1.⁶²

To the music of <Trombe, tamburi e piffari...Gente legiadre e donzelle> are dancing, while Agramante greets each of the kings and orders the room to be cleared. On the dais are placed <trentadue sedie d'or...| poi l'altre son più basse e diseguale, | Pur vi sta gente di gran dignitate> [II.i.33]. The buzz of talk is stilled as the emperor rises to speak: <Ma come odirno il suo signor audace, | Subitamente per tutto si tace> [II.i.33].

Milton's palace of Pandaemonium which rises out of the ground "with the sound | Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet" [I.711-2] is a seat worthy of an oriental tyrant with its:

pillars overlaid
 With Golden Architrave; nor did there want
 Cornice or Frieze, with bossy Sculptures grav'n,
 The Roof was fretted Gold. I.714-7.

Such magnificence recalls Troy and Carthage in the Aeneid, but Satan's palace is also compared by the poet to Babylon or "great Alcairo...when Aeygpt with Assyria strove | In wealth and luxurie" [I.721-2]. Into this building are summoned "From every Band and squared Regiment | By place or choice the worthiest" [I.758-9], who throng the entrance and the great hall in their thousands while:

⁶²Berni, II.1.27:<E nella sala entrati, parve loro | Veder dove fa Giove l'alto concistoro>.

far within
 The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
 In close recess and secret conclave sat
 A thousand Demy-Gods on golden seat^{es}. I.791-6.

However it is the debate, not the affinities between the two settings, which makes the Orlando Innamorato a model for Milton's infernal "consistory". Agramante opens the council with a call on the loyalty, virtue and love of glory of his followers. Satan starts by strengthening his own supremacy, arguing that where highest rank means highest misery no one should think of internecine struggles, but instead they should all turn their attention to establishing a new empire and the question of revenge "by what best way, | Whether of open Warr or covert guile, | We now debate" [II.40-2].

In the Orlando Innamorato the argument is split between youth and age, on the one hand the greybeards who fought with Agolante and know from harsh experience the might of the paladins, on the other the untried hotheads convinced of their own invincibility who find a powerful spokesman in Rodamonte, king of Sarza. The older men speak first. Branzardo predicts that though few in number Charlemagne's paladins <gente antiqua di sua gesta, | Che sempre sono usati insieme a guerra> [II.i.40] will prove more than a match for the badly-armed and inexperienced African hordes. Sobrino warns that both the potential invasion routes will prove impassable, whether the direct crossing which would have to land in the face of the Christian resistance, or the longer route via the straits of Gibraltar and over the Pyrenees which would mean meeting at Montalban <Rinaldo il crudo, che difende il passo> [II.i.49], not to mention the other paladins whom Charlemagne

will bring in his train, Orlando <quel maladetto che è si forte>, Gano, Danese, Salamone, Oliviero, and concludes: <Io gli ho provati: possote accertare | Che'l bon partito è de lasciargli stare> [II.i.51].⁶³ At this point Rodamonte interrupts. Now we meet for the first time one of Boiardo's major creations whose angry death ends the Orlando Furioso and whose character introduces the term rhodomontade into both English and Italian. Though Rodamonte (Rodomonte in Ariosto) has much in common with the other fierce pagans invented by Boiardo: Agricane, Gradasso, Mandricardo, or those inherited from the romance tradition such as Feraguto (Ferraù in Ariosto) from the Spagna, for uncompromising pride, suicidal ferocity and bloodthirsty madness the king of Sarza stands above them all. As such he is a worthy model for Milton's Moloch.

..the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
 That fought in Heav'n; now fiercer by despair:
 His trust was with th'Eternal to be deem'd
 Equal in strength, and rather then be less
 Car'd not to be at all; with that care lost
 Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse
 He reck'd not,...

II.44-50.

Rodamonte menaces those who seek to dissuade Agramante from his purpose and swears <In celo o ne l'inferno il re Agramante | Seguirò sempre, o passarogli avante> [OI.II.65]. Likewise Moloch speaking for "open war" condemns those who "sit contriving" and leave millions of fighting angels in prolonged imprisonment when, having nothing to lose, they can only ascend and "Arm'd with Hell flames and fury all at once | O're

⁶³Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.i.39-43 (Branzardo); 45-51 (Sobrino).

Heav'ns high Towrs...force resistless way" [II.62-3]. Where Moloch knows only too well the reality and might of God, Rodamonte professes a furious atheism and places his only trust in physical force.

Se egli è alcun dio nel cel, ch'io nol so certo,
 La stassi ad alto, e di qua giù non cura:
 Omo non è che l'abbia visto esperto,
 Ma la vil gente crede per paura.
 Io de mia fede vi ragiono aperto
 Che solo il mio bon brando e l'armatura
 E la maza ch'io porto e'l destrier mio
 E l'animo ch'io ho, sono il dio mio. II.iii.22.

Moloch's madness is easily shown up as folly by Belial and Mammon who argue for easeful sloth and a utilitarian self-sufficiency, but the issue of invasion by forza or frode is raised again by Beelzebub when he suggests that instead of a futile war against heaven the fallen angels should turn their attention to man.

Som advantagious act may be achiev'd
 By sudden onset, either with Hell fire
 To waste his whole Creation, or possess
 All as our own, and drive as we were driven,
 The punie habitants, or if not drive,
 Seduce them to our Party... II.363-8.

In the Orlando Innamorato the council reaches an opposite conclusion, agreeing on war (a foregone conclusion since Agramante has already made up his mind), but the decision that the invasion should be postponed until Ruggiero is discovered and brought to join them angers Rodamonte. He refuses to wait and sets sail in the teeth of a raging storm, not heeding either the weather or the advice of the sailors, so great is his impatience: <A lui non par quella ora veder mai | Che pona il mondo a foco a roina> [II.vi.2]. He shares with Moloch an indifference both to his own fate and that of his followers.

<Quando io sero del mare in fondo, | Voria tirarmi adosso tutto il mondo> [OI.II.vi.2].⁶⁴ Two thirds of his force are shipwrecked and drowned in the crossing, while the rest land at Monte Carlo to find themselves attacked by a Christian army led by Bradiamante and Rinaldo. After a fall received from the latter Rodamonte, craving vengeance, follows the paladin into the forest of Ardena, abandoning his followers to take flight back to Africa in their few remaining ships. In their turn admirers of Ariosto wrote a continuation to Orlando Furioso with a furious catabasis and harrowing of hell by the spirit of Rodomonte;⁶⁵ but in this respect the figure of Moloch and his line of argument were already familiar to the Renaissance reader in the person of the ferocious pagan warrior.

In the Orlando Innamorato the invasion of France is delayed until Ruggiero is found and brought to join Agramante's army from the magic garden where he is being concealed by the wizard Atalante; but this garden is in an unassailable site on the summit of the monte di Carena and further protected by spells that can only be broken by the ring of Angelica. Therefore not a hero but a thief must steal the ring from its owner (at that time shut up in Albracca by Marfisa).⁶⁶

⁶⁴Berni, II.vi.31, adds echoes from Inferno XV to recall Dante's Capaneus: <Sol Rodamonte è quel, che'l cielo minaccia>; also vi.15: <L'intrepido, empio, altiero Rodamonte, | Al mare, al cielo, a Dio volta la faccia>.

⁶⁵Gervase Markham, Rodomonths Infernall, or The Diuell conquered. Ariastos Conclusions. Of the Marriage of Rogero and Rodomonth the never-conquered Pagan, London, V.S. for Nicholas Ling 1607. This is a liberal translation by Phillipe de Portes from the French version of Aretino's Marfisa.

Agramante offers a kingdom and immense wealth to whoever will undertake the task, but there is no reply: <Tutti han la cosa molto ben intesa, | Ma non se vanta alcun di tale impresa>

[II.iii.38]. Finally the king of Fiessa brings before the council Brunello, who boasts the most fantastic larcenous and burglarious accomplishments:

Tuor la luna dal cel giù mi da il core,
E robbare al demonio il suo forccone,
E per sprezar la gente cristiana
Robberò il Papa e'l suon de la campana. OI.II.iii.42.

He soon returns not only with Angelica's ring but bringing the horse of Sacripante, the sword of Marfisa and the horn of Orlando into the bargain. Brunello masterminds the discovery of Ruggiero, lending the young warrior his horse and armour to join in the tournament; but his luck changes when he is blamed for the death of Bardalusto and sentenced to death (he is reprieved by Ruggiero), an example of aulical ingratitude Milton noted in the Commonplace Book.⁶⁷

In Paradise Lost Beelzebub's question "whom shall we send | In search of this new world, whom shall we find | Sufficient?" [II.402-4] is likewise greeted with silence.

....: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In others count'nance read his own dismay
Astonisht: none among the choice and prime
Of those Heav'n-warring Champions could be found
So hardie as to proffer or accept
Alone the dreadful voyage;... II.420-6.

Finally Satan "whom now transcendent glory rais'd | Above his

⁶⁶Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.i.68-77; iii.16-45.

⁶⁷Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.v.26-46; x.57-xi.10; xv.66-xvi.57; xvii.4-38; xxi.22-61.

fellows" [II.427-8] offers himself, but in the context the similarity between "this first grand thief" and Brunello - <quel ladro soprano> - is not only unflattering, it also comments eloquently on the real heroic worth of Satan's actions.

Milton's War in Heaven and Renaissance Epic Warfare.

During the Second World War A.H.Gilbert published a brief note in Italica on resemblances between a grotesque battle of Saracens against devils in the Orlando Innamorato and some episodes in the angelic war of Paradise Lost.⁶⁸ In a note on this article Professor Fowler remarked that:

in a general way it is true that Milton's angelic war begins by resembling the chivalric combats of Renaissance romantic epics. But because it is more impressionistic and economical and functional,⁶⁹ it always avoids their 'long and tedious havoc'.

Within the last five years three major studies of Satan's armies and their background have been published in America; but apart from brief references to the invention of firearms in Ariosto little mention is made of the Italian chivalric epics nor is Gilbert's article cited in the bibliographies.⁷⁰

⁶⁸A.H.Gilbert, A Parallel between Milton and Boiardo, Italica, XX, 1943, pp.132-4.

⁶⁹Carey-Fowler, p.745.

⁷⁰S.P.Revard, The War in Heaven: Paradise Lost and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion, Cornell University Press 1980; J.A.Freeman, Milton and the Martial Muse: Paradise Lost and the European Traditions of War, Princeton University Press

In the rest of this chapter I shall briefly display how, though unquestionably "more impressionistic and economical and functional", Milton employs the Italian chivalric epic to create some grotesque effects in his heavenly war.

The episode noticed by Gilbert occurs when the wizards of Charlemagne's court, Malagise and his brother Viviano, see Rodamonte and Feraguto travelling to join the Saracen army besieging Montalban. Recognising the threat this couple pose to the Christian cause the two magicians conjure up an army to terrify the pagans and take them prisoner. But the outcome proves opposite to their expectations. The demons line up as a chivalric army:

In forma de guerrieri e de ronconi,
Mostrando in vista più de mille schiere,
Con cimeri alti e lance e con bandiere. II.xxii.47.

They charge with urli e gridi, shaking the plain beneath them. But instead of fleeing in terror the two pagans are hardly dismayed. Rodamonte slices into Draginazza: <E dette a Draginazza una gran pena, | Benchè il passasse come cosa vana> [II.xxii.53], while Feraguto deals summarily with Malagriffa. Rodamonte splits Falsetta in half:

Intra le corne il brando ebbe callato,
E divise la testa e tutto il petto.
Via va cridando quel spirito dannato,
Ma dove andasse, io non lo so per effetto. II.xxii.58.

Thus the rout is complete:

Fuggiano urlando e stridendo con pianti,
Che eran spezzati e non potean morire;
E dove prima al bosco eran cotanti,

⁷⁰ (continued)

1980; R.T.Fallon, Captain or Colonel: The Soldier in Milton's Life and Art, University of Missouri Press 1984.

Ora son pochi, e ciascun vol fuggire.

II.xxii.59.

Likewise in Paradise Lost the issue of the battle proves opposite to the expectations and boasts of the bad angels. Moloch blasphemes against the Son and, threatening Gabriel, promises "at his Chariot wheeles to drag him bound", but "anon | Down clov'n to the waste, with shatter'd Armes | And uncouth paine fled bellowing" [VI.360-2]. Elsewhere Uriel and Raphael rout:

Adramelec and Asmadai,
Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods
Disdain'd, but meaner thoughts learn'd in thir flight,
Mangl'd with gastly wounds through Plate and Maile.
VI.365-8.

Unlike Boiardo Milton takes pains to explain the nature of his angels, but the parallel shows the element of mock-heroic, the sudden reversal of Satanic pretensions that underlies the inadequacy of the rebel angels' martial code.

Raphael's account of the angelic war where even the "least...could weild | These Elements, and arm him with the force | Of all thir Regions" [VI.221-3] is a deliberate accommodation "lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms" [V.573] for the benefit of not only Adam and Eve but also the reader. The real question that has troubled studies of Milton's heavenly war is whether Milton intends this as a serious account of a battle between angels or whether it is an epic parody of heroic warfare. The main studies by S.P.Revard, J.A.Freeman and R.T.Fallon incline to the former conclusion. In this last section I should like to extend A.H.Gilbert's original observation with further parallels from Boiardo and

Ariosto that imply rather the mock heroic interpretation. The three days of war are marked by a military escalation from the swords and shields of the first day, through the invention of cannon and mountain-hurling of the second day to the third, when the Son comes, driving the rebels from Heaven. In the first day what ostensibly is a Homeric conflict with two battle-lines advancing steadily towards each other is punctuated by episodes reminiscent of the chivalric epics with their invincible protagonists locked in a continuous "tedious havoc". The superiority of the loyal angels is not sufficient to achieve a total victory through unaided strength. Their advantage is temporarily overturned on the second day by the diabolic ingenuity of the bad angels and is only restored by even more extreme counter-measures. Thus between two foes equal "Save what sin hath impaired" [VI.691] no permanent solution will be found: "Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last | Endless, and no solution will be found" [VI.693]. Thus the war displays the futility of the martial solution, not just for the bad angels who seek to overthrow God through physical force, but even for the loyal ones who face them and have to learn that their own strength is not sufficient.⁷¹ The deadlock can only be resolved through the intervention of the Son on the third day.

Within this context the Renaissance epic (especially the Orlando Innamorato) where enchanted and indestructible protagonists for whom armour is an irrelevance meet in seemingly endless duels is a perfect model for the angelic battle, where spirits can be wounded but not killed. Equally important are Satan's martial failures and the poet's skill in playing with our expectations. On two previous occasions, at

the gate of Hell and at the gate of Paradise when Satan is brought before Gabriel we are led to expect an epic conflict, only to be disappointed. In the war in heaven this situation recurs with even more bathetic results. When Abdiel steps forward to challenge Satan who "Came towring, armed in Adamant and Gold" [VI.110], despite the accommodation of spiritual to physical combat we recognise Abdiel as the milites christianus or the single just man. His low rank among the angelic hierarchies confirms both the courage of his stand and the unexpectedness of Satan's reverse.⁷² The reader of romance might hope for a spectacular duel, but Abdiel's first blow fells the archangel.

So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
On the proud Crest of Satan, that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield
Such ruin intercept: ten paces huge
He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
His massie Spear upstaid as if on Earth
Winds under ground or waters forcing their way
Sidelong, had push't a Mountain from his seat
Half sunk with all his Pines.

VI.189-98.

The ten paces, the phrases tempest and ruin are all idioms familiar from the chivalric epic.⁷³ In the Orlando Innamorato when Rodamonte's army disembarks at Monte Carlo their leader towers over his followers, but to his rage he is felled twice, once by Rinaldo where his fall is like that of a tower or <il

⁷¹S.P.Revard, op.cit., p.186.

⁷²Milton, Paradise Lost, IV.827-56.

⁷³Compare Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I.vi.4 vinti passi; II.xv.4 dieci passi; "tempest": II.xiv.41,60; xv.39; xx.16,21; xxi.4; xxiv.19; xxix.64; xxx.46; xxxi.21; III.v.9; vi.14; "ruin" (cf.Paradise Lost VI.216,670,868): I.xxviii.25; II.ii.65; iii.15; xv.9; xvii.9.

iugo de un gran monte roinato> [II.xiv.43], second by
Brandimarte.

Come il romor d'uno arboro si sente,
Quando è dal vento rotto e dibarbato,
Sotto a se frange sterpi e minor piante:
Tal nel cader suono quello africante. III.viii.39.

In the Faerie Queene the fall of the Old Dragon is also like a
"huge rocky clift, | Whose false foundacion waves have washt
away, | With dreadfull poyse is from the mayne-land rift, |
And, rolling downe, great Neptune doth dismay; | So downe he
fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay" [FQ.I.xi.54].⁷⁴

Satan's second reverse comes at the hands of Michael. The
instigator of the revolt who so far has shown "Prodigious
power...and met in Armes | No equal", raging through his
opponents ranks like a Gradasso or a Rodamonte, sees from afar
the havoc wrought by Michael and hastens to prevent it.

the Sword of Michael smote, and fell'd
Squadrons at once, with huge two-handed sway
Brandisht aloft the horrid edge came down
Wide wasting; such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and oppos'd the rockie Orb
Of tenfold Adamant, his ample Shield
A vast circumference: at his approach
The great Arch-Angel from his warlike toil
Surceas'd, and glad as hoping here to end
Intestine War in Heav'n, the arch foe subdu'd
Or Captive drag'd in Chains, with hostile frown
And visage all enflamed first thus began. VI.250-61.

Warburton commented "how entirely the ideas of chivalry and
romance had possessed the poet, to make Michael fight with a
two-handed sword"⁷⁵ and this has been endorsed by later

⁷⁴R.Thyer in Newton, vol.1, p.429.

⁷⁵Newton, vol.1, p.434. The two-handed sway has generally
been called on in discussions of the "two-handed engine" of

critics, but such a weapon is incompatible with the shield the archangel uses only a few lines later. Much as some tennis-players use a double-handed backhand Michael's huge two-handed sway means a two-handed stroke and comments on the extent of his exertions. The two mighty angels face each other, each thinking to end the war with a single blow, and Milton builds up our expectations of an epic conflict.

...likest Gods they seem'd,
 Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms
 Fit to decide the Empire of great Heav'n.
 Now waved their fierie Swords, and in the Aire
 Made horrid Circles; two broad Suns thir Shields
 Blaz'd opposite, while expectation stood
 In horror; from each hand with speed retir'd
 Where erst was thickest fight, th'Angelic throng,
 And left large field, unsafe within the wind
 Of such commotion... VI.301-10.

Some resemblance exists between this passage and a moment in the battle at Monte Carlo where Rinaldo and Rodamonte face each other like two demons and instil panic into all around them.

Avea ciascun di lor tanta ira accolta,
 Che in faccia avean cangiata ogni figura,
 E la luce de gli occhi in fiamma volta
 Gli sfavillava in vista orrenda e scura.
 La gente, che era in prima intorno folta,
 Da lor se discostava per paura;
 Cristiani e Saracin fuggian smariti,
 Come fosser quei duo de inferno usciti.

Siccome duo demonii dello inferno
 Fossero usciti sopra della terra,
 Fuggia la gente, volta in tal squaderno,

⁷⁵(continued)

Lycidas, see Carey-Fowler, pp.238-9, 741. Iconographically Michael has a spear or sword, sometimes a shield as well, but I still have to find an example of a two-handed sword. On the other hand two-handed strokes are common in the chivalric epic, see Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.xix.33, xxiii.43, xxv.7, xxx.35; III.ii.55.

Che alcun non guarda se il destrier si sferra;
 E poi da largo, si come io discerno,
 Si rivoltarno a remirar la guerra
 Che fanno e due baroni a brandi nudi,
 Spezzando usbergi, maglie, piastre e scudi.

Ciascun più furioso se procaccia
 De trare al fine il dispietoso gioco..

II.xv.2-5.

The rage of the mighty protagonists with their desire to end the war matched by the terror of those around them, contributes an element of comedy even to the war in heaven. If behind the high seriousness of the epic encounter between the mighty angels we recognise Boiardo's humorous account of a similar conflict, we thus gain an insight into the potential mock-heroic of the war in heaven. The war in heaven is infinitely more terrible and awe-inspiring than the havoc of Boiardo's champions, but Milton possibly intends the difference to be one of scale rather than genre. Obvious comedy would harm the height of the epic theme; but in Paradise Lost war is not envisaged as a solution and the element of the ridiculous, confirmed by the firearms and the bomphologia of the second day, is thus apparent. Here, as Michael and Satan face each other, we expect the battle to reach new heights of fury.

Together both with next to Almighty Arme,
 Uplifted imminent one stroke they aim'd
 That might determine, and not need repeate,
 As not of power, at once.

VI.315-9.

Orlando thinks to do much the same at Albracca: <Pensò finir la guerra a un colpo Orlando>, but that battle lasts several more days. But in Paradise Lost Michael's sword cuts through Satan's, wounding the horrified rebel, who is only saved by the intervention of his followers. For the fourth time Satan

fails to live up to our expectations. Milton completes the object lesson for his audience.

Rodamonte is also saved by his men, when prior to the duel above, Rinaldo knocks him over:

Or se mosse la gente saracina,
Tutti a Rinaldo s'aventarno adosso;
Per aiutare il suo signor ch'è a terra,
Adosso a Rinaldo ogniom si serra.

II.xiv.44.

Satan soon heals, but his real hurt is to "find himself not matchless" [VI.341]. The pagan warrior who has believed himself matchless is a typical figure in the chivalric epic. Thus Rodamonte's fury when he is knocked over by Rinaldo is all the greater because it destroys the conviction of his own invincibility: <Per grande ira non trovava loco, | Chiamandosi abbattuto e vergognato> [II.xiv.46]. He attacks Rinaldo again and aims to cut his horse from under him, but, rebuked, shows that his contempt extends even to the previously sacrosanct chivalric code: <La usanza vostra non estimo un fico, | Il peggio che io so far, faccio al nimico> [II.xiv.50]. A similar disrespect for any martial code leads the rebel angels to invent firearms.

The invention of artillery in the second day's warfare after the proofs of their martial weakness on the first by Satan and his followers draws on a well-established Renaissance tradition.⁷⁶ One of Milton's sources is certainly the intrusion of firearms into the Orlando Furioso, where it is regarded as a grave infraction of the chivalric code. The evil inventor, Cimosco, king of Frisia, is characterised as

⁷⁶S.P.Revard, op.cit., pp.188-90.

<si astuto in mal far, ch'altrui niente | La possanza,
l'ardir, l'ingegno giova>, while in Harington's translation both the king and the description of his new weapon are described in terms suggestive for Milton.

For first he is of limbes and body strong,
To meet his enemies in open field,
And then so politicke in doing wrong,
He makes their force unto his fraud to yeeld:
He hath his other weapons strange among,
A weapon strange, before this seen but seeld,
A trunk of iron hollow made within,
And there he puts powder and pellet in.

All closed saue a little hole behind,
Whereat no sooner taken is the flame,
The bullet flies with such a furious wind,
As though from clouds a bolt of thunder came.
And whatsoever in the way it find,
It burnes, it breakes, it teares and spoiles the same,
No doubt some fiend of hell of divellish wight,
Devised it to do mankind a spite. IX.28-9.⁷⁷

Cimosco's Machiavellian treachery offers a precedent for the employment of artillery in the war in heaven. Ariosto's commentators praised the verbal skill with which in the Carolingian setting of the poem the Italian poet presented a totally new weapon. Girolamo Ruscelli praises:

la bella diligenza dell'Autore, che hauendo à nominar più volte uno istromento nuovo, lo dica con tanta leggiadria così diversamente.⁷⁸

Harington remarks "this description of an hargabush being then

⁷⁷Harington, Orlando Furioso, p.67.

⁷⁸Orlando Furioso di M.Lodovico Ariosto...Con le annotationi, gli Avertimenti, & le Dichiarationi di Girolamo Ruscelli, La Vita dell'Autore, descritta dal Signor Giovan Battista Pigna, Gli scontri de'luoghi mutati dall'Autore doppo la sua prima impressione, La Dichiaratione de tutte le Istorie, & fauole toccate nel presente libro, fatta da M.Nicolo Eugenio, Venice, Appresso Vincenzo Valgrisi 1560, p.89.

a thing not in use, doth beseeme Olympia very well".⁷⁹ In Milton's war Raphael is likewise puzzled when the rebels "to Right and Left the Front | Divided" [VI.569-70] and the loyal angels see what is as yet "new and strange" [VI.571].

A triple mounted row of Pillars laid
On Wheels (for like Pillars most they seem'd
Or hollow'd bodies made of Oak or Firr
With branches lopt, in Wood or Mountain fell'd)
Brass, Iron, Stonie mould, had not their mouthes
With hideous orifice gap't on us wide,
Portending hollow truce... VI.572-8.

Milton attributes to the good angels the same perplexity in the face of a weapon familiar to his audience but unknown to the protagonists of the poem as Ariosto's commentators noted in the wit of their poet. When Orlando challenges the treacherous king to single combat the treacherous Cimosco does not come out to fight honourably, but seeks to ambush the unsuspecting paladin:

Quel, che nè virtù nè cortesia
Conobbe mai, dirizzò tutto il suo intento
Alla fraude, all'inganno, al tradimento. OF.IX.63.

But Orlando slaughters the men set in ambush. When Cimosco fires at the paladin the poet eloquently mimes the hiss of the projectile through the air only to have it kill Orlando's horse. Orlando's fury is compared to the explosion of a powder magazine. He kills the evil king and throws the horrible weapon into the sea.

Acciò più non istea
Mai cavallier per te d'esser ardito,
Né quanto il buono val, mai più si vanti
Il rio per te valer, qui giù rimanti.
O maladetto, o abominoso ordigno,
Che fabricato nel tartareo fondo
Fosti per man di Belzebù maligno,
Che ruinar per te disegnò il mondo,
All'inferno, onde uscisti, ti rasigno. OF.IX.90-1.

The rebel angels have a scantier regard for chivalric rectitude than does the paladin. Thus they use Machiavellian ingenuity to counter the debilitation already wrought in them by their sin. So in Milton the high Homeric style of the first day's warfare is reduced to deception, bombast and the debased outlook of a dying chivalry.

⁷⁹Harington, Orlando Furioso, p.67.

CHAPTER 3. PART I.Galileo as Symbol: The "Tuscan Artist" in Paradise Lost.

Passò di Firenze son già molt'anni un Cavaliere
 Oltramontano ricco non meno de' Beni di Fortuna, che di
 Virtù, desideroso oltremodo di vedere il Galileo di cui
 già per fama riveriva, ed amava il valore. Questi
 appena scavalcato all'Albergo, domandò dove abitasse il
 celebre Vecchio, e sentendo che dimorava fuori della
 Città, con grande impazienza indugiò fino alla seguente
 Mattina, e allo spuntar¹ dell'Alba si mise in punto per
 trasferirsi in Arcetri.

Milton's Visit to Galileo.

What lessons can an ambitious young poet on his travels
 gain from a visit to a great scientist, especially one under
 arrest for having professed ideas contrary to the interests of
 Church and State? The visit of thirty-year old John Milton to
 Galileo Galilei, confined to his villa outside Florence five
 years after the famous trial and condemnation, has continued
 to fascinate later generations of poets, writers and artists,
 until it has become almost a legend in its own right. In the
 last century David Masson, Milton's most authoritative
 biographer, envisaged:

an excursion (perhaps more than one) to Galileo's villa
 at Arcetri, a little way out of Florence; an
 introduction to the blind sage by Malatesti, or Gaddi,
 or Buonmattei, or someone else of the Florentine group;
 a cordial reception by the sage, according to his wont
 in such cases; a stroll perhaps, under the guidance of
 one of the disciples in attendance, to the adjacent

¹Carlo Dati, Invenzione degli Occhiali, se sia antica, o no: e
 quando, dove, e da chi fossero inventati? in
 G.Targioni-Tozzetti, Notizie degli aggrandimenti delle scienze
 fisiche accaduti in Toscana nel corso di anni LX. del secolo
 XVII., Florence 1780, vol.II, pp.49-62.

observatory to see and handle the telescopes; a conversation, perhaps, on returning, with the assembled little party, over some of the fine wines produced in welcome; and all the while, surely, a reverent attention by the visitor to the features and mien of Italy's most famous son, judging reciprocally of him through courteous old mind and ear, but unable to return his visual glance.²

Though the real purpose of the first part of this chapter is to consider the image of the astronomer in Paradise Lost, it must necessarily review the controversy over the visit to Galileo, for which the only evidence is Milton's own statement in Areopagitica (1644), where he mentions his stay in Florence and meeting with the renowned victim of papal censorship.

There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise then the Franciscan and Dominican licensors thought.³

Leaving England at the end of April 1638 with letters of introduction from Sir Henry Wotton and passing through Paris, Nice, Genoa and Pisa, Milton was probably in Florence by the 8th July since the register of the Accademia degli Svogliati records the presence of <un Lettorato inglese che desiderava d'entrar nell'Accademia>.⁴ He stayed a little over two

²D.Masson, The Life of Milton, vol.1, p.737. See appendix 1.

³Milton, Columbia, IV.330.

⁴Florence, Biblioteca nazionale, Mss.Maglia.IX.60. See J.M.French, The Life Records of John Milton, vol.V.385, cf.I.371-89. The minutes of the next meeting, 15th July 1638, in the hand of Iacopo Gaddi, tell us that <furono proposti l'Ab.^e D.Eusebio, et il S.^r per Academici li quali vinsero nonostante una faua bianca>. Does the space refer to the Lettorato Inglese whose name Gaddi had failed to catch and left to be filled in later? Milton's own account gives the impression that he hurried through France and he could easily have been in Florence by this point. Likewise his figure of

months, reading <una poesia latina di versi esametri molto eruditi> to the same academy on the 16th September, before departing for Rome and Naples. In the spring of 1639 Milton returned and, after attending three more Thursday meetings of the Svogliati on the 17th, 24th and 31st March, left for Venice via Bologna and Ferrara to reach England in the summer after an absence of fourteen months. Though he corresponded with his Florentine friends for many years, he never left his own country again.⁵ What has disturbed some critics is Milton's failure to mention Galileo in the autobiographical passages of the Pro Popolo Anglicano Defensio Secunda (1651), even though he affectionately names his friends in Florence and describes his stay there.⁶ Consequently S.B.Liljegren, drawing on the publication at the end of the last century in the Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Galileo Galilei of all the known documents on Galileo and his circle, was able to charge Milton with never having visited Galileo and inventing the story in Areopagitica to impress potential employers.⁷ However his principal argument (that the Inquisition had made access to Galileo all but impossible) was based on a

⁴(continued)

circa menses duos was written over 10 years later and is a round not an exact figure. Could he have been elected to the Svogliati? Most certainly yes. It was a mere formality and the minutes record many outsiders who were elected and do not appear again, for example on the 19th June 1637 <il Signore Gio. Francesco Loredano Nobile Veneto Eruditissimo>, author of the romance Adamo (Venice 1640). What would have been strange would have been for Milton to have attended some five or more meetings, read his poetry and not been elected to the Academy.

⁵Columbia, XII pp.44,312.

⁶Columbia, VIII p.122.

⁷S.B.Liljegren, Studies in Milton, Lund 1918, p.36.

inadequate and superficial understanding of the documents and personalities involved. Let us examine Liljegren's case.

After the trial and a brief sojourn in Siena, Galileo was confined under permanent house arrest to the villa known as Il Gioiello in Arcetri on the hills overlooking Florence. Since before his disgrace the famous astronomer had been the chief attraction for many foreign visitors to Italy, the Inquisition, worried that he might prove a source of dissension but not actually forbidding him to correspond with or be visited by his friends, hoped that the villa's remoteness and difficulty of access would effectively deter prospective visitors.

In December 1637, as he announced in a letter to Elia Diodati, Galileo's sight, which had been worsening for years, finally failed him.

Signor mio, il Galileo, vostro caro amico e servitore, è fatto irreparabilmente da un mese in qua del tutto cieco. Or pensi V.S. in quale afflizione io mi ritrovo, mentre che vo considerando che quel cielo, quel mondo e quello universo che io con mie maravigliose osservazioni e chiare dimostrazioni avevo ampliato per cento e mille volte più del comunemente veduto da'sapienti di tutti i secoli passati, ora per me s'è si diminuito e ristretto, ch'e' non è maggiore di quel che occupa la persona mia.⁸

Other illnesses followed swiftly on this final affliction and, given his age, he was widely believed to be on the brink of death, as the Florentine Inquisitor, Giovanni Muzzarelli, Fra Fanano, reported to his masters in Rome in a letter dated February 13th 1638.

Io l'ho ritrovato totalmente privo di vista e cieco

⁸G.Galilei, Opere, XVII p.247. Letter dated 21st January 1638.

affatto; e sebbene egli spera di sanarsi, non essendo più di sei mesi che gli caderono le cateratte negli occhi, il medico però, stante l'età sua di 75 anni, ne quali entra adesso, ha il male per quasi incurabile: oltre di questo ha una rottura gravissima, doglie continue per la vita et una vigilia poi, per quello che egli afferma e che ne riferiscono li suoi di casa, che di 24 hore non ne dorme mai una intiera; e nel resto è tanto mal ridotto, che ha più forma di cadavero che di persona vivente.⁹

On the basis of this report the Inquisition approved Galileo's request to leave temporarily his prison for his son's house on Costa San Giorgio, between Forte di Belvedere and Ponte Vecchio in Florence, where he could better receive medical treatment. However, as Cardinal Francesco Barberini informed the Florentine Inquisitor, the Pope specifically ordered:

ch'egli non esca per la città, né meno ammetta in sua casa, a pubbliche o segrete conversationi, huomini tali che gli possono dar campo di far discorsi della sua dannata opinione del moto della terra: volendo Sua Santità che particolarmente gli proibisca sotto gravissime pene l'entrare a ragionare con chi si sia de si fatta materia.¹⁰

A few days later Muzzarelli reported reassuringly that not only had Galileo received the injunction, but Vincenzo Galilei had been further commanded to <non ammettere in modo alcuno persone sospette a parlare col padre, e di far sbrigare presto quegli che alle volte lo visiteranno>.¹¹ In the summer of the same year a Dutch deputation (in the person of Galileo's old friend Huygens) intending to present the astronomer with a gold chain for his work on the calculation of longitude at sea was expected in Florence. Unfortunately Muzzarelli heard rumours of this and immediately reported the matter to his

⁹G.Galilei, Opere, XVII p.290.

¹⁰G.Galilei, Opere, XVII p.310.

¹¹G.Galilei, Opere, XVII p.312.

masters in Rome. Rome at once ordered:

quod si persona Florentiam ventura ex Germania ad alloquendum Galileum sit haeretica vel de civitate haeretica non permittat accessum ad praedictum Galileum, eidemque Galileo hoc prohibeat; sed quando civitas et persona esset Catholica, non impediat negociationem, dummodo non tractent de motu terrae et stabilitate caeli, iuxta prohibitionem alias factam.¹²

Altogether it seems Milton could hardly have chosen a worse moment to arrive. Worse still, Milton was exactly the kind of visitor Galileo, unwilling to compromise himself further with the Inquisition, did not want. Years later in the *Defensio Secunda* the Englishman emphasized his frankness in matters of religion during his Italian journey.

Sic enim mecum statueram, de religione quidem iis in locis sermones ultro non inferre; interrogatus de fide, quicquid essem passurus, nihil dissimulare.¹³

Especially if we consider the young traveller's future career, one could hardly imagine a bête noire the Inquisition would have been more eager to keep from Galileo. Given these circumstances, could the visit really have taken place?

What was the real nature of Galileo's imprisonment? The truth seems to be that the Florentine Inquisitors were much more benevolent towards their charge than their reports to their masters would have us believe. In fact had his "guards" been as truly relentless and ubiquitous as some popular accounts have made out, the blind scientist could hardly have written, revised or arranged for the clandestine publication in the year of Milton's visit of his Discorsi intorno a due

¹²G. Galilei, Opere, XIX p.396.

¹³Columbia, VIII.124.

nuove scienze. The paintings of the nineteenth century showing the Inquisition gaoler, a benevolently smiling priest, sharing the astronomer's home and table are simply a creation of the same century. Nowhere in the correspondence of Galileo and his friends is there any mention of such a personage.

A highly placed official in the Vatican approached with an enquiry about the precise meaning of the Inquisition orders by Benedetto Castelli replied that <l'ordine delle visite non s'intende rigorosamente, ma solo che non si tratti, ne dia occasione di trattare, di moto di terra etc>.¹⁴ The same Castelli's requests for an official beneplacito in extending his visits to Galileo (cited by Liljegren as a proof of the astronomer's inaccessibility) stemmed rather from the need to forestall any malicious gossip by convincing his masters of his own dedication and zeal.

If anything, after his blindness and the permission to move to Costa San Giorgio, apart from the momentary difficulty caused by the Dutchman's proposed visit (this Galileo actually turned to advantage since his refusal of the gift was seen as a proof of molta pietà,¹⁵ the old scientist seems to have possessed a greater freedom than before.¹⁶

¹⁴G.Galilei, Opere, XVII p.230.

¹⁵G.Galilei, Opere, XVII.366, XIX.397-8.

¹⁶The documentation for Galileo's life in 1638-9 depends on a few original letters, some unreliable copies of letters where the originals have since been lost and a series of legal documents, where one assumes he was present. From all these we can see that his movements were far more frequent than one might expect. Galileo received permission to move down to Florence for medical treatment in early March 1638 [XVII.310,312], swiftly followed by a further permission [XVII.324] to hear mass in a small church by the house during

What is told to Rome is not necessarily fact in Florence even today. As an authoritative recent study has shown, Galileo's fall, besides being the ruin of his opponents, was a source of deep embarrassment to the Vatican.¹⁷ Three cardinals refused to sign his condemnation and he still had many powerful friends. Five years after the trial Muzzarelli's reports possibly picture the state of affairs (naturally the Inquisitor presents himself as zealous and vigilant) Rome wished to see rather than that which actually prevailed.

Though Liljegren quite rightly shattered the rosy-tinted vision of Masson, his own version conveniently ignored many troublesome details. For instance, Milton caused himself some nuisance with his freedom of speech (it led to reserve on the part of Manso and probably disconcerted some Florentine

¹⁶(continued)

Easter (4th April). A procura in favour of his son is made out in the house at Costa San Giorgio [29/4 - XIX.438]. However the astronomer must have returned to Arcetri in May-June, since an original letter, now in the BL (Add.Mss.23139,f.45), tells Michelangelo Buonarroti the younger that he will be coming down to Florence the next day [26/6 -XVII.346]. A further procura [9/7 - XIX.438-9] and a letter di Firenze [25/7 - XVII.359] show that when Milton arrived in Florence Galileo was certainly at Costa San Giorgio. The dates of two more letters [14,17/8 - XVII.369,373] were considered unreliable by Favaro, but Galileo's second will [21/8 - XIX.522] tells us that he returned to Arcetri, probably to avoid the August heat. From further procure [11,22/9 - XIX.439,511-4], a codicil to the will [19/11 - XIX.531-5] and a letter [7/1/1639 - XVIII.11] we learn that he was back in Costa San Giorgio till early in the New Year. By the time Milton returned from the south letters are once again signed Dalla mia villa d'Arcetri [15/1 - XVIII.18] which most likely Galileo never left again.

friends),¹⁸ but in Rome he was received by the very Cardinal Francesco Barberini who sent the above mentioned orders to Muzzarelli.

There is no real reason not to believe Milton. The very isolation and remoteness of Arcetri would mean that the determined visitor would go unobserved. Milton's Florentine friends, to name but Carlo Dati or Antonio Malatesti who had known Galileo since they were children, would have had no difficulty in visiting their old family friend nor in taking their English companion. It is not surprising that apart from Milton's testimony no other record of the visit survives. We can well believe it required considerable discretion.

Why therefore did Milton not mention Galileo in the Defensio ? The simplest explanation is that it did not serve his purpose. On his travels Milton, virtually unknown in his own country, was feted by many personages of the first rank in his own age such as Sir Henry Wotton, Viscount Scudamore, Hugo Grotius, Benedetto Buommattei, Lucas Holste, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Giambattista Manso and Jean Diodati.¹⁹ To our historical perspective the applause of the Svogliati and the Apatisti seems mere fustian against the chance of a meeting with Galileo, but Milton was after all a poet and these compliments and panegyrics were his first unforgettable taste of fame, as he himself tells us in The Reason of Church Government (1641).

In the privat Academies of Italy, whither I was favor'd

¹⁷ P.Redondi, Galileo Eretico, Turin, Einaudi "Microstorie 7" 1983, pp.328-31.

¹⁸ Columbia, VIII.124, XII.50.

¹⁹ Columbia, VIII.120-6.

to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory....met with acceptance above what was lookt for, and other things, which I had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them, were receiv'd with written Encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps, I began thus farre to assent both to them and divers of friends here at home, and not lesse to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life) joyn'd with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die.²⁰

In 1645 he prefixed these "written encomiums" to the first edition of his Poems.²¹ Even in 1654 these panegyrics are still his chief memory of Italy and what he wishes to emphasize, if only to prove his acceptability to continental intellectuals. The visit to the ailing astronomer, scarcely in a condition to bestow similar flatteries, does not belong to the same context. Equally Milton could hardly describe ~~describe~~ his gracious reception by Cardinal Barberini and mention in the same breath the man in whose condemnation the Catholic prince had participated.

Anyway, why should Milton need to mention Galileo ? In 1654 Cromwell's Secretary for Foreign Tongues, the chosen defender of the English Revolution against the slanders of Salmasius, was at the height of his international fame. Only many years later, after the downfall of the Commonwealth and restoration of the monarchy, after his pamphlets had been burnt by the public hangman, after brief arrest, imprisonment and narrowly escaping worse fate, but nevertheless ruined, poor and blind, did he return in Paradise Lost to the idea of Galileo in Florence.

²⁰Columbia, III.295.

²¹Columbia, I.154-67.

The "Tuscan Artist", the Val d'Arno and Fiesole.

In the first book of Paradise Lost when Satan, risen from the "lake of fire" where he lay for nine days and nights after his fall from heaven, turns to summon his stricken followers from their torments, like a classical hero he carries a great shield and spear:

...his ponderous shield
 Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
 Behind him cast; the broad circumference
 Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose Orb
 Through Optic Glass the Tuscan Artist views
 At Ev'ning from the top of Fesole,
 Or in Valdarno, to descry new Lands,
 Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe.
I.284.

The simile appears (and has always been so interpreted) as a considerable compliment to Galileo. In Italy the Heroic poem particularly felt the effect of Galileo's discoveries and, modelling themselves on the anachronistic introduction of firearms into the Orlando Furioso, numerous Italian seventeenth-century poets equipped their heroes with telescopes. Occasionally these were used to see a distant enemy, but as often, following the precedents set by Dante and parodied by Ariosto with Astolfo's ascent to the moon, it became an opportunity for an digression into the maraviglie of astronomy where the blotches on the moon (or even the sunspots!) were explained to the amazed hero, with the stylistic advantage of keeping his feet firmly on the

22 See appendix A at the end of the text ; cf. N.Vaccaluzzo, Galileo Galilei nella poesia del suo secolo, Milan 1910; G.Aquilecchia, Da Bruno a Marino, Studi Secenteschi, XX, 1979,

ground.²²

The parallel between Milton's "New lands, | Rivers or mountains" and the moon seen by Astolfo with its <altri fiumi, altri laghi, altre campagne...altri piani, altre valli, altre montagne> [OF.XXXIV.72]²³ has often been noted; but the discovery, description and explanation of celestial features (with appropriate praise for Galileo) was a well established genre within the Italian epics of Milton's day. The most illuminating example for our purposes is Marino's Adone (1610), where Mercury explains to the hero how <nel bel viso di Trivia i segni foschi> are caused by <altri mari, altri fiumi, ed altri fonti, | città, regni, provincie, e piani, e monti> [X.41]. He adds some stanzas of prophecy.

Tempo verrà che senza impedimento
queste sue note ancor fien note e chiare,
merce d'un ammirabile stromento
per ciò ch'è lontan, vicino appare;
e con un occhio chiuso e l'altro intento
specolando chiascun l'orbe lunare,
scorciar potrà lunghissimi intervalli
per un picciol cannone e duo cristalli.

Del Telescopio a questa etate ignoto
per te fia, Galileo, l'opra composta,
l'opra ch'al senso altrui, ben che remoto
fatto molto maggior l'oggetto accosta.
Tu solo osservator d'ogni suo moto,
E di qualunque ha in lei parte nascosta,
Potrai, senza che vel nulla ne chiuda,
novello Endimion, mirarla ignuda.

Adone.X.42-3.

²²(continued)

pp.89-95. In J.Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, ed. J.B.Wharey, 2nd ed., OUP 1960, p.122, shepherds show Christian the gates of the "Coelestial City" through a "Perspective glass".

²³ J.Harington, Orlando Furioso, XXXIV.72. "'Twere infinite to tell what wondrous things | He saw, that passed ours not few degrees, | What towns, what hils, what rivers and what springs, | What dales, what pallaces, what goodly trees".

With the Adone as an admired example, the Italian epics of the seicento abound in fantastical explanations of celestial phenomena and (before 1633) flattery of Galileo.

On the other hand even a serious "scientific" pamphlet such as Cesare Cremonini's reply to the Nuncius Sidereus could cite in all earnestness passages sympathetic to his Aristotelian argument from the Convivio and the Divina Commedia without fear that the literary might compromise the scientific.²⁴ Equally relevant is the success enjoyed in the first years of the telescope by the cosmic voyage, a genre where works like Kepler's Somnium, Donne's Ignatius His Conclave or Godwin's Man in the Moone,²⁵ inspired by Galileo's discoveries and mixing scientific with fantastic, speculated seriously or satirically on space travel and the inhabitants of the moon.

With such precedents it is difficult to think that Milton's "Tuscan artist" can be anything more than a synonym for "Galileo"; but a closer study of the simile reveals disturbing ambiguities.

²⁴C. Cremonini, De facie in orbe Lunae in Disputationes de coelo in tres partes divisa, Venice, Apud Thomam Balionum 1613. See B. Nardi, La dottrina delle macchie lunari nel secondo canto del "Paradiso" in Saggi di filosofia Dantesca, Florence 1967, pp. 3-39; M. P. Stocchi, Dante e la Luna, Lettere Italiane, XXXIII, 1981, pp. 153-74.

²⁵J. Kepler, Somnium, seu Opus Posthumus de Astronomia Lunari, Impressum partim Sagani Silesiorum, absolutum Francoforti 1634; J. Donne, Ignatius His Conclave, ed. T. S. Healy, OUP 1969 (1st ed. 1611); F. Godwin, The Man in the Moone, or a Discourse of a voyage thither. By Domingo Gonzales The Speedy Messenger, London 1638; cf. M. H. Nicolson, Voyages to the Moon, New York, Macmillan 1948.

Firstly, it is applied to Satan.

Secondly, the application of the simile to Satan's shield immediately recalls the famous classical shields of Achilles and Aeneas, where the former showed <Έν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ', ἐν δ' οὐρανόν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν, | ἥελιον τ' ἀκάμαντα σελήνην τε πλήθουσιν, | ἐν δὲ τὰ τεύχεα πάντα, τὰ τ' οὐρανόσ' ἐστεφάνωται>, followed by cities at peace and war, ploughing, reaping, the vineyards and the dancing floor, and the latter the future glories of Rome.²⁶ There is an obvious analogy with the "new lands, Rivers or mountains", but the echoes link Satan with the discredited "wrath of stern Achilles" and "rage | Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd" [PL IX.15]. The anachronous mention of the telescope (albeit within a simile) in Satan's new realm could be a sinister reminder of that other technological novelty, the discovery of gunpowder and firearms: "devilish Engines, which in the second dayes Fight put Michael and his Angels to some disorder".²⁷ Comparisons between the moon and shields appear also in Renaissance epics. In the Faerie Queene Radigund's shield "shined wide, | As the fair Moone in her most full aspect".²⁸ Milton however emphasizes not the brilliance of the moon but the blotches and stains which mar her "spotty globe", the <signi bui | Di questo corpo; che là giuso in terra | Fan di Cain favoleggiar altrui [Par.ii.49]. The image echoes the theme of cosmic disorder associated with Satan, who elsewhere is seen as the sun in eclipse, a comet or even a planet breaking loose from its sphere [PL I.596; II.708; VI.311]; but worse it reflects

²⁶Virgil, Aeneid VIII.627-728; cf. Appendix 2, A.Grandi, Il Tancredi.

²⁷Milton, Paradise Lost, Argument to VI.

²⁸E.Spenser, The Faerie Queene V.v.3. cf.12.

(like the simile on the sunspots) his own disfigured splendour.

...his form had yet not lost
All her Original brightness, nor appear'd
Less then Arch Angel ruind, and th'excess
Of Glory obscur'd.

I.600.

Thirdly, the real danger in identifying the Tuscan artist with Galileo rather than Florentine scientists in general lies in the geography of Milton's simile. To put it quite simply, Galileo lived at the other end of the city. From his stay in Florence Milton certainly knew that Galileo's prison, <il mio carcere d'Arcetri>, was in Pian de'Giullari on top of a hill to the south of Florence, looking directly across the city and the Val d'Arno to Fiesole some five miles away.²⁹ Though Florentines can be vague about the precise bounds of the Val d'Arno (it can simply mean Florence and the surrounding countryside), any definition excluding Fiesole (as in "from the top of Fesole, | Or in Valdarno") could not logically include Arcetri.

Though the idea of the moon as another earth had innumerable antecedents in Milton's day, the most obvious was

²⁹S.Baldi, Folte come le foglie o lo scudo di Satana in Comparative Dimensions: English, German and Comparative Literature Essays in honour of Aurelio Zanco, ed.M.Curreli & A.Martino, Saste 1978, pp.221-40: 229. See M.L.Bonelli-Righini, Le abitazioni fiorentine di Galileo Galilei, l'Universo, XXXVII, 1957; XXXVIII, 1958; A.Godoli-P.Paoli, L'ultima dimora di Galileo. La villa "Il Gioiello" ad Arcetri, Annali dell'Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza di Firenze, IV, 1979, pp.15-29, tavv.1-11; A.Godoli, La casa di Galileo al Pian de'Giullari in Arcetri, Archivio Storico Italiano, CXXXIX, 1981, pp.631-44.

certainly Galileo's Nuncius Sidereus (1610), where the astronomer described his first observations with the telescope which showed the moon's surface to be mountainous and irregular.³⁰ This famous pamphlet, like the Lettere sulle Macchie Solari (1613), was written in the villa of Filippo Salviati, Le Selve, at Ponte di Signa, unquestionably in the Val d'Arno.³¹ Therefore if Valdarno refers to Galileo, it does so, not to the blind miserable captive of Milton's visit, but to that Galileo Milton never met, the astronomer of many years previously at the height of his worldly fame and prestige.

