

Nevertheless, the ultimate business of philosophy is to preserve the *force of the most elemental words* in which Dasein expresses itself, and to keep the common understanding from levelling them off to that to that unintelligibility which functions in turn as a source of pseudo-problems.

—Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*

Paradise Regain'd is an exercise in frustration. Many readers, rather satisfied with the aesthetics and 'lesson' of *Paradise Lost*, consider the plain style and Puritan theology of this apparent sequel dull and repetitive. Yet the asceticism of *Paradise Regain'd* might function as a necessary supplement to the earlier epic's vast panorama of images, sound, and argument which impinges on the sense and leaves its readers in the wake of their own astonishment. Such wide-ranging entertainment surely leaves a mind thoroughly sated, if not perhaps dangerously exhausted. 'Lost' in the sea of sensual perception, the reader that Milton tried to shape might far too easily be swayed by currents of cunning rhetoric; and for all the author's prescient warnings, a man might still mistake a terrifying Leviathan for an island of safe repose. Indeed, in spite of all its apparently full and copious verse, the magnitude of *Paradise Lost* demanded a response.

Paradise Regain'd is Milton's magnanimous response. First-time readers, however, expecting an illustration of the apocalypse or crucifixion might find Milton's choice of subject matter a bit disorienting, perhaps disappointing. The poem describes the period of Jesus' life from his baptism until the end of his sojourn in the Wilderness, when he is tempted by Satan three times. The Bible provides two versions of this story in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and both differ in how they order the temptations chronologically. Milton composes *Paradise Regain'd* following Luke's account: Satan first tempts the Son with a command that he turn stones into bread, then that he bow to Satan for military or rhetorical imperial power, and finally that he prove his divinity by casting himself from a temple spire.

Ultimately, both Milton and the poem are most interested in this question of Jesus' status as an incarnate divinity—what, precisely, it means to be the Son of God. Satan throughout the poem founds many of his temptations within the framework of what has already been written concerning the coming messiah in scriptural law and prophecy, attempting at once to grasp the Son intellectually and in doing so trick Jesus into falling disobedient. However, understanding Satan's incapacity to transcend the limits of his own literal-mindedness, the Son consistently and effectively counters his adversary in terms of the very laws and prophecies Satan seeks to abuse. In fact, the seeds of this hermeneutic triumph appear toward the end of *Paradise Lost*, when Michael admonishes Adam for foolishly expecting a literal defeat of Satan: Dream not of thir fight, / As of a Duel, or the local wounds / Of head or heel; not therefore joins the Son / Manhood to Godhead."¹ Even his later qualification of the Son's action of "fulfilling that which thou didst want, / Obedience to the Law of God"² does not seem a satisfactory answer to the fundamental problem—namely, Satan's perversion of the discursive human being. Likewise, his negative description of the Son's as 'joined' or as a dual being leaves the act of negating the fall unclear. Michael's vague explanation of the exact nature of this victor and the conditions of his victory thus finds its answer and parallel in the work of *Paradise Regain'd*.

Of course, that vagueness has not stopped critics from publishing various speculations and theories about the poem's conception of the Incarnation for the last three hundred years. Faced with such an astoundingly complex intellectual knot, whose threads both demarcate and subsume realms as seemingly disparate as theological history and political philosophy, students and critics over the years have fallen into an almost unsolvable disagreement about the nature of

the Son and consequentially, the status of the poem as a whole. Some critics understand the poem as a dramatic rendition of the biblical story, thereby imagining a Son of God “subject to doubts and fears, and undergoing a genuine adventure of testing and self-discovery.”³ On the other hand, other readers believe Milton’s Jesus a rigidly perfect being, and so read the poem didactically as a moral lesson couched in theological terms—his *De Doctrina Christiana* in iambic pentameter. One such critic contends that “the ‘characters’ of this poem exist, not for their own points of view, but as occasions, as channels, by which the personal meditation can make its way.”⁴ However, while at first glance these lines of argument appear utterly irreconcilable, a successful investigation of Jesus’ intermingled identity might become possible by asking about the functional relationship between the poem and Milton’s ideal or intended reader.