What about "Fesole" ? T.S.Eliot dismissed the wealth of proper names which proliferate in Paradise Lost as a "solemn game",³² and any such a school of thought would evidently ascribe Fesole and Valdarno to a poetic desire for fine-sounding syllables at the expense of precision. Nevertheless, remembering the particular bent of Milton's creative personality, just as the famous allusion to Vallombrosa a few lines previously may derive as much from a citation by Ariosto³³ as from a day's jaunt thirty years previously, so Fesole may depend more on literary than direct experience. We should therefore ask with what Milton would

³⁰G.Galilei, Opere, III p.62, cf.VII.87; M.H.Nicolson, Milton and the Telescope, p.25.

³¹G.Galilei, Opere, V, pp.113,239; XVII, p.247. By the time of Milton's visit Galileo had disposed of all his telescopes, except<il mio antico e scopritore delle novità celesti> [XVII.220].

³²T.S.Eliot, On Poetry and Poets, London 1957, p.144. See B.Everett, The End of the Big Names, Milton's Epic Catalogues in English Renaissance Studies presented to Dame Helen Gardner, ed.J.Carey, OUP 1980, pp.254-70.

³³Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, XXII.36.

associate the name Fiesole, and the answer is obvious, if slightly unexpected.

Milton certainly knew well the passage in the Inferno where the civil strife that racked Florence for centuries is blamed on the <bestie Fiesolane [...] Quello'ngrato popolo maligno; | Che discese da Fiesole ab antico, | Et tien'ancor del monte & del macigno> [Inf.XV.61].³⁴ A fuller version of the foundation and later history of Fiesole can be found in Villani's Croniche.³⁵ Villani tells how king Atalante <grande astrologo>, after a long search <per astronomia> for a site to found a city, eventually <per augurio, & consiglio d'Apolino suo astrolago, et maestro> chose the mountain of Fiesole. Though sadly lacking in telescopes these mythical star-gazers have a better geographical claim to the title Tuscan artists than Galileo.

Early commentaries on the Divina Commedia interpret Dante's macigno as symbolic of invidia.³⁶

³⁴In the Commonplace Book Milton cites Dante con l'espositione di M.Bernadino Daniello da Lucca, Venice, Pietro da Fino 1568.

See I.Samuel, Dante and Milton, Cornell 1966, p.34.

³⁵Croniche di Messer Giovanni Villani cittadino Fiorentino, nelle quali si tratta dell'origine di Firenze, Venice, B.Zanetti 1537, I.vii. Milton cites Villani in the Commonplace Book [Columbia XVIII.131]. For similar versions of the old legend see Boccaccio, Ninfale Fiesolano, st.436-59; Benvenuto da Imola, Commentum super Dantis Alighierii Comoediam, Florence 1887, vol.1, p.509; N.Machiavelli, Istorie Fiorentine II.ii.

³⁶Benvenuto da Imola, op.cit., vol.1, p.512, Purgatorio, XIX.48, <Tra'due pareti di duro macigno>. The commentary remarks <Macignus ergo est lapis lividus, aridus et figurat invidiam>.

Into the bargain Milton, who also knew Sallust and Cicero by rote from his boyhood,³⁷ was certainly remembering Villani's description of that classical arch-villain, Catiline, who chose Fiesole, or the ancient Etruscan Faesulae, as his stronghold.

Catellina, nobilissimo cittadino, disceso di sua progenia della schiatta reale di Tarquinio, essendo huomo di dissoluta vita, ma prode & ardito in arme, & bello parlatore, ma poco savio, havendo invidia di buoni homini ricchi & savi che signoregiavano la citta, non piacendoli la loro signoria coniuratione fece con più altri nobili, & altri seguaci disposti à mal fare, & ordinò d'uccidere li Consolii & i Senatori & di disfare loro uficio & correre et rubare, & mettere da più parti fuoco nella città, & poi far se signore.³⁸

Evidently this, especially Villani's emphasis on Catiline's rhetorical and more attractive virtues, forms a prototype for Satan's "revolt in Heaven" and "how he drew his Legions after him to the parts of the North, and there incited them to rebel with him".³⁹ According to Villani the enmity between Florence, built <ad similitudinem Romae>⁴⁰

by Caesar and after her destruction by Totila rebuilt by Charlemagne, and Fiesole, ally of all forces hostile to Rome, despite the defeat of the latter and consequent mixing of the two peoples, persists in Florence's history of internal discord and schism.⁴¹

³⁷Columbia, XII.92.

³⁸Villani, Chroniche, I.xxx.

³⁹Milton, Paradise Lost, Argument to book V, cf.V.657-802.

⁴⁰Benvenuto da Imola, op.cit., vol.1, p.510.

⁴¹Villani, op.cit., I.38, III.1, IV.7; B.Latini, Li Livres dou Tresor, I.37:

Por ce n'est il mie merveille se li florentin sont tozjors en guerre et en descort, car celui planete (Mars) regne sor aus. De ce doit maistre Brunet Latin savoir la verité, car il en est nés, et si estoit en exil lors k'il compli cest livre por achoisin de la guerre as florentins.

In the Epistolae Dante <Florentinus et exul immeritus> had inveighed against the Florentines as <Miserrima Fesulanorum propago, et iterum iam Punica barbaries>.⁴² The opening books of Paradise Lost hint at a form of Satanic epic, a heroic aberration parodying the Aeneid, which symbolically equates Heaven or the unfallen world with Rome and Hell with Carthage.

The legendary origins of Florence attracted poets, who added a strong dash of the fantastic. In his Firenze (1615) Chiabrera told the struggle between Fiesole rebuilt by Totila and the eventually triumphant Florence, whereas in the Fiesole Distrutta (1621), closely modelled on the Gerusalemme Liberata, the aftermath of the Catiline conspiracy and eventual fall of Fiesole to Caesar were retold by Gian Domenico Peri, il poeta contadino d'Arcidosso. Milton's own epic plans on his Italian journey were not dissimilar, but in the History of Britain (1670) he defines similar materials as a "Region of smooth or idle dreams".⁴³ Milton's ability to turn the province of the pseudo-historical heroic myth over to his Arch-fiend bears out the consistency of his mature historical bias.

Equally sinister is the geography of Fiesole. With Dante and Villani in mind Milton would have seen and remembered Fiesole towering over Florence to the North, a symbol of menace and evil. In Paradise Lost Satan leads the rebel forces to "the quarters of the north" where he has "his Royal seat | High on a Hill, far blazing, as a Mount | Rais'd on a

⁴²See Dantis Alagherii Epistolae, ed. P. Toynbee, OUP 1920, p. 75.

⁴³Columbia, X.31. cf. I.292, 310-2; XVIII.241-5.

Mount, with Pyramids and Towrs | From Diamond Quarries hewn,
and Rocks of Gold, | The Palace of great Lucifer" [V.760].
Thus we find that the "Tuscan artist" is a Satanic image.

This 'surprise' is confirmed by two more references to
astronomers in later similes as well as the famous allusion to
the Tuscan landscape in the Vallombrosa simile (as I shall
demonstrate later in this chapter). In the third book of
Paradise Lost Satan, who has broken out of Hell and is now
seeking the newly created world, lands in the sun.

There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
Astronomer in the Sun's lucent Orbe
Through his glaz'd Optic Tube yet never saw.
III.588.

As previously Milton concentrates not on the astronomical
issue, described by Galileo in the Nuncius Sidereus and
Lettere sulle Macchie Solari (1613), but sardonically on the
astronomer peering through the aperture of his "glaz'd Optic
Tube".

In the fifth book Raphael, sent by God to warn Adam and Eve
against the wiles of Satan, pauses at the gates of Heaven and
gazes down.

..he sees....
Earth and the Gard'n of God, with Cedars crownd
Above all Hills. As when by night the Glass
Of Galileo, less assur'd, observes
Imagin'd Lands and Regions in the Moon.
V.259.

The thrilling "new lands, | Rivers and mountains" have dwindled
to a mere "imagined lands", dismissed scornfully as the
product of the star-watcher's whimsy. Equally Milton is able
to capitalize on the ambiguity of "Glass of Galileo", a common
seventeenth-century synonym for telescope.⁴⁴

The Astronomer and the Explorer.

This is not to say the image of the Astronomer is unimportant. On the contrary Astronomy is a vital issue in Paradise Lost, but Milton's emphasis derives from the needs of his epic. In Paradise Regained (1671) Satan offering Christ the kingdoms of this world uses his "Aerie Microscope" (a strange instrument which shows both interior and exterior) to project a vision of Rome. "By what strange Parallax or optic skill | Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass | Of Telescope, were curious to enquire".⁴⁵ The mechanical or optical contraptions relied on by the Tempter contrast implicitly with the "from the Well of Life three drops" [XI.416] in Paradise Lost which the Archangel Michael uses to

⁴⁴OED, "Glass" 10b (example 1638); "Telescope" 1 (example 1619). However an instance in a dramatic work earlier than any in the OED is J.Webster, The Duchess of Malfi, ed.E.M.Brennan, London, "The New Mermaid" 1964 (written c.1612, 1st ed. 1623), II.iv.16-8: "We had need go borrow that fantastic glass | Invented by Galileo the Florentine, | To view another spacious world i'th'moon, | And look to find a constant woman there".

⁴⁵Paradise Regained IV.42,53. M.H.Nicolson, Milton and the Telescope, p.11, argued that Milton, hampered by his loss of sight, misunderstood the real purpose and functions of the microscope; but even before the telescope books on optics had described arrangements of lenses and mirrors to produce similar effects, cf.K.Svendson, Milton's "Aerie Telescope", Modern Language Notes, LXIV, 1949, pp.525-7. It seems more likely that, given his bias, Milton wished to allow Satan a technical expertise in optics far superior to that of human exponents. Equally, the primitive spyglasses of the seventeenth-century would hardly have impressed Milton's Christ.

reveal to Adam the future history of the world up to the flood.⁴⁶

The years from Galileo's first epoch-making announcement up to the publication of Paradise Lost did not see real advances in astronomical knowledge. True, accurate maps and studies of the moon's surface seen through the telescope were printed, but there remained a fundamental uncertainty about the cause of the macchie lunari. In the Dialogo sui due massimi sistemi (1632) Galileo had argued (thus refuting what he had hazarded in the Nuncius Sidereus) both against the presence of water in the form of seas and lakes, and that the lunar atmosphere was too thin to support life,⁴⁷ but other astronomers were more equivocal. In the Selenographia (1647) Hevelius could still suggest that:

Maculas illas magnas....non minus congruentur, nostris Oceanis, Maribus, Lacubus, Stagnis & Paludibus aequiparantur...quandoquidem aequae constantes ratione coloris, & omnis umbrae penitus expertes apparent.⁴⁸

Therefore the idea of the moon as another earth, besides being firmly entrenched in the popular imagination and the literary fantastic, was still tenable in scientific circles.

In Paradise Lost the very act of speculation is discouraged as counter-productive. Milton's argument to book VIII states

⁴⁶Milton, Paradise Lost XI.381.

⁴⁷G.Galilei, Opere, VII.85-88.

⁴⁸J.Hevelius, Selenographia, sive Lunae Descriptio, Danzig 1647, p.148. See G.B.Riccioli, Almagestum novum Astronomiam Veterem novamque complectens Observationibus Aliorum et Propriis Novis Theorematis, Problematis, ac Tabulis promotam....tomus primus, Bologna 1651, book IV, De Luna, ch.VIII, De Lunae Figura & Quid in ea sint Maculae Antiquae ac Novae, & Quantae magnitudinis, Deque Lunae Asperitatibus, Montibus &c.

"Adam inquires concerning celestial Motions, is doubtfully answer'd, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge". Unlike the Paradiso where Dante's explanation of the marks on the moon from the Convivio is refuted scholastically by Beatrice in favour of a "correct" solution,⁴⁹

Milton's Adam is left to ponder on alternative hypotheses.

Raphael first suggests that the spots are "unpurg'd | Vapours not yet into her substance turn'd" [V.419], but later comments that the moon may be inhabited.

If Land be there,
Feilds and Inhabitants: Her spots thou seest
As Clouds, and Clouds may rain, and Rain produce
Fruits in her soft'ned Soile, for some to eat
Allotted there.

VIII.144.

The angel also warns Adam how useless it is to puzzle over things so far beyond his reach and sketches the follies of future astronomers, who will move God's laughter "at thir quaint Opinions wide |...when they come to model Heaven | And calculate the Starrs" [VIII.78].

Heav'n is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowlie wise.
Think onely what concernes thee and thy being;
Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures there
Live, in what state, condition or degree.

VIII.172.

Despite his scornful dismissal of astronomers, the angel often touches on the new astronomy. The explanation of the Milky Way as a "circling Zone....| Poudred with Starrs" [VII.579] went back to the ancient world, but it was only corroborated in the Nuncius Sidereus.⁵⁰ The most telling point Galileo made against the Ptolemaic universe was the discovery of the phases

⁴⁹D.Alighieri, Paradiso I.52.

⁵⁰Milton, Paradise Lost, Argument to book V, cf.V.657-802.

of Venus (an impossibility in a geocentric system),⁵¹ yet Milton possibly betrays his real sympathies by including it in the account of the creation.

And hence the Morning Planet guilds her horns;
By tincture or reflection they augment
Thir small peculiar.

VII.366.

In reality Milton's comprehensive grasp of astronomy is academic rather than scientific, concerned not with mathematical truths but with their imaginative and poetic consequences. Almost as a contrast to the multitude of Ptolemaic, Tychonic, Copernican and variant systems that cover the pages in astronomical tomes of his century, to meet the needs of his epic Milton projects a prelapsarian cosmos, which unlike other Renaissance poems, by making the heavenly equator and the ecliptic coincide, provides a proper astronomical basis for the "eternall spring" enjoyed in Eden.⁵² Satan sees the created universe "hanging in a golden chain" [II.1051] and the ideal of the unfallen world is affirmed in the brilliant ambivalence of Milton's terminology, which permits both the geo- and the heliocentric hypotheses.

The Fall inevitably brings disorder and irregularity in the macrocosm, altering to afflict the earth and her inhabitants with the harsh extremes of summer and winter, but the poet, speaking this time in propria persona, skilfully avoids

⁵¹S.Drake, Galileo at Work, His Scientific Biography, Chicago 1978, p.164.

⁵²Carey-Fowler, pp.446-50. For the bewildering choice of systems available at the time, see G.B.Riccioli, op.cit., book IX, ch.3, De systemate mundi circa terram immobilem, ch.4, De systemate terrae motae; idem, Astronomia Nova, Bologna 1665, Appendix II, pp.81-91, De Motu Diurno Solis, ac Reliquorum Siderum, potius quam Terrae contra Copernicanos.

adherence to any single world system.

Some say he bid his angels turne ascanse
 The Poles of Earth twice ten degrees and more
 From the Suns Axle; they with labour push'd
 Oblique the Centric Globe: Som say the Sun
 Was bid turn Reins from th'Equinoctial Rode
 Like distant breadth to Taurus with the Seav'n
Atlantick Sisters, and the Spartan Twins
 Up to the Tropic Crab; thence down amaine
 By Leo and the Virgin and the Scales,
 As deep as Capricorne, to bring in change
 Of Seasons to each Clime; else had the Spring
 Perpetual smil'd on Earth with vernant Flours.
 X.668.

Of course this could be the poet playing safe between two equally valid alternatives, but more likely it marks the reader's direct involvement in the twin hierarchies of being and knowledge on which the epic depends. Just as angels and men are distinguished by intuitive and discursive reason, so man, whether fallen or not, should recognise his proper limits and live "Contented that thus farr hath been reveal'd | Not of earth onely but of highest Heav'n" [VIII.177].

Though Paradise Lost reflects the medieval compendium of knowledge in form and therefore finds room but not pride of place for the new astronomy, it also offers a working definition of redundant knowledge. The real revolution achieved by Galileo with his emphasis on trial and experiment was to make men believe their own eyes. This conflicted with Renaissance Aristotelianism and certain traditional Christian doctrines which emphasized the fallaciousness of the senses, especially sight.⁵³ Therefore the sight of the astronomer peering through the "glazed optic tube" of Milton's day at the fuzzy and distorted image of "imagined lands and regions in

⁵³V. Ronchi, Il Cannocchiale di Galileo e la scienza del Seicento, Turin 1958, p.80.

the moon" obviously re-enacts the deeper issues at work in the poem.

In an epic where faith is opposed to experience, where Satan moves in countless disguises, where rhetoric and illusion destroy mankind, this conflict of vision, sight, appearance, illusion and belief is the key to the fall of man. Eve sees and hears the snake speaking to her, allows herself to be convinced of what she sees, and thus abandons a pre-ordained order which she knows to be reason. Satan promises that the fruit of the tree of knowledge will clear her sight.

In the day
Ye Eate thereof, your Eyes that seem so cleere,
Yet are but dim, shall perfetly be then
Op'nd and cleerd, and ye shall be as Gods.

IX.706.

Likewise, in her dream Eve had been tempted by the sensation of flight.

Forthwith up to the Clouds
...I flew, and underneath beheld
The Earth outstretcht immense, a prospect wide
And various: wondring at my flight and change
To this high exaltation

V.86.

Despite the warnings Adam and Eve fall. Before their expulsion from Eden Michael foretells the second coming of Christ and the the final judgement to Adam who in turn acknowledges his own folly and God's infinite mercy. Michael replies: "This having learnt, thou hast attained the summe | Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the Starrs | Thou knewst by name" [XII.575].

On the other hand perhaps Milton's use of the "Tuscan artist" is not simply theological or philosophical

conservatism, but an acute insight into the directions the modern world, ushered in by Galileo, was taking.

The long dispute over the "hero of Paradise Lost" launched by Dryden and Addison and seized on by each generation of critics in turn has obscured the very issue it should have clarified. Milton seeks to define the very ambivalence of heroism in a fallen world. The image of the Son as supreme heroic pattern, Adam as the mean, is balanced by the many forms of false (or at best morally equivocal) heroic donned by Satan.

The century previous to the publication of Paradise Lost, against the background of the Council of Trent and the Counter Reformation, brought a clear progress in the poema Eroico from "Wars, hitherto the only argument | Heroic deemed" and the consequent "tedious havoc" [PL IX.28] to the virtues of the crusader and the explorer. In the Gerusalemme Liberata Tasso's Saracens conform to an older chivalric ideal, one where "might only shall be admired, | And valour and heroic virtue called" [PL XI.689], but it proves outmoded and eventually inferior to the rational virtue of the Christians. Tasso's masterpiece, and in particular the praises of Columbus <di poema degnissimo e d'istoria> [GL XV.30], heard by the two crusaders on their way to Armida's refuge, effectively defined the bounds of the Italian Heroic poem until after Milton's death. Adhering slavishly to Tasso's practice as well as to the guidelines offered in his Discorsi and the preface explaining the allegory of his masterpiece, Italian seicento poets aspiring to an Iliad plumped for a crusade (not necessarily against the Saracens!), and others favouring an Odyssey patriotically selected Columbus or Vespucci.⁵⁴ In Portugal similar choices had led Camoës to base Os Lusíadas

(1572) on the voyages of Vasco da Gama. Naturally some poets managed to combine the two. The fortunes of the final battle in Graziani's Il Conquistato di Granata (Rome 1650) are decided (with some distortion of historical fact!) by the sudden arrival of Columbus back from the discovery of America.

Milton may have known Tommaso Stigliani's Il Mondo Nuovo (Rome 1628), if only for the scorn poured on it by Marino; but in the Svogliati academy the young English poet probably met Girolamo Bartolommei, whose America (Rome 1650) celebrates in thirty-eight allegorical cantos the discovery of Brazil by Amerigo Vespucci.⁵⁵

In the literature of his own age Galileo, after the publication of the Nuncius Sidereus, was invariably hailed as a new Columbus or a <secondo fiorentino Amerigo, non già scopritore di poca terra, ma d'innumerabili globi e nuovi lumi celesti>.⁵⁶ The pleasing parallel was reiterated so often as to become a commonplace. In the Adone Mercury's prophecy continues:

Aprendo il sen de l'Ocean profondo,
ma non senza periglio e senza guerra,
il Ligure Argonauta al basso mondo

⁵⁴A. Belloni, Storia letteraria d'Italia, Il Seicento, 2nd ed., Milan 1947, ch.3, Il fallimento dell'ideale eroico; P. di Nepi, Regole e invenzione nell'epica del seicento, Rassegna della letteratura italiana, LXXXII, 1978, pp.110-26; idem, "Il Conquistato di Granata" e l'epica del seicento, Il Veltro, XX, 1976, pp.94-104.

⁵⁵In 1638 Girolamo Bartolommei già Smeducci was secretary of the Svogliati academy where at the meetings attended by Milton he read sections from Aristotle's Ethics to the assembled company. He had finished another lecture on the 4th June 1636 with praise of Amerigo Vespucci as <degnissimo soggetto per un noto poema>, BN, Florence, Maglia.IX.60. Atti degli Svogliati.

⁵⁶G. Galilei, Opere, XIX.624, cf. XX (Index), 138,350.

scoprirà novo cielo e nova terra.
 Tu del ciel, non del mar Tifi secondo,
 quanto gir spiando, e quanto serra,
 senza alcun rischio, ad ogni gente ascose
 scoprirai nove luci, e nove cose.

Adone.X.45.

In Milton's simile the tone of "descry new lands" belongs not to the astronomer but the seafaring explorer. Curiously Milton's only other "topical" citation of the personalities or events of his own age in a simile is to the same Columbus, when Adam and Eve make garments of leaves to hide their nakedness.

Such of late
Columbus found th'American so girt
 With featherd Cincture, naked else and wild
 Among the Trees on Isles and wooded Shores.
IX.1115.

Columbus' heroism led to a Spanish empire and the destruction of another Eden.⁵⁷

In Paradise Lost the bold explorer of empty space, the first astro-naut, is Satan, the prince of evil. In an unfallen world good is present and familiar, whereas evil is necessarily unknown. Milton marks innocence with a symbolic equilibrium, deriving from the very stillness of God, but at the Fall Adam and Eve are driven from the garden and the earth is set in movement.⁵⁸ The same distinction can be extended to the good and bad angels. The former move between known points, even in flight Uriel seems to have a path as he comes

⁵⁷ Milton, Paradise Lost XI.406. "...in spirit perhaps he also saw | Rich Mexico the seat of Motezume, | And Cuxo in Peru, the richer seat | Of Atabalipa, and yet unspoiled | Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons | Call El Dorado". See E.Spenser, Faerie Queene, V.x.8; R.R.Cawley, Geography in the Milton Encyclopedia.

⁵⁸Milton, Paradise Lost, X.651-91; XII 646.

"gliding through the even | On a sun beam" [IV.555], the latter explore the outer reaches of Hell while their leader, after his struggle through chaos, uncertain of his direction, "throws his steep flight in many an airy wheel" [III.741] like the coils of a serpent.

Milton is bringing his epic up to date. The Victorians made the explorer, whether of Africa, India or the two poles, their especial hero, but our age, lacking unknown lands, has made its own myth of the scientist, wise in the mysteries of physics, who battles intrepidly against a universe of evil. The great achievement of our time is often believed to be Neil Armstrong walking on the same moon Galileo was the first to see with more than his naked eye.

It has been argued that the sense of infinite space and cosmic background in Paradise Lost is indebted to the telescope and contemporary astronomy,⁵⁹ but the true relationship is not one of dependence but rivalry. Against the physical and mechanical limitations of the astronomer, in the proem to book VII Milton opposes the poet's power to venture imaginatively across infinite time and space. "Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns I have presum'd, | An Earthlie Guest, and drawn Empyreal Aire" [VII.13]. Even Milton's comparison of his flight with Bellerophon, who trying to reach the heavens on Pegasus fell "On the Aleian field... | Erroneous there to wander and forlorne" [VII.18], may well be a glance at Renaissance mythographies, which commonly interpreted the unfortunate hero as:

an Astronomer, who finding out the qualities and effects of the stars, was said to ride up to Heaven; but when they fail in their prediction, as oftentimes they do, then their horse Pegasus may be said to fling them down.⁶⁰

⁵⁹M.H.Nicolson, Milton and the Telescope, pp.15-22.

⁶⁰A.Ross, Mystagogus Poeticus, p.48; cf.Conti, Mythologiae, p.271: <Alii ad astronomicas rationes haec ipsa, quae de physicis dicta sunt, transtulerunt, eaque fieri iniquiunt pro viribus astrorum, quas cum prior Belleropheron deprehendisset, dictus est in coelum ascendisse>.

CHAPTER 3. PART I. Appendix 1.

Chronological Bibliography of Works that mention or discuss
Milton's visit to Galileo.

P.Rolli, Vita di Milton in Il Paradiso Perduto... tradotto da Paolo Rolli, 1730.

J.H.Todd, Life of Milton in The Poetical Works of John Milton, 3rd ed., London 1826 (first ed. 1801), vol.1, pp.34-5.

Brutus and Mortimer, A Survey of the Political Life of the Illustrious Patriot, John Milton, Monthly Mirror, XIV, 1802, pp.165-9, 303-5, 373-5.

W.S.Landor, Imaginary Conversations: Italian, London 1824-9, book IV, Galileo, Milton, and a Dominican.

W.Hazlitt, Notes of a Journey through France and Italy in Works, ed.P.P.Howe, London-Toronto, J.M.Dent & Sons 1932, vol.X, pp.83-303:211.

Samuel Rogers, The Campagna of Florence in Italy, A Poem, London 1830.

Nathan Drake, Milton and Galileo in Mornings in Spring, London 1828, II.313-38.

"By the author of Job" (Mrs Walter Birch), Galileo's Dream, London 1846.

G.Zanella, Milton e Galileo in Versi, Florence 1868, pp.1-38.

M.Chasles, Comptes Rendus Hebdomaires des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences LXVIII, 1869, pp.31ff, pp.740ff.

R.Owen, Milton and Galileo in Fraser's Magazine LXXIX, 1869, no.473, pp.678-684.

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CHAPTER 3. PART II.

Milton's Vallombrosa Simile: The Image of the Poet
in Paradise Lost and Renaissance Poetics.

Only we had set our hearts upon a two month's seclusion in the deep of the pine forests...and the mountains were divine, and it was provoking to be crossed in our ambitions by that little holy abbot with the red face, and to be driven out of Eden, even to Florence. It is said, observe, that Milton took his description of Paradise from Vallombrosa - so driven out of Eden we were literally.¹

Sometimes the literary pilgrimage displays a curious insensibility to an author's true feelings. One English spa town allures tourists with the exclamation of Isabella Thorpe in Northanger Abbey "Who can be tired of Bath!". Yet Jane Austen herself loathed Bath and put the remark in the mouth of one of her more fatuous characters. Other examples abound. Fortunately Milton's citation in a famous simile of Vallombrosa, a valley with a great Abbey high in the Casentino twenty miles outside Florence, sidetracks few of the hordes who nowadays trek through the Uffizi; but since the early eighteenth-century more discriminating travellers and some fellow poets have performed their own homage to Milton by taking the long twisting road up into the Appenines.

In Mrs Piozzi's account a group of gentlemen, including her husband, went:

together on a party of pleasure to see the renowned Vallombrosa, and came home contradicting Milton, who says the devils lay bestrewn Thick as autumnal leaves. Whereas, say they, the trees are all evergreen in those

¹ E. Barrett Browning, Letters, ed. F.G. Kenyon, London, Smith, Elder & Co. 1897, vol. 1, p. 343.

woods.²

Though neither comments directly on Milton, in 1814 and 1826 Samuel Rogers and Alphonse Lamartine were impressed by the deep pine forests around the Abbey.³ The idea that Milton could be mistaken angered William Wordsworth, who rebutted the criticism on his own visit in 1837.

The fault-finders are themselves mistaken; the natural woods of the region of Vallombrosa are deciduous, and spread to a great extent; those near the convent are indeed mostly pines; but they are avenues of trees planted within a few steps of each other, and thus comprising large tracts⁴ of wood; plots of which are periodically cut down.

Lying under "ye Miltonian shades", in his poem on the event Wordsworth cites two traditions that had already grown up around Milton's visit, first that the poet stayed in the Paradisino, "that Cell - yon sequestered Retreat high in air -

²Hester Lynch Thrale, afterwards Piozzi, Observations and reflections made in a Journey through France, Italy and Germany, London 1789, p.323. Cited inaccurately in Todd, vol.II, p.50.

³The Italian Journal of Samuel Rogers, ed.J.R.Hale, London, Faber 1956, pp.192-7, describes a visit from 7-8th November 1814. A.Lamartine, L'Abbaye de Vallombreuse in Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses, no.XI, in Oeuvres Poétiques Complètes, ed.M.-F.Guyard, Gallimard 1963, pp.332-4, written 5.viii.1826 and first published in April 1829, comments on <ces forêts, ces ténèbres, cette onde, | Et ces arbres sans date, et ces rocs immortels> (ll.5-6). Among the Oeuvres Posthumes in idem, pp.1745-8, the Epître I à Montherot describes Lamartine's sojourn at the monastery among <D'admirables sapins, que Dieu même a plantés, | A cent pas du couvent montent de tous côtés> (ll.31-2).

⁴W.Wordsworth, Poetical Works, ed. E. de Selincourt and

| Where our Milton was wont lonely vigils to keep", a building placed spectacularly on an outcrop some two hundred feet above the main monastery; second that the visit inspired the description of the Earthly Paradise in his great poem.⁵

In 1847 the Brownings tried to spend the summer at the Abbey, but after a contretemps with the Abbot, who would not allow them to enjoy the cloister's hospitality beyond the statutory three days, returned to the heat of Florence. Both the visit and the story of Milton discovering his inspiration for Eden in Vallombrosa are described in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Casa Guidi Windows:

The Vallombrosan brooks were strewn as thick
That June day, knee-deep with dead beechen leaves,
As Milton saw them ere his heart grew sick,
And his eyes blind. I think the monks and beeves
Are all the same too. Scarce they have changed the wick
On good St. Gualbert's altar, which receives
The convent's pilgrims...

...O waterfalls
And forests! sound and silence! mountains bare,
That leap up peak by peak, and catch the palls
Of purple and silver mist to rend and share
With one another, at electric calls
Of life in the sunbeams, - till we cannot dare
Fix your shapes, count your number! we must think
Your beauty and your glory helped to fill
The cup of Milton's soul so to the brink,
He never more was thirsty, when God's will
Had shattered to his sense the last chain-link
By which he had drawn from Nature's visible
The fresh well-water. Satisfied by this,
He sang of Adam's Paradise, and smiled,
Remembering Vallombrosa. Therefore is
The place divine to English man and child,
And pilgrims leave their souls here in a kiss.⁶

⁴(continued)

H.Darbishire, 2nd ed., OUP 1963, vol.III, p.498; cf. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed.A.G.Hill, 2nd ed., OUP 1982, vol.VI, pp.404-7, letter dated 30th May 1837. See appendix 1.

⁵W.Wordsworth, At Vallombrosa in Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837, no.XVIII, publ. in Poetical Works, vol.III, pp.223-5.

On the other side of the coin Italian guide books to the same part of Italy rarely mention Vallombrosa without a quotation from Paradise Lost and an approving comment on the English poet's sensibility to the Italian landscape. But sometimes how quoted! how abused! For instance when the 1834 guide to the Casentino cites "The Paradise Lost" one might be forgiven for thinking that the fallen angels are in Jabberwocky rather than Hell, since the text reads.

Thick as autumnal seaves that strow she brooks
In Vallombrosa whereth Etryian Ihades
Stigh over orch d'embover.

Today the Abbey and its valley have lost little of their loveliness, but much has changed. Unlike the hours the Brownings consumed hauling sledges up the last few miles, the bus from Florence now completes the twisting journey in about fifty minutes. It passes in front of the Abbey and continues through to the next village, Saltino, which is still an important, though declining, summer resort for Florentines. Saltino even boasts its own Hotel Milton (closed and derelict for the last seven years). The monks were expelled in the last century but have since returned to the Abbey. In 1957 the complex was extensively restored and now acts as a Catholic conference centre. During summer weekends the large

⁶E.Barrett Browning, Casa Guidi Windows in Poetical Works, OUP 1920, p.359; idem, Letters, vol.1, pp.332-44.

⁷Guida Storica Per Il Viaggio Alla Valle-Ombrosa. Verna e Camaldoli. Nella Provincia Del Casentino. Terza Edizione. Notabilmente Accresciuta Dall'Autore E Ornata D'Incisioni In Rame, Florence, Per V.Batelli e Figli 1834, p.20.

meadow in front of the monastery is covered with picnickers enjoying the sunshine, radios blare, the tranquil woods resound to the buzz of Vespas, while stalls along the road sell sandwiches, porchetta and soft drinks.

Nonetheless the issue of Milton's veracity in the "autumnall leaves" remains a troubled one. Today a visitor looking down on Vallombrosa from the Paradisino can see that the bowl of the valley is dominated by rank upon rank of evergreens. One must also admit that deciduous trees do line the banks of the brooks that converge on the Abbey, so the literal truth of Milton's simile is satisfied. Nonetheless, if Milton did visit Vallombrosa in person (the only evidence is the simile, whose imprecision might argue the contrary), he could not have failed to notice how the valley is dominated by its great pines. The tradition of selvicoltura associated with the Vallombrosans goes back to the order's first founder, San Giovanni Gualberto. In the Vita di San Giovanni Gualberto published a two years after Milton's Continental journey two illustrations show: first the valley as the artist imagined it a few years after the first institution of the order (see ill. 1), second the building as it appeared in 1637 (see ill.2). In the latter the engraver shows the landscape around the Abbey dominated by fir trees. Recently one critic sought to resolve the difficulty as a typically Miltonic paradox where "the autumnal leaves at Vallombrosa paradoxically fall from evergreen trees",⁸ but this seems fanciful! Can we

⁸C.Grose, Milton's Epic Progress: "Paradise Lost" and Its Miltonic Background, Yale University Press 1973, p.164.

attribute the simile to a lapse of memory? After all, nearly thirty years pass between the only occasion when Milton could have visited Vallombrosa and the simile.

On the other hand, if we consider the chronology of Milton's Italian journey, it seems unlikely that he was actually in Tuscany to see the leaves falling in Vallombrosa that autumn. On the Paradisino itself a stone raised in Milton's honour gives the date of the English poet's visit as September 1638, the only autumn Milton ever spent in Italy.⁹ In the Defensio Secunda Milton tells us that he spent two months in Florence. If the lettorato inglese recorded at a meeting of the Svogliati on 8 July 1638 is indeed Milton, then he presumably had arrived a few days previously. On 10 September Milton sent a farewell letter to Benedetto Buommattei and therefore, though he read a poem to the Svogliati on the 16th, shortly afterwards he must have departed for Rome (via Siena).¹⁰ It can be answered that, because Vallombrosa is a high cold valley facing north-west where autumn comes early, after a bad summer the leaves sometimes begin to fall in early September.¹¹ But, if he went,

⁹The Life Records of John Milton, ed. J.M.French, New Jersey, Rutgers U.P. 1949 (hereafter French), vol.1, p.381. The ceremony to unveil the monument was described in the Times, 28/8/1925, p.15; 1/9/25, p.12; 3/9/25, p.14; Notes and Queries, CLXIX, 1925, p.163; A.Sorani, Milton a Vallombrosa, Il Marzocco, XXX, 6 September 1925, no.36, pp.2-3. E.Chaney, The Grand Tour and the Great Rebellion, Geneva, Slatkine 1985, pp.244-51, challenges the idea of Milton's visit to Vallombrosa.

¹⁰Columbia, VIII.122 duos menses substiti; French, vol.5, pp.385-7; French, vol.1, pp.382-9: letter to Buommattei.

the sensible time for Milton to visit the mountains would be the high summer when the cool valley makes a welcome change from the torrid heat of Florence.

These may seem trifling objections. I am not seeking to undermine the poet's right to imagine a landscape he has never seen or to picture it at a season when he was not present. But is our pleasure in this famous simile lessened by either the suggestion that real and imagined landscape are incompatible or by the doubt as to the actual season of Milton's visit? Some sense of loss must be felt at the realisation that neither of Milton's "Florentine" similes really constitutes a momentary interlude of private reminiscence among the shadows of hell. After all Bishop Newton praised the Vallombrosa simile as "far superior to the other (Virgil) as it exhibits a real landskip"¹² and few would disagree that the place-name makes the simile. The name Vallombrosa must signify something for Milton. But is our first impression that it derives from the poet's personal observation and experience false? If so, do we have the right to feel cheated? Is the name just a literary reminiscence borrowed from the Orlando Furioso where Ariosto also mentions Vallombrosa as <una badia | ricca e bella, ne men religiosa, | e cortese a chiunque vi venia> [XXII.36]?¹³

¹¹ I visited the Abbey on 15 September 1985 after a hot summer. Only a few aspen leaves had fallen and the brooks were almost dry.

¹² Newton, vol.1, p.34.

¹³ Ruggiero and Bradamante plan to celebrate their wedding at Vallombrosa, but never arrive there, cf. XXIII.17, 19, 21, 25; XXV.84. Sir J. Harington, op.cit., p.171 translates XXII.36:

Therefore the real answer might lie in the reaction of the reader to the poet's presence in the poem. We ought to compare our reaction to Milton's Florentine similes with another Italian simile in book IV where Eden is compared to "that faire field of Enna" [IV.268]. Here the issue of personal experience on the poet's part is not raised because we know that Milton never travelled further south than Naples. This does not lessen our enjoyment of the Enna simile, but we approach it as a purely literary experience. On the other hand Milton tells us that he stayed in Florence and that he visited Galileo. Moreover Milton tells us this not in his private correspondence but in Areopagitica. In the Defensio Secunda Milton's autobiographical account, including his Italian journey, is designed to refute the libels of his political opponents. In this context the 'falsity' of first the "Tuscan artist" and now the Vallombrosa similes is all the more puzzling.

Of course the small number of deciduous trees in Vallombrosa may be a calculated paradox, or just poetic license, but it may also serve as a warning to look again, to think and to consider. The simile of the falling leaves has innumerable antecedents, whereas of the name itself Bowra remarked that "it has the immediacy of Greek poetry"¹⁴ and a

¹³(continued)

Vnto an Abby straight their course they bent,
 As in those days were in those places rife,
 Where men devout did live with great frugalitie,
 And yet for strangers kept good hospitalitie.
 But on p.178 he forgets that he has given no previous explanation when he includes the name "Vallumbrose".

¹⁴C.M.Bowra, From Virgil to Milton, London, Macmillan 1945, p.241.

more recent study has found in it an "Ovidian delight in place-names".¹⁵ However it is my contention in this chapter that Milton's Florentine similes (both appear in the same verse paragraph) depend on a deliberate inversion of secondary epic technique; that Milton's models are Virgil, Dante and Ariosto; that the deceptiveness of the landscapes can be intimately related to Milton's conception of the figure of the poet in Paradise Lost. However before proceeding to the fuller discussion of Milton's Vallombrosa simile, we must first observe his models to define the practice in the epic simile of the above-mentioned trio of classical, medieval and Renaissance poets.

Aristotle and the "figure of the narrating Poet".

In 1965 R.M.Durling compared the "figure of the narrating poet" in four Renaissance epics by Boiardo, Ariosto, Tasso and Spenser with classical and medieval practice.¹⁶ Durling recognised that in these epics a narrative strategy prevails where "the figure of the Narrator is a role in which the author casts himself; it is a dramatic projection of some kind".¹⁷ The distinction between the fictitious Narrator who masquerades as the poet within the poem and the 'real poet'

¹⁵J.P.Holoka, "Thick as Autumnal Leaves": The Structure and Generic Potentials of an Epic Simile, Milton Quarterly, X, 1976, pp.78-83.

¹⁶R.Durling, The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic, Harvard U.P. 1965, p.1.

¹⁷ibid., p.3.

can be most clearly seen in Chaucer. In Troilus and Criseyde Chaucer the Narrator continually expresses pity at the sufferings of his characters. Eventually he refuses to continue because Criseyde's betrayal of Troilus wounds him too deeply: "I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe".¹⁸ In the prologue to the Canterbury Tales the Narrator is so impressed by the specious virtues of his fellow pilgrims that he leaves it to the reader to discern their faults. Worse, the host abruptly halts the excruciating doggerel of the Tale of Sir Thopas with the judgement "Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord".¹⁹ The Narrator protests that he cannot do better and eventually continues with a tale in prose. Of course in both poems Chaucer's depiction of his alter ego's "lewednesse" stands in comic contrast to his real abilities. Thus the figure of the poet is a recognisable dramatic projection of the author; but it can consciously differ from the 'real' man.

To be sure the figure of the Narrator must in some way be consistent with the subjective awareness of the author: the author must be able to assume the role. By the same token, the role will reveal a great deal about the author - but usually not the facts.²⁰

In contrast the figure of the poet in Paradise Lost seems to be much more a projection of Milton himself. But on closer scrutiny the 'Milton' of the poem proves to be a poetic persona carefully modelled according to a series of classical and Renaissance exemplars. Milton's authorial presence in Paradise Lost is closely akin to the role played by the

¹⁸G. Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde in Works, ed. F.N. Robinson, 2nd ed., OUP 1965, IV.1099; R. Durling, op.cit., pp.44-66.

¹⁹G. Chaucer, Canterbury Tales in Works, p.167 (VII.930).

²⁰R. Durling, op.cit., p.3.

narrator in some Augustan novels, especially Fielding in Tom Jones; ²¹ but what was acceptable in the novel has not always found favour with the critics of epic and, among others, Dr Johnson attacked Milton for the prominent role the poet plays in Paradise Lost.

The short digressions at the beginning of the third, seventh, and ninth books, might doubtless be spared; but superfluities so beautiful, who would take away? Or who does not wish that the author of the Iliad had gratified succeeding ages with a little more knowledge of himself? Perhaps no passages are more frequently or more attentively read than those extrinsic paragraphs; and, since the end of poetry is pleasure, ²² that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleased.

In the Poetica Aristotle had praised Homer in a passage which some Renaissance critics took as authority for excluding the poet's interventions for the epic. Aristotle praises Homer's realism since in his eyes the Greek poet keeps "what the poet says in his own voice" to the minimum necessary to link dialogue and introduce episodes before immediately introducing the characters to carry the action on in dialogue. ²³

²¹ I. Watt, The Rise of the Novel, London, Chatto & Windus 1957, pp. 239-59.

²² S. Johnson, Milton in The Lives of the English Poets, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill, OUP 1905, vol. 1, p. 175; cf. J. Addison, The Spectator, ed. D. F. Bond, no. 297, III, pp. 60-1.

²³ Aristotle, De Arte Poetica, 1460a5-11. For a discussion of Renaissance interpretations, see appendix 1. Bywater's translation in The Complete Works of Aristotle, ed. J. Barnes, Princeton U.P. 1984, vol. II, p. 2336, is too theatrical in tone.

Homer... alone among epic poets is not unaware of the part to be played by the poet himself in the poem. The poet should say very little in his own character, as he is no imitator when doing that. Whereas the other poets are perpetually coming forward in person, and say but little, and that only here and there, as imitators,
(Footnote continued)

Aristotle's aim is mimesis and he states that where bad poets intervene with praise and blame of the characters, Homer avoids such clumsy manipulation and presents fully credible characters.

Since in Of Education Milton praises Castelvetro, we can assume that the English poet knew the Italian critic's discussion of this passage. Castelvetro draws a theoretical distinction between the rassomigliatore who obeys the Homeric pattern and the predicatore who does not and should be condemned for usurping the roles of the characters. He translates Aristotle as follows:

Ora Omero [è] degno d'essere commendato in molte altre cose, ma ancora [in questa], che [egli] solo tra poeti non ignora quello che esso [poeta] dee fare. Perciochè dee esso poeta dire pochissime cose, conciosia cosa che non sia in quelle rassomigliatore. Gli altri adunque per se stessi per tutto sono in azione, e rassomigliano poche cose, e poche volte; ma egli, avendo prologate poche cose, incontanente introduce uomo o donna o alcuno altro costume, e niuna cosa senza costume, ma cose aventi costumi.²⁴

His discussion is long and complex, but in the main he supports Aristotle and argues that the poet's interventions detract from the interest of the characters and lead the

²³(continued)

Homer after a brief preface brings in forthwith a man, a woman, or some other character - no one of them characterless, but each with distinctive characteristics.

I am grateful to Riccardo Brusagli for bringing my attention to this passage in the Poetics and for allowing me to read his unpublished lecture on the problem given to the University of Columbia in 1978.

²⁴L.Castelvetro, Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta, ed.W.Romani, Bari, Laterza (Scrittori d'Italia n.265), 1969, vol.2, pp.161-69.

reader to mistrust the poet's authority and impartiality.

Che diremo noi del poeta, in quella parte dell'epopea nella quale egli ne narra azione ne introduce persona a favellare, ma giudica le cose narrate, o riprendendole, o lodandole, o tirandole a utilita comune e ad insegnamenti civili e del ben vivere?.....conciosa cosa che giudicandole e parlandone come che sia, si mostri persona passionata e laquale v'abbia interesse, e perciò si toglia a se stesso la fede e si renda sospetto a' lettori d'essere poco veritiere narratore.

The scope of Durling's book is primarily illustrative, therefore it has no space for discussion of some of the more subtle ways in which the epic poet can manipulate his image as Narrator. As background to Milton's two 'Florentine' similes of the "Tuscan artist" and "Vallombrosa", I propose to consider in this section the presentation of the narrating poet through certain similes in the Aeneid, in the Divina Commedia and the Orlando Furioso (with a brief note on Berni's rifacimento). All these works compare scenes in the heroic, infernal or chivalric worlds through the citation, in the latter two by name, of places and scenes familiar to the poet and often his audience. These pages chart the development of this "simile of place" and its significance for the image of the poet.

Virgil's "Aeneid": Poetic consciousness and the Heroic Alternative.

In a famous chapter Auerbach defined the Homeric style as knowing "only a foreground, only a uniformly illuminated, uniformly objective present".²⁵ Likewise the Homeric simile possesses no sense of a disequilibrium between the world of

the simile and its heroic setting. Each illustrates the other perfectly. Both belong to the same heroic present and form a single point of comparison. The simile unfolds objectively to afford a moment's respite or diversion from the concerns of the epic, a brief interlude among the horrors of battle. Not so in Virgil. In the Aeneid the simile enters into the poet's subjective consciousness. It forms a moral commentary through which the poet underlines the gulf between heroic and contemporary cultures. More importantly the complexity of the device becomes an expression of the poet's feelings and at times implies his judgement.

This quiet revolution is achieved by retaining the external appearance of the Homeric simile, but the difference lies in some unexpected internal likeness, or the turn of a phrase, or the sudden movement of pity. Within the simile Virgil does not employ specific place-names for effect, but he does use his vision of the Italian countryside, the world of the Georgics, to create a "Roman" simile which is often at odds with the heroic setting. The importance of this antithetical method is acted out in the character of the hero - not a story book hero, but an anachronistic figure with Roman sensibilities caught up in the sometimes irrational violence of the simpler heroic world. The evocation of the peaceful Italian countryside in the simile is also a continual reminder to hero and reader that Aeneas' duty will compel him to seek a land which is as yet a dream.

Often Virgil's similes act proleptically, anticipating a

²⁵E.Auerbach, Mimesis (trans. W.R.Trask), Princeton University Press 1953, p.7.

state of affairs not yet understood by the characters. Thus they enjoy a dimension of privileged knowledge within the epic structure. On the last night of Troy Aeneas is woken by his dream of Hector warning him to flee since all is lost. In puzzlement he climbs to the roof of his house and looking out over the city sees flames and hears the sounds of battle in the distance. As the hero stands trying to understand what is happening the poet introduces a simile which effectively tells us that all is lost.

in segetem veluti cum flamma furentibus Austris
 incidit, aut rapidus montano flumine torrens
 sternit agros, sternit sata laeta boumque labores
 praecipitesque trahit siluas; stupet inscius alto
 accipiens sonitum saxi de uertice pastor. II.304.

Obviously the fire and the flood are like the Greek army engulfing Troy, but the complex function of the simile becomes clearer if we compare it to its Homeric model. This compares the crash when the Greek and Trojan armies meet to the roar sent up from the watersmeet of two mountain streams being heard from afar by a shepherd. Homer's shepherd is not touched by the event. Virgil's inscius pastor is the hero himself caught in the agonising dilemma of how to react. The simile which tells the reader that resistance to the will of the fates is futile also tells us that Aeneas makes the wrong decision. He disobeys Hector's ghost and throws himself into the last desperate battle for Troy. The destruction wrought by flood and fire on the sata laeta boumque labores obviously refers to Troy and Aeneas' labours through ten years of warfare to protect the city, but it also marks the interruption of Virgil's "private voice",²⁶ pushing to one side the narrator's "professional voice". Thus the sudden sense of

horror at the destruction of the bucolic world effectively marks the intervention of Virgil's own personality in the epic action.

Dante and the Epic Simile as "Apologia".

It is extremely unlikely that Dante knew any version of Aristotle's Poetica, though medieval translations into Latin did exist by Julian de Moerbeke from the original Greek and another by Hermannus Alemannus from the Arabic of Averroes.²⁷ Yet it is not altogether surprising if a poet so deeply concerned with the symbolic pattern of his own life should anticipate objections to the figure of the poet and answer in a manner which does seem very like a reply to Aristotle and

²⁶Virgil, Aeneidos Liber Secundus, ed. R.G.Austin, OUP 1964, p.139; R.O.A.M.Lyne, La "Voce Privata" di Virgilio nell'Eneide, Museum Patavinum, II, 1984, pp.5-21.

²⁷Aristoteles Latinus, XXXIII, De Arte Poetica, Guillelmo de Moerbeke Interprete, ed.E.Valgimigli, revv. E.Franchescini and L.Minio-Paluello, Bruges-Paris, Desclée 1953, p.31:

Homerus autem alias in multis dignus laudari, et etiam quia solus poetarum non ignorat quod oportet poetizare ipsum. Ipsum enim utique poetam paucissima prologizare. Non enim est secundum hec imitator. Alii quidem per totum agonizant, imitantur autem pauca et raro; hic autem pauca prohemizans mox inducit uirum aut mulierem aut alium aliquem morem et neque unum morem, sed habentem mores.