Indeed, both dramatic- and didactic-based criticisms rely on an underlying assumption, which once blindly accepted always already limits the scope and depth of either’s analysis. Both perspectives assume that the poem works entirely on a passive audience—one that sits by idly as the dramatic action or didactic ‘meaning’ is narrated to it, verbatim—thus ignoring the far more fascinating question of how Jesus and the poem enact their pedagogy. Put another way, to imagine the poem as a mere spectacle or as a simple apologue reduces its extensive and copious lesson to a “fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary.”⁵ *Paradise Regain’d*, like any effective instructor, teaches by demanding of its students a well-thought response.

One of the fundamental tenets of Milton’s own Protestant background, in addition to the contemporaneous poetic tradition, set down the foundation for the textual conception of the Son portrayed in the poem. Although the Bible had always already been at the foundational core of the Catholic Christian tradition, the Reformation that occurred in the century before Milton’s writing saw a shift in intellectual focus that highlighted even more centrally the textual essence of the Bible. Milton and his contemporaries witnessed the “revelational and incarnational [*sic*] thrust of Christianity...made more explicitly verbal through the identification of the Bible as the Word of God [and] the authority of Scripture as ‘God’s self-revelation’ and accommodation to his creatures.”⁶ Of course, the transcendent infinitude of the divine, rather than being captured perfectly in its essence in any one chapter or verse, instead encompassed the entirety. While the Bible as a whole might serve as such an accommodation, the great difficulty remained in how to utilize the power of this holiest of holy texts in a way that allowed its readers rightly “To know, and knowing worship God aright” (PR 2.475).

In the century that preceded the epic, Erasmus and other early reformers attempted to explain the reasons for this difficulty. Citing the “inscrutability of the divine intention,”⁷ Erasmus would thus argue against the demand for any kind of forcefully literal or allegorical interpretation of scripture: the divine spoke or proclaimed the same idea throughout the Bible, through many devices. The multiplicity of the Gospels demonstrated his argument as a case in point: that there are four different narratives of the same life suggests not some kind of error in transcription on the part of some all-too-human author, but rather a divine authorization for the

multiplication of explanations, given the limit of language itself. The logic of Erasmus and other early reformers could thus “give licence [*sic*] to a degree of plurality (or ‘probabilism’) in [biblical] interpretation.”⁸ In effect, the miraculous accommodation of the divine in scripture required a multifaceted or perhaps experimenting understanding, a kind of intellectual synaesthesia the early reformers would signify as ‘copia’.

In addition, the poetic tradition that surrounded the epic’s writing would adopt the notion of divinely authorized ‘copia’ from the theological sphere. In the wake of the Reformation’s identification of the Bible as a textual entity, as well as, the supreme manifestation of the divine, the place of non-religious art—namely, its written expression, especially classical poetry—would in contrast to the divine words appear threatened to shrink into mere uselessness at best or utter blasphemy at worst. One of Milton’s poetic contemporaries, John Bunyan, confronted with this peculiar “problem of producing Christian epic in an atmosphere rife with the claims and counterclaims of Christian and classical culture,”⁹ would thus appropriate the theological argument into his own rationale for writing poetry:

Solidity indeed becomes the Pen
Of him that writeth things Divine to men;
But must I needs want solidness, because
By metaphors I speak? Were not God’s Laws,
His Gospel-Laws, in olden time held forth
By Types, Shadows, and Metaphors? Yet loth
Will any sober man be to find fault
With them, lest he be found to assault
The highest Wisdom.¹⁰

In this case, Bunyan reiterates the inadequacy of literal or solid speech to communicate the divine, thus arguing for the continued use of metaphor. For his part, Milton would justify the artistic free will to employ classical poetics in Book VII of *Paradise Lost* by expanding his descriptions precisely at moments of divine command to “Be fruitful, multiply.”¹¹ In that case, poetic expansion becomes a form of obedience to the divine, so that Milton augments the biblical text for the sake of accommodating the Bible’s ‘intent’.