Though the translation was completed in 1278 it had little circulation; cf. Appendix 1; B.Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance, 2nd ed., Chicago U.P. 1963, pp.349-423; E.N.Tigerstadt, Observations on the Reception of the Aristotelian Poetics in the Latin West, Studies in the Renaissance, XV, 1968, pp.7-24; E.Garin, La

his Renaissance interpreters. In the Convivio, before launching into the commentary, Dante remarks that like the servants at a feast he must first remove two macule from the bread he proposes to offer to his guests, or in other words allay two doubts which might come into the reader's mind. The second is that the commentary might prove too prolix, but the first is the fear <che parlare alcuno di medesimo pare non licito>.²⁸ Dante accepts that this is a serious objection and agrees that in the main such action is wrong. However he suggests two cases where a man ought to make his own life and deeds the centre of the action: in the one case where <grandissima utilità ne segue altrui per via di dottrina>, citing Augustine's confessions as an example, and in the other where a man must speak in his own defence since no one else will:

quando senza ragionare di se, grande infamia e pericolo non si può cessare; e allora si concede per la ragione che delli due sentieri, prender lo meno reo è quasi prendere un buono. E questa necessità mosse Boezio di se medesimo a parlare, acciocchè sotto pretesto di consolazione scusasse la perpetuale infamia del suo esilio, mostrando quello essere ingiusto; poichè altro scusatore non si levava. ~~////~~

In this context the role of 'Dante' through the entire Divina

²⁷ (continued)

diffusione della "Poetica" di Aristotele dal secolo XV in poi, Rivista critica di storia della Filosofia, XXVIII, 1973, pp.447-51.

²⁸ Dante Alighieri, Il Convito, I. ch.2. A.Pagliaro, Inferno XIX in Lectura Dantis Scaligera, Florence, Le Monnier 1967, pp.633-4, cites the <norma di derivazione aristotelica> in discussing the Baptistry simile. For Iacopo Mazzoni's discussion of Dante's role, see J.M.Steadman, Milton and

Commedia must be seen as a necessary apologia pro vita sua.

Dante's similes of place can be divided into two kinds: first the "classical" similes such as the false coiners in the Inferno who remind the poet of the plague sent by Juno to afflict the island of Aegina; second the "contemporary" similes which draw on the poet's own experience and observation. This study only looks at the second group.

In Virgil we found a distinction between "professional" and "private" voices, so in Dante these similes depend on a contrast between Dante the character, who though at the height of his political fortunes and worldly success in his native city has become enmeshed in the selva oscura, and Dante the narrator or poet, who is creating the great poem through later years of exile. In the Inferno Dante's presentation of himself as the poem's principal character is not unlike Chaucer's ironic and reductive self-characterisation in the Canterbury Tales. Indeed there are even moments of distinct comedy, such as when Dante and Virgil clamber onto the back of Geryon and the author implores Virgil to hold him very tightly!

In the Divina Commedia we find a contrast between the younger character Dante at the time of the poem, Easter 1300, who is portrayed as a more sinful and naïf 'Dante' with his soul <da viltade offesa> [Inf.II.45], and the persona of the narrator 'Dante' who intervenes clearly and powerfully at certain points in the poem. The poem's story is really the growth of the first into the second, ostensibly in the week or

28 (continued)

Mazzoni: The Genre of the "Divina Commedia", Huntingdon Library Quarterly, XXIII, 1960, pp.107-22.

more taken by the poem (six days for the first two stages, but none are given for the third), but at another level it represents the twenty or more years which the writing of the poem actually occupies. Partly this process is revealed through the structure of prophecy and warning which informs the character Dante of his coming exile and other misfortunes, but which of course for the narrator already represent time past; partly we at times recognise the narrator rather than the character in passages such as the exordium to Paradiso XXV where the poet voices his anguish at his continuing exile and the hope that one day he can receive the poet's crown in his native city.

Se mai continga che il poema sacro,
 Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,
 Si che m'a fatto per più anni macro,
 Vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra
 Del bello ovil, dov'io dormii agnello
 Nimico ai lupi che gli danno guerra;
 Con altra voce omai, con altro vello
 Ritornerò poeta, ed in sul fonte
 Del mio battesimo prenderò il cappello. Par. XXV. 1.

The image of the long years the poem <che m'a fatto per più anni macro> has taken and the crudeltà of his fellow Florentines who keep him in exile belong not to the character Dante but to the authorial persona. In my reading of the Divina Commedia, excluding the classical 'similes of place', I have found twenty-nine contemporary similes of place, spread through the Inferno and to a lesser extent the Purgatorio. They share the qualities of sharp personal observation previously noted in Virgil's scenes from the Roman countryside; but instead of the Roman poet's unlocalised landscapes, Dante has found how effective a concrete reference to a single place or time can prove. When Dante sees the

barattieri in a pit of boiling pitch, the substance reminds him of the bustle and activity of the Venetian Arsenal when the hulls of the Serenissima's galleys are being caulked.

Quale nell'Arzanà de' Viniziani
 Bolle l'inverno la tenace pece
 A rimpalmar li legni lor non sani,
 Che navicar non ponno, e in quella vece
 Chi fa suo legno nuovo, e chi ristoppa
 Le coste a quel che più viaggi fece;
 Chi ribatte da proda, e chi da poppa;
 Altri fa remi, ed altri volge sarte;
 Chi terzeruolo ed artimon rintoppa.

Inf.XXI.7

Other similes draw on episodes that belong to a specific time and place. On two occasions the poet recalls scenes he has witnessed with his own eyes: first when the company of the escort of devils given to himself and Virgil leaves him feeling as ill at ease as <li fanti | Ch'uscivan patteggiati di Caprona, | veggendo se tra nemici cotanti> [Inf.XXI.94] (the surrender of the fortress of Caprona to the Florentines occurred in the summer of 1289); second another scene from the same year, the Florentine raids towards Arezzo, which occur to the poet as a bizarre contrast to this same escort of devils.²⁹

We must take notice of the geographical distribution of these similes. Despite the preoccupation with the fate and fortunes of his native city only two of these twenty-nine similes refer to Florence, while several others clearly refer to scenes and places of Dante's exile. In the Paradiso Cacciaguida warns the poet how <Tu proverai sì come sa di sale | Lo pane altrui, e com'è duro calle | Lo scender e il salir per l'altrui scale> [Par.XVII.58-60]. If Dante's similes are remarkable for their concrete sense of place and keen observation, on the other hand these very qualities re-enact the

enforced leisure of the exile, the man for whom time hangs heavy and who wanders through pain rather than pleasure. Many similes refer to the cities and places of northern Italy where the character Dante is told he will find <Lo primo tuo rifugio e il primo ostello> in the <cortesia del gran Lombardo | Che in sulla Scala porta il santo uccello> [Par.XVII.70].

Brunetto Latini's flight across the burning sands recalls <coloro | Che corrono a Verona il drappo verde | Per la campagna> [Inf.XV.122-3]; the landslide between the sixth and seventh circles is like <quella ruina che nel fianco | Di qua da Trento l'Adice percosse> [Inf.XII.4]; the rustle of trees in the <giardino terrestre> recalls the great pineta outside Ravenna.³⁰ Other similes extend his wanderings to the bounds of Italy and perhaps beyond. When he enters the City of Dis he sees the tombs where the heretics are tortured and remembers <Arli, ove Rodano stagna> or <Pola presso del Quarnaro, | Che Italia chiude e suoi termini bagna> [Inf.IX.112-5]. The dykes which enclose the river Phlegethon and provide a path across the burning sands of the third circle recall the banks along the Brenta or the larger barrier raised by the Flemings to protect them from the North Sea.

Quale i Fiamminghi tra Guizzante e Bruggia,
 Temendo il fiotto che ver lor s'avventa,
 Fanno lo schermo perchè il mar si fuggia;
 E quale i Padovan lungo la Brenta,
 Per difender lor ville e lor castelli,
 Anzi che Chiarentana il caldo senta.

Inf.xv.4-9.

In the second half of the simile the tone of "lor ville e lor castelli" shows that the Po valley is a land where Dante has

²⁹Inf.XXII.1-9.

³⁰Pur.XXVIII.19-21.

no sense of belonging.

Other similes deal with scenes and places elsewhere in Italy. The colour and steam rising from the Phlegethon recall the hot springs of the Bulicame at Viterbo <Che parton poi tra lor le peccatrici> [Inf.XIV.79], while its cascade into the bolgia below recalls a waterfall in the Apennines where the river changes names in its fall:

Che si chiama Acquaqueta suso, avante
 Che si divalli giù nel basso letto,
 Ed a Forlì di quel nome è vacante

Inf.XVI.99.

The wood of the suicides is fiercer and more unfriendly than the woods inhabited by the wild beasts <che in odio hanno | Tra Cecina e Corneto i luoghi colti> [Inf.XIII.8-9]. In the bolgia of alchemists and false-coiners the misery is worse than what could be seen if all the <spedali | Di Valdichiana tra il luglio e il settembre, | E di Maremma e di Sardigna i mali | In una fossa tutti insembre> [Inf.XXIX.46-9]. The giants set in order around the bottom of the pit are like the crown of towers encircling Montereggion. Antaeus as he bends to pick up Dante and Virgil is like the Carisenda tower in Bologna which seems to fall as the clouds pass overhead. The steep paths between the cornices in Purgatory are harder than any leading up to the hill-top cities of San Leo, Noli, Mount Cacume or even the climb up to San Miniato in Florence.

The sight of the pimps and other deceivers of women driven in opposing but ordered directions by demons with whips in the first bolgia of the <luogo detto Malebolge> recalls the primitive traffic circulation ordered in the Eternal city to deal with the chaos of the first Jubilee in 1300.

Come i Roman, per l'esercito molto,

L'anno del Giubbileo, su per lo ponte
 Hanno a passar la gente molto colto:
 Che dall'un lato tutti hanno la fronte
 Verso il castello, e vanno a santo Pietro;
 Dall'altra sponda vanno verso il monte.

Inf.XVIII.28-33.

Logically, if the knowledge of the character Dante were to mark a terminus post quem non, should this simile be included, since according^{to} the chronology of the poem it most likely refers to an event witnessed after his supposed and fantastic journey? The poet's voyage through the three realms supposedly begins on the 8 April 1300. Though there is obviously a period of overlap, one wonders if the Romans needed to put such arrangements into operation before Easter. The following year while Dante was away from Florence as envoy to Boniface VIII his enemies seized power in his own city, confiscated his goods and declared him an exile.

Likewise the only simile of place which refers to Florence (apart from the brief mention of San Miniato in the Purgatorio) must, if we believe the early commentators, refer to an incident which occurred later in the summer of 1300. In the third bolgia where the simoniacs, including Nicholas III who believes the new arrivals to be Boniface VIII, are plunged head-downwards into narrow holes where flames flicker on the soles of their feet, Dante is reminded of the font in the Baptistery of Florence.

Non me parean meno ampi ne maggiori,
 Che quei che son nel mio bel San Giovanni
 Fatti per loco de'battezzatori.
 L'un delli quali, ancor non è molt'anni,
 Rupp'io per un che dentro vi annegava:
 E questo sia suggel ch'ogni uomo sganni.

Inf.XIX.17-21.

The early commentators explain that Dante was serving as prior

in the building next door to the baptistery. Entering the church one day he saw a crowd of people gathered around one of the fonts where a young boy was trapped and drowning while the bystanders watched. Dante seized an axe and <manibus propriis percussit lapidem qui de marmore erat, et faciliter fregit; ex quo puer quasi reviviscens a mortuis liber evasit>.³¹ To be one of the city's six priors, one for each sestiere, was the highest office a Florentine citizen could hold. Historical records show that Dante held this office from the 15th June to the 15th August 1300.³² This must place this incident after the supposed date of his marvellous journey. It also shows Dante using the simile to refute libels cast on his name by his enemies. One can believe that the destruction of church fittings, even to save a life, occasioned some malicious gossip. Equally within the simile the statement that this event occurred <ancor non è molt'anni> must be spoken from the viewpoint of the narrator, not the character. However this last example shows the importance of the simile as a device through which Dante emphasises his own integrity, defending the younger self he portrays in the central role of the poem.

The Poet in the Romance form: Ariosto and Ironic Commentary.

Among poets who fail to observe Aristotle's dictum and

³¹Benvenuto da Imola, op.cit., vol.II, pp.35-6. The same page mentions that at the time of the incident Dante <erat de Prioribus regentibus>.

³²P.Toynbee, A Dante Dictionary, 2nd ed. (rev. C.S.Singleton), OUP 1968, p.216.

interfere unnecessarily in the action of their works, thus impinging on the realism of the characters, Castelvetro lists Virgil, Lucan and <più spesso di tutti Lodovico Ariosto>. ³³ Criticism of the poet's role in the Orlando Furioso was not uncommon. Finding the proems to the cantos both inept and unpleasing, Sperone Speroni voiced his objection in terms curiously reminiscent of Dr Johnson's Life of Milton two centuries later.

Ora parlerò di quel modo, che tengono questi detti romanzi di parlare non da sè, ma alli auditori: e dico che'l Boiardo fu'l primo che ciò fece; perchè anche nel principio del libro parlò alli auditori: onde fece bene a far così di canto in canto, e di libro in libro. Ma l'Ariosto, che non comincia così, non fa bene a dar licenzia nel fine de'canti alli auditori, che non avea prima invitati, e nel principio tornar a parlar loro...Far poi in ogni canto proemio, o ricercar, come dicel il Giralardi, è grandissima inezia; perchè non erat is locus....Però dico, siano belli quanto si vuole i principii de'canti dell'Ariosto, son sempre inetti, e molte volte non catenati e congiunti alla cosa del poema. ³⁴

The same objection voiced by two such different critics, albeit both with neo-classical prejudices, proves a basic uneasiness about the propriety of the figure of the poet and an unwillingness to come to terms with a major feature of the Renaissance epic. Where Dr Johnson's criticism stems in part from a dislike of Milton the man and especially Milton the political sectarian and defender of the regicides, Speroni's criticism, as with many early attacks on the Orlando Furioso, derives from a real failure to comprehend the extra dimension added to the poem by the poet's prominent role.

³³L.Castelvetro, Poetica d'Aristotele, vol.II, p.165.

³⁴Sperone Speroni, Sopra l'Ariosto in Opere, Venice 1740, vol.V, pp.521-2.

However some early criticism did appreciate and defend this feature, albeit cautiously. G.B.Pigna resorts to the morphological distinction between epic and romance, arguing that in the former the plot is <più ristretto e più legato... per esser egli ad una sola attione di un solo uomo tutto intento>,³⁵ whereas in the latter the tangle and complexity of plots and characters requires a narrator to intervene and let the audience know what is going on.

Et perchè d'erranti persone è tutto il poema, egli altresì errante è, in quanto che piglia e intermette infinite volte cose infinite: et sempre con arte, perciocchè se bene l'ordine epico non osserva, non è che una sua regola non abbia: la quale è questa, che quasi non può farne fallare. Tralascia o quando il tempo dà che s'interponga, o quando nol dà. Quando il dà, l'animo di chi legge quieto rimane, dal che ha contezza e perciò piacere, restando egli con una cosa compiuta, come se un naufragio è finito, o una singolar battaglia, o un fatto d'arme, o una peregrinatione, o cose simiglianti. Quando nol dà, l'animo resta sospeso, et ne nasce però un desiderio che fa diletto: essendo che un certo ardore è causato, che è di douer la fine della cosa sentire. Come in sul bello di una tempesta ritirarsi, o nel tempo che due sono per menar le mani, o che una guerra si prepari, o da un luogo leuar uno et a mezza strada et anche prima abbandonarlo, et far altre cose così fatte. Et ciò più s'usa che il primo modo: conciosa cosa che il compositore di farne sempre più innanzi andare s'ingegna.³⁶

But beyond the complexities of the entrelacement for the poet's presence, Pigna also pleads that where the epic is written to be read, the romance is heard by an audience:

perciò che non per i lettori, ma per gli ascoltanti fu da principio composto, et chi l'udiva, quella sol parte capir si contentava, che quel tempo cantata gli era: et poi quell'altra, che un'altra volta altre orecchie gli

³⁵G.B.Pigna, I Romanzi...Ne quali della Poesia, & della vita dell'Ariosto con nuovo modo si tratta, Venice, Nella bottega d'Erasmus appresso Vincenzo Valgrisi 1554, pp.45.

³⁶Ibid., pp.44-5.

perveniva.³⁷

Yet this excuse does not hold water. The survival of cancellanda in some copies of the 1532 edition shows that even in the final proof stage Ariosto still corrected and rewrote the poem. Once the edition was published, rather than give public recitals, he was busy selling copies.³⁸ We have just noted Speroni's exasperation that Ariosto should end a canto with a farewell to the audience he has not greeted at the beginning. Like Boiardo, Ariosto intends his poem to masquerade as an oral recital. The characters Ariosto inherits from Boiardo are Charlemagne's paladins whose deeds were recited through the Italian cities by the cantastorie. However the truly oral text, if transcribed, remains anonymous and placeless since the oral poet must improvise to adapt his basic tale to the audience he sees before him. Paradoxically

³⁷Ibid., pp.45-6. I do not agree with Durling's assertion, op.cit., p.113, that "the references to singing, reciting, or hearing as often as not are meant to be recognized as merely conventional metaphors for writing and reading". I believe that Ariosto exploits our naïf expectation that such a convention exists.

³⁸L.Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, ed. S.Debenedetti and C.Segre, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua 1960, p.1560; idem, ed.S.Debenedetti, Bari, Laterza 1928, vol.III, pp.415-26. The correct bibliographical formula of the Ferrara, Maestro Francesco Rosso da Valenza 1.X.1532 edition is 4°: A⁸ (±A3.4.5.6), B-Z⁸, a-h⁸. In a recent lecture Conor Fahy has suggested that the considerable differences between cancellanda and cancellantia show the extent of the revisions carried out by the poet even in the final-proof stage. For Ariosto's direction of the printing and sale of his poem, see M.Catalano, Vita di Ludovico Ariosto ricostruita su nuovi documenti, Geneva, Olschki 1930.

the written genre circulated through the printing press can instead pretend to be the transcription of a single performance. Retaining some real features of the oral genre Boiardo's audience is courtly but anonymous, defined in the first octave as <Signori e cavallieri che ve adunati>, they never become more concrete. But where Boiardo consistently greets and says farewell to his courtly listeners at the beginning and end of his cantos, Ariosto only conjures up his audience when he wants them. Moreover Ariosto replaces Boiardo's generalised corte zoiosa with a larger, and in a sense, ideal audience. However if we analyse the Orlando Furioso, certain features of the poem, for instance the style which is conversational rather than recitative or the disparities in canto length, actually belie the <finzione d'oralità> that governs the poem. Therefore not only the characters and the events of the Orlando Furioso, but the very audience is part of a sustained poetical fiction.

So far in this chapter I have pointed to a distinction within the figure of the poet common to poets as diverse as Virgil, Dante and Chaucer. In Virgil a division appears between the public and private voices of the narrator; in Dante the poet plays on the autobiographical distinction between himself as character and narrator; Chaucer exploits a similar juxtaposition for comic effect, although the limited perception of Chaucer the character also possesses considerable artistic significance. In the Orlando Furioso the narrating 'Ariosto' presents himself through a variety of divergent and sometimes almost contradictory facets. This variety emphasises the poet's control not just of the story but also of his own personality as presented in the poem. Let

us examine the 'Ariosto' of the Orlando Furioso. Can we safely identify him with the historical figure and author of the poem, Lodovico Ariosto?

The first stanza of the poem introduces the subject matter. The second presents the poet who at once declares a bond between himself and the eponymous hero of the poem: <Che per amor venne in furore e matto, | D'uom che sì saggio era stimato prima> [OE.I.2], and the poet himself who believes that love threatens his ability to complete the poem.

Se da colei che tal quasi m'ha fatto,
Che'l poco ingegno ad or ad or mi lima,
Me ne sarà però tanto concesso,
Che mi basti a finir quanto ho promesso. I.2.

Where Chaucer presents himself as one who does not "dar to love, for myn unliklynesse", Ariosto casts himself as a lover and a courtier, possibly not unsuccessful in either department. The third stanza presents the poem to Ippolito d'Este as a gift from the <umil servo vostro> in payment of his debt to his patron, but where Chaucer humbly defines his poem as "litle bok...litel myn tragedye" [TC.V.1786], Ariosto hints that this is no trifling present.

Quel ch'io vi debbo, posso di parole
Pagare in parte e d'opera d'inchiestro;
Né che poco io vi dia da imputar sono,
Che quanto io posso dar, tutto vi dono. I.3.

The polarity observed above within the presentation of other narrator-poets, whether between qualities of "voice" or of "character", proves to be true of Ariosto. But this time the different qualities of presence are governed by the constitution of his imaginary audience. It depends on whether he is talking to men or women. On the one hand the professional

narrating voice of the poet addresses itself to his Signor, the focal point of the audience, and offers an image of 'Ariosto', loyal servant to Ippolito and Alfonso d'Este, repaying their patronage through his poem. On the other hand, not a private, but a more intimate voice dialogues with a specific area of the audience, the <Cortesi donne e grate al vostro amante> [XXII.1], to whom the poet presents himself as a lover and an admirer of women, but also confesses that like the poem's hero he himself has been and still is crazed for love.³⁹ Just as the audience as a whole finds a focal point in the image of the Signor, so the female side finds its focal point in the object of the poet's love. When Astolfo retrieves the wits of Orlando in the moon, the poet makes the event the occasion for a momentary aside to his lady, asking:

Chi salirà per me, madonna, in cielo
 A riportarne il mio perduto ingegno ?
 Che, poi ch'uscì da'bei vostri occhi il telo
 Che'l cor mi fisse, ognior perdendo vegno.

OF.XXXV.1.

Though we can identify the poet's madonna as Alessandra Benucci, the secret nature of this relationship, that only emerged after Ariosto's death, proves the audience to be part of a sustained fiction.

Deriving from this love motif and under the influence of Dante and Petrarch, especially the former's pursuit of Beatrice, the poem is considered as a journey. This journeying motif comes to a climax in the opening to the last

³⁹For addresses to the donne, see proems to cantos X, XX, XXII, XXVI, XXVIII-XXX, XXVII-XXVIII; for the poet as lover, see I, II, IX, XVI, XXIV, XXX, XXXV.

canto in an address where Ariosto imagines the poem as a ship finally coming into port and he sees all his friends standing on the shore.

How does Ariosto define and deal with this audience? In a sense the poem is presented as a masterly confidence trick. Early in the tale the poet pauses before describing the marvellous island of Alcina to criticise the <sciocco vulgo> [VII.1], who through ignorance condemn travellers' tales as lies. However, claims the Narrator, his audience <che'l lume del discorso avete chiaro> [VII.2] know better than to condemn a story as untruthful because it sounds fantastic. Therefore they will believe him. Effectively Ariosto has checkmated his audience. If they display incredulity at the amazing and unlikely events he is about to recount, the poet can condemn them as part of the <vulgo sciocco e ignaro>; if not they must accept his wildest claims as true. The Narrator is not asking the audience within the poem for a ^{romantic} ~~Wordsworthian~~ "suspension of disbelief", he is demanding the dismissal of disbelief.

From the reader inversely, never mentioned in the poem, but always Ariosto's real audience reached through the printing press, the poet requires not the suspension of disbelief, but a special Ariostesque double-think, that permits the reader simultaneously to believe and not believe that the Narrator controls the very existence of the audience in the poem. If the poem exists as truth, it heightens the importance of the poet. He confidently directs the intricate weave of the poem's structure and conducts a dialogue between himself and this ideal audience of patrons, fellow courtiers and friends. This presenter of the poem offers the fruits of his labours to

Cardinal Ippolito d'Este; but he also reminds the patron of the importance of this story for the Este family, since among the <più degni eroi> will appear <quel Ruggier, che fu di voi | E de' vostri avi illustri il ceppo vecchio>. Therefore the Cardinal would do well to turn his attention for a moment from the affairs of state to those of the poem.

L'alto valore e' chiari gesti suoi
Vi farò udir, se voi mi date orecchio,
E vostri alti pensier cedino un poco,
Sì che tra lor miei versi abbiano loco.

I.4.

The poet now launches into the recital with the words: <Orlando, che gran tempo innamorato | Fu de la bella Angelica>; but the real scene of the poem has already been set. It is no longer the remote seven-hundred year distant realm of Charlemagne, nor the far countries visited by the errant paladins, but a great hall in some palace in Ferrara where we can believe that the poet is reciting before his masters and the assembled court. Perhaps the principal character of the poem is no longer Orlando, nor even Ruggiero, but the poet himself. In the Satires Ariosto asks why he should bother to travel through the world when he can sit comfortably at home and read about it in Ptolemy. In the Orlando Furioso this idleness becomes a deliberate physical stasis which transforms the poet into the geographical centre of the poem. It is often remarked that in the transition from Innamorato to Furioso Boiardo's paladins exchange a primitive energy and fire for a more sophisticated psychological depth and feeling. In a valuable study Riccardo Bruscagli has shown how Ariosto extends Boiardo's motifs of ventura and inchiesta while dispersing the characters in their private quests.⁴⁰ Both

points confirm the peripheral and complimentary roles assigned to the characters of the poem by the poet, who retains his own position on the centre stage and effectively affirms his own absolute control over the events and personalities of the poem. It is as though Ariosto were showing the audience the events and characters of the poem through a series of great windows, but the characters remain outside while the poet remains inside the hall and dictates the action.

Where Virgil uses the Italian countryside within the epic simile to contrast the ethics of the heroic world with Imperial Rome, Ariosto introduces the familiar landscape of the Po valley to bridge the gulf between the remote and fantastic world of the paladins and the bright court of Ferrara. The trap set by Cimosco for Orlando is compared to a fisherman setting his nets in the river Volana: <Come appresso a Volana i pesci e l'onda | Con lunga rete il pescator circonda> [OE.IX.65]; Rodomonte's advance through the mud and slime of the moat beneath the walls of Paris is like that of a wild boar in the marshes <De la nostra Mallea...| Che col petto, col grifo e con le zanne | Fa, dovunque si volge, ample finestre> [OE.XIV.120]; in the final duel with Rodomonte Ruggiero's might is compared to a piledriver seen at work on the Po.

Con quella estrema forza che percuote
La machina ch'in Po sta su due navi,
E levata con uomini e con ruote
Cader si lascia su le aguzze travi;
Fere il pagan Ruggier...

XLVI.122.⁴¹

⁴⁰R.Bruscagli, "Ventura" e "inchiesta" fra Boiardo e Ariosto in Stagioni della Civiltà Estense, pp.87-126.

In the assault on Biserta the Virgilian simile of the river engulfing the fields is deliberately alluded to; but in a pyramid of effects the home, the flocks, the dogs and finally the shepherd himself are swept away in the roaring waters, while the poet amuses himself with the juxtaposition of fish among the branches where birds sang before.

Con quel furor che'l re de' fiumi altiero,
Quando rompe talvolta argine e sponde,
E che nei campi Ocnei s'apre il sentiero,
E i grassi solchi e le biade feconde,
E con le sue capanne il gregge intero,
E coi cani il pasto porta ne l'onde;
Guizzano i pesci a gli olmi in su la cima,
Ove solean volar gli augelli in prima. XL.31.⁴²

The Virgilian horror at the annihilation of the bucolic world is replaced by a curious and proprietary pride in the power of the re de' fiumi, the Po. Unlike Dante Ariosto avoids place-names for such familiar scenes and in the 1532 edition the more recherché epithet Ocnei replaces the Mantoani of the 1516.⁴³

⁴¹Sir J. Harington, Orlando Furioso, p.402, gloss: "The like is on London bridge". On the character of Harington's "translator", see J. Lee, The English Ariosto: The Elizabethan Poet and the Marvellous, Studies in Philology, LXXX, 1983, pp.277-99.

⁴²cf. OF.XXXVII.92; Sir J. Harington, Orlando Furioso, gloss: "Poe called the king of rivers".

⁴³G.B. Pigna, op.cit., p.168:

Le materie grandi debbono essere con uoci graui dechiarate, si come il dimostra lo stile delle cose pastoritie: & quello delle heroiche. Essendo però questa comperatione del Po quanto si possa alta & magnifica, era molto à proposito in uece de i nomi proprij che u'entrauano prendere le loro circoscritioni: come quelle che le potean aggrandire. La onde come disse, Il re de i fiumi, per lo po; cosi mutò
(Footnote continued)

When Rodomonte and Brandimarte come tumbling from a narrow bridge into the river below, Ariosto compares the splash to that made by Phaeton when he fell from the chariot of the Sun into the Po.

E gran rimbombo al ciel ne riede,
 Simile a quel ch'usci del nostro fiume,
 Quando ci cadde il mal rettor del lume. XXXI.70.

The single nostro transforms a classical commonplace into a joke the poet and the audience can share. Similar "gingering up" of heroic language appears when Ariosto casts around as if perplexed when he has to describe Ruggiero in battle and runs through a gamut of tired allusion before suddenly producing a happy solution.

La forza di Ruggier non era quale
 Or si ritrovi in cavallier moderno,
 Né in orso né in leo né in animale
 Altro più fiero, o nostrale od esterno,
 Forse il tremuoto le sarebbe uguale,
 Forse il Gran Diavol: non quel de lo'nferno,
 Ma quel del mio signor, che va col fuoco
 Ch'a cielo e a terra e a mar si fa dar loco. XXIV.14.

The wit of the sudden turn depends on knowing, as of course the court does, that Alfonso d'Este possessed two huge cannon which were used against the Venetians and appropriately christened Tremuoto and Il Gran Diavol. The nicely-turned simile thus compliments the Estes both on the might of their great ancestor and their own skilful use of military resources.

A similar preoccupation with the campaigns and battle

⁴³(continued)

Mantoani campi in Ocnei, con tal modo.
 See also OF.XXXVII.92,110.

fought in defence of the city state appears at the beginning of the fortieth canto. Ariosto compares the slaughter in the sea-battle fought between the victorious Dudon and Agramante's wretched fleet to the battle of Polesella fought in 1509 on the Po where Ippolito d'Este routed the advancing Venetians.

Ebbe lungo spettacolo il fedele
 Vostro popul la notte e'l dì che stette,
 Come in teatro, l'inimiche vele
 Mirando in Po tra ferro e fuoco astrette.
 Che gridi udir si possono e querele,
 Ch'onde veder di sangue umano infette,
 Per quanti modi in tal pugna si muora,
 Vedeste, e a molti il dimostraste allora. XL.2.

Professor Santoro notes that the ostensible celebration of this victory <risulta carico d'ambiguità, misurato sulla prospettiva della costante ripugnanza, espressa dal narrante nel corso del poema, per la violenza e per le disumane stragi della guerra>.⁴⁴ Ariosto also reminds the audience that his knowledge of the battle is second-hand, since a few days previously he had been sent as envoy to ask for assistance from Julius II:

Nol vide io già, ch'era sei giorni inanti,
 Mutando ogn'ora altre vetture, corso
 Con molta fretta e molta ai piedi santi
 Del gran Pastore a domandar soccorso OF.XL.3.

Where Dante disassociates himself from the ruling regime in Florence, Ariosto reminds the one in Ferrara both of his signal services as a soldier and courtier, and of the new and even more valuable demonstration of loyalty provided by the

⁴⁴M.Santoro, Nell'officina del Narrante: gli esordi in L'anèllo di Angelica: nuovi saggi Ariosteschi, Naples, Federico & Ardia 1983, pp.11-43:22. See also OF.III.57; XV.1-2; XXXVI.2-9.

Orlando Furioso itself.

Not only does this text which went straight from the author's pen to the press masquerade as the transcript of a literary recital, it even possesses a carefully scripted ad-lib. In the 1521 and 1532 editions as Ariosto finishes his account of the desperate battle on the island of Lipadusa, he pauses momentarily to deal with an objection raised from the audience by Federico Fregoso, who <avendo la riviera | Di Barberia trascorsa in ogni canto> [OF.XLII.20] knows the island in question and protests that there is hardly enough level ground on Lipadusa for a man to stand. Therefore how can <sei cavallieri, il fior del mondo> [OF.XLII.21] fight an arduous and bloody pitched battle there? The poet disposes of his heckler in a masterly fashion with the ready reply that at the time of the story:

una piazza de le destre,
Che sieno a questo, avea lo scoglio al fondo;
Ma poi, ch'un sasso che'l tremuoto aperse,
Le cadde sopra, e tutta la coperse OF.XLII.21.

Within the fiction of the audience we are to imagine the poet breaking off his narrative to deal with this interruption.

Whether or not Federigo Fregoso actually made this objection to Ariosto...we are made to imagine him humorously suggesting the objection and wondering how Ariosto would be able to get out of that one. The poet rises superbly to the occasion - he rewrites history.⁴⁵

The joke lies not just in the seemingly spontaneous promptitude of the absurd explanation, but also in the completely

⁴⁵Durling, op.cit., p.121.

convincing tone with which it is delivered. However not content with such an audacious and untruthful assertion Ariosto advances the even more monstrous claim that at all points in the poem he is telling the strict truth. Worse still, he begs the doubting Federico to assure the Genovese Doge Ottaviano Fulgoso, Federico's brother and also a friend and patron of Ariosto, that here Ariosto is telling only the truth: <Vi priego che non siate a dirgli tardo, | Ch'esser può nè in questo io sia bugiardo> [OF.XLII.22].

On a primary level this off-the-cuff rejoinder saves the poet from embarrassment and turns the tables on his tormentor. The Narrator's insistence that here, as ever, he is telling the truth heightens our laughter. In general criticism has rightly taken claims of this kind from the poet with a pinch of salt. This is wise, since ~~since~~ Ariosto's irony makes the poet an elusive figure and we should beware of taking anything he says too literally. Nonetheless, if we pursue the absurd and reductive logic behind such statements, if we relate these apparently implausible claims to the poem's narrative strategy and to the problems of mimesis presented through the figure of the Narrator, perhaps a coherent statement on the nature of Ariosto's art and its limitations may emerge. To understand the better we must re-examine the literary conventions of belief and disbelief in the epic poem. Therefore in the following pages I examine as a critical hypothesis the literal and logical import of the Narrator's statements.

The suspension of disbelief that exists between a poet and an audience is a gentleman's agreement. Within the mutually respected bounds of reasonable fiction the latter will accept

the former's make-believe as truth. Woe beside the presumptuous poet who steps beyond this line and tries to oblige the audience to believe what the latter's good sense must balk at! Otherwise within the epic fiction the poet can manipulate his landscape and his characters as he pleases and his audience will allow him to do this without objecting. When, as in the Fregoso episode, Ariosto challenges his audience's knowledge and experience, asserting his right to alter landscape as he pleases and insisting that such alterations become the truth, he is calculatedly breaking the genteel agreement that regulates the suspension of our disbelief.

Why does Ariosto rest his veracity on a point we know to be unacceptable? Let us examine the issue from another angle. Within the Orlando Furioso the reader is in the privileged position of watching a confidence trickster at work on his victim. The plots of Ariosto's dramas usually allow the theatre audience to watch a deceit performed by one character to the detriment of another. The theatre audience is never itself deceived. In the Fregoso episode the reader watches the poet attempting an outrageous deception on the audience within the poem. With what success we do not find out. We never find out Fregoso's response, nor does it matter. What does matter is our judgment of the poet. If we perceive the dramatic trio of trickster, dupe and audience in the Orlando Furioso's trio of poet, audience and reader, then we are driven to suspect that through the literal logic of the fiction the poet's insistence that everything in the poem is true must be totally false. Therefore from his privileged viewpoint the reader has no choice but to convict the Narrator as a liar, albeit a very charming and fluent and accomplished

liar.

Not only does 'Ariosto' want us to think him a liar, but, as Professor Quint shows, through the mouth of Saint John in the cielo della luna he wants us to recognise his whole profession as mendacious.⁴⁶ This famous episode parodies the Divina Commedia with Astolfo in the role of Dante and Saint John in that of guide, though the latter also imitates the rage of Saint Peter in the Paradiso against the corrupt church. But Saint John's criticism is directed at patrons <privi | de lo'ntelletto> [XXXV.24], who fail to reward poets according to their deserts. The Evangelist follows this with examples of what the epic poets have done for more generous masters.

Non sì pietoso Enea, né forte Achille
Fu, come è fama, né sì fiero Ettore;
E ne son stati e mille a mille a mille
Che lor si puon con verità anteporre:
Ma i donati palazzi e le gran ville
Dai descendentì lor, gli ha fatto porre
In questi senza fin sublimi onori
Da l'onorate man degli scrittori.

Non fu sì santo né benigno Augusto
Come la tuba di Virgilio suona.
L'aver avuto in poesia buon gusto
La proscrizione iniqua gli perdona.
Nessun sapria se Neron fosse ingiusto,
Né sua fama saria forse men buona,
Avesse avuto e terra e ciel nimici,
Se gli scrittor sapea tenersi amici.

Omero Agamennòn vittorioso,
E fe' i Troian parer vili ed inertì;
E che Penelopea fida al suo sposo
Dai Prochi mille oltraggi avea sofferti.
E se tu vuoi che'l ver non ti sia ascoso,
Tutta al contrario l'istoria converti:
Che e Greci rotti, e che Troia vittrice,
E che Penelopea fu meretrice.

XXXV.25-7.

⁴⁶D. Quint, Astolfo's Voyage to the Moon, Yale Italian Studies I, 1977, pp.398-408.

Surely the palazzi and gran ville grossly exaggerate Augustus' rewards to Virgil? Is this not too blatant a hint to others to follow suit? If Ariosto plays with the Renaissance commonplace that poets are constrained to lie in order to convey moral or spiritual truth, he effectively delineates the "higher" truth as financial reward.

On the surface Saint John's attack on selfish patrons displays on the poet's part a complete lack of moral perspective, as if the Evangelist, who does after all constitute an unchallengable authority, were indifferent to the morality of poets whose praise for their masters is governed by purely material considerations. Indeed by inference the same criteria apply to the Gospel itself, since the Evangelist tells Astolfo that he is receiving the due reward from Christ for his literary labours.

Non ti maravigliar ch'io n'abbia ambascia,
E se di ciò diffusamente io dico.
Gli scrittori amo, e fo il debito mio;
Ch'al vostro mondo fui scrittore anch'io.

E sopra tutti gli altri io feci acquisto
Che non mi può levar tempo né morte:
E ben convenne al mio lodato Cristo
Rendermi guiderdon di sì gran sorte.

XXXV.28-9.

Thus the Gospels are the product of the same literary process as the Aeneid and Christ bestows his rewards as if he were an extraterrestrial Maecenas. In fact this purported insight into the mechanics of literary apotheosis seems to destroy literary authority in what for the Renaissance was the most authoritative of texts. Of course a joke is a joke and only a fool would take this literally. In the bargain the poem's own internal logic prevents us from doing so with the reasoning: "This statement is in a poem, all poems are untrue since all

poets are liars, therefore this statement is also untrue".

On the other hand within the poem Saint John hangs a halo of bad faith over the dynastic epic. Therefore, against the background of the Este court, Ariosto is hoisting himself and Boiardo with his own petard, since both the Innamorato and the Furioso glorify the invented genealogy of the rulers of a small dukedom. Beyond their natural political difficulties the Estes had to cope with the stigma of a supposed descent from the treacherous house of Maganza. The introduction of Ruggiero as mythical capostipite of the Estense family and the choice of Bradamante, sister of the most popular hero of the Carolingian tradition, as his bride in the Orlando Innamorato (the innovation was originally suggested in Tito Strozzi's Sborsiate), marked a valuable propaganda coup for the ducal family. Not only did it provide them with a prestigious made-to-measure ancestry, but it also codified their rather tenuous claims to the territory they ruled. Therefore even with a French invasion threatening their borders, they saw to the publication of Boiardo's poem. In Ariosto's case the Duke's assistance with the paper necessary for the 1516 and 1532 editions amounted to a considerable subsidy towards the printing costs.

It is clear that when Boiardo started his third book he intended to take it up to Ruggiero's death and tell how <Gano di Maganza, | Pien de ogni fellonia, pien de ogni fele, | Lo uccise a torto, il perfido crudele> [QI.III.i.3]. According to the fatal decree prophesied by Atalante this was to occur two years after Ruggiero's marriage with Bradamante, whom in the third book he meets for the first time.⁴⁷ If we compare

Ariosto's treatment of the Este genealogy with the solutions in the alternative continuations to Boiardo's unfinished poem by Nicolò degli Agostini and Raphael da Verona, we can see how Ariosto's conception of the poet's role dictates the unfolding of the plot. In Nicolò degli Agostini's Quarto libro Ruggiero almost at once finds Bradamante in the company of the Spanish princess Fiordelisa, exactly as Boiardo had left the two women at the end of the Orlando Innamorato. After Bradamante reveals her true sex to the Spanish princess, Fiordelisa departs in tears. The two progenitors of the House of Este declare their love, Bradamante converts Ruggiero to Christianity and that very night the marriage is consummated. In the Quinto Libro by Raphael da Verona an ambush set for Ruggiero by Gano fails, but after the battle the villain discovers Ruggiero asleep in a grove of trees and murders him,⁴⁸ whereas in the Sexto libro by Nicolò degli Agostini Ruggiero, riding to rescue the son of an old man, falls into a cavern (as Gano plans) and dies of thirst and starvation.⁴⁹

In the Orlando Furioso we never arrive at the death of Ruggiero, since the wedlock of the loving couple, or rather their failure to tie the nuptial knot, and not the love and madness of the eponymous hero (as the title might suggest), becomes the mainspring of the action. But though the marriage

⁴⁷Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, III.v.15-43.

⁴⁸Raphael da Verona, El Quinto e Fine de tutti li Libri de lo Inamoramento de Orlando, Milano, Rocho & Fratello da Valle ad Instantia de Mesere Nicolo da Gorgonzola 2.III.1518, ff.g3-4, cf.R.Bruscagli, Stagioni della Civiltà Estense, pp.87-126.

⁴⁹Nicolò degli Agostini, Ultimo & fine de tutti li libri de Orlando innamorato, Venice, Nicolo Zopino e Vicentio compagno 10.XII.1524, IV.55.

seems imminent from the opening cantos, the poet through a variety of devices manages to delay the actual celebration until the forty-sixth and last canto: first the stratagems set in motion by the wizard Atalante to prevent the marriage and consequently Ruggiero's inevitable and untimely death, such as the two enchanted palaces and the abduction by the hippogrif of Ruggiero to the island of Alcina; second Ruggiero's sense of honour which will not allow him to abandon Agramante while the latter is losing; third by the introduction in the 1532 edition of a refusal by Bradamante's parents to consent to the alliance, that in turn leads to Ruggiero's campaign against and capture by Leone, his release and agreement through his sense of obligation to the latter to disguise himself as Leone and win Bradamante for his rival by withstanding Bradamante herself throughout a day's combat in the lists. The poet introduces all these ingenious and protracting mechanisms to a single end, to postpone not indefinitely but continuously the hour when Ruggiero and Bradamante finally climb into that wedding bed.

This elaborate process of frustration and postponement can only be explained in view of the audience dimension. Ariosto no longer makes Angelica the pivotal point of the action and marries her off to Medoro, because what happens to Angelica is of no interest to his imagined audience within the poem, though it might be to his reader. What happens to Ruggiero and Bradamante does matter to his audience since, according to the poem's extra dimension, the very existence of the audience depends on this couple. The interest and involvement of the audience is the most important element in the attitude of secondary epic to history. The basic aim of dynastic epic is

to explain to its first audience how and why that audience is what it is. The Aeneid, ostensibly the story of a group of survivors from Troy whose ancestors will found Rome, justifies the rise of Augustus. In the Aeneid Virgil does not cite or refer to an audience, but the Renaissance editions of the same poem were usually printed with Servius' commentary which described the reaction of Augustus and his family when passages such as the death of Marcellus were read to them.⁵⁰ For Ariosto to include the court of Ferrara within the bounds of the poem is the next logical step.

The projection of Ariosto's audience operates within the bounds of a necessary suspension of disbelief (everybody knows that Ruggiero, Bradamante and the consequent Este dynasty are a pack of poetical untruths). Within the bounds of this fiction the poet arrogates immense power to himself because he seems to hold the life-threads of everyone in the room in his hands and twists them as he pleases. If Ruggiero were to discover in himself a preference for older women and were to stay on the island of Alcina; if Bradamante were to show herself a dutiful and obedient daughter and were to prefer an emperor's son to a common knight; if, after the marriage has been celebrated and it seems that no further impediment can occur, when Rodomonte suddenly appears and challenges Ruggiero as a traitor, the poet were to allow the pagan to conquer or Ruggiero, like some Hemingway hero, to receive a debilitating wound in the groin, then with a flick of his pen the poet

⁵⁰Servius, op.cit., VI.861:

et constat hunc librum tanta pronuntiatione Augusto et Octaviae esse recitatum, ut fletu nimio imperarent silentium nisi Vergilius finem esse dixisset.

would make the entire Este court, the "Clowd-capt Towres, the Gorgeous Palaces", Ippolito d'Este himself, the whole city of Ferrara, disappear in a puff of imaginary smoke leaving "not a Racke behind", just an undrained swamp on the banks of the Po. Of all the illusions in the poem, and there are many, this is possibly the most important, the most sustained and the most convincing.

How finally should we reconcile the ascendancy of the poet both over the fictional characters of his poem and over the audience with the same poet's very frank admission through the mouth of Saint John that Ariosto and all who practise the same trade are a profession of liars? I believe that such a confession determines the real limits of the poet's powers. Within the illusion of the literary fiction the poet is almighty. As in the Fregoso episode, he can manipulate characters and change landscape as he pleases and not be challenged; but by implication the real world is a different kettle of fish. Outside the poem the poet has no control over events. Within the poem good can triumph over evil, the Este dynasty can be cemented into place by eternal decrees, the glorious city of Ferrara can triumph over its enemies: all this good is dictated by the poet's single presiding harmonious genius; but in reality evil seems to be doing better than good, the Este's claim to Ferrara remains dubious, the small state continuously risks being engulfed by its greedy neighbours.

If the Orlando Furioso appeared at a time that other writers were documenting the value of the political lie in Il Principe and the need for some duplicity in a courtly society

in Il Cortegiano, the same age also recognised that literature, politics and society were to an extent autonomous spheres of action. Though it shares the deeper pessimism of the cinquecento, in this context Ariosto's conviction of himself and his profession as mendacious and his refusal, by implication, to pretend that this poem is anything more than a lie become a proof of the poet's veracity. It is also a declaration of impotence that acknowledges the bounds of the poet's power in the fiction. The poet cannot manipulate reality.

Berni's "Orlando Innamorato" and the character of the "rifacitore".

Apart from the linguistic tuscanizzazione, the real change made in Berni's rifacimento is the irruption onto the scene of the figure of the rifacitore, no Emilian aristocrat this, but a Florentine wit and scribbler, secretary to Cardinal Ippolito de'Medici, peremptorily ousting the original author from his corte zoiosa, dismissing the audience and turning the poem into a literary experience addressed to the graziosi Lettori, as well as demonstrating a lesser involvement and a more critical attitude to the characters. Just as the figure of the "translator" in Harington's English Orlando Furioso is markedly more sober and down to earth than the extrovert Italian original, so Berni does not extirpate all traces of Boiardo but acts as the stand-offish moderniser of an old story. In the original when Marfisa asks about Orlando who appears <terribil...solo a guardare> [QI.I.xxvi.18] as he

leads the defenders out to face Ranaldo and the other besiegers, Astolfo replies with a cheeky jibe at Orlando's ugly appearance and squint.

Non fare estima,
 Che ogni zuffa che hai fatta, è stata un scherzo.
 Benchè ei d'ardire e di prodezza in cima,
 Io ti saggio accertar ch'egli è un mal guerzo. I.xxvi.19.

When Berni has to revise this stanza he has to deal with the dialect form guerzo, which normally he would seek to remove, either by finding a substitute or by changing the whole rhyme pattern; but on this occasion he finds an amusing solution by making the Duca inglese turn his disparaging summary of Orlando's looks into: <E per dirlo in Lombardo, è un mal guerzo>. Though we can accept the fiction that the characters of Charlemagne's court should speak Renaissance Italian rather than old French, when on the distant steppes of Asia an English duke begins to quote Milanese slang, our suspension of disbelief begins to waver. The episode shows that the rifacitore intends the process of conversion from Boiardo's Emiliano illustre to Berni's colloquial Florentine to be a public one. Where Boiardo's comedy depends on situation and character, Berni generates his comedy through the presence of the rifacitore.

Besides new proems to the cantos, Berni also inserts a series of similes drawing on the rifacitore's personal experience and observation; but, instead of the Ariostesque periphrasis, like a good Florentine the reviser is aware of the concrete power of names and how to employ them.⁵¹ The to

⁵¹ Berni's added similes are: I.ii.56: bull fight; iii.6: tower
 (Footnote continued)

and fro of the battle around Albracca recalls fights between gangs of stone-throwing urchins in the Florentine alleys at carnival time; the fearsome blows of the giant Archiloro remind the rifacitore (presumably also remembering Ariosto's pile-driver) of a water-powered copper-beating hammer he has seen in Verona; while the fall of Rodamonte recalls the automaton known as <Il Mangio..quel cotal, che suona l'ore> which, when Leo X's fool, Fra Marian, removed the supporting chain, crashed down into Siena's Piazza del Campo and <fece spiritare i bottegai> [Berni.II.xxiv.62]. As if to allow a comparison Berni resorts to the familiar river simile, obviously emulating both Virgil and Ariosto, to describe Agricane's army sweeping forward. He displays a fine effective grasp of place-names.

Qual di Scirocco suole al caldo fiato

51 (continued)

falling, 47: dog; iv.2: bulls fighting, 6: storm, 26: wind after calm, 73: bird and predator; vii.30: bull-baiting <a Roma in Testaccio, o in Agone>; x.56: Carnival; xi.6: wind; xii.26: Hawk; xiv.71: elephants protecting young; xv.22 angry bear, 61: river in flood; xvi.45 hammer beating copper; xvii.32 wind; xxvii.8: two mastiffs fighting; II.ix.30: released prisoners; xii.32: old man on pilgrimage; xiv.13: nightingale; 33: slings used by the <milizia antica | Quel ch'allor si chiamava Baleare, | Ed or Majorchin par che si dica>, or Hercules whirling Lycas round his head; xvi.38 and xvii.25: stallion; xx.21: cannon smoke clearing; 56: bold adultress; xxiv.64: <il foco in Puglia negli aperti piani>; III.vi.30: fox traps crow; viii.21: storm. N.B. Antonio Malatesti, Rinaldo Infuriato, Florence, BN, Mss.Maglia.II.IV.238, canto VI.26:

Chi ha visto per le strade di Fiorenza,
Giunger per sorte qualita Can' Capraio
& come è conosciuto alla presenza
(Footnote continued)

L'aria l'inverno, liquefatta in pioggia,
 E di Turin la neve, e Monferrato,
 Far crescer Po' con disusata foggia;
 Onde vien furioso, e smisurato,
 E gli argini rompe, o sopra enfiato poggia,
 E valli, e bassi, e fossi, e balzi agguaglia,
 L'acqua infinita altrui al vista abbaglia.

Berni.I.xv.61.⁵²

Around clearly defined spatial and temporal axes Berni constructs a chain of cause and effect. The warmer winds of spring melt the snow around Turin, the Po rises, breaks its banks, floods the surrounding plain and the sight strikes awe into the onlooker. The roll of place-names does not possess Miltonic splendour, but it has a clear sharp precision of its own.

However Berni finally extends his participation in the poem beyond authorial intervention and actually appears in person in the poem, much as Italian painters include themselves and their friends in the crowds around the miraculous birth or Alfred Hitchcock always appears momentarily in the background of his own films. When Orlando falls into the enchanted realm of the <fonte del riso>, among the voluntary prisoners of the delightful garden appears one <certo buon compagno Fiorentino> whose main pleasure in this palace where each does as he pleases consists in <iacere, | Nudo, lungo, disteso, e'l suo

⁵¹ (continued)

(da quei della Città) ch'è dal Paglaio:
 Gli vanno adosso con grand'Insolenza
 Et un Cerchio gli fan di più d'un paio
 E mentre egli con un le zanne adopra
 Quegl'altri d'acciuffarlo usano ogn'opra.

⁵² Compare Vida, Christiad, I.25-31; Tasso, Gerusalemme

Liberata, IX.46; Spenser, Faerie Queene, I.i.21, II.xi.18;

Milton, Paradise Lost, VI.828-30: "the Orbes | Of his fierce Chariot rowled, as with the sound | Of torrent Floods, or of a numerous Host".

diletto, | Era non far mai nulla, e starsi in letto>

[Berni.III.vii.45].⁵³ The aristocratic hortus deliciarum imagined by Boiardo now has to function as a paradise for tired secretaries <dallo scriver stracco, e morto>, while the chamberlains have standing instructions that nobody is to be disturbed for anything whatsoever.

Questo era il loro esercizio ordinario,
Si mangiava a vicenda, e si dormiva,
Non si osservava di, né Calendario,
Mai non entrava settimana, o usciva,
Senza vicissitudine, o divario,
Quivi ore, ne campane non s'udiva,
Avean' i servidor commessione,
Nuove non portar mai triste, né buone.

Berni.III.vii.54.

Likewise in the Faerie Queene Sir Calidore stumbles on Colin Clout playing in a grove to the graces, but when the knight's clumsy intrusion puts the dancers to flight the knight fails to penetrate beyond the shepherd's external appearance and recognise his own author behind the incognito.

⁵³Berni, III.vii.36-56.

CHAPTER 3. PART II. Appendix 1.

Note on Renaissance Translations and Commentaries on Aristotle's "Poetics" (1460a5-11).

For background to this note see, B. Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance, 2nd ed., Chicago U.P. 1963, pp. 349-423, and the list of editions of the Poetics in F.E. Cranz-C.B. Schmitt, A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions 1501-1600, 2nd ed., Baden-Baden, Koerner <Biblioteca Bibliographica Aureliana 38> 1984, pp. 215-6.

The passage in question is omitted from Averroës' summary Latin by Hermannus Alemannus and first published in Venice in 1481 with the title Determinatio in poetria Aristotilis.

The first proper Latin translation directly from the Greek was that of Alessandro Pazzi, published by Aldus as Aristotelis poetica, per Alexandrum Paccium, Patritium Florentinus, in Latinum conversa, Venice, Aldus 1536, f. C8v:

Proin uates Homerus in hoc quoque quemadmodum & in caeteris, praecipua laude dignus est; quandoquidem omnium unus, quid ipsum decet poetam, minime ignorat. Decet autem hunc ex persona sua pauca dicere: quod in eo imitator non sit; itaque vates alii, dum hoc studio semper certant, pauca interim, paucisque in locis imitatione assequuntur; contra Homerus pauca admodum praefatus, modo virum, modo mulierem, interdum mores aliquos inducit; nihil enim unquam non moratum: at semper moribus praepollens, quodcunque confingit.

By the middle of the century the commentary of Vincenzo Maggi and Bartolomeo Lombardi often accompanied Pazzi's translation: In Aristotelis Librum de Poetica Communes Explicationes Madii Vero In Eundem Librum Propriae Annotationes, Venice, In officina Erasmiana Vincentij Valgrisiij 1550, p. 260:

(Aristotle) confirmat, ostendens quid deceat ipsum poetam nimirum pauca dicere: quoniam poeta, cum minime se occultans loquitur, non imitatur.

The most influential Latin commentary of the sixteenth-century was by Francesco Robortello, In librum Aristotelis de arte Poetica explicationes, Basle, per Ioannem Hervagium Iuniorum 1555, p. 244:

(Aristotle) ait Homerum etiam ob id esse magnopere laudandum, quod pauca sub suae personae figura protulit: id enim debent in primis servare poetae, quia imitantur, atque ab imitatione nomen ducunt: quatenus

igitur ipsi narrant, non imitantur, neque munus exequuntur suum. Quod si aliorum poemata intuearis...videas ipsos multum operae posuisse in narrationibus sub sua persona proferendis: paucisque admodum in locis expressisse loquentes personas: atque eo modo, quo maximè debebant, imitatos fuisse hominum actiones, & mores, qui non aliunde facilius perspiciuntur, quales sint, quàm ex sermone.

This work was followed by the lengthier commentary of Pietro Vittorio, Commentarii In Primum Librum Aristotelis De Arte Poetarum, 2nd ed., Florence, In officina Ivntarum, Bernardi Filiorum 1573:

Ipsum enim poëtam oportet pauca admodum dicere, suaque ex persona loqui: nam quin se immisceat aliquando in medios illos sermones, facere non potest. Non enim est, inquit, in his omnibus, quae suo nomine edit, imitator: id est amittit penè eo tempore nomen poëtae: in imitatione nanque omne ipsius officium positum est. Vt autem initio huius praecepti exponendi tulerat in coelum Homerum, ita nunc ceteros poëtas reprehendit, qui quid oporteat ipsos facere, ac magnam partem officij sui non cognouerant: inquit igitur, contemnens illos. Ceteri autem omnes per totum, id est omni in parte poëmatibus concertant, & quasi in pulverem descendunt: cum rarò admodum immiscere se cum illis, quorum personas imitantur, deberent, & certis quibusdam in locis tantum: & eo quidem tempore paucis agere.

The first Italian translation of the Poetics was published by the Florentine Bernadino Segni, Rettorica Et Poetica D'Aristotile Tradotte di Greco In Lingua Vulgare, Florence, Appresso Lorenzo Torrentino 1549, p.340:

Homero stesso in questo anchora...è degno di molta lode, ilquale solo infra tutti Poeti non è ignorante di quello, che se li conuenga di fare. Et certo che al Poeta non è conveniente dire molte cose in persona propria: perchè in tal modo e'viene a non essere imitatore. Homero all'incontro subito che egli ha proemiato, hora introduce vn'huomo, & hora vna donna à parlare, & hora introduce qualche costume; ne mai mette innanzi nulla, che di costume fa manco: ma che sempre ne sia ripieno.

The commentary sums up:

Ammonisce doppo questo i Poeti, qualmente e' debbin' usare l'imitatione, auuertendogli à dir' poche cose in persona loro; anzi a introdur sempre un', che parli: perchè nel primo modo e' non imitano, ma sì in questo secondo.

The first seventeenth-century translation of the Poetics was by Daniel Heinsius, Aristotelis De Poetica Liber, Lugduni Batavorum, Apud Ioannem Balduinum 1611, p.58:

Paucissima enim ipsam dicere poetam oportet. Non enim in eo imitatio illius constitit. Alii ergo a principio ad finem sese ipsi immiscent: pauca autem & raro.

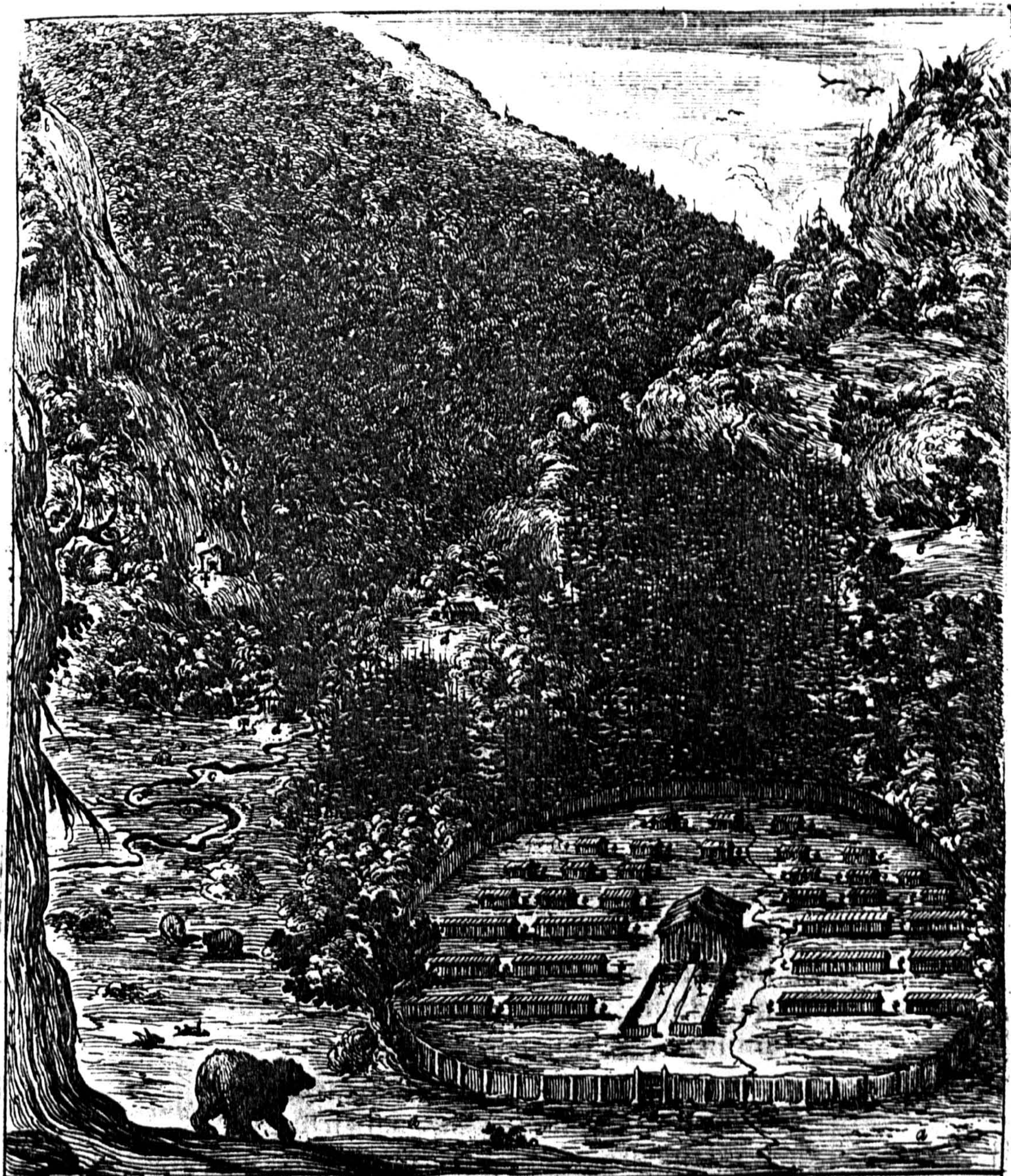
Two years later Paolo Beni finished his enormous commentary In Aristotelis Poeticam Commentarii In Quibus Ad Obscura Quaeque Decreta planius adhuc dilucidanda, Centum Poeticae Controversiae interponuntur & copiosissime explicantur, Padua, Per Franciscum Bolzettam 1613, p.516, and translated Aristotle's assertion: <Homerus autem & in aliis multis dignus est, qui laudetur, & in hoc etiam, quod solus inter poetas id non ignorat, quod ipsum facere oportet. ipsi enim poetae quam paucissima dicenda sunt. etenim ipse non est secundum haec imitator>. In his Controversia LXXXV: Num iure affirmet Aristoteles Epico quam paucissima dicenda: & Num haec laus Homero debeatur Beni discusses the issue and challenges Aristotle with the observation that both Homer and Virgil have long sections of narrative without dialogue. In the Particula XV, pp.105-6 he also discusses the problem of how the poet should present his personality in the poem.

Chapter 3. Part II.ILLUSTRATIONS.

1] Stefano della Bella, Prima Istitutione dell'Eremo e Cenobio di Vallombrosa, dalle Memorie di Xanthe Perugino, di Thaddeo Adimari, e di altri in Diego de' Franchi, Historia del Patriarcha S.Giovanni Gualberto, Florence, Appresso Gio.

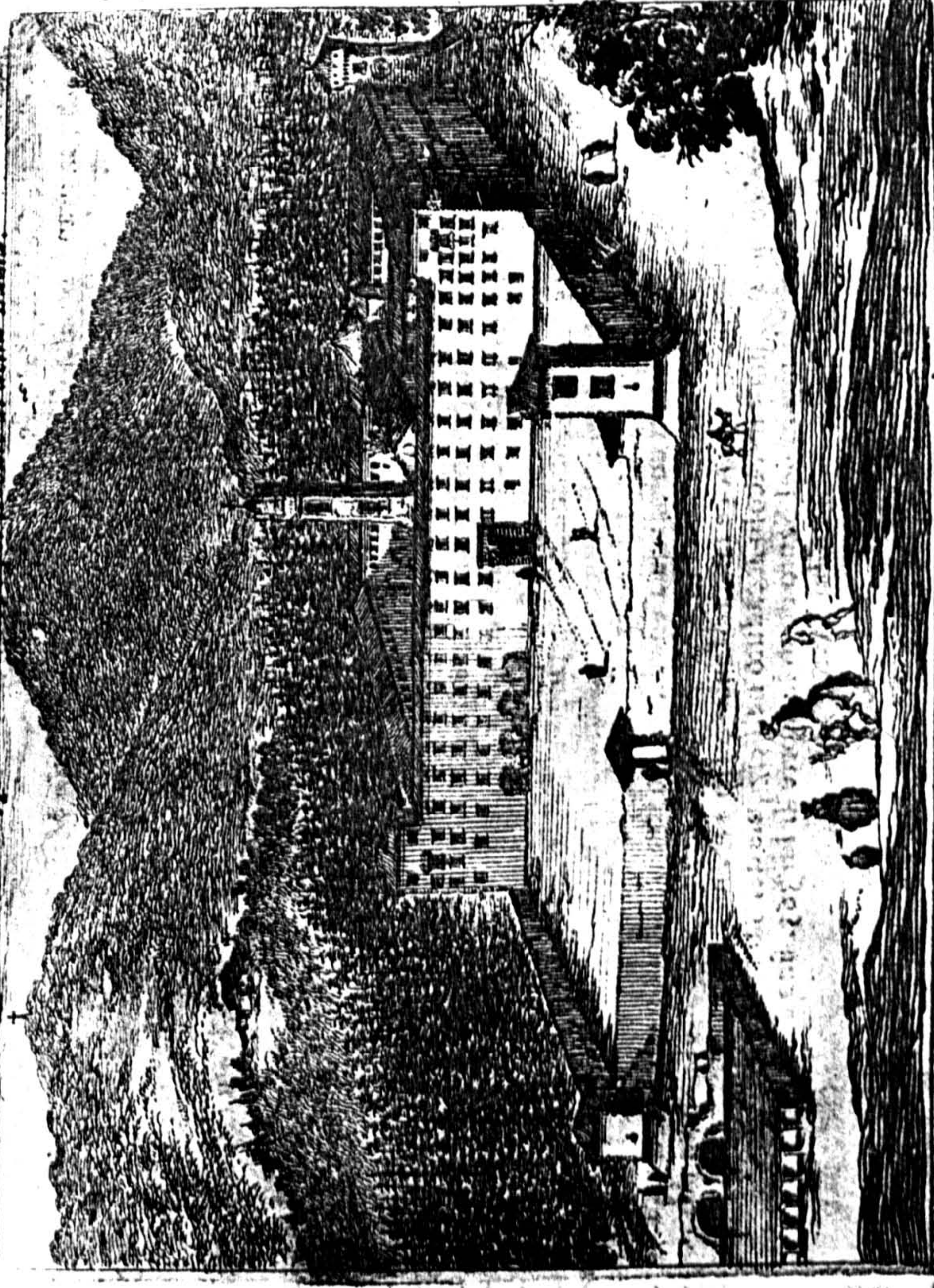
Battista Landini 1640 (see part III, appendix 1).

2] Idem. Vallombrosa in 1637, as it was rebuilt under the direction of Averardo Niccolini.



Prima Institutione dell' Oratorio e Cenobio di Vallombrosa, dalle Memorie di
 Xantho Perugino, di Thaddaeo Adimari e di altri
 a a Luogo appellato Acquabella. b Masso dove hoggi delle celle
 c Vicano fiume. d d Oratorio e tugurij delli due romani Cluniacon st.
 e Fuggio, e tugurio di S. Giovanni.

Ma la moderna Ichnographia è questa seconda che l'ha da i fondamenti rinouata il P.D. Auerardo
Nicoletti da Firenze, prima Generale e poi Abbate di detta Badia.



D'Auerardus Nicolinus a Flor. Ab Vall: has nouas Aed: funditus erexit. A.D. 1637

CHAPTER 3. PART III.

Vallombrosa and the Figure of the Poet in "Paradise Lost".

Fiesole, Valdarno, Vallombrosa, interrompano le dense caligini dell'inferno, le tenebre della Morte e del Peccato, e i boschi lussureggianti e gentilmente selvaggi che il poeta aveva veduti intorno a Firenze gli servirono liricamente per cantare l'aria fresca che spirava sulla cima degli alberi nelle mattinate scene dell'Eden.¹

If in the autumn of 1667 in a bookshop such as that of Peter Parker under Creed Church in Aldgate, or that of Robert Boulter at the Turk's Head in Bishopsgate street, or that of Matthias Walker under Saint Dunstan's Church in Fleet street we had purchased a copy of Paradise Lost, A poem in ten books by a Mr John Milton,² what on reading would be our impression of the poet, even if we knew John Milton as the adversary of Saumaise, the defender of the regicides and Cromwell's former secretary for foreign tongues? It is usually impossible to imagine the reactions of the first readers of a great work; but Andrew Marvell, Milton's close friend and fellow poet, does recall his emotions as he read Paradise Lost for the first time in the verses entitled On Paradise Lost that prefaced the second edition of Milton's poem.³ Marvell's

¹E.Allodoli, Vallombrosa e la poesia in L'Abbazia di Vallombrosa nel pensiero contemporaneo: conferenze tenute in occasione del IX centenario della dedicazione della Basilica di S.Maria Assunta in Vallombrosa (1051-1951), prefazione di P.Bargellini, Livorno, <Edizioni Vallombrosa 1> 1953, pp.23-33: 26.

² R.G.Moyles, The Text of "Paradise Lost": A Study in Editorial Procedure, Toronto University Press 1985.

³Columbia, IV.3-5.

initial sense of awe at the majesty of the "vast Design...|
 Messiah Crown'd, God's Reconcil'd Decree, | Rebelling Angels,
 the Forbidden Tree, | Heav'n, Hell, Earth, Chaos, All" is
 accompanied by a fear that the "Poet blind, yet bold...would
 ruine | The sacred Truths to Fable and old Song". Marvell
 also recognises the importance of the poet himself within the
 poem as the controlling genius and echoes Milton's own imagery
 to praise his friend's labours and his complete success.

Thou singst with so much gravity and ease;
 And above humane flight dost soar aloft
 With Plume so strong, so equal and so soft.
 The Bird nam'd from that Paradise you sing
 So never flaggs, but always keeps on Wing.

If we discuss the figure of the poet in Paradise Lost, we must
 do so with the proviso that the autobiographical "Milton" in
 the poem is a poetic persona, created by Milton himself around
 his own historical self, not just in Paradise Lost, but
 through manipulation of autobiographical detail through the
 whole corpus of his life's writings. Gordon Campbell shows
 how in the Defensio Secunda Milton reworks the facts of his
 life, not through a principle of dishonesty, but through the
 desire typical of puritan autobiography to direct attention ^{to} a
 divinely ordered pattern.⁴ Milton's willingness to cite his
 potentially humiliating Cambridge nickname "The lady of

⁴G.Campbell, Milton and the Lives of the Ancients, Journal of
 the Warburg and Courtauld Insitutes, XLVII, 1984, pp.234-8.
 On the figure of the poet in Paradise Lost, see A.D.Ferry,
Milton's Epic Voice: The Narrator in "Paradise Lost", Harvard
 University Press 1963, p.21; B.L.Lewalski, Milton's Brief
 Epic, pp.325-9; A.Stein, The Art of Presence: The Poet and
 "Paradise Lost", University of California press 1977.

Christs'" becomes understandable if we remember that according to the life of Donatus Virgil was nicknamed Parthenias. Likewise in Paradise Lost Milton chose for the image of "Milton" a series of mythical and poetic archetypes recognised by Marvell who says: "Just Heav'n thee like Tiresias to requite | Rewards with Prophecie thy loss of sight".

On the other hand it is difficult to judge the real extent of Milton's manipulation of his own biography since so little has survived that is not official. There is no great hoard of unpublished manuscripts and diaries to belie the image Milton gives of himself in the poetry and prose; even his letters he published in his own lifetime. Other comments on his life and character are often polemical and therefore unreliable, while the only two major private documents, the Commonplace Book and the Trinity College manuscript, are uninformative from a biographical point of view.

Our image of the poet in Paradise Lost is orchestrated by the quartet of autobiographical prologues that were judged irrelevant by Dr Johnson. In the 1674 second edition of Paradise Lost in twelve books these proems are to be found as exordia to books I, III, VII, IX, dividing the poem according to a harmonious pattern:

I 2 | III 4 5 6 || VII 8 | IX 10 11 12

If however, as Professor Fowler has demonstrated,⁵ we compare the original 1667 first edition arrangement in ten books, another more subtle numerological structure emerges. This

⁵Carey-Fowler, pp.440-3, 851-2; cf.J.Whaler, Counterpoint and Symbol: An Inquiry into the Rhythm of Milton's Epic Style, Copenhagen, Rosenkild and Bagger 1956, p.165.

emphasises the poet's controlling and anacrustic role.

According to Milton's original intentions the proems fall in books I,III,VII,VIII. Therefore no single section has the same number of books as any other and the whole adds up to the Pythagorean tectracts.

I 2 | III 4 5 6 | VII | VIII 9 10

We can find numerological import in a link between the number of books and the material treated. The opening two books of the poem mark the evil dyad (I,2), defined by Pietro Bongo as the <principium...diversitatis> and the <unitatis destructio; nam diuisum est vnus negatio, quia rem dividere idem est quod destruere>.⁶ Appropriately these books deal with the revival of the fallen angels and the scheme to ruin mankind. The tetrad (III,4,5,6) is the number of order and regularity whether it refers to the four corners of a square or the four cardinal virtues, so books III to VI deal with the harmonious and ordered prelapsarian universe. The divine monad (VII), <numerosum fons, & origo, Divina creaturarum origini, aeternoque principio similis>,⁷ is the book where Raphael describes the creation of the world. The final triad (VIII,9,10) is the number of compromise (Milton of course avoids the obvious association of 3 with the Trinity, except in the infernal parody at the gates of Hell); yet it also marks redemption and therefore these books deal not only with

⁶Pietro Bongo, Numerorum Mysteria. Opus Maximarum Rerum Doctrina, et Copia Refertum, In quo mirus in primis, idemque perpetuus Arithmeticae Pythagoricae cum Divinae Paginae Numeris consensus, multiplici ratione probatur, Bergamo, Typis Comini Venturae 1599, p.62.

⁷P.Bongo, op.cit., p.13.

the fall but also with the vision of the future and the promised coming of Christ.

The internal reverberation of this numerological structure appears for instance in the link between the Son's offer of himself as redeemer in book III and the final triad of books, where this redemption begins to be put into operation. The numerological import of these divisions means that we cannot consider the quartet of prologues as mere introductions to a new book, but we must recognise them as the four cardinal and organising points of the poem.

Partly due to his personal circumstances, partly due to the age he lived in, which in book IX he fears may prove "an age too late" for the epic poem, Milton can hardly pretend to recite his poem to an audience. Nevertheless, like its models Paradise Lost presents itself as a dynastic poem explaining the present through a series of events in the distant past. But the "interested" audience (in the Aeneid limited to the imperial family and in the Orlando Furioso to the Este court) now constitutes the whole of mankind. Where Milton consciously differs from other epic poets is in the attitude of "Milton" to history. When the poet calls on the Spirit "that doest prefer | Before all temples th'upright heart and pure" [I.16-7] to make him sufficient for the task: "That to the highth of this great Argument | I may assert Eternal Providence, | And justifie the wayes of God to men" [I.24-6], he is displaying his hostility to the ethics of the dynastic epic. Where the poems of Virgil and Ariosto distort history to satisfy the historical desires of a single period and falsely pretend that a single regime or family, which may have

obtained power by corrupt or nefarious means, has been placed in this happy position by unequivocal destiny, all the decrees of fate and the irrevocable evolution of history, "Milton" does not daub whitewash on sepulchres in situ, but shows that the dominance of evil made manifest in the world through injustice and unreason throughout the course of history, whether the death of Abel or the failure of the English revolution, is the proof of God's justice both in the abstract and in his dealings with men.

If we acknowledge how through the poetic reductio ad absurdum Ariosto dismisses the pretensions of his profession to stand above time and place, we should also recognise how Milton counters Ariosto by affirming the epic's role as the image of truth and by defining the poet himself, not as the author of poetic lies, but as the speaker of eternal truths. Where Ariosto within the Orlando Furioso pretends that he basks in the applause of fellow courtiers and patrons, like Dante, Milton emphasises the dangers to his persona and his poem. Though a propagandist such as Milton inevitably thought in terms of the printing press (yet the poet himself was a partial recluse by the time of publication), the poem still rests on the literary fiction that it is being "sung".

Thus in the opening proem Milton terms Paradise Lost his "adventurous Song" [I.13]. When in book III Milton calls for the "Celestial light" to clear his sight "that I may see and tell | Of things invisible to mortal sight" [III.54-5], when in book VII he claims that "Half yet remains unsung" [VII.21], when in book IX he expresses his fears that an "age too late, or cold | Climat, or Years damp ~~by~~ intended wing" [IX.44-5], he sustains the deliberate fiction that the poet is

composing as he recites. Where the chivalric poets imagine a large courtly audience, Milton specifies a "fit audience... though few" [VII.31]. The oral dimension displaces the scene of the poem from the written page to the poet himself. The affinity of the poem to tragedy, whether through Milton's original intentions to write Paradise Lost as such, whether through the possible arrangement of the poem within a five-act tragic structure within the poem, permits Milton a role as chorus or prologue.

As in the Orlando Furioso and (at a remove) the Divina Commedia, the figure of the poet in Paradise Lost is a double persona. The first or inner persona might stand for Milton's creative and poetic imagination which, through a series of journeying or flight images, now plunges down into the depths of hell, now soars up towards heaven and now falls back to earth. The second or external persona is an exact opposite, logically so, since it is John Milton himself imprisoned in the darkness of his body, lying awake at night waiting for a dawn he will not see, the verses of his poem running through his mind, expressing himself through the antithesis of light opposed to darkness, blindness to sight.

The two opposite personae are united in an unemphatic manner in the first proem when Milton appeals to the spirit of creation to aid him in his poetic task: "what in me is dark | Illumin, what is low raise and support" [I.22-3]; but Milton's imagination has already called on the Muse to invoke "thy aid to my adventurous Song, | That with no middle flight intends to soar | Above th'Aonian mount, while it pursues | Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime" [I.13-6]. In the proem to book III Milton strengthens the use of flight and the

journeying motif by allusion to two mythic archtypes of the inspired poet: first Bellerophon's flight on Pegasus; second Orpheus' descent to the underworld to rescue Eurydice. The image of winged flight "Above th'Olympian Hill I soare, | Above the flight of Pegasean wing" [VII.3-4] is appropriate to Milton's poetic ambitions. In book I the act of poetic creation finds an analogue with the Spirit which "with mighty wings outspread | Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss" [I.20-1]; but here the flight of the poet has a more sinister twin in the dark wings of Satan. The poet and the Devil share the deliberate echo of the Virgilian descensus when Milton speaks of himself "Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down | The dark descent, and up to reascend, | Though hard and rare" [III.19-21]. Is Milton anticipating the complaint that his poem lacks any positive counterweight to the martial and adventurous Satanic virtues by opposing them with the imaginative poetic virtues epitomised by the figure of the poet?

The fulcrum of the poem, as it emerges in book III, is the poet's personal darkness wrapped in the external darkness of night; his is an immobile body, except for the eyes "that rowle in vain | To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn; | So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs, | Or dim suffusion veil'd" [III.23-6]. As in Ariosto and Dante this external persona is concerned with the poet's circumstances in writing the poem. The poem must answer his enemies, especially those who presume that blindness was a heaven-sent affliction for Milton's sins. He cites not mythic archetypes but "Those other two equal'd with me in Fate, |...| Blind Thamyris, and blind Maeonides, | And Tiresias and Phineus

prophets old" [III.33-6]. The movement from the darkness of Hell to the light of heaven in book III is sustained by a paradox within the poet himself, on the one hand blindness, night, physical constraints, the dangers of the city; on the other hand inner vision, light, freedom of imagination and the quasi-pastoral world of "Sion and the flowery brooks beneath" [III.30].

In book VII where the poet has to deal with earthly matters, he begins to show a lack of confidence in his mount and pleads for the Muse to help him down.

Up led by thee
 Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns I have presum'd
 An Earthlie Guest, and drawn Empyreal Aire,
 Thy tempring; with like safetie guided down
 Return me to my Native Element:
 Lest from this flying Steed unrein'd, (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower Clime)
 Dismounted, on th'Aleian field I fall
 Erroneous there to wander and forlorne. VII.12-20.

Milton's fears seem to arise from the fate of his archetype. According to Homer Bellerophon tried to ride to heaven, but was thrown when a gnat sent by Jupiter stung Pegasus who threw his rider onto the Aleian plain, where blinded by his fall Bellerophon wandered until his death.⁸ In the same proem the

⁸Homer, Iliad, VI.200-1; Natalis Comes, Mythologiae, Venice, 1567, p.271:

Sed Bellerophon, quale est ingenium plerisque
 mortalium, tanta rerum gestarum felicitate nimium
 elatus in coelem quoque ascendere super equo Pegaso
 voluit; quam arrogantiam Iuppiter omnis temeritatis
 grauissimus vindex deprimendum esse ratus, oestrum illi
 equo immisit, quare Bellerophon praeceps in terram
 deturbatur. Cum in Aleiam Ciliciae planitiem is
 cecidisset, caecusque factus fuisset: (*) at Pegasus
 nunc sublimis, nunc depressus per aëra volans, in
 coelum rediit in Iovis praesepe, quae stellae sunt ita
 vocatae.

(Footnote continued)

memory of Orpheus arouses Milton's terror that he might now meet Orpheus' death and dismemberment "In Rhodope, where Woods and Rocks had Eares | To rapture" [VII.35-6].⁹

In the prologue to book IX Milton concentrates on his choice of theme and its status as a higher form of epic, but he also expresses his personal sorrow that "I now must change | Those Notes to Tragic" [IX.5-6], just as Chaucer begins the fourth book of Troilus and Criseyde with his grief that he must tell how Criseyde forsook Troilus: "For which right now my herte gynneth blede, | And now my penne, alas! with which I write, | Quaketh for drede of that I most endite" [TC.IV.12-4]. But Milton does not blench at the impending tragedy. He finds comfort in the magnitude of the theme: "Sad task, yet argument | Not less, but more Heroic" [IX.13-4]. Like Dante Milton holds up his long labours over the poem: "Since first this Subject for Heroic song | Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late" [PL.IX.25-6] and declares his

⁸(continued)

M.Lascelles, The Rider on the Winged Horse in Notions and Facts, OUP 1972, pp.1-28:17, shows that at (*) a later editor of Comes, G.Linocier, Paris 1583, pp.955-6, inserted the phrase:

tamdiu erravit per illam planitiem, quamdiu vixit,
donec inedia denique fuit assumptus ac victus penuria,
cum nullam neque domum, neque hominem reperisset.

⁹J.M.Evans, The Road from Horton: Looking Backwards in Lycidas, English Literary Studies 28, University of Victoria (Canada) 1983, pp.36-44. Sandys, op.cit., p.387, notes the fate of Neanthes who "corrupted the priest", stole the lyre of Orpheus from the temple of Lesbos and:

supposing that the taming of wild beasts had beene inherent to the instrument...retired by night into the suburbs, and playing thereon, was torne in peeces by the dogs that gathered about him: imitating herein not his skill, but his destiny.

own unsuitability for the chivalric epic (one of the few points where other biographical details might contradict the image of the poet given in Paradise Lost).¹⁰

According to the precedents offered by the Aeneid, the Divina Commedia and the Italian Renaissance epics, the Vallombrosa simile ought to function as a bridge between the flames of hell at the beginning of time and seventeenth-century Europe. There may even be a conscious desire in Milton to emulate the contrast between the two Dantes, between the thirty-five year old character of the poem and the older poet writing the Divina Commedia in troubled circumstances, by conjuring up the image of two Miltons, the thirty-year old author of Lycidas on his Italian tour remembered by the blind poet of Paradise Lost. But does the idea of Milton taking a valley with a great Catholic abbey, albeit a <badia...cortese a chiunque venia>, as an image of the poet's integrity seem in character? In the second half of this chapter I showed that Milton might be imagining or manipulating the landscape of the Vallombrosa simile for some darker purpose. Let us look more carefully at the simile and its background.

The monastery of Santa Maria in Vallombrosa was founded in 1039 by San Giovanni Gualberto with a gift of land from the Abbess Itta di Sant'Ellero and by the middle of the seventeenth-century the "order of vallis umbrosa or the Monks of the Shadowy Valley"¹¹ comprised some forty monasteries and

¹⁰Mansus, ll.80-4; Epitaphium Damonis, ll.162-8.

¹¹Alexander Ross, MANÆBIA, Or, A View of all Religions in the World: With the severall Church-Governments, from the

approximately 280 monks, mainly in Tuscany, though numbers were considerably diminished by the plague of 1630. Villani mentions the early history of the order;¹² but in 1640 Diego de' Franchi published a life of San Giovanni Gualberto which described the history of the order and the site of the first monastery, previously known as Acquabella, as first seen by the saint.

Al lume di quella riuelatione vide l'ombrosa VALLE delineata nel proprio sito, con le dense boscaglie di Cerri, e di Faggi, e di oscuri Abeti; vide il fiume Vicano li à punto oue comincia à diuentar torrente; vide il Promontorio della Macinaia, che con li due alti Colli, l'uno da Settentrione, l'altro da Austro, forma quella Valle, volgendola verso Occidente; vide in essa sortir fonti, e scorrer riuoli, con sì ben regolata discretione, che nè l'aria, ne la terra vi restauano per la troppa humidità, o freddezza distemperate.¹³

The same work speculates that the name is an allusion to the:

¹¹(continued)

Creation, to these times, 3rd ed., London, John Saywell 1658, p.283. Ross incorrectly gives the date of foundation as 1060. See Ferdinando Ughelli, Italia Sacra sive De Episcopis Italiae Et Insularum adiacentium, Rebusque Ab Iis Praeclare Gestis deducta serie ad nostram usque aetatem, Rome, Apud Bernadinum Tanum 1647, vol.III, coll.298-302.

¹²G.Villani, Croniche, IV.16, tells how San Giovanni Gualberto entered the Abbey of San Miniato al Monte:

ma poi trovando chel detto abate di santo Miniato non era huomo di santo, et honesto stato come si richiede ad abate, si traslato di quel luogo et diuenne quasi heremita nelle alpi di ualembrosa...et fu il primo hedificatore della badia, et religione dell'ordine di valembrosa, onde molte grandi & ricche badie sono discese in Toscana.

¹³Diego de'Franchi, Historia del Patriarcha S.Giovanni Gualberto Primo Abbate & Institutore del Monastico Ordine di Vallombrosa, Florence, Appresso Gio. Battista Landini 1640, p.78. The author signs himself Abbate di Ripoli del medesimo Ordine and the preface is dated 18.IV.1638; cf. Appendix 1.

novissimo luogo, che nel Mondo ha con tal vocabolo di Valle da esser per vltimo chiamato, cioe la Valle di Iosaphat.¹⁴

Nevertheless in Paradise Lost the juxtaposition is unexpected between the beautiful valley and the scene in hell where in Milton's words: "Satan with his angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded".¹⁵

 he stood and call'd
His Legions, Angel Forms, who lay intrans't
Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strew the Brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th'Etrurian shades
High overarch't imbowr; or scatterd sedge
Afloat, when with fierce Winds Orion arm'd
Hath vext the Red-Sea Coast, whose waves orethrew
Busiris and his Memphian Chivalry
While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore thir floating Carkases
And broken Chariot Wheels, so thick bestrown
Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood
Under amazement of thir hideous change. I.300-13.

The structure of the simile is double: first the leaves floating on the brooks in Vallombrosa; second the weed floating on the Red sea like the wreckage of Pharaoh's army seen floating on the same waters by the Israelites.¹⁶

¹⁴Diego de'Franchi, op.cit., p.97: <Come nel nome di Ombroso contemplarono il simbolico significato dell'oscuro, e del fosco; il qual denota dolore, e perseueranza> (a marginal gloss refers to GL.XVIII.29). Citing Xanthes da Perugia the same work also notes a dispute about the origin of the name:

Ab imbribus, quos vallis gignit, sunt qui umbrosam dicant. Mihi magis placent, qui ab vmbra vmbrosam dictam volunt.

¹⁵Milton, Paradise Lost, Introduction to I.

¹⁶The following works discuss the Vallombrosa simile: Newton, vol.1, pp.34-6; Todd, vol.II, pp.49-51; C.M.Bowra, From Virgil to Milton, pp.240-1; J.M.Steadman, The Devil and the
(Footnote continued)

Ostensibly the simile is a digressio in the Homeric manner; but biblically it recalls Isaiah's prophecy:

And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved...and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.¹⁷

In the Iliad the Greek army is as numerous as the <φύλλα καὶ ἄνθεα γίγνεται ὥρη> [Il.II.468] and a few lines later is described again as <λίην γὰρ φύλλοισιν ἑοικότες ἢ ψαράθοισιν> [Il.II.800].¹⁸ Another famous Homeric passage sometimes called into question is Sarpedon's comparison of the <φύλλων γενεή> to the <ἀνδρῶν γενεή>.¹⁹ Further examples of what J.C.Scaliger termed the frondium casus are virtually innumerable in their own right.²⁰

In the Baccylides Hercules sees the souls of the dead

¹⁶(continued)

Pharaoh's Cavalry, Modern Language Notes, LXXV, 1960, pp.197-201; C.Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, OUP 1963, pp.123-4; I.G.MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as "Myth", Harvard University Press 1967, pp.124-6; A.D.Ferry, Milton's Epic Voice, pp.74-8; S.Baldi, op.cit.; C.Grose, Milton's Epic Progress, pp.163-5; H.Bloom, A Map of Misreading, New York - OUP 1975, pp.130-8; J.P.Holoka, "Thick as Autumnal Leaves", Milton Quarterly, X, 1976, pp.78-83; C.Schaar, The Full Voice'd Quire Below, Lund 1982, p.58.

A.V. Isaiah 34.4. Saint Jerome, Migne, Patrologia Latina, XXIV, coll.370-1, explains the verse as an allusion to the fate of the wicked angels on Judgement day:

et tabescat omnis militia vel fortitudo coelorum...in similitudinem foliorum, quae appropinquante frigore, aurentia atque contract de vinea et ficus defluunt.

In the Pindarique Ode...on the 34 Chapter of the Prophet Isaiah Cowley translates the verse: "Thick as ripe Fruit or yellow Leaves in Autumn fall"; cf. J.M.Steadman, The Devil and the Pharoah's Chivalry, p.199.

¹⁸Cited by Hume, Annotations, I.302. Hibernicus, Notes and Queries, 184, 1943, p.85, indicates Chapman's translation: "in number like Autumnus' leaves" and adds Heywood, The Brazen Age, I, "Thy tough hide | Tan into rags as thick as autumnal leaves".

¹⁹Homer, Iliad, VI.146-9, cited in Carey-Fowler, p.480; cf. Horace, Ars Poetica, ll.60-3: <Ut silvae foliis pronos
(Footnote continued)

<παρὰ κωκυτοῦ ῥεέθροισι, | οἷά τε φύλλ' ἄνεμος | ἴδας ἀνὰ
 μηλοβότους | πρῶνας ἀργησιᾶς δονεῖ>. ²¹ In the Argonautica the
 Colchians are as numerous as the waves of the sea or as the:
 < φύλλα χαμάζε περικλαδέος πέσεν ὕλης | φυλλοχόψ ἐνὶ μηνί >. ²²
 But Milton's primary source has always been recognised as the
 sixth book of the Aeneid, where the hero and the Sibyll see
 the souls of the dead standing on the banks of the Acheron
 waiting to cross in Charon's boat.

Quam multa in silvis autumni frigore primo
 lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto
 quam multae glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus
 trans pontum fugat et terris immittit apricis.

VI.309. 23

Unlike the true Homeric long-tailed simile Virgil's simile
 relates to its subject at several levels, especially in the
 image of the flocks of birds. Though it might be modelled on
 an Homeric simile comparing the advance of an army to the
 cranes flying south to wage war on the pygmies, Virgil
 substitutes the ordered V-shaped rows with the swirling masses
 (finely conveyed by the verb glomerantur) of small migrants
 who use the Italian peninsula as a route to warmer climes.

¹⁹ (continued)

mutantur in annos, | Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit
 aetas, | et iuvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque> (cited
 by Baldi, p.225).

²⁰ Julius Caesar Scaliger, Poetices libri septem, 2nd ed.,
 Heidelberg, Apud Petrum Santandream 1581, V.xiii, p.711.

²¹ Bacchylides, Poems and Fragments, ed. Sir R.C.Jebb,
 Cambridge U.P. 1905, V.63-7 (cited in Bowra, p.290).

²² Apollonius Rhodius, Argonautica, ed.H.Fränkel, OUP 1961,
 IV.214-7.

²³ Cited in Hume, I.302, and Newton, vol.1, p.34; cf. B.Otis,
op.cit., pp.410-2; Virgil, Aeneidos Liber Sextus,
 ed.R.G.Austin, pp.130-1.

The longing of the birds to cross the sea emulates the desire of the dead souls who hold out their hands <ripae ulterioris amore> [VI.314]. On the one hand the presence of the Virgilian hero on the banks of an infernal river and the appearance of the fallen archangel on the shores of a lake of infernal fire makes the Milton simile a self-declared aemulatio, on the other hand, where Virgil and other authors describe the leaves falling, Milton's leaves are already fallen.

The multiple correspondences between the the state of Milton's fallen angels and the leaves in Vallombrosa were noted by the earliest critics of Paradise Lost, such as Falconer, who observed that:

the falling of a Shower of Leaves from the Trees, in a Storm of Wind, very well represents the Dejection of the Angels from their former Celestial Mansions; and their faded Splendor wan, is finely expressed by the paleness and witheredness of the Leaves.²⁴

The arches of the trees recall the vault of Hell, while the characteristic Miltonic metonymy of shades for trees hints at the "darkness visible".

Between Virgil and Milton there were many other retractiones of the frondium casus, sometimes with a specific place name. In the Oedipus, Seneca describes the innumerable dead: <non tot caducas educat frondes Erix | nec vere flores Hybla tot medio creat>.²⁵ In Tamburlaine the Great Marlowe makes the king's army "in number more than are the quivering

²⁴C.Falconer, Essay upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients, 1741, p.23 (cited in Newton and Ricks, p.123-4).

²⁵Seneca, Oedipus, 11.600-1 (cited in Baldi, p.222).

leaves | Of Ida's forest".²⁶

In the De raptu Proserpinae Claudian also imitates Virgil in comparing the leaves to the numberless dead:

Conveniunt animae: quantas violentior Auster
Decutit arboribus frondes, aut nubibus imbres
Colligit, aut frangit fluctus, aut torquet arenas.²⁷

In the Inferno Dante compares the spirits of the damned being called into Charon's boat to leaves in autumn falling one by one from a tree:

Come d'autunno si levan le foglie
L'una apresso dell'altra, fin che'l ramo
Vede a terra tutte le sue spoglie. III.112.²⁸

In the Gerusalemme Liberata Tasso reproduces the Virgilian simile (after reversing the order of the two halves), but applies it to the hordes of demons driven back to hell from the battle before Jerusalem by the archangel Michael:

Non passa il mar d'augei sì grande stuolo
Quando a i soli più tiepidi s'accoglie,
Nè tante vede mai l'autunno al suolo
Cader coi primi freddi aride foglie. IX.66.²⁹

²⁶C.Marlowe, Tamburlaine, ed.J.S.Cunningham, "The Revels Plays", Manchester University Press 1973, part II, III.v.3 (cited in Bowra, p.290); cf. part I, IV.i.30-2: ..could their numbers countervail the stars, Or ever-drizzling drops of April showers, | Or withered leaves that Autumn shaketh down".

²⁷Claudian, De Raptu Proserpinae in Works, ed.M.Platnauer, Heinemann, Loeb Classical Library 1922, vol.2, II.308-10 (cited with Virgil by J.C.Scaliger as an example as the frondium casus).

²⁸Cited in Todd, vol.2, p.50.

²⁹Cited in Todd, vol.2, pp.49-50. Fairfax translates:
The birds that follow Titans hottest ray,
Passe not by so great flocks to warmer costes,
(Footnote continued)

The other Italian chivalric epics abound in comparisons of huge armies, in the main Saracen hordes, to autumnal leaves, especially in defeat. In the original text of the Orlando Innamorato the slaughter wrought by Rodamonte on the beach at Monte Carlo shows Boiardo being influenced by Dante:

Come al decembre il vento che s'invoglia,
Quando comincia prima la freddura:
L'arbor sfronda e non vi riman foglia;
Così van spessi e morti a la pianura.

II.vii.17.

This is the only example with the same point of comparison as Milton (note that spesso is a precise equivalent of thick);³⁰ but in Berni (imitated also by the Bonelli rafazzonamento) this becomes:

Come il Dicembre il vento, che si annoia
La terra, e agli anima' to' la pastura,
Cascan le foglie, e par che'l mondo muoia,
Cosi cascano i morti alla pianura.

II.vii.22.³¹

In the Orlando Furioso the African hordes which pour into the

²⁹(continued)

Nor leaues by so great numbers fall away,
When winter nips them with his new-come frostes.

³⁰John Florio, Queen Anna's New World of Words Or Dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues, London, Melch. Bradwood, for Edw. Blout & William Barrett 1621 (facs. Scholar Press, 1968), p.192, "Folta, thick, spisse, darke, foggie, mistie, duskie, gloomie, pitchie"; p.522, "spesso, spisse, thicke, massive, firme and hard".

³¹Compare Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, II.xi.52:

Ma tante foglie non lascia una pioppa
Là nel novembre, quando soffia il vento
Quanti ènno e cavallier.

xvi.8: Quel popolaccio tremando se crola
Come una legier foglia al vento fresco.

xvii.47: Or la battaglia è ben stretta e ricolta,
Né abatte il vento sì spesso le fronde,
Né sì spessa la neve o pioggia cade,
Come son spessi e colpi de le spade.

xxx.50: Pur la gente minuta e la gran folta
Com'una foglia ad ogni vento volta.

battle around Paris are such <Che meglio conterei ciascuna foglia, | Quando l'autunno gli arbori ne spoglia> [XVI.75], while wicked old Gabrina was in her youth more fickle than a:

..foglia
Quando l'autunno è più priva d'umore,
Che'l freddo vento gli arbori ne spoglia,
E le soffia dinanzi al suo furore. XXI.15³²

In the Faerie Queene the enemies of temperance are felled by Spumador "As withered leaves drop from their tired stockes, | When the wroth Western wind doth reave their locks" [EQ.II.xi.19].

In Luigi Alamanni's Avarchide Heretto sweeps the enemy before him as the North wind does the autumn leaves.

Segue oltre Heretto, e qual l'aride fronde,
Poi che il calor estivo già vien meno,
Nel tardo Autunno, d'Aquilone al fiato,
Caggion, nudo lasciando il tronco amato:
Tal da colpi di lui cader si vede ³³
Gente infinita poi di sangue oscura.

In the Italia Liberata dai Goti the army of the Goths is as numerous as the leaves of oak or beech trees covering the ground when autumn gives way to winter.

E come suole ombrosa, e folta selva
Di faggi, o d'olmi, o di robuste quercie;
Quando l'autunno vuol dar luogo al verno,
Coprir di frondi tutto quanto il suolo,³⁴
Tal che non può vedersi erba, nè terra.

³²XVI.75 is cited by Todd, not in Harington, who translates XXI.15 (13): "She more light than leaves in Autumne season, | That ev'ry blast doth blow about and change"; cf. QE.XXI.85; XXXII.47.

³³Luigi Alamanni, L'Avarchide, Florence, Giunti 1570, V.13.

³⁴G.G.Trissino, L'Italia liberata dai Goti, X, p.106, col.b; XVIII, p.181, col.b; cf. XXVI, p.283, col.b: <vedendo quei

Later the slaughter inflicted by Turrismo on the same army is like the North wind blasting the leaves from the trees.

E come quando soffia in una selva
D'olmi, o di quercia de l'autunno
Il feroce Aquilon, ch'allor s'inaspra,
Che la bella Arianna esce de l'onde,
Manda per terra le mature foglie,
Così mandava Turrismo a terra
Gli uomini spessi giù de i lor cavalli.

The way the warriors of supreme prowess in the chivalric epics sweep away the ordinary rank and file could well serve as a reminder of the futile resistance offered by the bad angels to the Messiah who drove them from heaven.

Since some examples show the leaves simile being applied to a remote literary landscape (Mount Ida or Mount Erix),³⁵ Milton's choice is at first sight triumphantly both literary

³⁴(continued)

monti esser coperti | D'uomini armati, e spessi come foglie>.
See also Girolamo Graziani, La Conquista di Granata, II.58:
<Tante giamai da le silvestre piante | Non caggiono l'Autunno
aride fronde>; XXV.48:

Potria dir quante Arene Afric'aduna,
Quante foglie de l'Alpi han le foresti
Chi potesse narrar quanti...
Per man del Saracin caddero morti.

G.D.Peri, Fiesole Distrutta, VIII.84:

Chi prendesse a narrar quanti per terra
Caggiono estinti cavalieri, e fanti,
Far novero potria di quanti atterra
Fronde Aquilon da i boscherecci monti.