Milton and the early reformers, however, did not understand this notion of ‘copia’-based interpretation as a mere expansion of pages or accumulation of words. Such a literal conception of ‘copia’ undermines its fundamental *raison d’être*, the clarification of the divine. Instead, their preference falls away from the breadth or length of any single exposition and favors instead a greater depth of understanding, as the “true plentitude of language is to be found not in simple extension, but inventive and imaginative richness.”¹² Erasmus himself believed in the necessity for linguistic fertility in order to aid the spiritual and scriptural learning of the Christian student: “It is not absurd to believe that the Holy Ghost also desired Scripture at times to generate various senses (*varios gignat sensus*), to suit the disposition of each reader, just as manna tasted as each one wished it to”.¹³ Milton dramatically illustrates this requirement for specificity in the diffuse

epic when God creates Eve for Adam. In that case, unsatisfied with mere animals that he could name but with whom he could not truly converse, Adam recognizes that he “requires / Collateral love, and dearest amity”¹⁴ because even the vast infinity of the divine in its totality far outstrips his limited understanding. God responds by thus creating Eve as Adam’s “likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, / Thy wish, exactly to thy heart’s desire”.¹⁵ Likewise, a single person’s individual imperfection might be repaired or sutured by means of the copious multiplication of meaning, and biblical interpretation thus becomes a kind of process of speech “releasing and bringing to life, as in poetry, the potential nuances of a single bare statement”¹⁶ in order also to account for multiple and occasionally conflicting perspectives.

Paradise Regain’d integrates this ‘copia’-based understanding of scriptural interpretation within the realm of pedagogy by locating their praxis in the figure of Jesus. Milton counters the problem of different perspectives with the word “revolve,” which he uses twice¹⁷ in the poem to refer to the Son’s contemplations of events and of scripture (PR 1.185, 1.259). Inherent in this curious word is the simultaneity of action and steadfastness: revolving a thought, for instance, can be accomplished rather well while standing still. The poem illustrates this ideal with brilliant brevity in the pinnacle scene, where the act of “he said and stood” brings about the defeat of an utterly confounded Satan, who falls “smitten with amazement” (PR 4.561-562). In addition, “revolve” captures precisely the ‘copia’ ideal of understanding in multiple ways what ultimately is a single, though enormous, idea. Like planets encircling a star—or perhaps more like the galaxy’s stars around a massive singularity—the pluralities of scripture bespeak various aspects of the singular word of the divine, and the Son’s activity of revolving that word grants him intellectual access to this divine plentitude. Indeed, “revolve” characterizes not just the manner of Jesus’ action, but also the act itself—the regaining of a lost Paradise and the reversal of perversion.

It would be misleading, however, to assume that access to the divine is confined to Jesus’ mind alone; doing so would divorce his mental activity from his physical and human activity. Indeed, Satan’s conception of “The mind [as] its own place”¹⁸ does just that and so, fails logically because he presupposes that physical place is merely a function of the mental. The Son, on the other hand, as the Incarnate or embodied Word, cleaves together rather than cuts apart the body and the mind; thus, what he learns becomes as much a part of him as the food he eats: “The Law of God I read, and found it sweet, / Made it my whole delight, and in it grew / To such perfection” (PR 1.207-209). Indeed, the early reformers would highlight the significance of this digestion of scripture, in order that they might stress the value of the individual reader’s work of interpretation over some banal form of mere rote memorization. A personal interpretation allows for a greater depth of understanding, and so “this notion of incorporation... transfers to language the possibility of a process by which alien, external materials may be transformed so that they may re-emerge as a function of ‘nature’, and more specifically of the speaker’s nature.”¹⁹ Here biology and theology come together to produce a more profound understanding of—and perhaps union with, as in the Eucharist—the divine.

In such a way, Jesus comes to manifest Erasmus' ideal biblical student by becoming the "living expression"²⁰ of scripture, molding in the present by speech a seemingly unchanging text of the past. In fact, the narrator's first phrase for the Son describes him "Musing and much revolving in his breast" the matters of spiritual and scriptural import (PR 1.185). Here again the verb "revolve" becomes transitive, taking as its object what Jesus contemplates while at the same time referring to his manner of contemplation. By locating the space of that activity "in his breast," the poem refers to another standard of the early reformers' ideal student—specifically, that the biblical "text be wholly absorbed...and located in the pectus"²¹ or heart of the reader. In fact, the Son takes that goal even further, aiming not simply for his own individual understanding of the divine, but the inculcation of that wisdom to others, in that way bringing about humanity's redemption precisely by means of this "Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell / In pious Hearts, an inward Oracle / To all truth requisite for men to know" (PR 1.462-464).