³⁵Trissino inserts Italian place-names into his reworkings of Homeric similes, VII, p.71, col.b: <com'un alta pioppa...lungo la Brenta>; XIII, p.136, col.b: <E come nel principio di Vall'arsa, | Intra Campo silvano, e Campo grosso, | Talor si vede un numero di faggi>; XV.p.153, col.b: <parve nel cadere un'alta pioppa...nutrita su la riva d'Arno>.

and experiential, drawing on the one hand on a literary landscape already cited in Ariosto, on the other appearing to be a deliberate reminiscence of the poet's Italian journey nearly thirty years previously. However, as Milton's early commentators observe,³⁶ the very choice of a name meaning the "Shady Vale" puns on the desperate situation of Satan's followers and establishes a curious ambiguity between Hell and the pleasant valley south-east of Florence.

By what cannot be coincidence Milton comments in the catalogue of the infernal deities on another such beautiful valley transformed into a "type of hell" by Moloch who made "his Grove | The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence | And black Gehenna called" [PL.I.403-5]. In strict terms Milton's confusion of Tophet and Gehenna is inaccurate since the former marked the high altars (excelsa) of Moloch and Baal which stood in the Valley of Hinnom or Valley of the Sons of Hinnom, <quae est ad ostium portae orientalis>.³⁷ The name

³⁶Patrick Hume, Annotations on Milton's Paradise Lost, p.19:

It[alian]. In the Shady Vale. Valombrosa is a famous Valley in Tuscany, so named of Vallis and Vmbra Shade, remarkable for the continued cool Shades, which the vast number of Trees that overspread it, afford. The name Vallombrosa does perhaps suggest a chivalric landscape, i.e. OI.II.ix.4 valloni ombrosi; OE.VII.32, GL.XVI.9 ombrose valli.

³⁷OT = Testamenti Veteris Biblia sacra, sive libri canonici...latini facti...Editio septima...repurgata & emendata; NT = D.N.Jesu Christi Testamentum Novum, sive Fedus Novum, E Graeco archetypo, Latino sermone redditum, Theodoro Beza interprete, & iam ultimo ab eo recognitum. Cui ex adverso additur ejusdem novi Testamenti ex vetustissima tralatione Syra, Latina translatio Immanuelis Tremellii conjuncta notis ad linguae & rerum intelligentiam. Quam Franciscus Junius recensuit, auxit, illustravitque, Hannover, Typis Wecheliani, Sumptibus Danielis ac Davidis Aubriorum & Clementis Schleichii 1623 (hereafter indicated as Junius-Tremellius), Jeremiah 19.2, the gate of Harsith or "potsherds" was mistranslated as "the east gate" (A.V.) up to the last century.

Gehenna probably derives from the use of the same valley in New Testament times as Jerusalem's rubbish tip where fires were kept burning to destroy the refuse.³⁸ According to the book of Jeremiah in Old Testament times the worshippers of Moloch built their <excelsa Thophethi, quod est in valle filii Hinnomi, ad comburendum filios suos & filias suas igne>.³⁹ The book of Chronicles tells how Ahaz built sacrificial fires in the valley of Hinnom: <arsi filios suos igne secundum abominationes gentium quas expulerat Jehova a facie Jisraelitarum>.⁴⁰ Such practices continued until the evil "Grove | Of Moloch homicide" was cut down and destroyed by Josiah:

polluit etiam Thophethum quod est in valle filiorum Hinnomi: ne traduceret quisquam filium suum aut filiam suam per ignem Moletto.⁴¹

³⁸ D. Petrus in Novi Testamenti Libri Historii, Graec. & Lat. Perpetuo Commentario ex antiquitate, Historiis, Philologia, Illustrati, Quem praeter venerabilis Bezae, undique conquistae doctiss. virorum lucubrationes, ac prae caeteris insigniores explicationes suppeditarunt, Adornate Balduino Walaeo, Lugduni Batavorum, Ex Officina & Typographia Adriani Wyngaerden 1653, p.47, cites Rabbi David Kimhi's commentary on Ps.27 for the view that:

in vallem Hinnonis Hierosolymis projecta fuisse haec insepulta cadavera: deinde; ubi cadavera putrissent, ossa illorum fuisse igne combusta, qui huic fini perpetuo ardebat in hac valle. Unde abhoc igne perpetuo vallis Hinnomi factum putamus, ut "Gehenna" dicatur infernus in quo perpetuus est ignis, non vero, ut volunt eruditi, a Topheth illius vallis, ubi Molocho pueros comburebant.

See C. Warren, Hinnom in Dictionary of the Bible, ed. J. Hastings, 8th impr., Edinburgh, T.&T. Clark 1910 (hereafter Hastings), vol. II, pp. 385-8; S. D. F. Salmond, Tophet in Hastings, vol. IV, pp. 797-9. Modern authorities agree that the valley of Hinnom was the modern Wadi er-Rababi which curves around the southern side of Jerusalem to meet the valley of Kidron and the Wadi en-Nar. Tophet must have stood

(Footnote continued)

Where Saint Jerome derives the name Tophet from a Hebrew word meaning latitudo,⁴² thus a place where the valley widened, later authorities preferred a less prosaic source from toph or drum, which according to their understanding of the ceremonial referred to the drums, cymbals and other instruments which were beaten when children were placed in the arms of a huge bronze idol, representing Moloch with a bull's head and a man's body, in order to drown the screams as the fires burning around the monster cremated the victim alive.⁴³ Thomas Fuller offers a graphic description of the idol and the rites performed in its honour.

A monstrous Idol. Nothing came amiss to him, having Stowage enough to receive whatever was offered unto him. It was a hollow image of brass, having seven repositories therein; one for Meal, a second for turtles, a third for a Sheep, a fourth for a Ram, the fifth for a Calfe (like to which was the head thereof), the sixth for an Oxe, the seventh for a Child, which if first embraced in it armes, and then (Hags hugs kill with kindness) seared to death, having fire made under the concavity thereof.⁴⁴

³⁸(continued)

near the junction of the three valleys and tradition points to the slopes beneath Aceldelma or the field of Blood.

³⁹Junius-Tremellius, Jeremiah 7.31.

⁴⁰Junius-Tremellius, II Chronicles 28.3, cf.4: <Et sacrificabat studiose, adolebatque in excelsis, & in collibus, & sub omni arbore virente>.

⁴¹Junius-Tremellius, II.Kings 23.10.

⁴²Saint Jerome, Commentariorum in Jeremiam Prophetam in Migne, Patrologia Latina, XXIV, p.735; cf. Junius-Tremellius, Isaiah 30.33, Jeremiah 7.32.

⁴³Thomas Fuller, A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine and the Confines Thereof, With the History of the Old and New Testament acted thereon, London, J.F. for John Williams at the signe of the Crown in Pauls Churchyard 1650, IV.vii-34, p.133. The interpretation of toph or "drum" is rabbinical in origin (Rashi and D.Kimhi) and was widely popularised by Paulus Fagius, but is rejected by modern scholars, see Hastings, vol.IV, p.799.

In the Pisgah-Sight a map of <Ierusalem qualis...exstitit aetate Solomonis> shows the <vallis Benhinnom sive Tophet> east of the city and south of the mount of Olives. In the same volume a Pantheon sive Idola Iudeorum shows Moloch on the right as a crowned minotaur grasping a struggling child with flames licking around the base, in the centre the weeping parents and on the left a crowd beating drums and blowing trumpets.⁴⁵ This is the image of Moloch Milton has in mind when he speaks of:

Moloch, horrid King besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents tears,
Though for the noyse of Drums and Tymbrels loud
Thir childrens cries unheard, that past through fire
To his grim Idol. I.392-6.

In the Commentariorum in Evangelium Matthaei Saint Jerome had contrasted the locus amoenus with the abominable rites performed there:

Haec vallis et parvi campi planities, irrigua erat et nemorosa, plenaque deliciis, et lucus in ea idolo consecratus. In tantam autem dementiam populus Israel venerat, ut deserta templi vicinia ibi hostias immolaret, et rigorem religionis deliciae vincerent, filiosque suos daemoniis incenderent vel initiarent.⁴⁶

In the Commentariorum in Jeremiam Prophetam the Saint repeated

⁴⁴ Fuller, op.cit., p.133; cf. J. Selden, De Diis Syriis: Syntagmata II, Amsterdam, Apud Lucam Bisterum 1680, pp.98-9.

⁴⁵ Fuller, op.cit., pp.[120-1].

⁴⁶ Saint Jerome, Commentariorum in Evangelium Matthaei I, 10.28, in Migne, Patrologia Latina, XXVI.66; cf. Henry Greenwood, Tormenting Tophet. Or a Terrible description of Hell. Able to breake the hardest heart, and cause it quake and tremble, London, I.H. for Henry Bell 1628, pp.6-8;

this judgement, and suggested that the very beauty of the place was the cause of the evil since the pleasant valley:

quod subjaceat Siloe fontibus, et amoenitate sui, quia locus irriguus est, populum provocaverit ad luxuriam, quam idolorum cultus sequitur.⁴⁷

The Junius-Tremellius bible remarks that rather than throw both sexes into Moloch's pyres, only the male-children were sacrificed, while the females were prostituted.⁴⁸ Milton comments that Chemos his "lustful Orgies...enlarg'd | Even to that Hill of scandal, by the Grove | Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate" [PL.I.415-7]. Following Saint Jerome Erasmus describes Tophet as a <locus delitiarum...qui prius alliciebat amoenitate, postea factus est abominandus>.⁴⁹ Contemporary travellers to Jerusalem such as Sandys who visited the Old Testament sites give their own description of the valley of Gehinnon and the rites performed there.

From hence we descended into the valley of Gehinnon, which divideth Mount Sion from the mountain of Offence; so called, for that Solomon by the perswasion of his wives here sacrificed to Chamoch, and Molech; but now by these Christians called, The mountain of Ill counsell; where they say, the Pharises took counsell against Jesus: whose height yet shewes the reliques of

⁴⁶(continued)

G.W.Whiting, Notes and Queries, 192, 1947, pp.225-30.

⁴⁷Saint Jerome, Commentariorum in Jeremiam Prophetam, 7.31.

⁴⁸Junius-Tremellius, Leviticus 18.21, note: <in huius honorem (Moloch) parentes igne filios suos transmittabant...& prostituebant filias>.

⁴⁹Desiderius Erasmus, In Novum Testamentum Annotationes. Ab Ipso Autore iam postremum sic recognitae ac locupletatae, ut propemodum novum opus videri possit, Basle, In officina Frobeniana 1542, p.53; T.Fuller, op.cit., p.349:

There the citizens of Jerusalem, pent within the walls of their City, used to dilate, expatiate, and recreate their spirits in the walks thereof. Pity it was that so pleasant a place should afterwards be poisoned with Idolatry, where children were offered to Moloch.

no meane buildings. This valley is but streight, now seruing for little vse; heretofore most delightfull, planted with groves, and watered with fountaines: wherein the Hebrews sacrificed their children to Molech: an Idoll of brasse, hauing the head of a Calfe, the rest of a kingly figure, with armes extended to receiue the miserable sacrifice, seared to death with his burning embracements. For the Idoll was hollow within, and filled with fire. And lest their lamentable shreeks should sad the hearts of their Parents, the Priests of Molech did deafe their ears with the continuall clangs of trumpets and timbrels; whereupon it was called the valley of Tophet. But the good Iosias brake the Idoll in pieces, hewed down the Groves, and ordained that that place (before a Paradise) should be for euer a receptacle for dead carkasses and the filth of the city. Gehenna, for the impiety committed therein, is vsed for hell by our Saviour.⁵⁰

Can Milton wish us to acknowledge the ambiguity between one beautiful valley near Florence with its great Catholic monastery and the equally lovely valley south and east of Jerusalem which was desecrated by the abominable rites of Moloch? The transition from the leafy Tuscan valley to the fires of Milton's Hell anticipates the mention in the catalogue of the infernal deities first of the fires of sacrifice to Moloch, second the destruction of Moloch's grove by Iosiah and the valley's consequent use as a fiery rubbish-dump that becomes the New Testament type of Hell.

⁵⁰ G. Sandys, A Relation of a Journey begun An: Dom: 1610. Foure Bookes. Containing a description of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote parts of Italy, and Ilands adioyning, 2nd ed., London, W. Barrett 1621, p.186. The description shows that Sandys was treating the Wadi er-Rababi as the valley of Hinnom, which does lie between the Coenaculum and the Hill of Evil Counsel (Jebel Deir Abu Tor, 2549 feet) directly S. of the city, though he mistakenly identifies this peak with the separate Mountain of Offence, which is usually the title applied to the lower peak of the Mount of Olives, Jebel Baten el Hawa (2411 feet); cf. Franciscus Quaresimus, Historica Theologica et Moralis Terrae Sanctae Elucidatio, Antwerp, Ex Officina Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti 1639, vol.II, book iv, ch.xvii, pp.274-6.

Tophet is also described by Purchas;⁵¹ but the most suggestive English account appears in Raleigh's Historie of the World where the Elizabethian courtier describes the idol of Moloch as a:

man-like brazen body, bearing the head of a Calfe, set up not far from Jerusalem, in a Valley shadowed with woods called Gehinnon, or Tophet.⁵²

What Milton may also remember, if he ever visited the valley, was that the Abbey of Santa Maria di Vallombrosa underwent extensive rebuilding between 1637 and 1645 which added the present west facade and radically changed the whole appearance of the monastery. Could this private detail have occurred to the English poet when he came to describe the construction of Pandaemonium?⁵³ Equally the application of Milton's simile to

⁵¹Samuel Purchas, His Pilgrimage Or Relations Of the World And the Reliqons Observed in all Ages and places Discovered, from the Creation unto this Present, 4th ed., London, William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, and are to be sold at his Shop in Pauls Churchyard, at the signe of the Rose 1626, p.86:

There was a valley neere Hierusalem (sometime possessed by the son of Hinnom) where the Hebrewes built a notorious high place to Moloch: it was on the East and South part of the Citie. It was also called Topheth, or Tymbrell, of that Tymbrell-rite, which those Corribantes and bloodie Priests did use; or else for the spaciousnesse of it....Upon the pollution hereof, by slaughter and burials, it grew so execrable, that Hell inherited the same name, called Gehenna, of this place: first, of the lownesse, being a Valley: secondly, for the Fire, which heere the children, there the wicked, sustaine: thirdly because all the filth was cast out of the Citie hither, it seemed they held some resemblance.

⁵²Sir Walter Raleigh, The Historie of the World, London, Walter Burre 1614, vol.I,ii, ch.23-7, p.494; cf. G.W.Whiting, Milton's Literary Milieu, New York, Russell & Russell 1964,

numberless and defeated hordes might remind us that, just as the neighbouring valley of Jehosaphat will be the place of God's judgement, so according to Jeremiah the valley of Hinnom is the place of his vengeance:

Idcirco ecce dies venturi sunt, dictum Jehovae, quum non dicetur amplius Thopheth, & vallis filii Hinnomi, sed vallis interfectionis: nam ita sepeliverunt in Thopetho, ut nullus supersit locus.⁵⁴

When Milton compares Satan lying in the burning lake to Leviathan which the "Pilot of some small night-founder'd Skiff" [PL.I.204] mistakes for an island and takes shelter "under the Lee, while Night | Invests the Sea, and wished Morn delayes" [I.207-8], he effectively warns us to beware of false inviting appearances. So a seemingly innocent simile which at first sight seems merely to be a pleasant memory of the poet's journey through Italy proves to be a veiled allusion to the abominanda of Moloch.

So far we have seen how in his two 'Florentine' similes Milton reverses the practice of his epic models. The two similes which appear as pleasant reminiscences possess sinister and contrary meanings. Part IV of this chapter will show how the two similes in conjunction balance these sinister meanings with a deeper redemptive image.

⁵²(continued)
p.201.

⁵³G.Morozzi, Il Restauro dell'Abbazia in L'Abbazia di Vallombrosa nel pensiero contemporaneo, pp.161-6; see app. 2.

⁵⁴Junius-Tremellius, Jeremiah 7.32.

CHAPTER 3. PART III. Appendix 1.

Description of Vallombrosa in Thaddeo Adimari, Vita di sam Giovâni qualberto glorioso cōfessore & instituroe del ordine di valembrosa, Venice, Lucantonio di Giunta fiorentino, 6.III.1510, f8.

Sono alcuni chi voglon dire, questa valle chiamarsi imbroza: ab imbribus: cioè dalle pluue: lequali quella per essere profunda, & di natura opaca & aquosa spesso genera. Ma ad me piace molto più el parere di coloro, che dal umbra la chiamono ualle umbrosa. Però che questa ualle è sita nel alpe xviii migla lontana dalla cipta di Firenze: molto alta: ornata di uarie spetie de arbori: sotto uno promontorio da Paesani chiamato la Macinaia: infra el casentino & il valdarno: & uoltando uerso el ponente, e posta fra due alti, precipiti, & prorupti colli: nè molto si leua in altezza: & doue quella ualle comincia: è uno monticello de uno uasto & altissimo saxo: che dalla parte sua de leuante con uno tracto strectissimo, congiunge col monte di sopra: da omni altra banda sino al suo fondo, molto precipite per sua natura: come se per humano artificio fussi ordinato: con uno solo adito difficillimo per ascendere alla sua sommità. In su la quale hogi è una chiesa molto deuota, & alcune collette humile & basse: per lequali si adomanda, el masso delle celle. Et apresso di quelle per industria humana corre uno riuo de aqua clarissima: habitano in epse celle alchuni monaci, prima nel monasterio circa la vita regolare lungo tempo exercitati & approbati: equali laudando dio seguano uita più arta & austerà, che li monaci claustrali. Alle radice di questo masso surgono molte commode fontane, lequali hanno ad quel loco dato nome: Aqua bella: benchè tutta la ualle come è decto si chiami ualembrosa. Intorno a questo loco corrono riui di continue aque che per la loro crudità e per cadere precipite & per luoghi saxosi, non generano alcuna specie di pescie. El quale circondato da una frequente selua di molti & grandissimi abeti, piantati da monaci in quella uasta solitudine, accrescie la deuotione del loco: & maxime per la uarietà di più ameni prati residenti nella planitie d'epsa ualle, & interposti fra le selue delli abeti & monasterio. Oltre a di questo un bosco folto di cerri, faggi, & uarie specie d'arbori, cinge e cuopre tutti questi luoghi, & generano non piccolo horrore ad quelli che ui entrano: per la sua asperità, & ispedite uie, & loco solo habitato da fere. Da questa ualle si muouono monticelli difficili, con molti pricipitii & cauerne: e quali conducono giù a luoghi più domestici pel culto humano: & quelli che sono più uicini, sono distanti dua o tre milia: londe li monaci o loro ministri portano el uicto necessario, o donato lor da lauoratori, o riceuto dalle loro possessioni.

This description is cited in De Franchi and is also the basis of Stefano della Bella's illustration showing how Vallombrosa might have appeared in the years of its foundation, see Chapter 3, part I, Illustration 1, p. ~~62~~248.

CHAPTER 3, PART III, Appendix 2.

Extracts from Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mss. Conventi Soppressi 260, n.142. This is a Libro di Ricordanze kept by the monks of Vallombrosa which affords an insight into the life of the Abbey during the years of Milton's visit.

Title:

Incomincia il nuovo libro chiamato Ricordanze [del] Monasterio di Vallombrosa di carte 200. Principiato l'Anno 1632, al tempo del Reverendissimo Padre don Averardo Niccolini da Firenze il 3^o Anno che egli era Abate di questo Sacro Monasterio di Vallombrosa; e del Molto R.P. don Valentino Baldovini da Firenze Camarlingo, quali il Signore conservi inoffeso de ogni ingiuria del tempo per il buon servizio di questo Monasterio.

1634, f.13r: Memoriale per la licenza della nuova fabbrica:

The memorial requests the beneplacito for the new scheme from the Padri Visitatori.

La fabbrica del Noviziato del Monasterio di Vallombrosa è intanto male stato che da ogni parte minaccia precipitosa rovina, atteso che sia già un tempo che vien retta, e sostenuta da tre puntelli di legno d'Abeto, e le muraglie continuamente vannosi aprendo molto più da tutte le bande; che come accade la rovina, è un danno irremediabile, ed una perdita irreparabile; da che non solo cade la fabbrica del Noviziato, ma necessariamente va già quell'ancora della Sagrestia, sopra laquale posa ed è fabbricata tutta la macchina del medesimo Noviziato. Onde avanti ne succeda la soprastevole rovina, per non mancare al debito di lor medesimi l'Abbate, e Monaci di Vallombrosa hanno da firenze fatto venire e chiamato il Sig. Gherardo Silvani Architetto perito e molto intelligente, e pratico in far fabbriche, quale veduto e considerato con esquisita diligenza la medesima fabbrica del Noviziato, et insieme tutto il sito, e circuito del Monasterio ha giudicato sia spediante, e necessario, mediante il pericolo che s'incontra con la dilazione, metterci quanto prima riparo, e rimedio con buttar giù il vecchio acciò non cada inaspettatamente; e fabbricarne uno di pianta secondo il modello che egli ha posto in buon disegno, quale è stato molto ben visto e considerato da questi Padri, a da molte altre persone intelligenti, e della professione et a tutti piace, e da piena soddisfazione.

Asks for approval to begin works.

f.14v: The works begin.

Ricordo come questo dì 11 Aprile 1634 si dette principio alli fondamenti della nuova fabbrica dalla

parte dinanzi per seguitare la facciata del monasterio avanti la porta et innanzi si trovassi il sodo bisognò andar adentro da dodici o 14 braccia, Anzi convenne in alcuni luoghi che non si trovava il sodo ficcarvi molti pali di tre o 4 braccia l'uno. I fondamenti sono larghi da quattro braccia, e dove smottava molto più perciò dettero che fare assai e ci si messe molto tempo, pur con l'aiuto di Dio, e con la molta pazienza e diligenza s'edificarono su i fondamenti felicemente; et a di 21 del seguente maggio dal reverendissimo Padre Abate Don Averardo Niccolini si buttò e messe la prima Pietra con la benedizion solita accennata nel Rituale....

1636, f.19r.

Ricordo come questo dì 5 maggio si ripigliò il fabbricare da muratori, e tirare avanti la nuova muraglia atteso che l'Inverno per i diacci, e gran freddi non si possa seguitare il murare in questi luoghi tant'aspri, se non incrudelisce l'aria, di che sei mesi al più si può murare, cioè da maggio sino a Novembre massimo allo scoperto, al coperto si può cominciar prima e seguitar qualche mese di più.

f.37r.

Ricordo come questo dì 8 luglio 1637 si dette fine di metter su la Porta nova della facciata che corrisponde alla chiesa, e perchè da tutti fu stimata molto bella, è stata chiamata e postoli nome Porta Bella, per aver del magnifico, del grande e del vago, e da molti maestri scarpellini estimata di valuta da 300 scudi e invero si ricca facciata non richiedevano meno.

f.37v.

Ricordo questo dì 7 Aprile 1638 che per corrispondere al piano della Porta Bella che riguarda alla Chiesa si è messo quasi al medesimo livello la porta che entra nel monasterio con far la salita per di dentro di lastrico a bastoni, e messo per di qua e di là alla salita una bella Balaustrata che rende gran magnificenza e grandezza all'entrata.

f.39r-42v. Summary of the Capitolo Generale of the order at S.Michele di Passignano which began on the 25 Aprile 1638. At this capitolo Deodato Monzecchi da Pelago was elected Abbot of Vallombrosa in place of Averardo Nicolini. Ff.39-40 list the monks and domestics who accompany the new Abbot. This change of Abbot means that the precise composition of the monastery in the year Milton arrived in Florence was as follows:

Monks in orders including the Abbot: 12.

<Giovani non sacerdoti fuor di Monastero>: 6.

<Giovani in dormitorio>: 8.

Novices: 4.

<Conversi>: 18.

<Novizzi e Conversi>: 3.

Monks in the parishes around the monastery: 9.

Total 60.

Servants and Lay Persons.

<Guardie>: 2.

<Muratori>: 4.

<Manovali>: 6.

<Scarpellini>: 2.

<Sotto Cuoco>: 1.

<Cuoca a Paterno> (neighbouring village): 1.

<Servitori>: 3.

Servants in the parishes: 2.

<Vetturali>: 2.

Total 23.

f. 42^V.

Ricordo come havendo il Reverendissimo Padre Abate Don Averardo Niccolini antecessor cominciato la fabbrica per far poi il noviziato come di sopra in questo libro in più luoghi è notato, la condusse con le mura andanti di qua e di là con i suoi tre finestrati come si vede e la copre quasi tutta, eccetto una parte della Torre, e la gronda andante sopra la Sagrestia Vecchia, si et per finir questa Parte sola dinanzi allato alla facciata della Sagrestia di sopradetta ci resta ridurre detta facciata vecchia a proporzione colla nuova nei Finestrati nell'altezza e ogni cosa. Ci resta riempire questa muraglia di drento, con le Volte, Tramezzi, Anditi, Camere, e Stanze et ci vanno, onde il M.R.P.D. Deodato Monzzecchi Abate di questo Monastero considerando che tal Muraglia non deve rimaner imperfetta pensò di seguitar nel miglior modo possibile e fare a poco a poco secondo che l'entrate lo comporteranno. Hanno tirato avanti questa muraglia colla vendita di tante abetine et ci erano, come apparisce a Libri [100 pine trees sold], ora et più non ce ne sono, non si maraviglia alcuno se la fabbrica non si può fare con prestezza, ma si farà secondo che la Badia potrà, poichè se ognuno che sarà quì superiore tirerà avanti o tardi o per tempo si finerà.

Si cominciò dunque di nuovo alli 14 Maggio 1638 a finire tutta la facciata dinanzi secondo il disegno fatto, e s'è cotta la Fornace, e si cuocerà a Paterno e per tale effetto sendoci 3 maestri muratori e Fra Michele.

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f.43r.

Memoria come essendo venute due Pioggie, anzi due Diluvii stravaganti, durando di piovere continuo un giorno e mezzo due volte alli 20 Maggio, et alli 11 Giugno 1638, l'acqua allagò tutta la Fabbrica nuova con pericolo non piccolo, però bisognò fare un fosso murato da rimpetto all cappella de Beati, sino lungo la Muraglia nuova giù verso il Vinaio, et pigliasse tutte l'acque che con tanto impeto scorrono et così si fece.

f.44r.

Ricordo come li detti Padri visitatori lasciorno ordine che si tirasse innanzi nel meglio modo che si poteva la nuova fabbrica e perchè non c'era la possibilità di farla presto, limitorno che oltre le materie da murare, cioè Calcina, Tufo, sassi, legname e altre cose che sono in questo luogo, si spendessi 150 scudi l'anno acciò quello che non si può far presto come bisognerebbe, almeno col tempo si faccia.

f.46v. 1639.

Memoria come l'estate di questo anno 1639 fu arida e secca oltremodo, che le fonti di questa valle scemarono assaissimo, eccetto quella detta del cassone, che viene in casa, però il molto Reverendo Padre Abate Don Deodato per haverla con più copia e comodo, rinuovò, ristaurò, e rifece le due fonti di rimpetto alla porta del fianco, e fece fare i condotti di pietra stabili, che durassero con molta commodità.

f.49v. On 19th August 1640 Deodato Monzecchi dies. On the 21st of the same month Tommaso Davanzati is elected Abbot.

CHAPTER 3. PART IV.The Poet, the Just Man and the Spiritual City of Sodom.

In part I and part III of this chapter I have shown that Milton's two famous 'Florentine' similes, the first comparing Satan's shield to the moon seen through the telescope of the Tuscan artist, the second comparing the fallen angels to autumnal leaves lying on the brooks in Vallombrosa, far from being pleasant reminiscences of the poet's continental journey, are in fact Satanic images. One recalls Catiline's rebellion and the useless knowledge sought by astronomers; the other alludes indirectly to the abominanda of Molech and the fires of Tophet or Gehenna. In part II of this chapter I showed how in classical and Renaissance epics as well as the Divina Commedia the autobiographical simile of place defines the standing of the poet in relation to his audience. In court poets such as Virgil and Ariosto the simile demonstrates the poet's fulfilment of his loyalties towards his patron; but in Dante the simile demonstrates the poet's distance from the society that exiled him. In these two 'Florentine' similes Milton's very choice of landscape hints that Dante is his model. But how can the sinister interpretation of these two similes that act as a trap for the unwary or unfit reader be compatible with the autobiographical significance of Dante's art? So far this chapter has not explored the relation of the similes to Milton himself, while the interpretation offered of the astronomer simile could be construed as saying that Milton approved of Galileo's trial and imprisonment. I now propose to show how these opposites can be reconciled in the image of

the poet.

In contrast to the ambiguities of the "pleasant valley" and the consequent suggestion of a type of hell, the etymology of the name Vallombrosa, "Shady Vale" or "Shadowy Valley", could remind the listener of that other "valley of the shadow of Death" where, like the Psalmist, the poet will find God to sustain him.

23.3 [The Lord]...restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Now the Masoretic pointing of the ancient Hebrew formulaic phrase < צֶלְמָוֶת > is a "rabbinical conceit"¹ which seeks to explain the term as a compound of < צֶל >, shadow, and < מָוֶת >, death, whereas modern biblical scholarship agrees that the term should be written < צֶלְמָוֶת >, making the word a masculine noun meaning dense darkness. The original Hebrew term recurs as < σκιά θανάτου > twice in the Greek New Testament when Isaiah 9.2 is quoted at Matthew 4.16 and Luke 1.79; but Renaissance translators and commentators of the Bible were aware that the customary translation of the Hebrew enshrined in the Septuagint < σκιά θανάτου > and the Vulgate's umbra mortis was imprecise.² In De Doctrina

¹C.A. & E.G. Briggs, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark <International Critical Commentary> 1907, vol.1, pp.209-12; An Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, 5th issue, ed. F. Brown, S.R. Driver, C.R. Briggs, OUP 1959, p.853.

²Job 3.5; 10.21-2; 12.22; 16.16; 28.3; 34.22; 38.17; Psalms 23.4; 44.20; 107.10,14; Isaiah 9.2; Jeremiah 2.6; 13.16; cf. J. Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress, pp.61-6, 241-6.

Christiana Milton cites Psalm 23.4 from the Junius-Tremellius Bible which alone among Renaissance translations consistently substitutes lethalis umbra for the usual umbra mortis.³ A gloss in the same Bible on Job 10.21 - <abivero...in terram tenebrosam & umbrae lethalis> - comments <umbrae lethalis, id est umbrosissimam>. In a note on Matthew 4.16 Erasmus comments that the original Hebrew is a <unica dictio... composita ex umbra & morte, ut intelligas altissimam caliginem, qualis est apud inferos>.⁴ Beza's later translation of the New Testament applauds Erasmus with the note <Hebraismus, id est umbrosa sive tenebricosa morte>.⁵

In a brief life of his uncle, John Phillips explains that Milton "besides his ordinary lectures out of the Bible and the best Commentators on the week day, That was his sole subject on Sundays. And Davids Psalms were in esteem with him above all Poetry".⁶ In contrast to the contextual hint at Tophet and Gehenna, the etymological sense of valle ombrosa must also have been present to Milton. It serves as a symbol of hope in darkness. This 'darkness' can be both spiritual and physical, as can be learnt from Christian's passage through the same valley in the Pilgrim's Progress. In the Junius-Tremellius bible a gloss on the opening words of Psalm 23.3 - <Animam meam quietam effecit, ducit me per orbitas iustitiae> - notes: <Animam meam, id est, me languentem, mea

³Milton, Works, XVII.248.

⁴Desiderius Erasmus, In Novum Testamentum Annotationes, Basle, In Officina Frobeniana 1542, p.26.

⁵Novum Testamentum a Theodoro Beza versum, Basle 1559.

⁶The Early Lives of Milton, ed.H.Darbishire, London, Constable & Co. 1932, p.33.

infirmirate labefactum, & planè confectum instaurat:
regenerationis symbolam>.

A consistent poetic strategy couples the two 'Florentine' similes within a single verse paragraph (I.283-330). Both allow a type of hell to emerge suddenly from behind the pleasing facade presented by an allusion to the poet's continental journey thirty years previously. Yet in the Vallombrosa simile one level of meaning counterbalances the other. The darkness and horror of the valle ombrosa can also stand for the regenerationis symbola typified in the figure of the Psalmist. Throughout this thesis we have noted Milton's consistent use of epic paradox. Does some final redemptive image exist in these two similes? The clue, I think, emerges if we study the mention of 'Fesole' against the background of the attack launched in the Divina Commedia against the bestie Fiesolane. In this context we can identify the autobiographical image Milton advances in Paradise Lost with the figure of the poet which Dante presents in the Divina Commedia.

When Dante and Virgil pass from the wood of suicides onto the <arena arida e spessa> of the <terzo girone>, they see the damned lying supine or sitting on the sands and trying to beat away the slowly falling flakes of fire. The two poets are advancing across this arid desert protected from the fiery rain by the steam rising from the Phlegethon, when they are passed by <d'anime una schiera>. A single figure suddenly breaks away with the cry <"Qual maraviglia?">. Momentarily perplexed by the changes wrought in <lo cotto aspetto> by fire and Hell, Dante recognises Brunetto Latini, his former teacher <grande scientifico et ancora astrolago>.⁷

The Renaissance commentators agree that sodomy is the sin which places Brunetto Latini and his companions <tutti...di gran fama | D'un peccato medesimo al mondo lerci> [XV.107-8] in this part of Hell;⁸ but the strange encounter leads to a virulent condemnation of contemporary Florence as a type of the biblical Sodom in its persecution of Dante <vir praedicans iustitiam>. Ser Brunetto warns the poet about the defeat of his party and his own imminent exile.

Ed egli à me; "se tu segui tua stella,
 Non puoi fallire à glorioso porto;
 Se ben m'accorsi ne la vita bella:
 E s'i non fossi sì per tempo morto;
 Veggendo'l cielo à te così benigno
 Dato t'havrei à l'opera conforto.
 Ma quello'ngrato popolo maligno;
 Che discese da Fiesole ab antico,
 Et tien'ancor del monte & del macigno;
 Ti si farà per tu'ben far nimico:
 Et è ragion: che tra gli lazzi sorbi
 Si disconuien fruttare il dolce fico.
 Vecchia fama nel mondo li chiam'orbi;
 Gent'avara, inuidiosa, & superba:
 Da lor costumi fa, che tu ti forbi.
 La tua fortuna tant'honor ti serba;
 Che l'una parte & l'altra hauranno fame
 Di te: ma lungi fia dal becco l'herba.
 Faccian le bestie Fiesolane strame
 Di lor medesme; & non tocchin la pianta;
 S'alcuna surge ancor nel lor letame,
 In cui riuiua la sementa santa
 Di quei Roman, che uì rimaser, quando,
 Fu fatto il nidio di malitia tanta".

Inf.XV.55⁹

⁷Francesco da Buti, Commento, vol.1, p.405. Daniello comments:

Haueua per via d'Astrologia, essendo perfetto Astrologo, antiueduto ser Brunetto, che Dante era nato sotto gran constellatione [XV.55].
 Milton would also know Brunetto Latini from Villani, VIII.10.
⁸In Dante, f.84v, Velutello defines the running souls as the <violenti contra natura, o vogliamo dir de'sodomiti> and argues that Brunetto Latini's presence among the sodomites means that the accusations of alchemy levelled against him during his lifetime must be false.

On the lazzi sorbi Alessandro Velutello comments:

Tra gli aspri sorbi, al dolce fico si disconvien
fruttare: uolendo inferire, che tra quello inhumano, e
duro popolo, non era conueniente, che la virtù del
Poeta si esercitasse, perchè sarebbe stato un dar le
margarite ai porci, non potendosi le uirtù ne gli animi
bestiali, & efferati inserire.¹⁰

In their commentaries Velutello and Daniello link Brunetto
Latini's condemnation of the <Gent'avara, inuidiosa e superba>
with Ciaccio's similar indictment of the Florentines in canto
VI for their deafness to justice:

Giusti son due, ma non ui sono'ntesi:
Superbia, inuidia & auaritia sono
Le tre fauille; ch'hanno i cuori accesi. Inf.VI.51.¹¹

The identity of the due giusti has become a locus classicus in
Dante criticism with commentators advancing a wide variety of
candidates. But the problem remains unresolved today. With
Milton in mind it is worth noting that both Landino and
Velutello suggest Dante and his fellow poet Guido

⁹The text is from the edition cited in Milton's Commonplace Book, Dante con l'espositione di M.Bernadino Daniello da Lucca, Venice, Pietro da Fino 1568, f.86r.

¹⁰Dante, f.86r.

¹¹Ibid., f.86r.

¹²In Dante, f.86r, Landino cites:

frate Guido del Carmine...che questi due eran Dante, &
messer Guido Caualcanti. Alquanti intendono che i due
giusti sien la legge diuina, & humana, & queste non ui
sono intesi, quasi dicat, che le leggi diuine, & humane
son ben ordinate in Firenze, ma non sono intese, perche
non sono osseruate.

Velutello cites Villani X.179 to suggest Barduccio and
Giovanni di Vespignano, but also notes, f.38r:

Altri hanno inteso per questi due, della divina, &
humana legge, altri del Poeta stesso, & de Lodovico
(sic) Cavalcanti, che furon in un medesimo tempo.

Cavalcanti.¹² Bernadino Daniello interprets <non vi sono intesi> as meaning that the two just men remain unknown (not "they are not listened to") and also suggests that Dante means himself.¹³ But a reader such as Milton would immediately seize on the biblical import of the giusti son due, all the more so given his own interest in the just man as symbol.

In Paradise Lost the role of just "man" is anticipated in the prelapsarian Eden by the outstanding example of the angel Abdiel who, in Raphael's narration, alone among the rebels challenges Satan's treacherous and corrupting lies.

Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single V.901.

In the vision of the fallen world shown by the archangel Michael to Adam appears first Enoch:

The onely righteous in a World perverse,
And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With Foes for daring single to be just,
And utter odious Truth. XI.701-4.

Then Noah, where the angelic instructor praises not just the righteousness of the single man, but also his courage in speaking out against the weight of a whole society.

..all shall turn degenerate, all deprav'd,
Justice and Temperance, Truth and Faith forgot;
One Man except, the onely son of light
In a dark Age, against example good,
Against allurement, custom, and a World
Offended; fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, hee of thir wicked wayes
Shall them admonish, and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe,
And full of peace, denouncing wrauth to come
On thir impenitence; and shall returne

¹³Daniello: <Ciacco risponde...che duo soli ui erano giusti, ma non conosciuti: (& forse uol'intendere di se stesso)>.

Of them derided, but of God observd
The one just Man alive.

XI.806-16.

In Renaissance protestant theology the biblical figure of the just man served to prove the priority of individual conscience over other forms of spiritual direction, especially the claims of the Catholic clergy. The theme was so familiar to Elizabethan England that Falstaff blasphemously parodies it with the outrageous claim: "There live not three good men unhang'd in all England, and one of them is old and grows fat".¹⁴

In the Old Testament the book of Ezekiel declares Noah, Daniel and Job to be three just men.¹⁵ In Genesis Abraham bargains with God over the number of just men who will suffice to save Sodom from destruction.¹⁶ The doom of Sodom is one of the epic themes Milton lists in the Trinity College manuscript. The conduct of the inhabitants of Sodom towards Lot and his two angel guests condemns the city and its people to destruction by fire from heaven, which Lot as the single just man is warned to flee with his family. In the Inferno the violence of Florence towards its greatest poet thus identifies Dante's own city as a type of Sodom;¹⁷ but equally the doom of the biblical city or the fiery rain and burning sands of the Inferno are hardly distinguishable (unless in scale) from the "burning marl" and "fiery deluge" of Milton's

¹⁴W.Shakespeare, I Henry IV, ed.A.R.Humphreys, 6th ed., Arden 1961, II.iv.127.

¹⁵Ezekiel 14.13-4; cf. Z.G.Baranski, Inferno VI.73: A Controversy Re-examined, Italian Studies, XXVI, 1981, pp.1-26.

¹⁶Genesis 18.23-33.

¹⁷See appendix 1.

hell that make Beelzebub (like Brunetto Latini) unrecognisable and mar the brilliance of Satan. Curiously, a slander levelled at Milton in Saumaise's posthumous Responsio ad Ioannem Miltonem (London 1660), which of course Milton could not answer directly, was that on his travels he was debauched by his sodomite Italian friends.¹⁸

The simplest interpretation of Dante's giusti son due is that his Florence cannot even match the three of Ezekiel, but the very choice of number also indicates a New Testament text often associated with the just men of the Old Testament in biblical exegesis, the two witnesses in the Apocalypse whose ministry is ended by violence and death.

7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth.

11. And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Apocalypse XI.7-11.

In the years around Milton's birth the interpretation of this passage and the identification or nature of the two witnesses lay at the centre of the fierce propaganda battle between Bellarmine's Rome, which invited the Catholic subjects of a Protestant king to rebel and depose him, and Protestant Europe, especially the England of James I.¹⁹

Traditional Roman Catholic exegesis, taking its authority from Saint Jerome, believed that the two witnesses were Enoch and Elijah, whose return to earth would anticipate the coming of Antichrist and the beginning of the last days. Since Protestant polemical theology considered the Pope to be Antichrist, the writers of the reformed church sought examples of the two witnesses among both proto-protestant martyrs and post-reformation victims of the Papacy. Some, like Henry Bullinger, argued that the text was universal in application since "there is oneself citie and societie of all the wicked in the world, like as there is one body of the godly".²⁰ Francis Junius states that the "great city" of the Apocalypse must be Rome.

Sodome signifieth most licentious impietie and iniustice; Eygpt most cruell persecution of the people of God; and Ierusalem signifieth, the most confident glorying of that Citie, as it were in true religion, being yet full of falshood and vngodlinesse. Nowe who is ignorant that these things doe rather, and more agree vnto Rome, than vnto anie other Citie?²¹

In answer to these attacks Bellarmine subtly argued that since

¹⁸ Cited in French I.417.

¹⁹ James I, Triplici nodo triplex cuneus. Sive Apologia Pro Ivramento Fidelitatis, Adversus duo Brevia P. Pauli Quinti. & Epistolam Cardinalis Bellarmini. ad G. Blackwellum Archipresbyterum nuper scriptum, London, R. Barker 1607, ch.VIII, pp.67-87; R. Bellarmine, Apologia... Pro Responsione Sua ad Librum Iacobi Magna Brittaniae Regio. cuius titulus Est, Triplici nodo triplex cuneus, Rome 1610, ch.XI, p.160, De Henoch & Elia.

²⁰ Henry Bullinger, A Hyndred Sermons Vppon the Apocalipse of Iesu Christ, reueiled by the angell of the Lord; but seene or receiued and written by the holy Apostle and Euangelist S. Iohn, London, John Daye, dwelling ouer Aldersgate 1573, f. 149.

²¹ Francis Junius, A Briefe And Learned Commentarie Vpon The Revelation of Saint Iohn the Apostle and Euangelist, applied vnto the historie of the Catholike and Christian Church... translated into English for the benefit of those that vnderstand not the Latine, London, Richard Field for Robert

the two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah, who had not yet reappeared to announce the rise of Antichrist, the Pope therefore could not be Antichrist.²²

Quoniam ante adventum Christi duos Prophetas Henoch & Eliam venire oportet. At nondum illi venerunt. Pontifex vero Rom[anus] tot iam seculis regnavit. Non est igitur Antichristus, & nondum venit Antichristus.²³

This glib statement is not actually by Bellarmine, but it is deliberately attributed to the Roman Cardinal by David Pareus in his commentary on the Apocalypse. In the Disputationes Bellarmine does cite six proofs that will identify the real Antichrist. The third and fourth proofs are the ministry and persecution of Enoch and Elijah. Pareus replies that like Antichrist the two witnesses have been present in various ages just as their ministry, persecution and martyrdom has occurred not once, but many times.²⁴ Other protestants concur with Pareus. John Bale terms the two witnesses "the witnesses of gods ueritie in all ages" who "have continued with the people of God since the death of Steeuen, for the most part secretly and unknown to the world".²⁵ Francis Junius terms them:

²¹(continued)

Dexter, dwelling in Paules church yard at the signe of the brasen serpent 1592, p.38.

²²See appendix 2.

²³D.Pareus, In Divinam Apocalypsin S.Apostoli Et Evangelistae Johannis Commentarius, 2nd ed., Heidelberg, Impensis Viduae Jonae Rosae 1622, col.470, attributes this to R.Bellarmino, Disputationes...De Controversiis Christianae Fidei Adversus Huius Temporis Haereticos (I have consulted 2nd ed., Ingolstadt, David Sartor 1588), vol.1, book III, ch.6, where no such statement appears though Bellarmine identifies the 2 witnesses as Enoch and Elia.

²⁴See appendix 2.

²⁵John Bale, The Image of both Churches, after the most wonderfull and heauenly Reuelation of saint Iohn the

ministers of the word, who are few inded, weake and contemptible: but yet two, that is of such a number as one of them may help an other, and one confirme the testimonie of another unto all men.²⁶

Likewise their resurrection after three and a half days means that though single men might be persecuted and killed, others will always arise to take their place, a view with which Richard Baxter agreed.

And this will seem, to carnal men, to be God's disowning them, & all that they did: But the same sort of Men shall be raised again, and revive their work with more success,²⁷ and again silence the deluded insulting enemies.

In the context of the spiritual Sodom being considered a symbol not solely of unnatural vice but also of injustice, and of Dante's use of the encounter with Brunetto Latini to damn Florence as a type of Sodom, I should like to suggest that Milton's final intention (beyond the interim associations with Catiline or Tophet) in the two allusions to Florence is for us to recognise in the double structure of the famous aemulatio of the Vallombrosa simile with its falling leaves and floating sedge the apocalyptic vision of < τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἣτις καλεῖται πνευματικῶς Σόδομα καὶ Αἴγυπτος >. On biblical

²⁵(continued)

Euangelist, containing a very fruitfull exposition or Paraphrase vpon the same, London, Thomas Cast, s.d., f.16, 11v.

²⁶F.Junius, Commentarie Vpon the Revelation, p.37.

²⁷Richard Baxter, A Paraphrase on the New Testament, With Notes Doctrinal and Practical, 2nd ed., London, T.Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three Crowns at the Lower-end of Cheapside; S.Sprint at the bell, in Little-Britain; J.Taylor, at the Ship and J.Wyat, at the Rose, in St.Paul's Churchyard 1695, Revelation 11.7.

authority (Genesis 13.10) before their destruction:

the Sodomites sometimes inhabited a pleasant and fertile valley, watered by Iordan, which Moses compareth to the garden of the Lord, and the land of Aegypt, for pleasure and plenty.²⁸

If we accept that from the allusion to Fiesole in the 'Tuscan artist' simile, from the choice of Dante as poetic prototype, from the common transition from amoenitas to destructio, ~~that~~ through the name 'Vallombrosa' Milton intends to identify Florence with the biblical and apocalyptic Sodom, then we have no difficulty in recognising the floating sedge of the Red sea as symbolic of Eygpt.

Inversely the simile identifies Milton himself as a witness and martyr of God's truth. In the first half of the simile ambiguity of the valle ombrosa and the darkness threatening the just man do not only remind us of the danger and evil surrounding Milton; they also affirm his own faith in God's justice. In the second half of the simile the floating sedge of the Red Sea, that recalls the flotsam and jetsam remaining of the Pharaoh's proud chivalry, show that God's vengeance has already been actuated. The same scheme of things separates Galileo the astronomer conjured up by the image of the "Tuscan artist" from the blind, sick victim of Papal tyranny actually visited by Milton.

Through manipulation of the figure of the poet in Paradise Lost Milton's choice of Dante as poetic archetype shows a determination not to infringe the Aristotelian norm. Obeying the dictum of the Convivio Milton depicts himself as speaking in his own defence <poichè altro scusatore non si levava>. As political animals Milton and Dante take up a position precisely opposite to the dynastic epics of Virgil or Ariosto.

Neither will offer poetic credibility to a potentially corrupt regime of masters and patrons. Neither the Divina Commedia nor Paradise Lost is created in a vacuum; but instead they possess a distinct political alignment, viewing local struggles sub specie aeternitatis as part of a larger process and enshrining the figure of the poet as symbolic of injured truth, oppressed by evil and slander, but sure of ultimate triumph. Just as Milton's critics and biographers have sought to divorce his pamphleteering from his poetry, so Landino and other Renaissance commentators deplored Dante's invectives against Florence;²⁹ but a propagandist as experienced as Milton, besides acknowledging a kindred spirit, would have recognised the venom directed against the bestie Fiesolane (distinct from the sementa santa) as the product of a political stance not dissimilar to his own. This overt political orientation in the Divina Commedia must have proved an inspiration, otherwise why should such a patriotic Englishman make his contemporary images refer not to his native land, but a foreign city he visited for only four months ?

In the contrast between Dante entering the selva oscura at the height of his political fortunes and writing the Divina

²⁸ Purchas, His Pilgrimage, p.83.

²⁹ Dante, Landino:

E d'havere per iscusato il Poeta nostro, se in uituperar la sua patria trapassa i termini di quella modestia, la qual deue in huomo Filosofo, & Theologo: & dimentica la reuerentia, & la pietà, laqual deue hauer ogni Cittadino alla sua repubblica perche essendo stato a grandissimo torto, poco auanti priuato de gli honori, delle dignità, del patrimonio, & della patria, & finalmente relegato in duro esilio, non puote por freno a si fresca ingiuria: ma inuero era più ufficio della sua sapientia parlar più modestamente.

Commedia in poverty and exile, Milton, who knew and compared at least two different editions of Boccaccio's Vita di Dante, found a pattern for the figure of the poet in Paradise Lost.³⁰ In the Paradiso Cacciaguida forewarns his descendent how <la colpa seguirà la parte offensa | In grido, come suol> [Par xvii.52], since, though innocent, in defeat Dante will have to bear the torments of disgrace and malice. The blindness and ignorance of the orbi is the antithesis of the clearing of Dante's sight in the Paradiso; likewise Milton's physical blindness is counterbalanced by the inner vision to "see and tell | Of things invisible to mortal sight" [PL III.55] that he shares with those "equal'd with me in Fate, || Blind Thamyris, and blind Maeonides, | And Tiresias and Phineus prophets old" [III.33].

The various and often seemingly contrary elements cited in this chapter, the complex unfolding of paradox on paradox are quintessential features of Milton's cast of thought and choice of form. In Paradise Lost the figure of the poet is that of the blind Milton dictating the poem, but the momentary allusion to his Italian journey thirty years before creates an effective analogue with the character Dante listening in the Inferno to Brunetto Latini and as yet ignorant of the years to come. Equally Milton glorifies not the scientific importance of Galileo's discoveries, but the symbolic value of the caso Galilei. Behind the negative image of the astronomer is the figure of the single man suffering for truth, "grown old a prisner to the Inquisition". In the image of the "one just man" Milton asserts his faith in the eventual triumph of the great cause. Though defeated and alone, the defender of the English revolution will not be silenced.

.....I Sing with mortal voice, unchang'd
To hoarce or mute, though falln on evil dayes,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compassst round,
And solitude.

VII.24.

³⁰Milton, Works, XVIII.174.

Chapter 3, Part IV, Appendix 1.Renaissance Commentators and Brunetto Latini.

Renaissance commentators interpret Inferno XV in the light of

Et però lo minor Giron suggella
 Del segno suo, e Sodoma, e Caorsa,
 Et chi spregiando Dio col cor favella. Inf. XI. 49-51.

Daniello comments:

"Del segno suo", cioè de le fiamme del fuoco, che cascano adosso à i sodomiti, & à gli usurai, ponendo figuratamente la cosa che contiene per la contenuta, che sono queste due città; Sodoma...per i sodomiti; e Caorsa, terra di Prouenza, per gli usurai.

In canto XIV Landino, f.79r, notes that it is:

conueniente che gli punisca col fuoco, perche tal pena ueggiamo ch'apparecchiò Iddio a Sodoma & Gomorra.

He also notes that punishments are ordered according to:

diverse leggi, e conditioni; percioche quelli c'haueuano usato uiolenza in uerso Dio, & meritauno maggior supplitio, giaceuano supini, & quelli che l'haueuano usato contra la natura, & l'arte, come son gl'usarari, sedeuano raccolti per toccar meno che si potea dell'arena...Et quelli c'haueuano usato contra natura & andauano, questi son sodomiti.

Velutello notes the difference in numbers:

"Alcuna si sedea tutta raccolta." Et questa è intesa per i uiolenti contra l'arte, & altra continuamente andaua, per la qual significa i uiolenti contra la natura, & questa era molto piu gente di quella, che al tormento giaceua supina, perche piu son quelli, che peccano contra la natura, come sono i sodomiti, secondo che vuol inferire, di quelli che bestemmiano & dispregiano Dio...Questo medesimo dispon di quelli, che offendon la natura, come i sodomiti; onde ueggiamo, che per questo tanto enorme, & bestial uitio, Iddio consumò per fuoco Sodoma, & Gomorra.

Dante's difficulty in recognising Brunetto also caused some comment. In Dante, Venice 1564, f.84r, Landino remarks:

Oltra di ciò dimostra, che con difficoltà potesse conoscere queste anime per essere molto arse dall'incendio; il che allegoricamente dinota, che l'ardor di sì bestial cupidità guasta informa il volto che l'huomo non è riconosciuto, cioè, leva ogni imagine di huomo, & fagli simili alle fiere.

Velutello, f.84v, comments:

Ma la lor breue, & corta ueduta altro moralmente non significa, che la sua cieca, & abbagliata mente, per la qual cecità, ancora con le loro conseguite dottrine, che universalmente sogliono dimostrar, & dannar ogni errore, s'eran nondimeno in sì uituperoso, & abhominuol uitio lasciati incorrere.

He lists the deformities of sodomy and concludes:

che difficilmente lo conoscesse, significa che questo vitio deforma tanto l'huomo, che piu tosto per bestia, che per huomo si fa conoscere, perche di quella tien i costumi, & di questo solamente l'aspetto.

Chapter 4, Part IV, Appendix 2.Seventeenth-century interpretations of Revelation 11.

The Catholic case is summarised in R. Bellarmine, De Summo Pontifice, Capite totius Militantis Ecclesiae, libri V. De Controversia tertia Fidei Christianae, quae est de summo Pontifice, cum Notis et animadversionibus Danielis Tileni, Sedani, Joannes Janonius 1619. The many Protestant refutations and Catholic counter-refutations are listed in A. & A. De Backer, Bibliographie in Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus, ed. C. Sommervogel, Bruxelles-Paris 1890, vol. 1, coll. 1167-70. G. Campbell, Milton's "Index Theologicus" and Bellarmine's "Disputationes De Controversiis Christianae Fidei Adversus Huius Temporis Haereticos", Milton Quarterly, XI, 1977, pp. 12-6, argues from evidence in the Commonplace Book that Milton gathered material for a pamphlet against Bellarmine in a now lost Index Theologicus.

D. Pareus, In Divinam Apocalypsin Commentarius, col. 475, *W&A* sees the ministry of the two witnesses as not future, but past, present and future:

Prophetiam intelligamus hic non strictè praedictionem futurum: sed latè praedictionem doctrinae propheticae & apostolicae. Hanc illi obscuratam & proculcatam ab Antichristo, renovatâ prophetiâ vindicabunt, cordatè praedicabunt atque restituent Ecclesiae, idque "Christo hoc eis dante", hoc est, spiritu heroico & donis eos armante, ut regnum Antichristi toto orbe Christiano ceu φεωρημα inexpugnabile firmatum & roboratum, cordatè oppugnent, & concutiant fortiter.

He links the first appearance of the Witnesses with the gradual corruption of the Church, col. 478:

Sicut autem oppressus Ecclesiae non facta est momento nec initio fuit gravissima, sed paulatim incrementa fecit: donec sub pedibus Antichristi prorsus depressa jaceret sancta civitas: sic duorum testium praeconium adversus eum non semper fuit aequaliter evidens & efficax, sed singulis seculis sese notoriis martyriis patefecit.

He lists pairs of Witnesses for the various European countries of the Reformation. He also interprets the exposure and mockery of the bodies as the persecution of their works, col. 493:

Cadavera testium sunt non tantum eorum corpora, quibus

frequenter talia ad literam contingerunt...sed & eorum nomina, quae anathemate ferit, & eorum libri, quos haberi, legi, vendi prohibet, igne exurit, denique etiam familiae, quas quibus potest modis infames reddit & opprimit.

Richard Baxter, A Paraphrase on the New Testament, agrees with a political interpretation:

Say some, They shall be literally cast out inhumanely buried; say others, They shall be politically slain, deposed, silenced, imprisoned, and cast by as dead and useless. And not only their persecuting enemies, but the deluded rabble and people, shall see their oppression and insult over them, and not suffer them to be restored or honoured.

CHAPTER 4: PROLOGUE.

Milton's Paradise of Fools and Renaissance Satire.

Book III of Paradise Lost moves from the rejoicing in Heaven when the Son's offer of himself as ransom to redeem mankind is accepted by the Father to the moment when Satan first "alights upon the bare Convex of this Worlds outermost Orb; where wandring he first finds a place since call'd The Lympo of Vanity".¹ After comparing Satan to a vulture Milton introduces a brief digression to explain the future use of this spot "when Sin | With vanity had filld the works of men" [III.446-7] and the various kinds of folly that will gather there to earn it the name "the Paradise of Fools". The passage ends with a brief but brilliant sketch of the delusion in store for Catholic hypocrites who seek to creep into heaven disguised as monks or friars.

This momentary break in the narrative with its sudden excursus into satire has found few friends among Milton's critics who have generally judged it out of keeping with the seriousness of the subject matter. Bentley blamed its "Impertinencies" on an editor, but was perhaps wiser than he knew when he complained at III.489-90 - "then might ye see | Cowles, Hoods:²

Great Civility to his Readers. How could anyone see them, unless he himself is suppos'd a Fool and plac'd in this Limbo.²

¹J.Milton, Paradise Lost, Introduction to Book I

²Milton's Paradise Lost. A New Edition, ed. R.Bentley, London,
(Footnote continued)

Addison, though he admired the episode in itself, deemed it inappropriate to epic.

Milton has interwoven in the Texture of his Fable some Particulars which do not seem to have probability enough for an Epic Poem, particularly in the Actions which he ascribes to Sin and Death, and the Picture which he draws of the Limbo of Vanity...Such Allegories rather savour of the spirit of Spencer and Ariosto, than of Homer and Virgil.³

More recently J.B.Broadbent has condemned the Paradise of Fools as a digression into gratuitous and inappropriate religious satire.

Yet there remains a genuine religio-literary objection to this sort of thing in Paradise Lost. Romantic epic can absorb satirical explosions, and the fate of Ignorance is appropriate in a book about the practice of the Christian life. But in a poem geared to universal good and evil the Limbo is indecorous. The intensity of feeling is disproportionate to the dramatic value of the episode releasing it; and, congregated about Satan, it shifts guilt for the fall from evil onto stupidity.⁴

These criticisms are to an extent all well founded. The episode is more appropriate to the chivalric epic. The real error common to both the neo-classical and the modern critics is the unspoken assumption that the chivalric epic has no place in Paradise Lost. However if it is studied in terms of Satan's heroic progress this satiric interlude becomes a cardinal one, since, through the momentary and unexpected

²(continued)

Jacob Tonson [and others] 1732, p.95.

³J.Addison, The Spectator, no.297, III, p.60; see no.357, p.336:

Such beautiful extended Allegories are certainly some of the finest Compositions of Genius; but, as I have before observed, are not agreeable to the Nature of an Heroic Poem. This of Sin and Death is very exquisite in its kind, if not considered as Part of such a Work.

⁴J.B.Broadbent, Some Graver Subject, p.163.

correspondence with Ariosto's Astolfo carried up to the mondo della luna in a fiery chariot by Saint John the Evangelist, Milton signposts a new phase in Satan's epic progress and hints at the major role hypocrisy and disguise will play in Satan's temptation of man.

Ariosto converts the moon into a vast lost-property office in the sky where everything:

Che si perde o per nostro diffetto,
O per colpa di tempo o di Fortuna:
Ciò che si perde qui, là si raguna.

Le lacrime e i sospiri degli amanti,
L'inutil tempo che si perde a giuoco,
E l'ozio lungo d'uomini ignoranti,
Vani disegni che non han mai loco,
I vani desideri sono tanti,
Che la più parte ingombran di quel loco:
Ciò che in somma qua giu perdesti mai,
La su salendo ritrovar potrai.

XXXIV.73.75.

This lunar stockpile of humanity's worthless dreams and achievements acts as a celestial mirror converting human actions and desires into incomprehensible and useless objects. But this is no higher sphere of timeless meaning. As Professor Quint demonstrates, the promise of <ogni effetto convien che corrisponda | In terra e in ciel, ma con diversa faccia> [XXXV.18] at first:

seems to posit a traditional allegorical relationship. Human events, unreadable as they are unfolding on earth, create a series of signs, a gloss to the earthly book, upon the moon. It rapidly becomes apparent, however, that the gloss itself is unreadable.⁵ The paladin can only understand these objects through the interpretation of the Evangelist.

⁵D. Quint, op.cit., p.399; cf. M. Santoro, La sequenza lunare nel "Furioso": una società allo specchio in L'anello di Angelica, pp.105-33.

Though the sight of the large mountain <Di varii fiori... Ch'ebbe già buono odore, or putia forte> [XXXIV.80]⁶ and the explanation that this is the donation of Constantine marks a satirical commentary on the aulical and religious societies which govern the world, on the whole the vision deliberately jumbles itself into incoherence. But the one thing missing from this rubbish-dump of foolish things is folly itself, since <Sol la pazzia non v'è poca né assai; | Che sta qua giù, né se ne parte mai> [XXXIV.81]. In fact Astolfo's encounter with the pile of bottles containing human wits (senno), including his own, and his surprise at seeing the senno deposited there belonging to many <ch'egli credea che dramma manco | non dovessero averne, e quivi dénno | chiara notizia che ne tenean poco> [XXXIV.84] points humourously to an Erasmian vision of a mad world governed by the witless.

Milton's Limbo of Vanity is precisely opposite to that of Ariosto in more than just the site "Not in the neighbouring moon, as some have dreamed" [III.459], but at the edge of the universe. First his limbo is not a repository of temporarily banished senno, but of eternally wretched folly; second no gloss is offered on human actions since these fools in their natural forms "fleet hither, and in vain, | Till final dissolution wander here" [III.457-8].

When Satan emerges from Chaos to find what had seemed "a globe far off | ...now seems a boundless continent"

⁶In Of Reformation (1641), Columbia III.27, Milton translates these lines:

Then past hee a flowry Mountaine greene,
Which once smelt sweet, now stinks as odiously;
This was that gift (if you the truth will have)
That Constantine to good Sylvestro gave.

[III.422-3], his surprise mirrors that of Astolfo at finding the moon so much bigger than it appears from the earth.

However the momentary comparison with the paladin, the homo fortunatus,⁷ who unwittingly is God's chosen instrument to restore Orlando's vanished wits and end the war against the pagans, may prove to be an ironic comment on Satan's heroic role. Though Milton's "higher argument" sees all the epic's characters as free agents exercising choice, the logic of the Satanic counter-epic with its rigid view of fate and fortune would automatically cast the archangel as the unwilling and evil instrument through which God will bring about a greater good, the redemption of man through the mediation of the Son.

Satan's landing in what will be the Limbo of Vanity is marked by an extended simile comparing Satan to a vulture in search of prey, but the landscape of the simile has a familiar ring for readers of the chivalric romance.⁸

⁷M.Santoro, L'Astolfo Ariostesco: "Homo fortunatus" in Letture Ariostesche, Naples, Liguori 1973, pp.135-214.

⁸In the Innamorato and Furioso Agricane and Mandricardo are successive kings of Tartary, while Gradasso is king of Sericana. In the Furioso Ruggiero's return flight from the isle of Alcina passes through the same area: Quinci il Cataio, e quindi Mangiana | Sopra il gran Quinsai vide passando: | Volò sopra l'Imavo, e Sericana | Lasciò a man destra [X.71]. An even more curious analogue is the descent of Alcina to the cave of Invidia in Ariosto's Cinque Canti, ed.L.Caretti, Venice, Corbo e Fiore 1974, I.38:

Fra i monti inaccessibili d'Imavo,
Che'l ciel sembran tener sopra le spalle,
Fra le perpetue nevi, e'l ghiaccio ignavo
Discende una profonda, e oscura valle,
Donde da un'antro horribilmente cavo
A l'Inferno si va per dritto calle,
E questa è l'una del le sette porte,
Che conducono al regno de la Morte.

Here walk'd the Fiend at large in spacious field.
 As when a Vultur on Imaus bred,
 Whose snowie ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
 Dislodging from a Region scarce of prey
 To gorge the flesh of Lambs or yeanling Kids
 On Hills where Flocks are fed, flies toward the Springs
 Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams;
 But in his way lights on the barren Plaines
 Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
 With Sails and Wind their canie Waggon light:
 So on this windie Sea of Land, the Fiend
 Walk'd up and down alone bent on his prey.

III.430-41.

As Professor Fowler notes, various points of correspondence identify Satan's entry into the unfallen universe as an inroad of chaos into order: the Vulture comes from the north (the traditional point of the compass for evil), is rapacious, flies and knows approximately where to seek his prey who are young, puny and innocent.⁹ An additional irony is suggested by the encyclopedists' identification of the Ganges with the Pison, one of the four rivers flowing from the garden of Paradise.¹⁰ The vulture anticipates ~~the~~ the unnatural sexuality created in the fallen world through Satan and Sin, since according to Renaissance zoology this bird of prey was ~~hermaphroditic~~ ^{only female} and fertilised its eggs by pointing its tail into the north wind for five days at a stretch.¹¹ The Chinese

⁹ Carey-Fowler, pp.585-6.

¹⁰ Ambrosius Calepinus, Dictionary, Venice, Apud Nicolaum Bevilacqua 1568, f.137r.

¹¹ Piero Valeriano, Hieroglyphica, f.131-2:

Cum ergo in genere Vulturum mas nusquam inveniatur, omnes autem foeminae sint, vtpote quae ex vento concipiant, manifestum est cur Aegyptii sacerdotes per eam autem vropygio surrecto, atque ad Aquilonem verso, matrem aut naturam ipsam intellerent: mater siquidam foemineum est animal. Vultur enim, vti dictum, tempore conceptus appetente, quod per quinque dies illos quos supra memoravimus, producit, natura in Aquilonem vt Aegyptii tradunt, in Eurum, vt Plutarchus, exporrecta
 (Footnote continued)

landships introduced by the mention of the flat plains of Sericana point to a confusion of elements (ships on land), but the consequent image of sails billowing in the wind prepares us for the delusion awaiting the Catholic hypocrites.¹²

Outside the immediate context of the Limbo of Vanity this simile prepares for the moment when, snuffing the "smell | Of mortal change of Earth" [X.272-3], Death manifests another virtue which impressed the Renaissance encyclopedists in the vulture, its ability to foresee battles and slaughter: <biduo triduve ante eo congregari, ubi futura sunt cadavera>.¹³

As when a flock
Of ravenous Fowl, though many a League remote,
Against the day of Battel, to a Field,
Where armies lie encampt, come flying, lur'd
With sent of living Carcasses design'd
For death, the following day, in bloodie fight.
X.273-8.

The first Vulture simile marks Satan's emergence from Chaos and entrance into the created universe. The second simile of birds scenting carrion initiates a parody of creation where Sin and Death fly into chaos to construct the great bridge

¹¹(continued)

adapertaque ab eodem initur, non secus ac plantae
Zephyris genialibus iniri traduntur.

See F.L.Huntley, A Justification of Milton's Paradise of Fools, English Literary History, XXI, 1954, pp.107-13.

¹²F.L.Huntley, Milton, Mendoza and the Chinese Landship, Modern Language Notes, LXIX, 1954, pp.404-7.

¹³Calepinus, Dictionarium, f.425v; Piero Valeriano, Hieroglyphica, f.133v:

Ab hac vero praesagiendi vi, quod tot ante dies vbi strages futura sit praesentiunt, iidem sacerdotes Aegyptii praesagituram ex Vulturis simulachro significabant: iidemque asserunt, consuesse priscos Reges belli tempore exploratores dimittere, qui obseruarent in quamnam exercitus partem Vultures imminerent, inde commonefacti stragem ibi futuram, vbi earum alitum grex frequentior incubisset.

which will be anchored to the universe at "the self same place where hee (Satan) | First lighted from his Wing, and landed safe | From out of Chaos to the out side bare | Of this round World" [X.315-8]. Though it also lies at the trivia between heaven, hell and earth, by making the site of his Limbo as an antechamber to hell, Milton emulates Dante's <setta dei cattivi | A Dio spiacenti ed ai nemici sui> [Inf.III.62-3],¹⁴ scorned by both heaven and hell in the empty space before the crossing of the Acheron into hell proper. Thus though when Satan enters this bare space its uses lie in the future, Milton is completing his cosmos, while the sardonic promise of "to few unknown | Long after" [III.496-7] suggests that the poet expects it to be well populated.

Milton's fools fall into three main categories, though they all share the common presumption that they possess an automatic claim to a place in heaven: first the collective follies of the Giants and the builders of Babel who tried to force their way into heaven; second the foolish philosophers who expected to come there "singly" through suicide; finally Milton's mocking depiction of Catholics who try to slip through in disguise. Milton first pokes fun at the Catholic concept of the limbo infantum with its unbaptized infants, "Embryo's and Idiots" by including in his Limbo the doctrine's main theological exponents "Friers | White, Black and Grey, with all thir trumperie" [III.474-6]. He next turns to those "who to be sure of Paradise | Dying put on the weeds of Dominic, | Or in Franciscan think to pass disguis'd" [III.478-80]. Their souls climb up through the seven planetary spheres, the crystalline sphere, the primum mobile.

And now Saint Peter at Heav'ns Wicket seems

To wait them with his Keys, and now at foot
 Of Heav'ns ascent they lift thir Feet, when loe
 A violent cross wind from either coast
 Blows them transverse ten thousand Leagues awry
 Into the devious Air; then might ye see
 Cowles, Hoods and Habits with thir wearers tost
 And flutterd into Raggs, then Reliques, Beads,
 Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls,
 The sport of Winds: all these upwhirld aloft
 Fly o're the backside of the World farr off
 Into a Limbo large and broad, since calld
 The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
 Long after, now unpeopl'd, and untrod.

III.484-97.

Though the practice of Catholic lay-persons donning in their dying hours or being buried in the robes of one of the monastic orders is amply documented, Milton's inspiration was undoubtedly fueled by the story of Guido da Montefeltro recounted in the Inferno. After their encounter with Ulysses and Diomedes in the bolgia dei frodolenti Dante and Virgil are stopped by the call of another spirit wrapped in fire, Count Guido da Montefeltro, <il più sagace e il più sottile uomo di guerra ch'al suo tempo fosse in Italia>.¹⁵ In answer to Dante's question he describes how towards the end of his life, wishing to make amends for his misdeeds as a soldier (<l'opere mie | Non furon leonine, ma di volpe> [Inf.XXVI.74-5]), he entered the Franciscan order only to be called from his retreat by Boniface VIII, <principe de'nuovi Farisei>, and ordered to devise a scheme that would allow the Pontifex to destroy the Colonna family and capture their stronghold, Palestrina. At first Guido refuses, but when Boniface reminds him that <Lo ciel poss'io serrare e disserrare> [Inf.XXVI.103] and assures the reluctant friar that the papal absolution will

¹⁴cf. I.Samuel, Dante and Milton, pp.85-93.

¹⁵G.Villani, Chroniche, VII.80, cf. VIII.23.

suffice to pardon his soul, he agrees and shows the Pope how to achieve his ambition. Unfortunately after death Guido finds that the demon who comes to collect him is not impressed by the papal pardon.

Francesco venne poi, com'io fu'morto,
per me; ma un d'i neri cherubini
li disse: "Non portar; non mi far torto.
Venire se ne dee giu tra'miei meschini
perche diede'l consiglio frodolente,
dal quale in qua stato li sono a'crini;
Ch'assolver non si può chi non si pente,
ne pentere e volere insieme puossi
per la contradizione che nol consente.

Inf.XXVII.112-20.

Evidently the Machiavellian deceits practiced by the Count of Montefeltro prepare the way for Satan's guile in the temptation, but Milton might also have remembered Dante's earlier encounter with the two frati godenti who abused their trust when they were made joint podestà of Florence. Villani's condemnation of the same pair who <sotto coverta di falsa ipocrisia furono in concordia più al guadagno loro proprio che al bene comune>¹⁶ accords with Dante's meeting with them in the <collegio | Degl'ipocriti tristi> [Inf.XXIII.91-2], where the damned literally bear the weight of their sins in gilded capes of lead: <cappe con cappucci bassi | ...fatti della taglia | Che in Cologna per li monaci fassi> [Inf.XXIII.61-3].

In Milton's poem on the gunpowder plot, In Quintum Novembris, Satan disguises himself as Saint Francis when he steals into the bedchamber of the Pope and suggests the plot to the sleeping Pontifex. ~~Thus~~ Thus Milton's satire with its image of unsuccessful attempts to steal into heaven through

¹⁶G.Villani, Chroniche, VII.13.

disguise counterbalances the successful temptation of man where Satan will use disguise and hypocrisy to deceive Uriel and slip into the garden.

However one more text would at once occur to Milton's "fit" readers on reading the description of the Paradise of Fools, the Erasmian satire, the Julius Exclusus, which revolves around a dialogue between the irate soul of Pope Julius II and Saint Peter when, despite all the former's insistence, the latter refuses to admit him to heaven. The satire begins with Julius pounding on the gates of heaven, that refuse to open to his key, and demanding to know why he had not been met on the way "with all the train of Heaven". The uproar brings Saint Peter to the gate.

Saint Peter: 'Tis well these are Adamantine Gates, else who ever this is, would have broke them down, sure this must be some mighty Giant, the subverter of Cities: But Foh! what common Sewer or Jakes is this I smell? I¹⁷ won't presently open the Gate, but out of the Wicket see if I can discover the wonder. What art thou? or, what wouldst have here?

Julius: Open you the Gate, Sir, as soon as you can: had you done your Duty, you ought¹⁸ to have come and met me with all the Train of Heaven.

¹⁷The Latin reads: <fenestrella cancellata prospectans>.

¹⁸The Pope Shut out of Heaven Gates: Or, A Dialogue Between Pope Julius the 2d., His Genius, and Saint Peter. Wherein is most elegantly, learnedly, and wittily set forth how Pope Julius (after death) imperiously knocking at Heaven Gates, is absolutely denied Entrance by Saint Peter: so that though having been alwayes stil'd His Holiness, and made famous by his Warlike Actions, whereby he hoped to become Lord of Heaven, he is not withstanding delivered over as a Slave to Satan, and hurried away to the Devil's Mansion, London, Printed for Roger Vaughan in Bishop's Court in the Old-Baily, and are to be sold by the Book-sellers 1673. Where it remains faithful to the latin I have chosen to use this lively

If Saint Peter is unimpressed by the appearance of Julius with his "Triple Crown and Robes everywhere shining with Gold and precious Stones" or his train of ganymedes and soldiers, ~~he~~ he is even less impressed by Julius' threat to:

fulminate upon you a Thunderbolt of Excommunication fiercer than those wherewith I used to Terrify the Mightiest Kings and Kingdoms. Do you see this Bull already prepared to that purpose?

Nor does Julius' final threat to storm heaven with his sixty-thousand followers succeed in opening the gates.

In Milton's eyes the Erasmian satire of Julius the destroyer of cities would link the Pope with the biblical giants in the first group of fools. Inversely the turn of phrase in the English poet's denigration of the authors of Babel who "still with vain designe | New Babels, had they wherewithall, would build" [III.467-8] echoes anti-Papal propaganda which identified Rome with the New Babylons of Revelation. ~~Thus~~¹⁹ Thus Sin and Death's construction of the great bridge across the abyss of chaos "by wondrous art | Pontifical" [X.312-3] completes the ironical balance between the two episodes.

One final element in Milton's Limbo requires, I think, some comment and that is its relevance to the poet's own state. By

¹⁸ (continued)
paraphrase. Latin text from W.K.Ferguson (ed.), Erasmi Opuscula: A Supplement to the Opera Omnia, Hague 1933. Though Erasmus denied authorship of the satire, proofs and explanation of the denial are summarised in the same work, pp.42-8.

¹⁹ Revelation 14.8; 16.19; 17.1-19.10.

its very nature limbo acts as a suspension between two states, midway between the two but participating in neither. An especial form of limbo is the condition of the blind man who can hear, smell, touch and taste; but whose single infirmity separates him from the living world and confines him to a personal darkness and the life of the mind. The sense of frustration at his infirmity expressed and resolved by Milton in the sonnet "When I consider how my light is spent" is not irrelevant to his Limbo of Vanity, especially given Ariosto's use of the mondo della luna as an image for his own wits lost through love. Satan sees the Paradise of Fools as a:

boundless Continent
 Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
 Starless expos'd...
 Save on that side which from the wall of Heav'n
 Though distant farr som small reflection gaines
 Of glimmering air III.423-9.

This echoes the poet's own imprisonment as he strains his clear eyes for light, but finds "cloud instead, and ever-during dark" [III.45] illuminated only by his cry "Celestial light | Shine inwards" [III.51-2]. Thus the Limbo and its wandering monsters "who in vain things | Built thir fond hopes of Glorie or lasting fame" [III.448-9] also identify the Paradise of Fools as the final resting place for some of Milton's own aspirations.

CHAPTER 4.

Milton's Eden and the Renaissance Garden of Circe.

Se di questo gentil giardino ameno,
 Graziosi Lettor, vi desse il core
 Le tempie ornarvi, o vero empiervi il seno
 Di qualche dolce frutto, o vago fiore,
 Non saria l'util vostro forse meno,
 Né la vittoria, e la gloria minore,
 Nel grado vostro, di quella d'Orlando,
 Se l'andate fra voi considerando.

Detto v'ho già, che sotto a queste cose
 Strane, che in questo libro scritte sono,
 Creder bisogna, ch'altri sieno ascose,
 E che dall'istrumento vari il suono;
 E che sotto alle spine stian le rose,
 E sempre qualche documento buono
 Sia coperto co'pruni, e con l'ortica,
 Perchè si duri a trovarlo fatica.

In the Orlando Innamorato the physical and moral prowess of the hero is put to a severe test by the beautiful enchanted garden of the witch Falerina where, after killing the monstrous dragon at the gate, Orlando has to pass through a cross between a Herculean psychomachia and a moral obstacle course. Fortunately the paladin possesses a plan of the garden, so he is well armed against the traps which beset the unsuspecting visitor to this locus amoenus, such as a Siren who sings <si dolcemente> that <Per la dolcezza convenian dormire> [OI.II.iv.37], which allows the siren, who has previously hidden her serpentine coils beneath the water, to emerge and tear her sleeping victims apart (a fate Orlando circumvents by stuffing roses into the lugs of his ears and pretending to sleep before suddenly leaping to his feet to

¹Berni, II.v.1-2.

decapitate the unsuspecting Siren with a single blow of his sword); a monstrous bull with <un corno di ferro ed un di foco> [OI.II.iv.40]; a bird that sprays drops of poisonous water; an ass with an enchanted hide, serpentine ears and a stinging tail; a faun that lays nooses for the unwary among tables decked with food and drink; a giant who once slain springs up again twofold; and finally a tree whose uppermost branch, if plucked, will dissolve the garden, but which protects itself with an unclimbable trunk and immense solid-gold apples that come hurtling down at the slightest footfall (a Gordian problem which Orlando solves by constructing a portable shelter of mud and branches to cover him as he runs to the base of the tree and with a blow of his sword chops the trunk in half). As the tree falls the whole garden vanishes into thin air leaving the hero in a bare plain with the witch and the satisfaction of a task well completed.²

In the rifacimento Francesco Berni presents himself as puzzling over this garden's allegorical intent, which he tells the reader that each must solve for himself.

Io non m'intendo di filosofia,
 E non vo fare il dotto, ne'l messere:
 Ma che non sia nascosta allegoria
 Sotto queste fantastiche chimere,
 Non mel farebbe creder tutto'l Mondo,
 E che non abbian senso alto, e profondo.

But he does proffer suggestions about possible interpretations.

Considerate un poco in coscienza
 Se quella donna, che'l libretto porse
 Al conte, potesse esser la prudenzia,

²M.Murrin, The Allegorical Epic, University of Chicago Press 1980, pp.53-86.

Che salvo pel giardin sempre lo scorse,
 Cioè pel Mondo, e se con riverenzia
 Quell'asino, e quel toro, e drago, forse,
 E quel Gigante, esser potessin mai
 I varj vizi, e le fatiche, e'guai,

Che vi son dentro, e se quella catena
 Posta sotto le mense apparecchiate,
 Volesses, verbigrazia, dir la pena
 Delle genti, ch'al ventre si son date:
 E quella Fauna, e quell'altra Serena,
 Mille altri van piacer, ch'alle brigate
 Mostran bel viso, ed hanno poi la coda
 Di velen pieno, e di puzza, e di broda. Berni. II. v. 4-5.

As even casual readers are aware, such allegorical gardens abound in the Italian chivalric romances, though the uniformity of the theme should not blind us to the diversity within the genre (for example the four very different gardens of the Orlando Innamorato).³ In the works of medieval authors the garden can stand for alternative monastic or aristocratic havens; but Renaissance poets preoccupied with the image of man in nature were concerned with the garden as the symbolic broken reflection of man's first perfection transformed into an emblem of vicious sensuality, the garden of Circe. Through Medieval and Renaissance moral allegory the Island of Aea, < ἔνθα δ' ἔθαιε | Κίρκη εὐπλόκαμος > [Od. X. 135-6], becomes the archetypal hortus deliciarum, where the metamorphosis of Odysseus' companions into swine becomes in Aristotelian terms the transformation through vice to brutishness. The change in external form acts as the image of the same change in the inner nature. The garden thus becomes a microcosmic image of man's post-lapsarian state as Harington's discussion of the

³Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, Dragontina: I.vi.43-53, ix.65-x.7, xix.38-47; Falerina: ~~II.viii.4-xi.41~~; Morgana: II.viii.4-ix.41; Fata della Fontana: II.xxxi.46-8, III.i.20-ii.39.

I.xvii.7-9; II.iv.15-v.15;

opposite gardens of Alcina and Logistilla in the Orlando

Furioso makes clear:

The nature of man (by which is vnderstood our appetite or affection), which ought to be subiect to reason and to be governed thereby, this nature (I say) was at the first a lawfull child of God, and was by the spirit of God framed to his own likenesse, there to gouerne and rule by reason and wisdom, so that afore nature was corrupted, all the parts of our minde were in a perfect accord and harmonie, vnder the gouvernement of reason, or rather euery one setting forward it selfe to vertuous actions: but when this first perfection was lost, and that the same great rebellion was made, to a ouerthrow of that quiet and settled state, the heart became so weake, as it was not able to indure the continuall assaults of the passions that assayled it, and in the end was content to take part with them against the reasonable part of the minde. And now euery part of the body engenders such seeds of concupiscence, that nature is become a bastard sister to reason, and vsurps that gouvernement that is due onely to her, and leaueth her only one castle, which was so strongly situated that it was impregnable: so that now reason is retired as it were to her principall fortresse, to the head, the rest of this kingdome being possessed (by Alcyna) by pleasure and fond delights.⁴

⁴J.Harington, A Brief and Summarie Allegorie of Orlando Furioso. Not Vnpleasant Nor Vnprofitable for those that haue read the former Poeme in Orlando Furioso, pp.405-14: 409.

Harington is repeating Gioseffo Bononome, Allegoria sopra il Furioso in L.Ariosto, Orlando Furioso...Nuouamente adornato di Figure di Rame da Girolamo Porro, Venice, Appresso Francesco de'Franceschi Senese e compagni 1584, f.**7:

Ma che vuol dire, che Alcina, & Logistilla sono sorelle, quella bastarda, & questa legitima, & che la bastarda ha preualuto, & ha robbato il Regno alla leggitima, che a pena le rimase una sola Rocca? Eccone l'espositione. La natura humana, che dovea reggersi, & rendere vbidienza alla mente, doue regna la sapienza. Questa leggitima figliuola fù di Dio, scolpita dalla mente sua, & posta nella natura humana, perche iui ella reggesse, & dominasse: onde prima che la natura nostra fosse corrotta, tutte le parti erano in noi d'accordo volentieri con l'attioni della virtù, & si reggeuano sotto il governo di questa: né si trouaua alcuna parte in noi, che a lei repugnasse. Ma poi che perduta la prima rettitudine, fu fatta quella gran ribellione, & riuolgimento di questo Regno, il core diventò debole, & però è tuttavia combattuto da gli affetti, & repugna, & (Footnote continued)

The great influence of such interim commentary in sixteenth-century editions of the Orlando Furioso on the English epic tradition can be seen in the first book of the Faerie Queene where, typologically, Christ's redemption of man is acted out in the victory of the Red Crosse Knight over the Old Dragon.

Within the poem Una:

by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Western shore,
And all the world in their subiection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule vprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld. EQ.I.i.5.

Through the juxtaposition of pre- and postlapsarian universes this kingdom is defined as both the whole world and specifically Eden itself or "all the territories, | Which Phison and Euphrates floweth by, | And Gehons golden waves doe wash continually" [I.vii.43]. After the onslaught of the dragon the "King of Eden faire" [I.xii.26] is confined to a single "brasen towre" obviously reminiscent of Ariosto's realm of Logistilla. Likewise the three days of conflict between knight and dragon are waged through the ruins of the former Eden which nonetheless in places conserves its former power. Twice the knight is overwhelmed by smoke and fire. On the first occasion he falls into the "well of life" [I.xi.29]; on the second he is saved by waters flowing from the roots of the

⁴(continued)

corre precipitoso contra la mente: nel fegato sono tanti fomenti di concupiscenza, che non possiamo più sostenergli. In questa maniera dopo vna rebellion cosi grande, questa sorella bastarda attende a i piaceri, & signoreggia, non si douendo a lei questo Regno. La mente...se ne sta nel capo, come fuggita in vna Rocca; poi che l'altre parti del Regno sono state occupate dalla bastarda Alcina.

tree of life, "the crime of our first fathers fall" [I.xi.46]. Spenser's unification of the romance allegorical tradition with the spiritual conflict waged between the knight and the Dragon, each a type of Christ or Satan, prepares the way for Milton's use of romance structure in the plot of Paradise Lost.

If we compare the Renaissance interpretation of Circe's island as the garden of vices with the original Homeric account, the two prove to be totally incompatible. In Homer half of Odysseus' crew go to Circe's house under the command of Eurylochus. The house stands in the middle of a forest and around it prowl wolves and lions, victims of Circe's drugs, that, instead of attacking the Ithacans, fawn on them like dogs on their master. Hearing Circe singing as she works at her loom they call out and the Goddess appears at the door to invite them inside (Eurylochus however is suspicious and remains outside). Circe feasts her guests on cheese, barley-meal and yellow honey flavoured with Pramnian wine, but in the food is a powerful drug which deprives them of all memory of their native land. When the meal is over Circe strikes each of Odysseus' companions with her wand and drives them out to the pigpens. But though in appearance they have become swine and can only grunt, their minds remain unchanged and they weep tears at their transformation.

When Odysseus learns of his men's fate from Eurylochus he sets out to rescue them. On the way he encounters Hermes, the messenger of the Gods, who gives him the root of the plant moly to nullify the effect of Circe's spells.⁵ When Circe attempts to transform Ulysses, ordering him off to the

pigsties, the hero draws his sword and rushes at her, so that the Goddess surrenders in terror and agrees to transform his men back to their human state.

The Renaissance allegories have their roots in classical writings,⁶ but the Circe myth was taken up by the Florentine neo-platonists, as can be seen by a letter from Pico della Mirandola translated by Sir Thomas More:

There was some time in Aea a woman called Circe, which by enchantment...used with a drink to turn as many men as received it into divers likeness and figures of sundry beasts; some into lions, some into bears, some into swine, some into wolves, which afterward walked ever tame about her house, and waited upon her in such use or service as she list to put upon them. In like wise the flesh, if it make us drunk with the wine of voluptuous pleasure, or make the soul leave the noble use of his reason and incline unto sensuality and affections of the body: then the flesh changeth us from the figure of reasonable men into the likeness of unreasonable beasts, and that diversely: after the convenience and similitude between our sensual affections and the brutish properties of sundry beasts.

In the Mythologiae Natalis Comes posited a link between the kind of animal and the nature of the vice,⁸ while George

⁵N.Comes, Mythologiae, VI.vi, p.174-5, interprets Moly as <divina clementia>, Ulysses as <humana sapientia> and Circe as:

libido...cum naturalis sit titillatio ad voluptates excitans; si nobis dominetur, belluarum vitia in animis nostris imprimit.

⁶Servius, op.cit., vol.II, p.127 [VII.1920:

Circe autem ideo Solis fingitur filia, quia clarissima meretrix fuit, et nihil est sole clarius. haec libidine sua et blandimentis homines in ferinam vitam ab humana deducebat, ut libidini et voluptatibus operam darent. Corrumpebatur enim in illis sensus: animus namque idem manebat.

⁷Sir Thomas More, Works, ed.W.E.Campbell, London 1930-1, vol.1, pp.10-11, cited in M.Y.Hughes, Spenser's Acrasia and the Circe of the Renaissance, Journal of the History of Ideas, IV, 1943, pp.381-99.

Sandys, commenting on the herb Moly, likewise sees the metamorphosis of Odysseus' companions as:

their headstrong appetites, which revolt from the sovereignty of reason (by which we are onely like unto God, and armed against our depraved affections) nor ever returne into their Country (from whence the soule deriveth her caelestiall originall) unlesse disenchanted, and cleansed from their former impurity. For as Circes rod, waved over their heads from the right side to the left: presents those false and sinister perswasions of pleasure, which so much deforms them: so the reversion thereof, by discipline, and a view of their owne deformity, restores them to their former beauties.⁹

One humorous element in these Renaissance gardens of vice is the emergence of a character who refuses to revert to his human shape and prefers to remain a hog. The idea first appears in one of Plutarch's dialogues where < Γρύλλος > ingeniously argues against a rather slow-witted Odysseus that pigs are better off and happier than men. The hog also defines man as < τὸ πάντων βάρυποτμότατον ζῷον > and his would-be rescuer as the < σχετιώτατε > who introduced trickery and deceit into war.¹⁰ Gian Battista Gelli wrote his Circe around various different animals who refuse to admit the superiority of the human form. Eventually^{the} elephant is the only beast^{whom} the Ithacan is able to convince of the <grandezza

⁸N.Comes, Mythologiae, VI.vi, p.175:

pro flagitiorum igitur natura, ad quae quisque erat propensus, in varias animalium brutorum formas vertebatur. nam libidinosi, sues; iracundi aut ursi fiebant; & reliqui eodem pacto.

The idea may originate from Claudian, In Rufinum II, ll.480-90. See also Sir W.Raleigh, Historie of the World, I.ii. ch.2,6, p.27.

⁹G.Sandys, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.480.

¹⁰Plutarch, Bruta Animalia Ratione Uti in Moralia vol.XII, ed.H.Cherniss and W.C.Helmbold, Heinemann, Loeb Classical Library 1962, 985-92: 987.

dell'uomo, e quanto egli sia, mediante l'intelletto, più nobile di ciascuno altro animale>¹¹ and ~~and~~^{who} agrees to resume his human shape. In the Orlando Furioso when Bradamante breaks the spell on the enchanted castle in the Pyrenees which previously has appeared as the most pleasing kind of Renaissance court and it disappears, Ariosto comments: <E furon di lor molte a chi ne dolse; | Che tal franchezza un gran piacer lor tolse>.¹² In the Faerie Queene after the Bower of Blisse has been spoiled and Acrasia is being led in chains, Guyon and the Palmer are attacked by wild beasts. The explanation of the beasts' conduct proves the Renaissance model to be the exact opposite of its Homeric original, since not only are their minds as monstrous as their bodies, but when they resume human shape, where Odysseus' companions were more handsome than before, the victims of Acrasia regret the loss of their bestial pleasures, while Gryll actively abuses his benefactors.¹³

However Renaissance readers would find little or nothing in the Homeric island of Circe that would recall their idea of

¹¹G.B.Gelli, La Circe in Dialoghi, ed.R.Tissoni, Bari, Laterza 1967; cf. Henry Iden, Circes of John Baptista Gello Florentine, London 1557.

¹²Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, IV.39; cf. J.Harington, Orlando Furioso, p.29:

In this fourth booke, whereas dissembling is praised, we may note in what sort and with what persons it is allowable, seeing generally in it selfe it is a most unnoble and unworthy quality. In that Bradamant by the ring doth discover Atalantas inchantments, and frustrate all his purposes, we may note, how reason tempered with courage, prevailes to the overthrow of all deceits and subtill practises.

¹³Spenser, Faerie Queene, II.xii.85-6.

the archetypal hortus deliciarum, though elsewhere Odysseus is held for seven years in a natural paradise by the nymph Calypso; but in Homer the image of the locus amoenus exists only in the Garden of Alcinoos. Thus the growth of the Homeric island into the Renaissance garden drew on other sources.¹⁴ Though Odysseus' sojourns on the islands of Circe and Calypso and Aeneas' love for Dido form one strand,¹⁵ another important element is the combination of two separate legends from the life of Achilles which Renaissance authors merged: first the withdrawal from the Greek army to sit sulking in his tent after the quarrel with Agamemnon which Homer made the subject of the Iliad; second his concealment as a girl in the court of King Lycomedes by his mother Thetis and his discovery by Odysseus and Diomedes.

The Homeric account of how Achilles quarrels with Agamemnon over Briseis and then sits idling in his tent while the Greeks are driven back from the walls of Troy by Hector was not always an easy one for Renaissance poets to translate into

¹⁴See A.B.Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic, Princeton U.P. 1966.

¹⁵G.Boccaccio, Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri, XIV.13, p.723:

Et sic intendit pro Dydone concupiscibilem et attractivam potentiam, oportunitatibus omnibus armatam. Eneam autem pro quocunque ad lubricum apto et demum capto. Tandem ostenso, quo trahamur in scelus ludibrio, que via in virtutem revehamur, ostendit, inducens Mercurium, deorum interpretem, Eneam ab illecebra increpantem atque ad gloriosa exhortantem. Per quem Virgilius sentit seu conscientie proprie morsum, seu amici et eloquentis hominis redargutionem, a quibus, dormientes in luto turpitudinum, excitamur, et in rectum pulchrumque revocamur iter, id est ad gloriam. Et tunc nexum oblectationis infauste solvimus, quando, armati fortitudine, blanditio, lacrimas, preces, et huius modi in contrarium trahentes, constanti animo spernimus, ac vilipendentes omittimus.

their own terms, since the Homeric Achilles seemed too brutish and violent a figure to make into an heroic exemplar, albeit an errant one.¹⁶ Therefore the Renaissance heroes modelled on Achilles are diluted figures, the quarrel is rewritten (often with a third character introduced as agent provocateur) to make the cause a misunderstanding, thus leaving both the hero and the commander free from blame. In the Gerusalemme Liberata the quarrel is provoked by Gernando who is killed by Rinaldo, while Godfrey, when he passes judgement, is unaware of the true situation.

The story of Achilles' discovery in the court of King Lycomedes was known to the Renaissance from two main classical sources: first a brief mention in the debate between Ulysses and Ajax in the Metamorphoses for the arms of Achilles where the former describes how he found Achilles and brought him to Troy, thus inflicting immense harm on the Trojans;¹⁷ second Statius' unfinished Achilleid. Knowing that her son must face the choice between immortal glory and a premature death or long life and obscurity, Thetis disguises the young Achilles as a girl and hides him among the daughters of King Lycomedes. The Greeks learn from an oracle that they can only capture Troy through the might of Achilles and so Ulysses and Diomedes come, ostensibly on a visit of friendship to Lycomedes. They bear with them gifts to the king and his family. According to Boccaccio however, Ulysses came alone disguised as a merchant.

Ceterum cum coniurassent in Troianos Greci, et responso

¹⁶J.M.Steadman, Achilles and Renaissance Epic in Lebende Antike, Symposion für Rudolf Sühnel, ed.H.Meller and H.-J.Zimmerman, Berlin 1967, pp.139-54.

¹⁷Ovid, Metamorphoses, XIII.162-70.

accepissent absque Achille capi Troiam non posse, ad eum exquirendum Ulixes missus est. Quem cum audisset in muliebri habitu apud filias Lycomedis clam teneri, ne loco iuvenis virginem auferret, novam commentus est fraudem, dumque se mercatorem finxisset, et iocalia, quibus delectari se virgines consuevere, filiabus Lycomedis apposuisset, inter ea arcum posuit et pharetram, arbitratus Achillem, si illis immixtus esset, arcum sumpturum. Nec defuit cogitationi successus. Quem postquam arcum trahentem cognovit, facile suasionibus induxit, ut se sequeretur in bellum.¹⁸

According to Statius the gifts were not a bow and a quiver of arrows, but a mighty spear and shield: <radiantem...orbem | caelatum pugnas, saevis et forte rubebat | bellorum maculis>.¹⁹ In the Achilleid the hero is constrained not only by his mother's command, but also by his love for the king's daughter, Deidamia. As the daughters of Lycomedes inspect the gifts set out by Ulysses, thinking the arms a gift for their father, they pay no attention to them; but one gazes on the shield and spear with longing. Ulysses, realizing that this must be Achilles, whispers in his ear to pick them up. The poet describes how as Achilles blushes as he catches sight of his effeminate appearance in the polished surface of the shield. At a signal from Ulysses Diomedes sounds a blast of his war trumpet, the girls scatter in terror, Achilles catches up the shield and reveals his true identity. Thus he chooses death and glory: <Nusquam mandata parentis, | nusquam occultus amor, totoque in pectore Troia est>.²⁰

¹⁸ G. Boccaccio, Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri, XII.52, pp.608-9. In Inferno XXII.61-2 Ulysses and Diomedes are punished for the <aguato del caval> and <l'arte perche morta | Deidamia ancor si duol d'Achille, | E del Palladio pena vi si porta>.

¹⁹ P. Papinius Statius, Achilleis, ed. H.W. Garrod, OUP 1906, I.852-3.

²⁰ Ibid., I.856-7.

When in the Renaissance epics these two episodes from the life of Achilles are merged with the legend of Circe, the physical transformation wrought by Homer's witch on the followers of Odysseus is limited to a moral metamorphosis. Neglecting his heroic duty the Renaissance Achilles wallows in a "sensual sty"; but now the real emphasis falls on the love trap. What also comes to assume increasing importance through Medieval and Renaissance moral allegory is the figure of the peccant hero's discoverer or hero. The original search for Achilles by Ulysses and Diomedes is not fraught with difficulty; but the romance epics introduce the idea of a chivalric quête, making the search for the disaffected and concealed hero increasingly arduous and complex. Thus gradually the interest of the poets moves from the hero to the rescuer(s), who can just be a powerful knight such as Orlando who undoes the gardens of Falerina and Morgana in Boiardo; but, with Ulysses' cunning as archetype, superhuman force is less popular than cunning and crafty infiltration, such as that displayed by Angelica, also in the Orlando Innamorato, when she uses her magic ring to enter the garden of Dragontina unseen by the guards.²¹ Indeed Trissino suggests that in such a situation the use of deception and cunning is laudable. In the Italia Liberata dai Goti Traiano is told by an angel that even for good the end always justifies the means:

Gia non è male usare ingegni, e fraudi
 Contra il nemico suo, pur che si vinca;
 Che più la fraude il vincitore onora,
 Che non onora la fortezza il vinto.²²

²¹Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I.xiv.39-48.

²²G.G.Trissino, L'Italia liberata dai Goti, IV, p.40b.

Ruggiero and the Island of Alcina.

When the glorious founder of the House of Este foolishly climbs onto the back of the Hippogrif and finds himself borne up and away three thousand miles from Bradamante to the island of Alcina, we discover that this is no chance event but a fresh scheme of the wizard Atlante. Where in Homeric epic the interference of some gods in favour of the Greeks against the explicit will of Zeus seems to stem rather from the needs of the narrative than any sense of a larger scheme of things, in the Aeneid and the Renaissance epics the actions of what can be termed the counter-fate or the powers seeking to prevent the decrees of fate being actuated, such as Juno's attempt in the Aeneid to divert the Trojans to Carthage or Atlante's plans to save Ruggiero by locking him away in one of a number of enchanted realms, are in reality part of the mechanism of a larger fate, which in Virgil marks the tanta moles of suffering and human lives that will be the price for the foundation and history of Rome. Ariosto's commentators were quick to point to the parallels between Ruggiero's sojourn on the island of Alcina and Aeneas' stay in Carthage as one of the merits of the Orlando Furioso:

Aeneas hath his Dido that retaineth him. Rogero hath his Alcina: finally lest I should note every part, there is nothing of any speciall observation in Virgil, but my author hath with great felicity imitated it.²³

²³J. Harington, A Preface, or rather a Briefe Apologie of Poetrie in Orlando Furioso, ff. P2^v-8; P6^v; cf. Fausto da Longiano, in Annotationi, et Avvertimenti di Girolamo Ruscelli in Orlando Furioso di M. Lodovico Ariosto... Con le annotationi,

What Harington also emphasizes for the readers is the "allegorical sense" of the episode, considering these "two bookes (to) be in a manner of meere Allegory from the beginning to the ending".²⁴ Therefore:

we may understand the Griffeth horse that carried him (Ruggiero), to signifie the passion of the minde contrary to reason, that caries men in the aire, that is, in the height of their imaginations, out of Europe, that is out of the compasse of the rules of Christian religion and feare of God, unto the Ile of Alcyna; which signifieth pleasure and vanities of this world.²⁵

When Ruggiero finally comes down to earth he finds himself in a paradise.