Moreover, *Paradise Regain'd* demands that the Son accomplish this task by means of speech. Milton's Jesus must adopt a rhetorical method precisely because of the nature of his humanity. In the longer epic Raphael relates to Adam that, although all the creatures possessing a soul possess reason, that same reason could be "Discursive, or Intuitive [and that] discourse / Is ofttest [humanity's]"²² form of reason. Indeed, as *Paradise Lost* sees the fall of humanity through Satan's perversion of that discursive form, the Son must repair the human to the divine precisely by means of concise speech. A fit response to Satan's overflowing and otherwise overwhelming bombast, the Son's first and final answers to Satan comprise a mere two lines each. In addition, as opposed to the various vast narrative descriptions that so permeate the diffuse epic, *Paradise Regain'd* navigates much of its plot within the confines of the Son's and Satan's dialogue, providing only cursory narrative descriptions when necessary, such as the Son's baptism, dream, the storm in the Wilderness, or noting which character speaks to whom. Therefore, Jesus can exemplify what Steven Goldsmith calls the "instantaneous bond between language and action"²³ by himself, as the plot of the poem moves with his conversation. The Son's terse concision thus cuts through Satan's allegorical logic during, for instance, the first temptation. In this case, when Satan points to scriptural examples of food miraculously given, in order that he might goad the Son into performing a similar spectacle, Jesus simply responds: "What conclud'st thou hence? / They all had need, I as thou seest have none" (PR 2.317-318). Of course, because Milton's poem takes as its principal aim the redemption of language by language, oration and right biblical interpretation must necessarily go hand in hand.

For Milton, as well as the early reformers, oratory acts as the public expression of the inward soul. In such a way, the poem and the Son re-exemplify the original Latin meaning of 'oratory' as 'prayer'. Read in this light, the need for right understanding of the divine becomes penetratingly clear, lest the speech falls into blasphemy. Indeed, if this "Spirit of Truth" remains only within the purview of a private, though devout heart, a dangerous self-righteousness unchecked by physical reality could emerge, an idea not too far off from the satanic conception of the isolated mind-space (PR 1.462). In fact, such an anxiety appears early in Milton's poetry, with the forcefully reassuring "They also serve who only stand and wait."²⁴ As the Incarnate

Word, Jesus must necessarily exercise his “ability to communicate truth directly through speech”²⁵—namely, his own speech, as that demonstrates the extent of his command of scripture:

Thus improvisation, which might have seemed the antithesis of memory, is in fact dependent on its hidden activity... Memory perpetually constitutes and reconstitutes the store...or treasure-house...which speech dissipates; it presents...the abundance of materials which the orator must always have ‘in promptu’.²⁶

Once again, Milton appropriates an ideal of the early reformers and locates it in the figure of his protagonist. In so doing, he implements a “rhetorical doctrine of the Word in which the Trinity itself is rhetorical since the Father speaks through the Word with the power and persuasive force of the Holy Spirit.”²⁷ Therefore, the immediacy of the Son’s speech—in contrast to Satan’s regular silences, “A while as mute confounded what to say”—expresses the depth of divine infinity in his own present moment (PR 3.2). His plain and unhesitating style contrasts Satan’s blasphemous speech, as Jesus recognizes his adversary’s oration and being as “compos’d of lies / From the beginning, and in lies wilt end” (PR 1.407-408). That is, Satan’s logic depends on contrivance and trickery, “By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies,” simply for the sake of finding loopholes in the letter of the Word, ignoring the spirit that both underlies and transcends those mere letters (PR 1.433).