Vaghi boschetti di soavi allori,
Di palme e d'amenissime mortelle,
Cedri et aranci ch'avean frutti e fiori
Contesti in varie forme e tutte belle,
Facean riparo ai fervidi calori
De'giorni estivi con lor spesse ombrelle;
E tra quei rami con sicuri voli
Cantando se ne giano i rosignuoli.

VI.21.

But Ruggiero's pleasure in the scenery is abruptly spoiled when the bush he has tied the hippogrif to speaks out in protest at having its branches broken.

Though the miserable ends of Virgil's Polydorus and Dante's Pier della Vigna provide precedents for Ariosto's vociferous and bleeding bush,²⁶ who identifies himself as the paladin

²³(continued)

gli Avertimenti, & le Dichiarationi di Girolamo Ruscelli. La Vita dell'Autore, descritta dal Signor Giouan Battista Pigna. Gli scontri de'luoghi mutati dall'Autore doppo la sua prima impressione. La Dichiaratione di tutte le Istorie, & fauole toccate nel presente libro, fatta da M.Nicolo Eugenio,

Venice, Appresso Vincenzo Valgrisi 1560, p.555.

²⁴J.Harington, Orlando Furioso, p.55.

²⁵Ibid., p.47.

Astolfo transformed into a myrtle by Alcina, as is the fate of all her lovers <perche essi non vadano pel mondo | Di lei narrando la vita lasciva> [VI.50], here the choice of "Venus' tree" comments aptly on Astolfo's amorous conduct since he:

was so entangled in Venerie, that he could not get himselfe out of it, therefore he is fayned to have taken roote in the ground as the tree doth.²⁷

His unpleasant imprisonment also identifies Alcina as a wicked and lascivious Renaissance Circe.

Alarmed by the fate of Astolfo from whom Ruggiero now learns that the island is divided between three sisters, Morgana, Alcina and Logistilla, the first two <inique e scelerate | E piene d'ogni vizio infame e brutto>, while the third <vivendo in castitate, | Posto ha ne le virtuti il suo cor tutto> [VI.44], the hero decides to make for the latter's castle in the highest part of the realm, a proper choice of ways which effectively casts him (for the moment) as a "new Hercules"²⁸ set on the "craggy and painful way"²⁹ of virtue.

In his climb the palace of Alcina comes into sight. When contrasted with the later description of Logistilla's castle, we see the ambivalence in Renaissance thinking of the garden as a symbol for the human condition, since both types of locus amoenus display the essential features of beauty and eternal spring; but the former is false alchemy whereas the other is the product of applied rationality. In Logistilla's garden the trees <adorni son l'estate e il verno tutti | Di vaghi

²⁶Virgil, Aeneid, III.19-68; Dante, Inferno, XIII.28-108.

²⁷J.Harington, A Briefe Allegorie, p.410.

²⁸Ibid., p.409.

²⁹Ibid., p.410.

fiori e di maturi frutti> [X.61], not the product of a conjuring trick but of the good fairy's <studio e cura, | Senza bisogno de'moti superni> [X.63]. Instead of a mere reflection the gems set on the walls of Logistilla's castle show the inner nature of the onlooker.

Unfortunately for Ruggiero's good intentions his path is blocked by a "monstrous crew" with their captain "riding on a Tortesse in token of sloth". The band of vices and their leader are characterised by Bononome as:

l'otio, come sua cagione adiutrice, il quale grasso, gonfio, & imbrocio...è descritto mouersi a lenti passi sopra una pigra testudine, & è capitano d'un essercito mostruoso, parte del quale ha testa di cane, parte collo di grue, parte cavalca vn'asino, parte un bue: alcuni hanno viso di scimmia, alcuni sono armati di palo di ferro, & altri d'uncino, & altri di lima sorda, volendo il Poeta mostrarci, che dal non distender le mani alle fatiche ne nasce, che gli huomini diuentano maledici, golosi, ignoranti, pigri, buffoni, mariuoli, assassini, ladri, & vengono a cadere in altri mostruosi vitiij.³⁰

Unlike Circe's lions and wolves these creatures attack Ruggiero who defends himself vigorously; but unfortunately his resolve is weakened by the arrival of two beautiful young ladies riding unicorns:

which some understand by chaste love, or at least a shew of honourable love, or rather I suppose thereby to be meant ambition and desire of advancement.³¹

They invite Ruggiero to take their part against the giantess Erifilla and his courteous nature does not know how to refuse. But in reality the monstrous Giantess mounted on a wolf is not a danger to Alcina's court, though she is a test of Ruggiero's

³⁰ Bononome, Allegoria, **6^v; cf. J. Harington, A Briefe Allegorie, p.406.

³¹ J. Harington, Orlando Furioso, p.47.

willingness to become enmeshed in vice since:

many men are stopt from this course of folly, in regard of the great charge and expence thereof, and so stay at this bridge; and though no consideration of vertue withhold them, yet feare of the charge doth terrifie them.³²

Naturally the generous Ruggiero has no trouble in bowling over this formidable opponent. Now he is admitted into the delights of Alcina's palace, full of things:

that allure most to sensuality, ...kind entertainment, ...sumptuous building...artificiall behaviour and exquisite beautie, set forth with all cunning...musick and wanton sonnets of love:...riotous fare with all kind of delicacies to provoke venery...wanton discourses and purposes, of which commonly their last purpose is to lie together...perfumes and all effeminate delicacies, in all which we see, the eye, the eare, the tast, the smelling, the feeling, the wit, the thoughts, all fed with their objects of delight, making men quite to forget God and all good counsell.³³

Not only is Ruggiero completely seduced and overwhelmed by Alcina, but he even convinces himself that the account of her wickedness and the proofs of her cruelty heard from Astolfo must be lies provoked by spite and jealousy.

Anzi pur creder vuol che da costei
Fosse converso Astolfo in su l'arena
Per li suoi portamenti ingrati e rei,
E sia degno di questa e di più pena:
E tutto quel ch'udito avea di lei,
Stima esser falso; e che vendetta mena,
E mena astio et invidia quel dolente
A lei biasmare, e che del tutto mente.

VII.17.

Though Ariosto informs us that this foolish opinion is the consequence of a spell cast by Alcina, the poet's arch tone is not entirely convincing.

Fortunately for the future of the Este dynasty, if Ruggiero

³²J.Harington, A Briefe Allegorie, p.407.

³³J.Harington, Orlando Furioso, p.54.

is forgetful of himself and his duties to posterity, others are not and Melissa is already planning his rescue:

E ben sapea che stava in giuoco e in ballo
E in cibo e in ozio molle e delicato,
Né più memoria avea del suo signore,
Né de la donna sua né del suo onore.

VII.40.

However the success of her plan depends first, like Ulysses' discovery of Achilles, on a little innocent deception; second on the ring of Angelica (taken by Bradamante from Brunello) which can either make the bearer invisible or break any kind of magic spell.

Ariosto himself speculates on how such a ring would help the bearer to uncloak the hypocrisies and deceits of a Renaissance court:

Chi l'anello d'Angelica, o più tosto
Chi avesse quel de la ragion, potria
Veder a tutti il viso, che nascosto
Da finzione o d'arte non saria.

VIII.2.

Given such a broad hint from the poet the commentators unanimously conclude that Angelica's ring "signifieth reason", while Harington interprets Melissa as "the divine inspiration of the grace of God, calling him (Ruggiero) from the damned course of life".

Armed with the anello della ragione Melissa summons a demon to carry her to the island of Alcina, where, rather than appear in her own guise, to speak with greater authority she dons the semblance of Atlante.

Quivi mirabilmente trasmutosse:
S'accrebbe più d'un palmo di statura,
E fe' la membra a proporzion più grosse;
E restò a punto di quella misura
Che si pensò che'l negromante fosse,
Quel che nutrì Ruggier con sì gran cura.
Vestì di lunga barba le mascelle,

E fe' crespa la fronte e l'altra pelle.

Di faccia, di parole e di sembiante
Si lo seppe imitar, che totalmente
Potea parer l'incantatore Atlante.

VII.51-2.

Thus disguised Melissa slips into the garden of Alcina and searches for Ruggiero, whom by chance she finds on his own without the witch: <E fu gran sorte; che di stare o d'ire | Senza esso un'ora potea mal patire> [VII.52]. Despite his sexual excesses Ruggiero has not yet been transformed into an animal or bush, but the "notable allurements of fleshy sensuality" have brought sartorial changes:

Il suo vestir delizioso e molle
Tutto era d'ozio e di lascivia pieno,
Che de sua man gli avea di seta e d'oro
Tessuto Alcina con sottil lavoro.

VII.53.

The poet judges that he looks more like a French serving-man than a warrior, but the passage obviously recalls:

Virgilio nel quarto della Eneida, doue il diuino Poeta finge Mercurio mandato da Giove ritrovare Enea in abito lasciuo e delicato. Il quale scordatosi de' celesti auisi, in poter di Didone, ordinaua le fortezze & le fabriche di Cartagine.³⁴

Of course the external garments reveal the state of the inner man: <Non era in lui di sano altro che'l nome: | Corrotto tutto il resto, e più che mezzo> [VII.55].

In the guise of Atlante Melissa angrily reproaches Ruggiero, reminding him that his moral decay will bring harm not only to himself but also to his descendants.

Se non ti muovon le tue proprie laudi,

³⁴ Girolamo Ruscelli, Raccolto di Molti Luoghi. Tolti e felicemente Imitati in piu Autori dall'Ariosto nel Furioso in Orlando Furioso, Venice, Valgrisi 1560.

E l'opre escelse a chi t'ha il cielo eletto,
 La tua succession perché defraudi
 Del ben che mille volte io t'ho predetto? VII.60.

She scornfully asks how the drudo d'Alcina will ever do anything of worth and, seeing his shame and confusion, slips the ring of Angelica on his finger with an order to look and see Alcina as she really is. (One might ask why she wastes words and does not do it immediately, though Ariosto would lose a discreet compliment to his patrons, since in strict romance terms the ring alone will break the spell, as happens in Boiardo's garden of Dragontina;³⁵ but the reproach, shame and repentance are of course stages in Ruggiero's recovery. The point shows Ariosto bending his plot to accommodate the psychology of his allegory.) Ruggiero looks and with the aid of the ring his sight is cleared so that he sees the true Alcina, the most hideous of hags: <Ritruova, contra ogni sua stima, invece | De la bella, che dianzi avea lasciata, | Donna sì laida, che la terra tutta | Né la più vecchia avea né la più brutta> [VII.72]. Such, Harington notes, is the "deformity of pleasure when it is beheld with reason".

Now Ruggiero has come to his senses, to escape he must also employ an element of deception since:

not withstanding that the Ring of Reason maketh him
 discerne these foule deformities of Alcyna, yet it is
 marvellous to see what wonderfull impediments be set in
 his way, ere he can discharge himselfe of his late
 received mistresse, ³⁶

On Melissa's advice he gives no sign to arouse Alcina's suspicions, but pretends that as a new game he wishes to try

³⁵Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato, I.xiv.43.

³⁶J.Harington, A Briefe Allegorie, p.407.

on his armour: <Finse provar s'in esse era aiutante, | Finse provar se gli era fatto grosso, | Dopo alcun dì che non l'ha avute indosso> [VII.75]. Only once he is fully armed does he break out of the <lascivo e molle | Palazzo...de la puttana vecchia> [VII.79], heading for the kingdom of Logistilla, which he finally reaches safely after truly Herculean trials and tribulations.

Rinaldo and the Garden of Armida.

When Rinaldo, the <sdegno guerrier de la ragion feroce>, a title reminiscent of the Homeric <Μῆνιν Ἀχιλλῆος>, abandons the Christian camp after the quarrel in which he is provoked not by the arrogance of the commander but by an agent provocateur introduced by the poet, the young hero is ensnared by Armida who bears him off to an enchanted garden among the isole fortunate. The siege around Jerusalem begins to falter and the Christian army, debilitated by disease and internal strife, is unable to renew the lost siege machinery due to the spells cast on the forest by the magician Ismeno which terrify the work crews and which cannot be^e exorcised by the other Christian warriors.

In the Allegoria Tasso explains that the <due Magi Ismeno & Armida> introduced into the historical matter of the epic stand for:

due diaboliche tentationi, che insidiano a due potenze dell'anima nostra, dalle quali tutti i peccati procedono; Ismeno significa quella tentatione, che cerca d'ingannare con false credenze la virtù...opinatrice; Armida è la tentatione, che tende insidie alla potenza, che appetisce, & così da quello procedono gli errori dell'opinione, da questa quelli dell'appetito.

In the Christian army Rinaldo alone can break the spells of Ismeno <che ingannano con delusioni> and <significano...la falsità delle ragioni, & delle persuasioni>, because according to the allegorical sense he stands for the potenza irascibile of the human soul, whose task is defined as that of fighting temptations and desires.

è debito della Irascibile parte dell'animo guerriero, & robusta armarsi per la ragione contra le concupiscenze, & con quella vehemenza, & ferocità, che è propria di lei ribattere, & discacciare tutto quello, che può essere d'impedimento alla felicità.

However Tasso recognises that the very properties which make the potenza irascibile a good servant also make it a bad master, because it is the very faculty of the soul most likely to refuse the command of reason.

ma quando essa non ubidisce alla ragione; ma si lascia trasportare dal suo proprio impeto, alle volte avviene, che combatte non contra le concupiscenze: ma per le concupiscenze, o a guisa di Cane reo custode non morde i ladri; ma gli armenti.

The imprisonment of the potenza irascibile by the sensual and sexual appetite means that to disenchant the wood and restore the disturbed harmony of the human faculties commanded by Godfrey, Rinaldo has to be rescued from the garden of Armida.

The task is allotted not to a wizard nor to a mighty warrior such as Tancredi, but to two ordinary crusaders, Guelfo and Ubaldo,³⁸ who according to the directions of Peter

³⁷T. Tasso, Il Goffredo, Venice, Appresso Gratiano Perchachino 1581, ff.**1-4.

³⁸Ubaldo might stand for human experience:

Veduti...in giovenezza e cerchi
Vari costumi avea, vari paesi,
Peregrinando da i più freddi cerchi
(Footnote continued)

the Hermit <che..figura la cognitione sopranaturale, ricevuta per divina gratia> travel to the Mago d'Ascalona, who stands for humana sapienza in general and philosophy in particular.

Si finge, che questo Saggio fosse nel suo nascimento Pagano; ma che dall'Eremita convertito alla vera fede si sia renduto Christiano, & c'havendo deposta la sua prima arroganza, non molto presuma del suo sapere; ma s'acqueti al giudizio del Maestro, peroche la Filosofia nacque, & si nutre tra Gentili nell'Egitto, & nella Grecia, & di la a noi trapassò, presontuosa di se stessa, & miscredente, & audace, e superbo fuor di misura; Ma da San Tomaso, e da gli altri Santi Dottori è stata fatta discepola, & ministra della Theologia, & divenuta per opera loro modesta, e più religiosa, nessuna cosa ardisce temeramente affermare contra quello, che alla sua Maestà è rivelato.

Advised by the wizard the two crusaders travel in a boat steered by a woman with the iconographical traits of Fortuna through the Mediterranean out beyond the pillars of Hercules to the isole fortunate. There they see on the top of a mountain surrounded by ice and snow the magic garden where Armida is holding Rinaldo: <Quivi fra cibi ed ozio e scherzi e fole | torpe il campion de la cristiana fede> [XV.44].

The mountain has to be climbed; however unlike the Orlando Furioso the virtue of the climb lies not in its objective (Logistilla's kingdom), but in the very act of climbing, since it contrasts the strenuous virtue of the courageous pair with the idleness of the Rinaldo lying in the garden at the top. The intrepid duo find their way blocked by the monstrous animals we might expect to surround a Renaissance Circe:

Ciò che di mostruoso e di feroce
Erra fra'l Nilo e i termini d'Atlante
Par qui tutto raccolto, e quante belve

38 (continued)

Del nostro mondo a gli Etiopi accesi,
E come uom che virtute e senno merchi,
Le favelle, l'usanze e i riti appresi.

XIV.28.

L'Ercinia ha in sen, quante l'ircane selve. XV.51.

These threaten to attack, but they are all put to flight by a magic wand given by the magico d'Ascalona.

A far more insidious and tempting trial, especially after the labours of the climb, appears in the fonte del riso where the waters, if drunk, will bring the victim to death through immoderate and uncontrollable hilarity. A sumptuous feast is spread on the bank. In the pool two beautiful nymphs are playing and laughing. They invite the watching knights to remove their armour, lay down their weapons and join them: <Ma i cavalieri hanno indurate e sorde | L'alme a que'vezzi perfidi e bugiardi> [XV.65]. Tasso tells us that though they might feel a twinge of desire, stern reason prevents any weakening of the will:

E se di tal dolcezza entro trasfusa
Parte penetra onde il desio germoglie,
Tosto ragion ne l'arme sue rinchiusa
Sterpa e riseca le nascenti voglie. XV.66.

Strengthened by having overcome the momentary temptation the determined couple enter the <inestricabili conserte> of Armida's labyrinthine palace, constructed by demons as a <inosservabile e confuso | Ordin di loggie> to thwart unready visitors, where frescoes show Hercules travestied in female clothing and spinning among the women of Iole or Mark Anthony abandoning his fleet at Actium to follow Cleopatra.³⁹ But

³⁹W.Shakespeare, Anthony and Cleopatra, ed.M.R.Ridley, 9th ed., Arden 1960, II.v.26-8: "Ere the ninth houre, I drunke him to his bed: | Then ~~I~~ put my Tires and Mantles on him, whilst | I wore his sword Phillippan"; cf. Plutarch, Life of Anthony in
(Footnote continued)

Ubaldo has a plan of the maze given them by the mag so the rescuers pass easily through the <oblique vie di quel fallace ravigimento> into the garden <ch'adorno è sovra l'uso | di quanti più famosi unqua fioriro> [XVI.1].

Inevitably the garden is an archetypal Renaissance locus amoenus where the usual eternal spring produces fruit and flower on the same branch. But the total effect, though not disharmonious, suggests excess through the very art which seeks to hide its presence.

Di natura arte par, che per diletto
L'imitatrice sua scherzando imiti...
Co' fiori eterni eterno il frutto dura,
E mentre spunta l'un, l'altro matura. XVI.10.

The intricate syntax underlines the labyrinthine complexities of the garden. The luxuriance and diversity of seasons, forms, colours, shapes, features: all have to be taken in at a single glance and produce not harmony but a visual chaos.⁴⁰

Poi che lasciar gli aviluppati calli,
In lieto aspetto il bel giardin s'aperse:
Acque stagnanti, mobili cristalli,
Fior vari e varie piante, erbe diverse,
Apriche collinette, ombrose valli,
selve e spelonche in una vista offerse.. XVI.9.

The chiastic structure of the stanza imposes a kind of order, but it also accentuates the complete and infinite variety of the garden.

³⁹ (continued)

Lives IX, ed. B. Perrin, Heinemann, <Loeb Classical Library> 1920, xxix, p.201; idem, Comparison of Antony and Demetrius, iii, p.337.

⁴⁰ S. Zatti, L'uniforme cristiano e il multiforme pagano, Milan, (Il Saggiatore 8) 1983.

Meanwhile the pair of intruders remain unmoved by the parrot's lament for the rose and tender youth. They advance directly ~~to~~ through the beauties of the garden:

Fra melodia sì tenera, fra tante
Vaghezze allettatrici e lusinghiere,
Va quella coppia, e rigida e costante
Se stessa indura a i vezzi del piacere. XVI.17.

Somewhere near the centre of the garden we find the two lovers caught up in their own sensual games. The two crusaders watch unseen and unheard: <Ascosi | mirano i duo guerrier gli atti amorosi> [XVI.19]. In an intricate play of images Rinaldo lies in Armida's lap while she gazes at herself in a mirror and he gazes at his own reflection in her eyes:

Con luci ella ridenti, ei con accese,
Mirano in vari oggetti un solo oggetto:
Ella del vetro a sé fa specchio, ed egli
Gli occhi di lei sereni a sé fa spegli. XVI.20.

The situation plays out the reversal of roles anticipated by the images of Hercules and Mark Antony in the palace: <L'uno di servitù, l'altra d'impero | Si gloria, ella in se stessa ed egli in lei> [XVI.21].

After a while Armida kisses her prisoner and departs as is her daily custom to check on her affairs and her magiche carte. Rinaldo remains to mope in her absence when the two warriors appear before him <pomposamente armati>. Without a word Ubaldo advances and holds up the <terso | adamantino scudo> so that Rinaldo can see himself as they see him.

Egli al lucido scudo il guardo gira,
Onde si specchia in lui qual siasi e quanto
Con delicato culto adorno; spira
Tutto odori e lascivie il crine e'l manto,
E'l ferro, il ferro aver, non ch'altro, mira
Dal troppo lusso effeminato a canto:
Guernito è sì ch'inutile ornamento

Sembra, non militar fero instrumento

XVI.30.

If we remember how Statius' Achilles blushes to see himself dressed as a girl in the shield of Ulysses, then the shame of Rinaldo at his perfumes and unwarlike garb now associates him directly with the frescoes of Hercules spinning and Antony following Cleopatra. This shame is followed by a rational exhortation from Ubaldo which clearly defines Rinaldo as a Renaissance Achilles hiding himself in ignominious sloth while the world goes to war.

Va l'Asia tutta e va l'Europa in guerra:
 Chiunque e pregio brama e Cristo adora
 Travaglia in arme or ne la siria terra.
 Te solo, o figlio di Bertoldo, fuori
 Del mondo, in ozio, un breve angolo serra;
 Te sol de l'universo il moto nulla
 Move, egregio campion d'una fanciulla.

XVI.32.

Rinaldo hardly hesitates but, ripping off the badges of his servitude, dons his arms and departs with his two intrepid companions. Armida rushes in pursuit and pleads for him to return, but he is obdurate and rejoins the Christian army where:

la reconciliation sua con Goffredo altro non significa,
 che l'ubidienza, che rende la potenza irascibile a la
 ragionevole.

On the island the garden which has failed to hold Rinaldo in amorous servitude has its spell broken and it disappears as though it had never been, like a cloud changing shape or a dream.

Guyon and the Bower of Bliss.

In the Faerie Queene the second book culminates in the spoliation of the Bower of Bliss by Sir Guyon, marking the triumph of temperance over concupiscence. Though the key to the action is the capture of the witch Acrasia and the rescue of the young knight Verdant, the main heroic role is transferred to Sir Guyon. Under the guidance of the Palmer, the knight makes a long sea journey through perils familiar from Homer and Virgil such as Scylla, Charybdis or the Sirens; but now (glossed by Natale Conti) they have been transformed into the moral landscape of the Gulfe of Greedinesse, where Guyon's ferryman has to find a middle way past the Rock of vile Reproach, the Wandering Islands of Phaedria, the Quicksand of Vnthriftyhead, the Whirlpool of Decay, the Sirens who invite sailors to the "World's sweet inn from pain and wearisome turmoil" [II.xii.32], where the beauty of the song makes Guyon ask the ferryman to row more slowly to "let him heare some part of their rare melody" [II.xii.33], a moment of weakness from which he is by the Palmer "with temperate advice discourseled" [II.xii.34].

The numerology of Spenser's poem makes Acrasia's realm with all its familiar features of the Renaissance garden of Circe the symbol of the duad, the <principium...diversitatis, inaequalitatis, dissimilitudinis...ex qua sua cuique foecunditas inest>.⁴¹ On the one hand the duad stands for division and potential evil, on the other it is the image of multiplication, the abundance of nature, and of man, a

⁴¹P.Bongo, Numerorum Mysteria, p.62; cf.A.Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1964, pp.9-17.

creature divided between material and spiritual, sensuality and reason.

The labyrinthine complexity of the Spenserian Bower's loveliness produces a cosmetic harmony with the Tassian emphasis on the conflict between Nature and Art agreeing "through sweete diversitie, | This garden to adorne with all varietie" [II.xii.59]. The two contrapuntal opposites, extravagant Art and abundant Nature, underline the disharmonious extremes of unbridled excess in this "dainty paradise", though the results of their conflict "striving each th'other to vndermine, | Each did the others work more beautifie" [II.xii.59] might be pleasing. In an epithalamial simile Spenser suggests that a riot of uncontrolled sweet things can cloy the discriminating palate in a landscape:

...goodly beautifide
 With all the ornaments of Floraes pride,
 Wherewith her mother Art, as halfe in scorne
 Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride
 Did decke her, and too lauishly adorne,
 When forth from virgin bowre she comes in th'early morne.
II.xii.50.

In Spenser's eyes the bride's chief beauties are her youth and innocence, so why add layers of plastering rouge? Similarly the landscape of the Bower of Bliss converts Nature and Art into deadly opposites. Nature is subject to the tyranny of Art in "A place pick't out by choice of best alieue | That nature's work by art can imitate" [II.xii.42], whereas in the following book the contrapuntal garden of Adonis is entirely natural. The classical paragons cited in the description of the Bower suggest disturbing overtones of sexual violence, excess and disobedience.

More sweet and wholesome, then the pleasaunt hill

Of Rhodope, on which the Nymphs, that bore
 A giant babe, herselfe for griefe did kill;
 Or the Thessalian Tempe, where of yore
 Fair Daphne Phoebus hart with love did gore;
 Or Ida, where the gods lou'd to repaire,
 Wheneuer they their heauenly bowres forlore;
 Or sweet Parnasse, the haunt of Muses faire:
 Or Eden self, if aught with Eden mote compare.

II.xii.52.

Rhodope, daughter of Haemus king of Thrace, bore a giant by Neptune, whereupon her arrogance led her to title herself Juno and she was punished by being turned into a mountain. Spenser's source for stating that Rhodope "herselfe for griefe did kill" is not known. On the same slopes the Maenads maddened by Bacchic frenzy dismembered Orpheus.⁴² In Tempe Daphne was only saved from rape at the hands of Apollo by her metamorphosis into a laurel. Ida was the setting for the judgement of Paris, Eden of "man's first disobedience" and thus the greatest of human tragedies. The deceptive turn of the last line "if aught with Eden mote compare" patently contradicts what has gone before and suggests that perhaps the Bower of Bliss might not in truth bear comparison with the garden of man's innocence. With its implications for the microcosm man set in the macrocosm Nature through the images of conflict suggested by the duad, appropriate number for a creature divided between reason and sensuality, the cumulative effect of the garden suggests that the the Bower of Bliss, by Acrasia's "fond favorites so nam'd amis", is a misnomer for man's gratification of his own sensuality, abusing his talents instead of rationally cultivating and ordering his own nature.

If the Crusaders of Tasso's Catholic Counter-Reformation

⁴²H.G.Lotspeich, Classical Mythology in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser, <Princeton Studies in English 9> 1932, p.105.

epic are stern in purpose, Spenser's protestant hero of temperance displays an even more unbending ethic:

Much wondred Guyon at the faire aspect
Of that sweet place, yet suffred no delight
To sincke into his sence, nor mind affect;
But passed forth, and lookt still forward right,
Bridling his will and maistering his might.

II.xii.53.

The denizens of the Bower, whether the corrupting Porter "That secretly doth vs procure to fall | Through guilefull semblaunts" [II.xii.48], or Dame Excess "Clad in faire weedes, but fowle disordered" [II.xii.55] are summarily dealt with by Sir Guyon; but the reappearance of Tasso's "Two naked damsels" bathing in a little lake, one coy and one bold, forms a temptation that puts more than the knight's eyes to the test when "His stubborne brest gan secret pleasaunce to embrace" [II.xii.65].

Now when they spide the knight to slacke his pace,
Them to behold, and in his sparkling face
The secret signes of kindled lust appeare,
Their wanton merriments they did encrease,
And to him beckned to approch more neare,
And shewed him many sights, that courage cold could reare.

On which when gazing him the Palmer saw,
He much rebukt those wandring eyes of his,
And counseld well, him forward thence did draw.

II.xii.68-9.

After this test the "constant pair", ignoring the music and song around them, creep "Through many covert groves and thickets close" to where they can spy "That wanton Ladie, with her louer lose, | Whose sleepe head she in her lap did soft dispose" [II.xii.76]. As in Ariosto and Tasso, the sartorial implications visible in the dress (or undress) of Acrasia and the armour of the young knight comment eloquently on a

chivalric failure.

His warlike arms, the idle instruments
Of sleeping praise, were hong vpon a tree;
And his braue shield, full of old moniments,
Was fowly ra'st, that none the signes might see;
Ne for them, ne for honour cared hee,
Ne ought that did to his aduauncement tend;
But in lewd loves, and wastefull luxuree,
His dayes, his goods, his bodie he did spend:
O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend!II.xii.80.

This time the peeping Toms do not wait for the witch to leave her lover on his own, but leaping out from ambush throw a fine net woven by the Palmer over the couple and take them prisoner. The witch is placed in chains of adamant, Verdant receives the benefit of "counsel sage", while Guyon (in a manner reminiscent of Josiah in Tophet) breaks down "all those pleasant bowres and Pallace brave | And of the fairest late now made the fowlest place" [II.xii.83].

Comus and the Lady.

If there is any truth in the novelistic commonplace that all plots depend on one of five or six basic story-lines which no author can escape having to use in some form or other, then we have no right to be surprised if the elemental plot discussed so far in this chapter (how to rescue a prisoner in the toils of an enchanter) resurfaces in Milton's masque Comus. However Milton does introduce a variant in the successful resistance of the lady during the prolonged temptation scene, where her mind refuses to submit though her flesh is imprisoned in Comus' chair. Equally the more confined space of the drama makes the sub-plot of the

Renaissance epics the focal point of the action, though the whole always depends on the presentation of the three children to their parents at the end of the piece.

The son of Bacchus and Circe, "Much like his Father, but his Mother more" [57], Comus has passed from the shores of Calabria and Sicily to the "ominous wood" outside Ludlow, where he:

Excells his Mother at her mighty Art,
Offering to every weary Traveller,
His orient Liquor in a Crystal Glass. 63-5.

The Circean transfigurement of the victims does not go beyond the face, "unmoulding reason's vintage" into the "brutish-forme of Woolf, or Bear, | Or Ounce, or Tiger, Hog, or bearded Goat, | All other parts remaining as they were" [70-2]; but the real transformation occurs in the minds of the monstrous rout where instead of the Homeric sorrow these:

So perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before
And all their friends, and native home forget
To rouse with pleasure in a sensual stie. 73-7.

In the masque the deceits of Comus are countered by the figure of the rescuer, the Attendant Spirit, who disguises himself as a shepherd with some of the poetic powers of an Orpheus whose "artful strains have oft delaid | The hudling brook to hear his madrigal" [193-4].

Just as Melissa comes armed with the anello della ragione, the Attendant Spirit brings the root "haemony...more med'cinal ...then that Moly | That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave" [635-6] which will strip the "foul enchanter" of his illusory disguises. It is not my purpose to argue about the

allegorical significance of haemony, though the hint that "in another Countrey" it bears a "bright golden flowre, but not in this soyl", the association of moly with "wise" Ulysses and the limitation of its powers to the dispersal of illusion (it cannot break the spell on the chair), all suggest poetry (or possibly learning).⁴³ What I wish to emphasise is Milton's discreet and partial use of allegory. Where in Ariosto, Tasso and Spenser the allegory turns into a complete extra dimension of meaning, in Milton it remains a suggestion. Though Comus' blandishment of the lady represents the assault of concupiscence on virtue, the allegorical level is never allowed to impinge on the drama being played out on stage.

In the debate between the lady and her tempter we see the struggle between temperance and sensuality transported into two opposing views of Nature: first Comus' opinion that Nature's abundance requires the gratification of the physical and sensual appetite; second the lady's reply that Nature means her gifts to be enjoyed "according to her sober laws, | And holy dictate of spare Temperance" [765-6]. Though Comus has bound the lady into the chair by a magic spell, he has no power over her will unless by deceit or persuasion she can be induced to drink from his magic cup; but her refusal is followed by the interruption of the brothers who rush in, break Comus' cup and drive out his monsters, though their failure to break his wand means that the lady can only be physically released through the intervention of the nymph Sabrina.

Paradise Lost and the Renaissance rescuer: the "vue

renversée".

Like the rescuer in the romantic epics Satan is seeking a couple enclosed in a beautiful garden and protected by a power hostile to him. His declared object is to encompass their downfall and to bring them into his camp. Rhetorically he considers his mission as one that will bring relief to his beleaguered followers. If successful it will win a new kingdom for the fallen angels. Professor Bloom has argued that all allusion to some extent represents a subversion of the original and in particular Paradise Lost represents a "powerful misinterpretation of Spenser, and a strong defense against him".⁴⁴ Set against its epic models Paradise Lost is like a poem printed in white characters on black paper since the subversion of its epic models is deliberate and systematic and ruthless. In Milton's use of the garden, instead of reason rescuing the soul from sensuality, evil successfully corrupts innocence, a reversal of events, characters and plot which not only suggests much potential and dramatic irony, but also fits the unhappy outcome of events where the tragic Fall of man replaces the triumphant conquest of Italy, Charlemagne's victory over Agramante or the glorious capture of Jerusalem.

Equally the more usual epic balance of the war as the main plot (whether the battle against Turnus, the repulse of the Saracen invasion or the siege of Jerusalem), which is impeded

⁴³Carey-Fowler, pp.173, 207-8.

⁴⁴H.Bloom, A Map of Misreading, p.128; cf. idem, The Anxiety of Influence, OUP 1973.

by the sub-plot (Dido's Carthage, Alcina's island, Armida's garden) is turned back to front when the garden becomes the scene of a psychomachia, while the war in heaven is relegated to Raphael's narration. Since Renaissance allegorisers and poets before Milton had found in the garden of Circe the image of a ruined and imperfect Eden, the idea of the perfect garden becomes the link between the bare structure of the opening chapter of Genesis, which Milton takes as the principal source for his epic, and the plots of his heroic models, which Milton intends to accommodate within Paradise Lost to prove the superiority of his poetic and heroic orders. So far in this thesis we have seen that when the narrative is re-arranged on a chronological basis Satan passes from being a vicious and self-glorified Achilles in the war in heaven to become a dux, an immoral Aeneas, in Hell where he rallies his fallen angels, directs the infernal council and takes on himself alone the task of escaping from hell and corrupting man. In his journey through chaos he is an epic voyager like Jason or Odysseus; but in reaching earth, creeping into the garden, subverting man and escaping successfully he is like the wily Ulysses. Among Ulysses' exploits perhaps the most obvious parallel is the theft of the Palladium;⁴⁵ but another major achievement of the same hero was the discovery of Achilles disguised as a girl in the court of King Lycomedes, a theme which the Renaissance epics had exploited and modified to their own

⁴⁵J.M.Steadman, Satan's Metamorphoses and the Heroic Convention of the Ignoble Disguise, Modern Language Review, LII, 1957, pp.81-5, reprinted in Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina 1968, pp.194-208.

romance ends. Does the choice of the theme not in its classical but in its chivalric version mark a further stage in the degeneration in Satan's heroic status?

In Paradise Lost for good to triumph nothing must happen. Satan's epic objective remains a traditional one, to break the affinity between the hero and the garden so that man is driven into the outer world; but where in previous epic this is an allegorical episode whose end marks the return of the hero to the main stage (neither Achilles' discovery nor his victory over Hector bring the fall of Troy; after escaping from Circe and Calypso Odysseus still has many perils to endure; after leaving Dido Aeneas still has to reach Italy and overcome Turnus; despite the lesson of Alcina Ruggiero still has to become a Christian, Agramante's army to be repulsed from Paris and finally defeated; on his return to the Christian army Rinaldo has yet to disenchant the wood and lead the final assault on Jerusalem); in Paradise Lost man's disobedience marks Satan's victory with the trappings of triumph visible at once in the great bridge Sin and Death throw across chaos to unite Hell and Earth. Even if, paradoxically, this Satanic triumph will ultimately lead to a greater good, that good lies in the distant future outside the temporal bounds of the poem's action, which runs from Satan's awakening on the lake of fire to the expulsion of Adam and Eve.

Like its secondary epic models Paradise Lost is a dynastic poem, but a dynastic poem with a difference. Where the Aeneid or the Orlando Furioso make the existence in the present of a ruling hierarchy an event determined in remote (but fictitious) history, Milton seeks to justify the ways of God

to men seen in history through the fall of our first parents.

Where in the classical catabasis a Hercules or an Aeneas descends to the underworld, in Paradise Lost Satan ascends from Hell, passes the infernal guardians, crosses chaos and enters the known universe. In the Renaissance epic to accomplish his mission the rescuer must travel from the centre of the action, Charlemagne's France or the camp outside Jerusalem, to the edge of the known world. In the Orlando Furioso the hippogrif carries Ruggiero <tre mila miglia> beyond the pillars of Hercules away into the Pacific ocean and the island of Alcina, while to reach him Melissa has to summon a winged demon. In the Gerusalemme Liberata Armida chooses for her refuge one of the Canary islands, where the site beyond the pillars of Hercules again marks the bounds exceeded by the hero; but the name, the Isole felici also confounds the enchanted garden with the image of a former golden age: <Ed eran queste l'isole Felici: | così le nominò la prisca etate> [XV.35].

When Satan emerges from the Limbo of Vanity he finds a choice of ways, one upwards to the wall of heaven and its portal "thick with sparkling orient gemmes" [III.507], a direction made the more inviting by the lowered stairs but which Satan cannot take since it would symbolize repentance; the other downwards towards earth and the pursuance of his scheme to ruin mankind. Though the fiend's choice is a foregone conclusion, this momentary passage through the landscape of moral choice and the preference for the lower way symbolises Satan's deepening in sin, whereas in the Orlando Furioso Ruggiero's climb with its view over the gleaming false alchemy of Alcina's palace in the plain below stands for a

correct choice in which the hero fails to persevere.⁴⁶

If we note that, as in the catabasis, Satan is going the other way (so to speak) from the outer edge of chaos and the Limbo of vanity to a garden which, according to Adam's Ptolemaic viewpoint, seems to stand at the centre of the universe, the winged fiend passes what seem landmarks familiar from the chivalric epic as he winds his way through the "innumerable stars", though, unlike Tasso's crusaders, his relentless will permits no idle curiosity about "these other worlds" and their inhabitants.

other Worlds they seemd, or happy Iles,
Like those Hesperian Gardens famd of old,
Fortunate Fields, and Groves and flourie Vales,
Thrice happy Iles, but who dwelt happy there
He stayd not to enquire. III.570.

In his descent and approach to Eden, like the rescuers of the romantic epics, Satan has to either overcome or bypass the sentries set to protect the garden from such unwelcome intruders. Since the tempter (to avoid the gate and its angelic guards on the east) enters Eden for the first time by leaping "all bound | Of Hill or highest Wall" [IV.181-2] on the opposite side and the second time passes underground to emerge in the "Fountain by the Tree of Life" [IX.73], the only sentinel Satan meets face to face is the archangel Uriel standing in the sun. Here in a sense Dryden's famous objection about the reversal of heroic roles in Paradise Lost verifies itself. Where in the Orlando Innamorato to enter the garden of Falerina Orlando has to overcome a drago smisurato,

⁴⁶Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, VI.59; cf. B. Giamatti, op.cit., p.148.

so now the Dragon slips past the watch of the "sharpest sighted Spirit of all in Heav'n" [III.691] not through force but fraud. Just as Angelica uses her ring to enter the garden of Dragontina unseen and Melissa uses the same ring to pass unobserved into the palace of Alcina, so to beguile Uriel Satan adopts the sartorial and protean invisibility of "Hypocrisie, the onely evil that walks | Invisible" [III.683-4] and masquerading as a "stripling Cherub" becomes "the first | That practisd falshood under saintly shew, | Deep malice to conceale, couch't with revenge" [IV.121-3].

Satan's final descent through the atmosphere to alight on the summit of mount Niphates "in many an Airie wheele" recalls the hippogrif circling as it comes down on the island of Alcina: <con large ruote, omai de l'aria sazio> [VI.19]. In Paradise Regained Satan "without wing of hippogrif" [IV.741] snatches up Christ and bears him to the highest pinnacle of the temple, so that Milton can finally extinguish the romantic marvellous inherited from the Renaissance epics in Paradise Lost.⁴⁷

As Satan's evil gaze takes in the beauties of Eden from his vantage point on the tree of life, the inattentive reader might be forgiven for thinking that Milton is idly reproducing the topography and features familiar from the gardens of Alcina, Armida and Acrasia: the "eternall spring" (though created not by magical art but an astronomical system where heavenly equator and ecliptic coincide); the "goodliest Trees laden with fairest Fruit, | Blossoms and Fruits at once of

⁴⁷A.M.Patterson, "Paradise Regained": A Last Chance at True Romance, Milton Studies, XVII, 1983, pp.187-208: 203-6.

golden hue" [IV.147-8]; choirs of birds; the "vernal aires" [IV.264]; the "Flours of all hue, and without Thorn the Rose" [IV.256];⁴⁸ but where other Renaissance gardens of Circe display infinite variety and vivid contrasts, Milton's landscape emphasises harmony, balance and peace. Even the usual paradox of "nice art" and "nature boon" is evoked only to tell us that the former is conspicuous by its absence. In this unfallen garden Nature:

Wantoned as in her prime, and plaid at will
Her Virgin Fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wilde above Rule or Art; enormous bliss. V.294-7.

This picture of a natural cornucopia contrasts with Spenser's hymeneal simile comparing the Bower of Bliss to a bride whose natural loveliness is spoiled by too many bows and frills. If in other poets the description of Eden might prove bland and insipid, Milton's prelapsarian garden possesses and manifests its own rich urgent sexuality as a proof of the joys of innocent married love. This is a calculated contrast to the rankness and possibly sterile sensuality of Milton's Renaissance models. This is appropriate since, just as the Renaissance's Circean gardens reflect the image of a broken Eden, Milton's Eden must act not only as archetype but also as a potential garden of Venerie. This "potentiality" of the landscape is hinted at in two manners: first at a semantic level where the "wanton growth" of the plants or the path of the brook running with "mazie error under pendant shades" [IV.239] refer in an innocent prelapsarian sense to the features of the garden, but the "fit" reader will recognise an ominous postlapsarian threat; second allusions which compare Eden to a series of inferior classical paragons.

Not that faire field
 Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flours
 Her self a fairer Floure by gloomie Dis
 Was gatherd, which cost Ceres all that pain
 To seek her through the world; nor that sweet Grove
 Of Daphne by Orontes, and th'inspir'd
Castalian Spring, might with this Paradise
 Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian Ile
 Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
 Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Lybian Jove,
 Hid Amalthea and her Florid Son
 Young Bacchus from his Stepdame Rheas eye;
 Nor where Abassin kings thir issue Guard,
 Mount Amara... IV.268-81.

The comparison with Enna develops into an aetiological image. In both pagan and christian terms the ravishment "of the young and beautiful while gathering flowers...by a dark power risen from the underworld"⁴⁹ means the end of an eternal spring and the novelty of winter. Equally the "Nyseian Ile" and "Mount Amara" underline the secrecy and concealment of Eden, the guard set around it and consequently elevate our opinion of the cunning and skill Satan shows to surmount the obstacles facing him, evading the sentries and penetrating the inner sanctum.

If Milton adopts the discovery of the Renaissance Achilles as an epic paragon for the temptation and fall of man, then events in a "typical" rescue (for our purposes an amalgam of Ariosto, Tasso and Spenser) such as the temptations resisted by the rescuer(s), the view of the loving couple and the rescue itself must be apparent in Paradise Lost. All three events occur in Milton's poem, though in a form more suitable

⁴⁸B.Giamatti, op.cit., pp.295-303.

⁴⁹C.S.Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost, OUP 1942, p.42; cf. Claudian, De Raptu Proserpinae, II.151-316.

to the greater importance of the garden as a whole action, not as just a subordinate one.

In the argument to book IV Milton summarises Satan's emotions at his first sight of the newly-created world.

Satan now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprize which he undertook alone against God and Man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despare; but at length confirms himself in evil, [and] journeys on to Paradise.

The key phrase confirms himself in evil signals the fiend's recovery from a momentary weakness or temptation; but Milton's early readers would recognise the theological import of Satan's hesitation since remorse followed by a failure to repent marks the advance to a deeper degree of damnation. Where in contrast Tasso's crusaders find the landscape pleasing and pause at the sight of the naked maidens, where Sir Guyon almost succumbs to the song of the Sirens or the maiden with the "lily paps", Satan is touched not by the sight of what might be but by the "bitter memorie | Of what he was, what is, and what must be | Worse" [IV.24-6].

Satan's further moments of self-doubt precede each of the two temptations, the first interrupted by the angelic guard, the second successful, and on both occasions a soliloquy inspired by the beauties of the prelapsarian world anticipates a moment of horror first at the sight of Adam and Eve, then at the view of Eve alone among the roses. In the Gerusalemme Liberata Tasso's intrepid duo are strengthened by the temptations they successfully resist, in the Faerie Queene Guyon's shame following the Palmer's rebuke gives him the moral strength to spoil the Bower of Bliss; however Satan's

character is not raised but abased through his failure either to pity man or to refute his own evil. The soliloquy in book IX displays his own sense of degradation and disgust at having to use the serpent as an instrument.

O foul descent! That I who erst contended
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the hight of Deitie aspir'd;
But what will not Ambition and Revenge
Descend to?

IX.163-9.

Therefore Satan's conduct in a landscape where he "Saw undelighted all delight" [IV.285] presents a Through-The-Looking-Glass parody of both Tasso's inflexible pair with their souls <indurate e sorde | ...a que'vezzi perfidi e bugiardi> and Sir Guyon "Bridling his will and mastering his might" against the "fair aspect | Of that sweet place".

Though excusable in terms of the allegorical dimension, the identification in the romance epics of moral worth and spiritual endeavour with a martial code attacking the carpe diem image of the lovely but sensual garden throws up in its wake two considerable problems: first the inevitable glorification of a military ethos, second the unsympathetic destruction of beauty by what can seem rigid and unnecessary Puritanism. Seen from another angle this ethic defends the extirpation by masculine and public elements of the soul of all that is private and feminine.⁵⁰ Milton's total reversal of this doubtful system of values not only permits him to make natural beauty compatible with innocence; but it also allows him to cast a shadow over the unbending militarism of Sir Guyon and the two crusaders. In fact, by citing "necessitie, | The Tyrants plea" [IV.394-5] Satan apes the stern concept of

duty held by his chivalric models.

And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I doe, yet public reason just,
Honour and Empire with revenge enlarg'd,
By conquering this new World, compels me now
To do what else though damnd I should abhorre. IV.388-92.

In reality Satan's first gift to man is the ragione di stato with which he can whitewash Machiavellian crusades of conquest, usurpation and enslavement. Inversely Milton shows that at least in the unfallen state public and private are one and the same thing. Through such an apt and ironic allusion to the alta moles of the ~~the~~ higher cause common to secondary epic, whether Aeneas relinquishing Dido, Ruggiero Alcina, Rinaldo Armida or Guyon destroying the Bower of Bliss, Milton is offering a truer morality for his own commonwealth of man.

When in book IX Paradise Lost finally reaches its moment of real crisis, the sight of Eve among the roses momentarily strips Satan of his will to persevere.

Her every Aire
Of gesture or least action overawd
His Malice, and with rapine sweet bereav'd
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
That space the Evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remaind
Stupidly good, of enmitie disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envie, of revenge;
But the hot Hell that alwayes in him burnes,
Though in mid Heav'n, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure not for him ordain'd: then soon
Fierce hate he recollects... IX.459-71.

Unlike the Tassian and Spenserian naked water-nymphs Eve's nudity is part of her innocence, not the spring for a trap calculated to excite Satan's sensuality. Yet by way of contrast she seems almost clothed or "Veild in a Cloud of Fragrance" [PL.IX.425].

After skilfully evading the garden's sentries the next moment in Satan's temptation of man where we might expect an analogue with the gardens of the romance epics comes with Satan's first view of Adam and Eve, but at first sight the parallels with the romances are not obvious. Instead of having to creep through bushes and thickets to some hidden secret bower, from his perch on the tree of life Satan immediately sees "Two of far nobler shape", not sprawling on a lawn or a bed of roses, but "erect and tall | Godlike erect, with native Honour clad | In naked Majestie" [IV.288-90] intent on the task of tending the garden and its animals. Now this would seem to contradict the scheme of the self-evident vue renversée demonstrated so far in this chapter; but as elsewhere Milton substitutes for the single simple image, the view of the couple making love in a bower, a more complex series of scenes which nonetheless allude to and redefine the familiar elements of the Renaissance epics. One good example is our first sight of Eve.

She as a vail down to the slender waste
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore
 Dissheld, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
 As the Vine curls her tendrils, which impli'd
 Subjection, but requir'd with gentle sway,
 And by her yielded, by him best receivd,
 Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
 Sweet reluctant amorous delay. IV.304.

Various elements of this portrait such as Eve's nakedness, the curling hair which acts as a veil, the emphasis on her voluntary submission to Adam, recall first Armida who <dinanzi

⁵⁰cf. Spenser, Faerie Queene, ed.A.C.Hamilton, pp.168,299.

al petto ha il vel diviso, | E'l crin sparge incomposto al
vento estivo> [XVI.18]; second Acrasia, who wears a veil which
shows more than it hides.

Upon a bed of roses she was layd,
As faint through heat, or dight to pleasant sin;
And was arayd, or rather disarayd,
All in a vele or silke and siluer thin,
That hid no whit her alabaster skin,
But rather shewd more white, if more might bee:
More subtile web Arachne cannot spin;
Nor the fine nets, which often we wouen see
Of scorched deaw, do not in th'aire more lightly flee.
II.xii.77.

In Armida's costume the vel diviso and the crin...incomposto
reflect the division and disorder of the landscape (echoed in
Spenser's play on "arayd...disarayd"). Acrasia's veil with
the allusion to spiders' webs and "fine nets" of gossamer
hints at the invisible bondage of her suitors and subjects.
In contrast Eve's hair which acts as an unnecessary veil
displays firstly her innocence (with the critical word wanton
linking her physical traits to the potentiality of the
landscape), secondly her consenting subjection to Adam. The
contrasts are further underlined by Eve's "meek surrender"
when she:

half imbracing leand
On our first Father, half her swelling Breast
Naked met his under the flowing Gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight
Both of her Beauty and submissive Charms
Smil'd with superior Love...
 ..and press'd her Matron lip
With kisses pure: aside the Devil turnd
For envie, yet with jealous leer maligne
Ey'd them askance... IV.494-502.

This scene which fills Satan with disgust might also prove
more acceptable to its modern opponents if its relationship to
the Renaissance epics were to be made clearer: whether the

"pure kisses" and conjugal chastity of Adam and Eve to contrast with the famelici sguardi of Rinaldo and Armida, or the correction of the wrong servitù and impero symbolised by the relative positions of the couples in the romantic epics, Rinaldo and Verdant the one with his head in Armida's lap, the other sleeping beside Acrasia, whereas Eve willingly rests on Adam's breast.

In the same fashion the gardening suggests by way of contrast rather more than just a protestant concern with honest toil instead of the indolent sensuality of the romance heroes. It also opposes the irresponsible abdication of Ruggiero, Rinaldo and Verdant from a martial ethic with the regency Adam and Eve exercise over Eden (and therefore the world). In Renaissance eyes gardening symbolises the union of moral and political activity⁵¹ and therefore is emblematic not only of the necessary maintenance of order within the commonwealth but also, in this case, the support of a right and proper hierarchy. This same ordered hierarchy is seen in the tameness of "All Beasts of th'Earth, since wilde" who "About them frisking playd" [IV.340-1], but the docility of these animals can either be contrasted with the brutish routs of the Renaissance epics, or serve as a distant reminder of the wolves and tigers around the house of Circe who fawned unnaturally on Odysseus' followers.⁵²

Thus through a series of evolving images covering over two hundred lines Milton hints at the archetypal view of the two

⁵¹J.B.Broadbent, Some Graver Subject, London, Chatto & Windus 1960, p.177; J.M.Evans, "Paradise Lost" and the Genesis Tradition, OUP 1968, pp.246-54.

⁵²Cf. PL.IX.521-2.

lovers of the Renaissance enchanted gardens; whether by the similarity of physical beauty, the setting and the hostility of the alien observer, or the contrasts of behaviour: work instead of idleness, innocent nudity instead of sartorial titillation; but he reinforces the structural parallels with verbal echoes. When at evening Adam and Eve sit down to rest after the "toil | Of their sweet Gardning labour" [IV.327-8], the turn of phrase seems calculated to recall the fine beads of post-coital sweat running down Acrasia's brow "through languour of her late sweet toyle" [FQ.II.xii.78].

In the plots of the romantic epics the discovery of the couple is the cue for the rescuers either to leap out and seize them (a possibility Satan considers when in the guise of lion or tiger he prowls around Adam and Eve "as one who chose his ground | Whence rushing he might surest seize them both | Gript in each paw" [IV.406-8]) or to bide their time until the witch leaves the knight on his own. Even in hexameral literature there is usually little delay between the arrival of the serpent-Satan, the temptation and the fall. In Paradise Lost a long delay occurs, ostensibly caused by Satan's need to understand the prohibition and the failure of his first nocturnal attempt on Eve; but the real cause is the structure of the epic itself and Milton's wish to insert Raphael's account of the war in heaven and the creation. In this delay, apart from the war in heaven discussed in chapter two, two episodes possess interesting analogues in the romantic epics.

In Tasso Godfrey dreams that his soul is borne high up above the earth into heaven where he is greeted by the spirit

of Ugone <Cinto di rai, cinto di foco, | Un cavaliere incontra a lui venia> [GL.XIV.5] and the Christian captain receives advice which sets in motion the recovery of Rinaldo and thus the fall of Jerusalem. In Paradise Lost Eve dreams of a figure "shap'd and wing'd like one of those from Heav'n" [V.55] who tempts her to eat from the forbidden tree and then carries her away up into the clouds where she "underneath beheld | The Earth outstretcht immense" [V.87-8]. Just as Godfrey's dream marks a divine intervention, so Eve's anticipates the eventual Satanic temptation and fall.

A more striking parallel in its similarities and contrasts is Raphael's earthward plunge from heaven which, as commentators have often noted, not only counterbalances Satan's twisting flight down through the universe, but also finely emulates similar flights by Hermes in the Odyssey to order Calypso to release Odysseus, by Mercury in the Aeneid to command the hero to relinquish Dido and Carthage and by Michael in the Gerusalemme Liberata to drive the demons back to Hell from around Jerusalem. Since we have already noted the descents of Hermes-Mercury as classical analogues with the journeys undertaken by human rescuers in the chivalric epics, logically Raphael must be fulfilling a similar role. But unlike his celestial predecessors his task is not to drive but to advise. He comes not to order Adam and Eve to depart from Eden nor to expel Satan, but to make sure that nothing happens, to ensure that the existing status-quo remains undisturbed.

In the romantic epics the separation of the knight from the witch is no great matter. In the Orlando Furioso and the

Gerusalemme Liberata it is simply a case of the rescuers biding their time and waiting for the chance to get the knight on his own. In the one this happens almost at once (though Ariosto comments that Melissa is fortunate), while in the other Armida leaves Rinaldo on his own every day for an hour while she sees to her magiche carte. Though commentaries on Genesis discussed why the serpent was able to approach the woman without the man intervening,⁵³ other literary and dramatic treatments of the Fall passed over the point. Not so in Paradise Lost where rigorous logic requires a proper reason for Eve's isolation and Milton from this small matter constructs a major scenario [IX.204-413]. Eve argues that to achieve greater efficiency she and Adam should work apart so as to avoid mutual distraction. Though Adam argues the contrary (especially bearing in mind the threat posed by Satan), he finally reluctantly allows Eve to have her way.

The issues involved, whether Eve was right to do so, whether Adam should have exercised his authority and forbidden her to leave him, have brought their own inevitable critical battles. The matter is intended by Milton as a moral and matrimonial crux. But why should Milton lay such stress on this issue? When Raphael and Adam are speaking together neither objects when Eve departs to tend her flowers. Yet this is only the day after the archfiend was surprised in the bower, whereas on the day of the separation there has been neither sight nor sound of the tempter for a week.

In her desire to work alone Eve is certainly magnifying

⁵³D.H.Burden, The Logical Epic, pp.80-93; J.M.Evans, "Paradise Lost" and the Genesis Tradition, pp.272-5.

"work" into an end, whereas, as Adam points out, it should be regarded as a means and source of pleasure, "delight" rather than "irksome toil" [IX.241]. Equally there is an element of foolhardiness in Eve's readiness to make trial of her own virtue. Symbolically she leaves the connubial emblems of woodbine and "clasping ivy" to be arranged by Adam, whereas she decides to work in the more ambiguous and dangerous "Spring of Roses intermixt | With Myrtle" [IX.218-9].

In numerological terms the division of Adam and Eve stands for the breaking of the single monad of unity into the destructive duad; but allegorically the separation of Eve from Adam may well symbolise reason or choice absenting itself from the government of the higher intellect. Such allegorical interpretations of the fall were not unusual. For example in his chapter on the Viper under the title Sensus à Voluptate, Mens a sensu decepta Valeriano cited patristic authority for his interpretation of Adam and Eve as mens and sensus.

Mulieris porrò figura apud Diuinarum literarum interpretes pro sensu accipitur, viri vero pro mente: vnde quidam Adam terrenam mentem interpretati sunt. Hic igitur...serpens accingit se primum ad expugnandam mentem, subuertendumque intellectum. Hic sua virtute opibusque fretus, hostem repellit acerrime, vti Adamum decet. Quid ille vafer & malignus? Eam adoritur, sensus ipsius obiectat commoda, delicias proponit omnes, voluptatum explicat illecebras, quarum gustus vel minimo expugnatur Euae imbecillitas: illa incautum opprimit Adamum, mendaciumque commenta, lenocinijs⁵⁴ suo atque blanditijs eum cogit aberrare. Athanasius⁵⁴ sanè cum puritatem animi, quae in Adamo primitiùs fuit, in spiritualium rerum contemplatione tantum occupato, metaphoricè Paradisum à Mose nominatum ostendisset, ibidem adiecit quo pacto sensus mentem à spiritualium rerum meditatione serpentis consilio ad corporis voluptates auerterit abstraxeritque[.] Diuus Augustinus in 48 Psalmum,⁵⁵ Singulis, inquit, nostrum

⁵⁴S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, Oratio contra Gentes in Migne, Patrologia Graeca, XXV, coll. 9-10.

inest mulier haec: quippe caro nostra, Eua est, quae seducit virum, id est, rationem: per quam carnem labitur homo, quem lapsum calcanei nomine quod à serpente fuerit impetum, Prophetæ appellaverunt.⁵⁶

This simple allegorical distinction between Adam as mens and Eve as sensus would accord very well with the allegorical interpretations of the Circe episode in the chivalric epics; however Milton may have been encouraged by Tasso's symbolic use of the platonic < vous > or virtù irascibile in the Gerusalemme Liberata to attempt a more complex treatment.

In the Renaissance the original Platonic distinction between the higher contemplating intellect (mens) and the operating reason (ratio) was elaborated by neo-platonic thought into triads of faculties, especially in the thought of Pico della Mirandola. In his commentary on Benivieni's Canzone d'Amore Pico places man midway between the angels and the beasts, ragione midway between intelletto and senso, and elettione midway between voluntà and appetito.

Si posson le virtù cognitive in tre gradi distinguere, in senso, ragione & intelletto, alle quali conseguono tre gradi di natura desiderativa che si potranno chiamare appetito, elettione, & Voluntà.

L'appetito è nelli animali brutti, la elettione nelli huomini, & in ogni altra creatura che si truova mezza fra noi & li angeli, la volontà nelli angeli, & così come il senso non conosce se non le cose corporali & sensibili, così lo appetito non desidera se non le cose corporali & sensibili, & come lo intelletto angelico solo alla contemplatione delli spirituali concetti è inteso & volto, né alle cose materiali s'inclina se non quanto loro già dalla materia absolute & sciolte,

⁵⁵S. Aurelius Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina XXXVIII, Turnhout 1956, p.556 (Psalm 48.6), discusses the promise of Genesis 3.15 and remarks: <Quare autem Euae hoc dixit? Quia per carnem labitur homo. Eua nobis interior caro nostra est?>.

⁵⁶Ioannes Pierius Valerianus, Hieroglyphica, f.108^v.

inmateriale & spirituale divengono, così la volontà loro solo de' beni intemporali & spirituali si pasce, la natura rationale posta fra questi dua come uno mezzo fra gli estremi, hora a l'una parte, cioè al senso inclinata, hora all'altra, cioè allo intelletto eleuandosi, alli desiderii dell'una & dell'altra per propria elettione può accostarsi. Di tutte le sopradette cose si può concludere che ogni volta che la cosa desiderata è cosa corporea & sensibile, bisogna che il desiderio di quella sia, o appetito che segua il senso, o elettione di ragione inclinata al senso, ogni volta che è cosa spirituale & incorporea, convien che sia o volontà intellettuale & angelica, o elettione di ragione alla sublimità dello intelletto assumtta, & elevata. Visto dunque Amore essere desiderio, & dichiarato che cosa è desiderio, per conoscere che desiderio è Amore, se egli è, o sensitivo, o rationale, o intellettivo, che tanto a dire quanto desiderio bestiale, o human, o angelico, bisogna vedere che cosa sia bellezza che è l'oggietto del desiderio, il che conosciuto, haremmo della definitione di Amore, & consequentemente di lui assoluta cognitione.⁵⁷

Pico also emphasises in the same chapters the dangers of a separation of the anima or the ragione from the contemplation of higher things and how the anima can be restored.

L'altre [anime] additte alla cura de corpi caduci & terreni occupate in questo si privano della contemplatione intellettuale, & mendicano la scientia delle cose da sensi, alliquali al tutto sono indicate, & però sempre di molti errori & opinioni false sono piene dalla qual prigione & miseria vedremo disotto essere potissimo mezzo a liberarne la via amatoria, la

⁵⁷Opere di Girolamo Benivieni Fiorentino. Novissimamente rivedute et da molti errori espurgate con una Canzona dello Amor cleste & diuino, col commento della Ill. S. Conte Giouanni Pico Mirandolano distinto in Libri .III. Et altre Frottole de diuersi Auttori, Venice, Nicolo Zopino e Vincentio compagno 12.IV.1522, book II, ch.v, cf. E.Garin, Marsilio Ficino, Girolamo Benivieni e Giovanni Pico, Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana, XXIII, 1942, pp.93-9. See W.Raleigh, Historie, I.i. ch.2,6, p.27:

But God gaue unto Man all kind of Seeds and Grafts of life (to wit) the vegetative life of Plantes; the sensuall of Beasts, the rationall of Man, the intellectuall of Angels; whereof whichsoever he tooke pleasure to plant and culture, the same should futurely grow in him, and bring forth fruit, agreeable to his own choice and plantation.

quale mediante la bellezza delle cose corporei & sensibile eccita nell'anima memoria delle parti intellettuali, & è cagione che ad quella rivolgendosi dalla terrena vita, veramente sogno di ombra...alla eterna trasferendosi, & dal suo foco amoroso quasi purgata in angelica forma...felicamente si trasforma.⁵⁸

In Paradise Lost Eve argues that she is strong enough to withstand temptation. Adam warns her that, though the will is free, that very freedom makes her vulnerable since she continually has to make free choices.

..God left free the Will, for what obeyes
Reason, is free, and Reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect,
Least by some faire appeering good surpris'd
She dictate false, and misinforme the Will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.
Not then mistrust, but tender love enjoynes,
That I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me.

IX.351-8.

Since Eve is surprised by just such a "faire appeering good", this passage suggests an allegorical scheme with Eve as "will" (voluntas) or (in the light of the form the temptation will actually take) "reason" (ratio), whereas the fears Satan later expresses of Adam's "higher intellectual" confirm the suspicion that we should see Adam as the higher intellectus or mens. In the Historie of the World Raleigh distinguishes between the operations of the inner soul or mens, "the principall strength of the minde, or soule...whose act, exercise, or office is the perpetuall contemplation of truth", from Reason "that faculty by which we judge and discourse".⁵⁹

⁵⁸Pico della Mirandola, op.cit., I.xii.

⁵⁹W.Raleigh, Historie, I.i. ch.2,2, pp.21-3, offers as synonyms for Mens the intellectus divinus, intellectus contemplativus, anima contemplativa, lumen animae rationalis and the anima animae, whereas the ratio can be termed the animus or perspicacem animae partem.

Equally the "tender love" could recall the emblematic Renaissance Triad of Fidiu showing a man and woman clasping hands with a child between them which was interpreted as the bond honor and veritas through amor, a bond which Eve breaks when "from her Husbands hand her hand | Soft she withdrew" [IX.385-6].⁶⁰

In Boccaccio's version of the finding of Achilles Ulysses disguises himself as a merchant; in the Orlando Furioso Melissa, to command greater credibility from Ruggiero, disguises herself as his former tutor Atalante; likewise in Paradise Lost Satan adopts the ignoble disguise of the Serpent, "the fittest Imp of fraud" [IX.89], and in this guise he searches the garden for Adam and Eve. But above all he "wish'd his hap might find | Eve separate" [IX.421-2] and precisely this "wish | Beyond his hope" is fulfilled by the sudden sight of Eve working alone amongst her roses.

In both the classical and Renaissance versions of the "discovery of Achilles" we have seen how the rescuers' success depends on two different kinds of artifice which can either be used separately or in conjunction: first some object which will either act as a counter-temptation such as the shield and spear shown to Achilles, or serve to break a Circean spell

⁶⁰Carey-Fowler, pp.874-7, 885. Professor Fowler, who first indicates the allegorical scheme of IX, mistakenly states the Triad of Fidiu to be Virtus, Amor, Veritas, whereas in reality it is Honor, Amor, Veritas. See V.Cartari, Imagini delli Dei, p.84 ill., p.86 text, cited in P.L.Williams, Two Roman Reliefs in Renaissance Disguise, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, IV, 1941, pp.47-66.

such as Angelica's ring or the haemony given to the two brothers in Comus; second that the rescuer should with powerful rhetoric compel the peccant hero to remember his own dignity, his duty and true heroic status. With considerable ingenuity Milton makes the framework of the temptation as it is described in ~~the~~ Genesis conform to and parody the strategy of the rescuer in the Renaissance epics. However in Paradise Lost the allegorical interpretation of the Fall as the seduction of reason by sensuality, which the sustained parallel with the romance epics might lead us to expect, is displaced by a much more complex ontological conflict. Since we have already seen how Milton makes Adam symbolise the higher intellect and Eve the middle reason, the temptation will show ratio in the absence of higher wisdom being seduced not directly by the pleasures of sensuality but rather by the attractions of specious knowledge. Therefore the element of romance-epic parody proves deeply ironic because the same ragione which restores Ruggiero and Rinaldo to their senses in fact leads Eve astray.

The serpent promises that (like the anello della ragione placed on Ruggiero's finger) if Eve eats the fruit from the tree "your Eyes that seem so cleere, | Yet are but dim, shall perfetly be then | Op'nd and cleerd" [IX.706-8] and Eve offers the branch to Adam as being "of Divine effect | To open Eyes, and make them Gods who taste" [IX.865-6].⁶¹ Eve finds the serpent's speech "persuasive...impregn'd | With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth" [IX.737-8] and describes the same beast to Adam as "Reasoning to admiration" [IX.872].

Though on the one hand the fruit acts as a Circean release of animal passion, on the other hand Milton is concerned to

define precisely the kind of knowledge to be obtained from the tree and resorts, I think, to the ancient scholastic distinction between higher contemplative wisdom (sapientia) and human experiential or academic knowledge (scientia).⁶²

Satan's rhetoric presses Eve to abandon the latter (Adam) for the ratiocinative knowledge of good and evil to be acquired through the act of disobedience and eating the fruit of the tree, thus in his address to the tree itself he deliberately muddles two distinct levels of knowledge: "O Sacred, Wise, and Wisdom-giving Plant, | Mother of Science" [IX.679-80].

Likewise Eve first praises the tree as being "of operation blest | To Sapience" [IX.796-7] and then claims that wisdom is attainable through experience.

Experience, next to thee I owe,
Best guide; not following thee, I had remaind
In ignorance, thou op'nst Wisdoms way,
And giv'st access, though secret she retire. IX.807-10.

However the narrator suggests that the tree possesses only "sciential sap, deriv'd | From Nectar, drink of gods" [IX.837-8], while later Adam who "scrupl'd not to eat | Against his better knowledge" [IX.997-8] is able to pun on Eve's character as "exact of taste, | And elegant, of Sapience no small part" [IX.1017-8].

The serpent's invitation to Eve to make her disobedience the proof of "dauntless virtue" is also an invitation to

⁶¹Genesis 3.5.

⁶²OED, "Sapience" 1a-c, cf. Paradise Lost VII.195, and the "Sapient King", IX.442; "Science" 1-2. W.Raleigh, Historie, I.i. ch.4,4, p.60, quotes Junius' definition of the tree as <arbor scientiae boni & mali (id est) experientiae boni & mali ab eventu>.

participate in the pseudo-heroic Sataneid that will lead man to Nimrod and Babel; but it is also recognisably the call to arms and martial endeavour heard by the original Achilles and his Renaissance imitations.

Like Melissa and Ubaldo speaking to Ruggiero and Rinaldo, the serpent comments on Eve's appearance, though not in terms of scorn but praise.

Fairest resemblance of thy Maker faire,
Thee all things gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy Celestial Beautie adore
With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
Where universally admir'd; but here
In this enclosure wild, these Beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
Who sees thee ? (And what is one!) who shouldst be seen
A Goddess among Gods, ador'd and serv'd
By Angels numberless, thy daily Train. IX.538-48.

This speech not only slights pastoral values, it also craftily displaces Eden from the centre of the world to a site more appropriate to the hiding places of the romance epics. The equally scathing dismissal of the "one man except" could almost serve as an echo of Ubaldo's scornful *<egregio campione di una fanciulla>*. Though unlike the Statius' discovery of Achilles or the crusaders stepping out before Rinaldo the serpent cannot hold up a polished shield or mirror to show Eve her own reflection, his rhetorical overpraising becomes a mirror of words.

All that fair and good in thy Divine
Semblance, and in thy Beauties heav'nly Ray
United I beheld; no Fair to thine
Equivalent or second. IX.606-8.

We should also remember Eve's first Narcissus-like fascination with her own beauty reflected in a pool. But the irony is

compounded if we remember that before the fall Adam and Eve are in themselves mirrors of God since "in thir looks Divine | The image of thir glorious Maker shone" [IV.291-2].

A certain dramatic irony even emerges in the reversal of roles, since, if Eve corresponds to the erring Achilles-figure, Adam, who rejoins her too late, must fall into the role of the witch returning to her prisoner and finding all lost; but his decision to join Eve in her crime leads to the state of sensuality typified by the garden of Circe. Our first parents first gorge themselves to excess on the fruit, then make passionate and violent love.

..Flours were the Couch,
Pansies, and Violets, and Asphodel,
And Hyacinth, Earths freshest softest lap.
There they thir fill of Love and Loves disport
Took largely, of thir mutual guilt the Seale,
The solace of thir sin, till dewie sleep
Oppress'd them, wearied with thir amorous play.

IX.1039-45.

When they wake after their lovemaking they "found thir Eyes how op'ned, and thir minds | How dark'nd: innocence, that as a veile | Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone" [IX.1053-5]. Just as Adam and Eve realise their folly, are horrified by their own nakedness and set about making garments of leaves, so the Renaissance hero is disgusted with his effeminate attire and stripping these ignoble weeds redons his armour.

In the Orlando Furioso Alcina's army is routed, in the Gerusalemme Liberata Armida undoes the spells which created the garden and it disappears, while in the Faerie Queene it is Guyon himself who destroys the "pleasaunt bowres". In Paradise Lost Adam is told by Michael that after the expulsion

Eden will survive up to the flood when the waters will carry "this Mount | Of Paradise" [XI.829-30] down to the sea. There it will become an unrecognisable "Iland salt and bare, | The haunt of Seales and Orcs, and Sea-mews clang" [XI.834-5].

The success of the temptation also means the triumphant conclusion of the Satanic epic, though Satan's return to Hell and punishment has to follow. The Devil's triumph marks the end of the running parallel of Paradise Lost with the romance epics. Their real protagonist, Satan in his protean forms, disappears from the scene. Appropriately so, since the final three books abandon the false classical and chivalric heroic for Milton's new "subject for heroic song", the redemption of man through Christ.

APPENDIX A.Citations of Galileo or the Telescope in Italian
seventeenth-century epics.¹

Giovan Domenico Peri di Archidosso, Fiesole Distrutta,
 Florence, Nella stamperia di Zanobi Pignoni 1620, canto IX.
 Brimarte uses a magic telescope to disperse the illusions of a
 witch and rescue Rosmondo (st. 2).

Era questo un'occhial con cui scorgea
 L'huom d'ogn'incanto la malizia, e'l frodo,
 Che posto auanti a l'occhio rimiraua
 Con esso il guardo quanto il cor bramaua.

When his way is blocked by storms and frightening woods he
 looks at them through the telescope (st.10-14).

Ricorre il pio guerrier tosto che vede
 Contro irritarsi la spietata rabbia
 Al terso Occhial col guardo, & a lui chiede
 Il modo di calcar la chiusa gabbia:
 Mira con esso la pregiata sede
 Cangiarsi in fummo, e dileguarsi in sabbia,
 E'l prezioso muro, e'l bosco, e'l fiume
 Prender l'usato aspetto, e'l puro lume.

Vede seco le piogge, e le tempeste
 Esser false finzioni, & ombre vane,
 E le colme d'orror dense foreste
 Finti prodigi, sogni, e larue insane:
 Sente gl'urli, e le note alterne, e meste
 Esser note d'augelli, e voci humane,
 E i graui tuoni a'terremoti uniti
 D'armenti, e greggi gemiti, e muggiti.

E quanto a l'occhio natural si mostra
 D'orrendo, e spaventoso al finto appare
 Tutto reale, e di quel ver s'innestra
 Che solea col cristallo occhio mirare...

L'Occhial merauiglioso, il finto, e'l uano
 Non sol chiarisce, e'l rappresenta al uero,
 Ma con doppio stupor, quel ch'è lontano
 Accostandolo altrui dimostra intero:

¹This appendix should have appeared after chapter 3, part I,
 but for reasons of length it has been placed at the end of the
 text.

E tal com'egli è fatto, a mano, a mano
 Porge ogni lontananza, ogni sentiero,
 Né merauiglia è dunque se gl'ascosi
 Scorge Brimarte lor giochi amorosi.

Like Astolfo's book in the Furioso the telescope shows how to break the spell and defeat the witch (canto IX.20).

Vede che a far dissolver l'ampia Reggia
 In fumo, e liberar l'amato amico,
 Vuopo è trarre il Demon da la sua seggia,
 Che tende quest'inganni, e questo intrico:
 Indi oprar che Rosmondo il finto veggia
 Nel prezioso Occhiale, onde nemico
 De la Maga diuenga, e del suo amore
 A cui l'allaccia lusinghiero errore.

Brimarte successfully rescues Rosmondo. The telescope continues to play an important role in the poem. When the magician Zambardo captures all the knights, including Brimarte who left the telescope in his tent, the Sibyll takes the telescope from where Brimarte left it and enters the court of Zambardo (canto XVIII.19).

Vede col puro occhial, che distruggendo
 Del sagace Demon l'impresse note,
 E l'ampolle, e l'imagini rompendo
 Con esse il fero incanto romper puote:
 Impara il modo di schivar l'orrendo
 Periglio ivi apprestato, a chi l'immote
 Arti distrugger tenta, e far che vane
 Restin le nebbie, e l'altre cose strane.

Giulio Strozzi, Venetia Edificata: Poema Eroico, Venice, Appresso il Pinelli 1624, Canto VII.49-58.

I nostri Duci a si gran vista han seco
 Oddo per guida, l'inclito Francone;
 E se d'un'occhio il Caualliero é cieco,
 Tal del chiamarlo fu l'altra cagione.
 Ch'ei da Merlin già nel Cemmenio speco
 Hebbe di sua fortezza in guiderdone
 Istromento mirabile, e diuino
 Che l'oggetto lontan porta uicino.

Forma ha di tromba, e di lunghezza in duoi
 Cubiti si distende; al doppio foro
 Due vetri stan; l'un ne'conuessi suoi
 Forma l'altro nel cauo il bel lauoro.
 L'occhio al cauo s'accosta, e mostran poi,
 Doue li fissi tu, gli effetti loro:
 E d'appressar'ogni lontan'oggetto

Con multiplico immenso è il lor'effetto.

Merlin già figlio d'un'aerea Mente,
E di donna a Dio sacra in van creduto;
Ma che del sangue rio de Re possente
Ogn'hor fra gli antri, e i boschi ermi è vissuto,
Fuggir del Re de gli Angli, e di sua gente
Ogn'ingiuria fin'hor saggio ha potuto;
E di virtudi ornato eccelse, e dotte
Habitator è di Cemmenie grotte.

Quiui in sacro ricetta egli il futuro
Tal'hor preuede, e se tant'oltre ei scorge
Con gli occhi della mente, hor più sicuro
A quei del senseo accrescimento ei porge;
Che d'intelletto perspicace, e puro,
Emolo di Talete, al fin s'accorge
Potersi di legier si nobil senso
Auualorar d'accrescimento immenso.

E tratti fuor da più riposta falda
Rozzi cristalli, pria gli arruota, e monda,
Indi su pietra adamantina, e salda
Incurua l'uno, e l'altro in giro affonda.
E all'hor, che'l Ciel nella stagion men calda
Di stelle più, men di vapori abbonda,
Mirò per qual cagion l'argentea Luna
Parte celi di se concaua, e bruna.

D'Ermite vide, e di Ciprigna a'moti
Crescer'ambo, e mancar con doppio corno,
E di scoprir ardì fregghi mal noti
Nel luminoso apportator del giorno.
Poi di Marte più sopra i giri ignoti;
E Giove ancor di quattro Stelle adorno,
Ch'errando con breuissimo interuallo
Formano intorno al lor gran Duce un ballo.

In tre nodi minori egli diuiso
Vide Saturno, e della via, ch'il latte
Pareggia, e scala è forse al Paradiso,
Le fauolose opinioni abbatte.
Non diede all'hor de'grandi aspetti auuiso,
Che ben conobbe in quell'età non atte
A solleuar tant'alto esser le genti
Con gli occhi ancor le sonnacchiose menti.

Che di leggier potean rozzi intelletti
Raggirarsi tra'dubbi, e non disciorli;
O che torrian questi nouelli aspetti
Del vetro inganni, o non saprian raccorli:
O che sì grandi, e mal'intesi effetti
In vanissimo error verriano a porli,
Col pensar, che s'aggiri intorno al Sole
Questa, ch'è centro a lui Terrena mole.

Ma sol disse al Guerriero, all'hor, che degno
Il fè Merlin de'suoi lauori industri.
Tempo verrà, quando di Pietro il Regno
Vegga giunte a gran draghe Aquile illustri,

Che dell'Etruria il più pregiato ingegno
 I vetri miei rinouellando illustri,
 Mentre, che rifiorir gli studi, e l'arti
 Là si vedran nell'Antenoree parti.

Ed hor, che Duce auenturoso, e forte
 Non è pigro a frenar l'empio Tiranno,
 Comanda il Ciel, che teco il don ti porte
 A scoprir lunge ogni nemico inganno,
 Ed habbia teco il mio lavor poi morte,
 Mentre haurai più di conseruarlo affanno:
 Tu non chieder più oltre, alto decreto
 Del Ciel pose a'miei vetri un tal divieto.

Malatesta Porta, Rimino Protetto: Poema sacro, Rimini 1628,
 canto III.79-88: Fe, Speme and Zelo rising from the earth
 carry the prayers of a martyred bishop to heaven and pass
 through the planetary spheres.

Rotar veggon più su la chiara lampa,
 Hor antiguardia, hor che s'atterga al Sole,
 E s'al lume di lui s'adorna, e stampa,
 Hor vuole, hor piene le sue corna vuole.
 Ma lo splendor, ch'intorno le si accampa,
 Fa, che tutta sembrar lucida suole,
 E s'inganna occhio human, ch'indarno puote
 Apparenze scoprir, troppo remote.

Ma tempo fia, ch'il mio Signore a sdegno
 Più non haurà (dicea) ch'il mondo ammiri,
 Con qua'vere sembianze, & a qual segno
 Quel lume, e questo altrui si mostri, e giri,
 Allhor, che Tosco, pellegrino ingegno,
 Nato su l'Arno, quinci, e quindi a giri
 Industri, aggiunti puri vetri, il velo
 Squarci, e col guardo suo penetri'l Cielo.

In quella allhor, che giu fra voi si stima
 Con più luce, e con men pulita Luna,
 Vedrassi, qual di monti, e dorso, e cima,
 Ed antri, ed ombre; onde s'oscura, e imbruna,
 E'l grand'occhio del giorno, in cui non prima
 Osò mente pensar sembianza alcuna,
 Fuor, che di lume, adhor, adhor di nere
 Macchie sparso apparir, forme pur vere.

[st.82-4 describe the planets and their astrological
 significance.]

Scorgono poi ciò, ch'in mill'anni, e lustri,
 Non mirò, non crede, nè forse aspira
 Occhio, ò mortal pensier, fra quanto illustri
 Il portator del giorno, ovunque gira;
 Che quale a sovran Prenze servi illustri,
 Presso (ò vada egli, ò stia) sempre si mira;

(Tal'a questa d'intorno, e chiare, e belle,
Quattro aggirarsi piccolette stelle.

Ma son già doue il più sovrano, e tardo
Lume, errante la su, non ben riluce,
E sembra a cui v'alza, ed affissa il guardo,
C'habbiano i raggi suoi pallida luce.
Ch'il funesto di lui, nero stendardo
Segua, ch'il prenda orrida schiera in Duce,
Crede chi a Dio mal crede, e che per tutto,
E fame porti, e pestilenza, e lutto.

Maraviglia odi hor tu, s'è finto in terra
Triforme Gerion, Saturno è in Cielo,
C'hor tre lucidi globi unisce, ed erra,
Hor solo appare, e fassi a gli altri velo.
Ma di saperlo huom pur vaneggia, ed erra,
Et io solo per grazia il ti revelo,
Ma nol ridir fin che verrà ch'ì scopra
Quelle, ch'ignote son, forme là sopra.

La 'ue Troian guerrier fondò primiero,
Eccelse, illustri, e gloriose mura,
Del Medeaco su le rive altero,
Vincerà vn Tosco GALILEO, Natura.
Di contemplar ne gli ampi Cieli il vero
Fia, ch'a lui solo il mio Signor dia cura,
E penetrar co'suoi cristalli ogni ombra,
Ch'à sì lontani oggetti il guardo adombra.

Ascanio Grandi, Il Tancredi, Lecce, Appresso Pietro Micheli
Borgognone 1632, canto IX.9-13. The look-out sees on the
horizon the English fleet in pursuit of Tancredi and shouts
down a warning. Tancredi takes the telescope and looks through
it.

...Tancredi immoto
Non stette a questa voce: ma stormento
Mirabil ad oprar già non fu lento.

E d'oro, è lungo, è tondo, & auuicina
Lontanissime cose al guardo humano
Vn tale ordigno, e doppia hà cristallina
Estremitate, e dentro è voto, e vano.
Il fabricò in germanica fucina,
E d'intagli il fregiò dedala mano:
Ma doue il fece d'oro, iui intagliollo,
E ne' duo vetri suoi schietto lasciollo.

Sotto vn de gli orli il nobil Fabro incise
De gli stellanti Segni il cerchio adorno,
E fè gir per le parti, onde il diuise,
I carri de' Pianeti, e l'Alba, e'l giorno:
Sotto l'altro a rimpetto Iride mise,
Iride incontra il Sol co'nembi intorno:
Ma nel mezo scolpiò l'immobil terra,

E' l mar, che la rinchiude, e la disserra.

Tancredi per colà, doue stà impressa
La terra, e' l mar, quello stomento prende,
E al miglior occhio l'un de' vetri appressa,
Incontro a cui l'altro cristal risplende:
L'altr'occhio intanto dal suo officio cessa,
(Ch'intorno a questo ei la palpebra stende)
E su le piante egli s'inalza, e resta
Immobile dal piè fin'a la testa.

Da l'un cristallo la virtù, che vede,
Passa ne l'altro, e verso Borea guata;
Per l'arte ò quanto in nostri sensi eccede
La virtù natural, ch'a'sensi è data:
Già s'appresenta al guardator (chi'l crede?)
Per quei duo vetri la londrese Armata,
E lunghissimo spatio ella da lunge
Riman, mentre a la vista a un punto giunge.

Mira Tancredi, quasi a se vicini
I Guerrier su quei legni...

Guidubaldo Benamati, La Vittoria Navale: Poema Heroico,
Bologna, Per Giacomo Monti 1646, canto VII, 94-7.

Mentre fauella, vn'Istrumento leue
Tratto dal sen rugoso, al Prenze ei dallo.
Tien rotonda lunghezza: e questa breue
Da l'un capo, e da l'altro haue un cristallo.
E cauo: e per l'un vetro occhio riceue
Spetie remote. E esso allungar pria fallo;
Si che per diece tanti, e più, sen cresce;
E nel crescere suo stupor accresce.

Poi segue il Mago. Al secol vostro ancora
Questo ordigno è mal noto, e ciò, ch'ei vale
Ma su l'Arno un Fanciullo hoggi dimora,
Che non haurà ne le scienze eguale.
Esso in matura età trarrallo fuori
Del fecondo suo ingegno, & immortale:
E con gusto de gli occhi, e de le menti,
Scoprirà noui in Ciel Mondi eccellenti.

Tu, Galileo sublime, al senso vago
Offrirai non più viste accese stelle,
E due splendori in Cintia, e ne l'imago
Del Pianeta maggior macchie rubelle.
Io sin di quà, de l'auenir presago,
Ammirar veggio in te proue sì belle;
E che far la virtù chiaro ti vuole
Ancor ne l'ombre, ond'imperfetto è' l Sole.

Hor su'l vetro minor l'un ciglio posto
Chiuso l'altro, ver la volgi l'occhiale,
(Replia al Prenze) e al tuo desire esposto
Vedrai lo scopo: al tuo desire eguale.

Girolamo Graziani, Il Conquistato di Granata, Modena 1650, V.27,
describes the magnifying effect of a lens in a simile.

Qual lucido cristallo a l'occhio opposto
Somministra a veder nuovi splendori,
E con doppia virtù, benche discosto,
Gli oggetti a chi risguarda offre maggiori...

Girolamo Bartolommei già Smeducci, L'America: Poema Eroico,
Rome, Nella stamperia di Lodovico Grignani 1650, Canto
XVIII.69-10. Amerigo Vespucci ascends to the top of the Monte
della Luna and sees the Egyptian hermit, Asterio.

D'Apollo Spiatore'l nouo Atlante,
Che con la mente al Ciel formò sostegno,
Ordigno tenne al guardo suo davante
Opra stupenda dell'industre Ingegno;
Raro instrumento, onde scoprir si vante
Alti segreti dell'Etereo Regno,
Pellegrino Linceo, Mago innocente,
Che s'appressi le Stelle, e si presente.

Figlio dell'Arte l'ingegnioso Arnese
Sonora Tromba nel model dipinse,
Anz'una ottusa Lancia, onde contese
L'Occhio col Sole, e'suoi splendori vinse.
De'folgoranti rai nudo lo rese,
E prigioner fra'vetri suoi lo strinse,
Confortatori della vista, ond'ella
Non tema i dardi di lucente Stella.

D'Indica Canna fra forami opposti
Fra lor serbanti debiti interualli,
Tali con dotta mano ebbe disposti
Vari di tempra candidi cristalli:
Ch'i più remoti oggetti, e'più discosti
Da bella qualità, che l'Arte dalli,
Prossima scorga, e'prossimi lontani;
Effetti inuero pellegrini, e strani.

Sotto'l suo Canocchial, che fermo tenne
Con ambe mani dall'appoggio immote,
Serbò varie tinture, e carte, e penne,
Onde gli apparsi Aspetti vari note.
Di pagine'l candore a sparger venne
Or di purpuree, ed or di negre note,
Qual suol Pittore, che fra'lini sui
Vada ombrando il color, scorto in Altrui.

Fiso il Tosco lo mira, e attende, e tace,
Sin che da tale alto stupor si desti,
Che più ch'Huom viuo iui parer lo face
Alcuna Statua, ch'al Sol posta resti.

Ti salui Dio, e lungamente in pace
 Intento serbi a be'pensier Celesti
 Di Te stesso nel cor pago, e felice,
 Al fin prorompe impaziente, e dice.

Riscosso il Saggio a quel gentil saluto
 Toltosi dal mirare'l Solar lume,
 Volse la fronte, e fe' veder canuto
 D'argento il mento con oneste piume.
 Poich'alquanto a guatar rimase muto,
 Pace ti renda, disse, il sommo Nume,
 Che tempra gli Elementi ò Pellegrino,
 Che scorse a questo Giogo erto camino.

Ma dimmi, onde fra questa ora opportuna,
 Mentre s'affaccia all'Oriente il Sole,
 Qua su poggiasti al Monte della Luna,
 Ch'Altri di rado stampar d'orme suole?
 Monte mira volesti, che da bruna
 Nube, e da giel sua sommità n'invole?
 E fè parerti dolce ogni aspra via
 Pensier, che Questi un novo Olimpo fia?

Non per altra cagion, Quegli ripose,
 Giunse a queste tranquille eccelse Cime,
 Alpestri superate Erte sassose,
 Che per mirar l'Ospite suo sublime:
 Sempre'l mio cor'un bel sauer prepose
 A gemme, ed oro, ch'Altri tanto stime:
 Quell'un frale tesor, Questo immortale,
 Che l'Huom sublima, e a gli Angeli rend'eguale.

O teco potess'io, resa la mente
 Scarca da cure, e da tumulti queta,
 Su questo Giogo di seren ridente
 Guidar Contemplator la vita lieta !
 Ma dinne, a qual cagion le luci intente
 Dianzi tenesti al bel Solar Pianeta?
 Quai vagheggiasti Aquila fisa in Lui
 Chiare bellezze da'Cristalli tui?

Sorrider parve a tai parole il Veglio,
 E sorto a far'ad Amerigo onore;
 Saggio, disse, Ti mostri, mentr'al meglio
 Fra le mondane cose appighi il core:
 Scorsi da questo replicato Speglio
 In quel Fonte di Luce, e di Splendore,
 Non già qual pensi folgoranti lumi,
 Ma fosche Macchie, e polverosi Fumi.

Se l'antico Prometeo al Sol poggiato
 Gl'inuolò il Foco, onde allumò sua Face,
 Ombre per le mie carte Io gli ho furato,
 Salendo a Lui col Telescopio audace:
 Ben ciò vedrai, se mentr'or più temprato
 Egli risplende a Te mirarlo piace,
 E partendo potrai render giocondo
 Di stupor nouo testimonio al Mondo.

Se questo Canocchial tua mano prenda,

Che con industrie cura fabbricai,
 E da' Cristalli il guardo al Sol s'intenda,
 Macchiato in varie guise lo vedrai:
 Si che ti sembri, che'n te stesso renda
 Nouo confuso Chaos fra chiari rai,
 Scorti vari mescugli di colori,
 E seminate l'ombre fra splendori.

Proruppe il Tosco allor: Dunque del Giorno
 Il chiaro Autore, Occhio del Ciel sereno,
 L'alto Pittor, che rende'l Mondo adorno,
 Di Macchie infosca il volto ardente, e'l seno?
 Se l'ombre fanno al Sole oltraggio, e scorno,
 Al Sol, che fa sparirle, e venir meno;
 Qual sarà cosa, che sia chiara, e pura,
 Mentre l'istessa Luce appare impura?

Dall'occhio forse, e non dal Sol procede,
 Che più n'abbaglia Altrui, quanto più splende,
 Ogni ombra, che veder'Altri in Lui crede,
 Fonte diurno di sereno Lume:
 O pure'l tuo Cristallo, che concede
 A Lui fissarti senza che consume
 La Virtute visiva una tal face
 Placido inganno, e illusion fallace.

Tal se fra'l Sol tramezzi, e fra la nostra
 Vista vn'umida Nube, ch'è percota;
 La fregia qual Taumante, indora, e'mostra,
 E quel che'n Lei non è, n'adombra, e nota:
 Tal s'infinge Colomba, che si mostra
 Sparsa di verde, e purpurina nota,
 Se del bel collo suo, che'n giro mena,
 Vega ne formi al Sol pompa serena.

Ben'oprar può, replicò il Veglio tosto,
 Che la Sfera del Sol maggior si mostri,
 Mercè, che resti alcun vapor traposto
 Fra quel chiaro Pianeta, e gli occhi nostri:
 Ma come vale un Conocchial composto
 Di chiari vetri adombrar ori, ed ostri?
 Macchie impure offerir Cristallo puro?
 E'l trasparente far veder oscuro?

Già son molt'anni, che da questa parte
 Io le Solari Macchie ebbi osservate,
 E quai le vidi figurate in carte,
 Variamente disposte, e colorate.
 Nascer non suol l'error là doue l'Arte
 L'opra sua n'impiegò per lunga etate;
 Delle cose si rende, oue s'addestra
 L'accorta Esperienza la Maestra.

Così dicendo quell'Egizio porge
 Al Tosco il Telescopio, ond'Egli intento
 Lo tenga al Sol, che mentre chiaro sorge
 Indora, e'ngemma all'onde'l molle argento:
 Mira, ed osserva pria, ma non iscorge
 L'arte di quel mirabile Instrumento,
 Che mal può scerner tosto ochio cerviero

L'artifizio d'un lungo magistero.

Quindi Amerigo alla Solare Sfera
 Quell'Ordigno indirizzò quasi Saetta,
 Onde qual chiaro scopo Egli lo fera
 Con punta di cristallo pura, e netta.
 L'Abitator di quella Cima altera
 Posto'n disparte il va mirando, e aspetta,
 Ch'Egli stesso confermi con le proue
 Il detto suo, scorte Apparenze noue.

Qual miracolo veggio offerirsi auante,
 Il Toscano prorumpe, al Sole intento?
 Un Mar di luce Io miro, un Mare ondante,
 Più che l'acquoso allor, che'l turbi il vento:
 Vagar Naui fra Quello Io veggio, ò quante,
 Cui presto il moto, e cui più tardo, e lento;
 Naui sembrar le Macchie di più sorti,
 Senza Nocchier correnti a vari Porti.

Qual pallida n'appare, e qual più bruna,
 E qual fra loro più di luce abbonda;
 Qual tien figura di falcata Luna,
 Qual dimezzata, e qual si mostra tonda:
 Con la Compagna altra s'annesta, ed una
 Si fa dal maritaggio; altra feconda
 Con mirabil stupor di se si rende,
 E Madre, e Figlia, che doppiata splende.

Ma quai fra Macchie sparse in vario loco
 Da parte Oriental mirò sorgenti?
 Tremole Faci di uivace foco
 Fra Campagne d'argento ori lucenti?
 Sembrar fra loro con incerto gioco
 Gire ad urtarsi con le fronti ardenti,
 Quasi non basti il guerreggiar la Terra,
 Mentr'anco'l Ciel nel Sole immiti guerra.

Entro al corpo solar minuti Punti
 Errando van di numero infiniti,
 Vniti fra di loro, ed or disiunti
 Intorno a varie Macchie compartiti:
 Poco molti durar nati, e consunti,
 In un punto comparsi, ed ispariti,
 Ne perch'altri sia fosco, ò più sereno
 Men tarda a sorgere fuori, ò venir meno.

Trasecolato resto, e mi confondo,
 Mentre veggio Portenti, e non gl'intenda,
 Io non so se vaneggio, ò se fecondo
 Di straniera famiglia il Sol si renda:
 Trammi d'errore ò Tu, che solo al Mondo
 Scopristi merauiglia sì stupenda,
 Dimmi quai son gli scorti Aspetti, e quali
 Mandin qua giuso influsso a Noi mortali.

Qual'è, replicò il Veglio, che si pensi
 Così spiar del Ciel gli alti secret,
 Che d'opre lontanissime da'sensi
 Voglia render ragion, ch'altri n'acqueti?

Le maculose note, e'lumi accensi,
 Ed altro, ch'offre il Prence de' Pianeti
 Altre si creda pur, che possan fare
 Parti, che sieno in Lui più dense, e rare.

Altri reputi il Sol foco viuace,
 Che lampeggiando l'Vniverso allumi,
 Si ch'auuampando qual'Etnea fornace
 L'interne proprie viscere consumi:
 Quindi a temprar l'incendio, che lo sface,
 Conserue tenga egli di Laghi, e Fiumi,
 E conforme a quell'acque, ò torbe, ò pure,
 Mostri le Macchie sue chiare, ed oscure.

L'aurato Sol per mia sentenza tondo,
 Che come rota in giro si conduce,
 Si come tempra in varie guise il Mondo,
 Tal'anco in se medesimo un Mondo adduce;
 Mentr'egli è ver, che Genitor fecondo
 Parti diuersi in Terra egli produce:
 Ben si conuien, ch'i semi in sen ritegna,
 Ch'Altri quello non dà, che'n se non tegna.

Quindi qual Corpo dominante serra
 Quanto in ogni altro inferior s'attende,
 Cagiona amenitade a quella Terra,
 Oue con verdi macchie le risplende:
 L'Aria, che spesso proua instabil guerra,
 Nelle più rare macchie adombra, e rende,
 Nell'argentate l'acque, e segna il foco
 Nelle dorate più mutanti loco.

Conforme all'Apparenza, che si vede
 Nell'aureo Sole, il Parto qui risponde;
 Da diversa di Lui macchia procede,
 Ch'umido, ò secco, ò freddo, ò caldo abbonde:
 D'alcune note all'apparir succede
 Farsi le piagge sterili, ò feconde;
 Altri arrecaro i morbi, altre ne'petti
 Turbar salute, altre turbar gli affetti.

Portar serenità macchie serene,
 Liuide, e fosche, torbide tempeste;
 Quelle che verdi il Solar corpo tiene
 La Terra riuestir d'erbosa veste:
 Serbano alcune qualità terrene
 In vista negre, che maligna peste
 A gli Huomini arrecaro, e a gli Animalì,
 Generate nel Ciel macchie fatali.

Ma pur fra l'altre, che fra'l Sol sen vanno
 Vaganti come Pesci in grembo all'Acque,
 L'accese in viuo foco apportar danno,
 Mentre sdegno da loro, e guerra nacque.
 Già del Tempo il Rettor volge il sesto anno,
 Che Faci ardenti rimirar mi piacque
 Dell'Occidente nell'estrema Parte,
 Ch'annunziar dall'ardor fiamme di Marte.

[St. 100-3 are a prophecy of discord and wars.]

Nunzi di guerre i fiammeggianti Aspetti
 Sino al secol futuro tarderanno
 Sovra l'Europa a partorir gli effetti,
 Se ne gl'incerti auguri io non m'inganno:
 Tu certo sè, che'l tuo morir s'affretti,
 Si ch'a veder non passi un tale danno:
 Quegli a tempo morio, che morto resti,
 Anzi di rimirar casi funesti.

Così disse, e di guerre Augur si rese,
 Di cui la bell'Italia assai sen duole,
 Che seppe presagir da Macchie accese,
 E non da Stelle no, com'Altri suole.
 Strano mi sembra il pio Toscan riprese,
 Ch'influenze di Stelle approprii al Sole:
 Vani gli annunzi tuoi spero, s'a'mali
 Nostre colpe non sian Madri fatali.

Ma rese conte già le Macchie erranti,
 Per cui qua giù suole incostanza farsi,
 Palese or fa, come nel Sole cotanti
 Punti mirai di quà di là cosparsi:
 A che fin così vari, altri mancanti,
 Altri nascenti, e chiari, e foschi apparsi,
 Molti aprirsi, e serrarsi, e vidi molti
 Quasi ad un tempo istesso, e dati, e tolti.

Segnan, rispose Asterio, gl'infiniti
 Punti scorti nel Sol gl'Huomin mortali,
 Che come sparsi in varie Terre, e Liti
 Compir diuersamente i dì fatali.
 Alcuni Infanti in un balen spariti
 Vnir co'funerali i lor natali:
 Di stato Altri più chiari, Altri più oscuri,
 Che più vagaro, mentre vita duri

Fra la Sfera del Sol, Padre fecondo
 Si com'i Punti cangiar lochi, e stati
 Così scherzando vangli Huomin nel Mondo
 Giochi del Tempo, ed Atomi animati.
 Nasce qua giuso, e muor Ciascun, secondo
 L'ordin prescritto da'sourani Fati,
 E tal di loro destinata Legge
 Nell'immortal Libro del Sol si legge.

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- *Galileo as symbol: the «Tuscan Artist» in Paradise Lost*, «Annali dell'Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza di Firenze», X/2, 1985, pp. 1-29.
- *John Milton's reading of the Orlando Innamorato*, «La Bibliofilia», LXXXVIII/1, 1986, pp. 25-43.
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Also by Neil Harris, but without reference to material in the thesis:

- *Milton's well pleasing son: A note on De doctrina christiana and Paradise Lost III.274-276*, «Notes and queries», CCXXXVII, 1992, pp. 33-36.