Indeed, the depth of Jesus’ scriptural understanding bespoken by the use of his own language—parallel to Milton’s use of English—counters the threat of a rote memorization that would forcefully iron out difference and depth. Responding to Satan’s temptation for rhetorical imperial power couched in the form of ancient Greek or Roman learning, the Son chastises that person who pores over books and bare knowledge “Incessantly, and to his reading brings not / A spirit and judgment equal or superior [as being] Uncertain and unsettled” in real wisdom (PR 4.323-326). This warning harkens back to the ideals of the early reformers: right interpretation flows from within the heart of the speaker, but this does not necessarily imply a homogenous blending of heart and text interpreted. If that were the case, the two would become a single entity devoid of difference, thus presupposing in the reader a lack of an individual identity or agency. In addition, such a homogeneous blending implies that there can be only one right interpretation of the biblical text. At the same time, a literally copious variety, while sometimes helpful to aid the understanding, if taken for its own sake undermines that understanding. Indeed, many times a pithy statement alone could, as it were, speak volumes. For example, the Son explains in sharp concision what might follow such an “unsettl’d” thinking: “(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek)” (PR 4.325-6). This line highlights the danger of an infinitely tautological or bare axiomatic reading, where the student sacrifices the depth of analysis for a superficial breadth of different sources taken unquestionably at face value. That superficial breadth both undermines the revolving character of ‘copia’ and creates an infinitely regressive situation where the student attempts to locate the truth of his belief by merely citing another person’s book that only cites another, and so forth. In so doing, he buries his uniqueness under a heap of books.

This uniqueness, moreover, represents one of Milton's prime directives for the individual, as well as for his poem's protagonist. This concept of individual difference appears as early as Sonnet XIX, when the speaker refers to "that one Talent which is death to hide."²⁸ For Milton, uniqueness is a function of the divine gift of individual faculty. Difference, therefore, becomes the site of an interpretive praxis; the sonnet's speaker contemplates not how he might subvert his individuality, but rather how he must employ that individuality in service and accordance with the divine. Milton carries this logic of contiguous uniqueness into *Areopagitica*, seeking to preserve different books by assuming the divinely-made differences in people: "when God did enlarge the universal diet of man's body, saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dieting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity."²⁹ Difference in individual perspective, therefore, entails the requirement for discretion.

For the Son and his mission, awareness of the necessity for discretion becomes of paramount importance. In order to "teach the erring Soul" of the individual persons around him, he must understand as well as accept his own uniqueness—to the point of cleaving his individual agency from the seemingly infinite words of scripture, which could otherwise threaten to overwhelm that individuality (PR 1.224). The poem recognizes the need for this separation early on when the Son overviews the major elements of his life before its action begins. He recollects, when effectively a child prodigy of scripture and its interpretation, how "all my mind was set / Serious to learn and know" the intricate nuances of divine proclamation (PR 1.202-203). The enjambment in this case provides an important clue in understanding the Son's relationship to scripture by separating his apparently already "set" mind from what he desires to study. In this case, Jesus' separate agency becomes the condition of possibility for the speech act that would convey a spark of the divine infinity to the specific realities and needs of his present moment.

Moreover, that separate agency also allows the Son to consider possibilities that he would otherwise not pursue in reality. The personal narrative he gives at the beginning of the poem reveals the revolving character of his contemplative process. When recalling childhood mental flirtations with various vocations, where he believes himself called to accomplish some task of great consequence, the young Son thinks first in terms of a traditional heroism and desires "To rescue *Israel* from the *Roman* yoke, / Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth / Brute violence and proud Tyrannic pow'r" by means of military force (PR 1.217-219). Later in the poem, during Satan's temptation for imperial rhetoric, Jesus' apparent rejection opens another interpretive praxis where he effectively preserves the status of classical learning by articulating its value within the context of scripture and biblical history. In an attempt to pervert the notion of 'copia', Satan argues that "All knowledge is not couch't in *Moses*' Law" and suggests the Greek philosophies and rhetorical strategies as a necessary alternative that in this case becomes more important than the Hebraic teachings for the sake of converting the Gentiles (PR 4.225). Jesus, on the other hand, refuses to bind himself to Satan's forced dichotomy and instead asserts "That rather *Greece* from us these Arts deriv'd" (PR 4.338). Such interpretive calculus characterizes much of the Son's contemplative action throughout the poem, as well as betokens the intellectual air of Milton's time: "Christians throughout the Renaissance were constantly

triangulating pagan and Christian with Hebraic, so that the Christian interpretation could be seen as the true origin of...all mythology.”³⁰ Thus, the Son’s ability to consider many courses of action—and in so doing subsume them into broader categories without at once diminishing their differences—gestures to his fundamental capacity to understand and relate to other perspectives that he does not necessarily have to take up as his own. Just as the notion of ‘copia’ authorizes multiple interpretations of scripture, Jesus can grasp multiple perspectives in order to become a better guide or teacher of that scripture. Simply being aware of those different perspectives, however, is not enough; he must have the capacity to discern what is worth doing.

Although this model of an active interpretation appears frequently in Milton’s writing, referenced in many of his prose pieces or dramatically exemplified in verse such as *Paradise Lost*, in no other tract does he treat the subject with greater and more deliberate care than in *Areopagitica*. As he is attempting to persuade Parliament to repeal the Licensing Order, his central argument rests upon the idea that the individual person has both the capacity and thus the right to choose good books from bad ones, precisely because the good and the bad define each other: “It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil.”³¹ Furthermore, in a compelling rendition of his argument, he reiterates this logic in terms of the classical myth of Psyche: “knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil...that those confused seeds which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labor to cull out and sort asunder were not more intermixed.”³² Indeed, like the Son, Milton cares more about expressing the fundamental idea of his point than he does the form that expression might take. Interestingly enough, even here Milton preserves his preference for sources: while Psyche’s task bears a similarity or likeness to it, her duty is “not more” difficult than the original condition of Adam and Eve’s progeny, according to the biblical tradition. He employs the classical allusion only to further his argument, but not to the point of considering it superior to his biblical allusions. This preference, moreover, finds its roots in Milton’s conception of the relationship between knowledge and truth in the postlapsarian world the Son must teach and redeem.

Milton’s prose tract does not explicitly discuss the fall, but it does refer indirectly and metaphorically to its consequences. After the expulsion from Paradise, death follows as the next painful outcome of humanity’s disobedience. Whereas Eden affords its residents immortality, and thus undiluted knowledge and truth, death brings the possibility of forgetting prelapsarian truth. Milton illustrates this point metaphorically in *Areopagitica* by alluding to the ancient Egyptian myth of Osiris. In that sense, humanity’s disobedience and the consequent fall adopt the role of Typhon, taking “the virgin Truth, [hewing] her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and [scattering] them to the four winds.”³³ The fall thus marks the separation of knowledge from truth. Those “pieces” of which the “virgin Truth” consists are the bits of dispersed knowledge, and postlapsarian humanity has no idea how to reassemble them back to original truth. Considering that the forgetting quality of death constantly threatens to undo the progress toward truth, the reality of the fall appears gravely dire, though not completely insurmountable.

Indeed, *Areopagitica* does provide a few scattered clues whereby humanity might bring about its intellectual redemption. In terms again of the Egyptian myth, human beings take on the role of Isis, “gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them.”³⁴ Milton again plays on multiple meanings here, considering “limb” not simply as a body part but more generally as any constituent part of a whole. In this case, that whole is the ancient, original truth, and knowledge its constituent parts. Later in the tract, Milton describes the work of restoring the original truth as a construction project to build “the temple of the Lord,” where some assist by “cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars.”³⁵ In this way, Milton illustrates his conception of contiguous difference and the necessary requirement for “many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built.”³⁶ Quite importantly, however, the prose tract adds that this work of restoration does not end at the command of any individual person or even some collective group. Rather, only Jesus possesses the ability to remember correctly the “perfect shape” of ancient truth, as human beings cannot do so “till [they] come to beatific vision,”³⁷ the ‘perspective’, as it were, of the infinite divine. Indeed, this little phrase signifies exactly what Milton tries to exemplify throughout his writing—a rather ambitious project, as “beatific vision” itself renders the “inscrutability of divine intention”³⁸ intelligible, and as such only becomes totally available at the second coming. Such apparent impossibility, however, clearly does not preclude his consistent attempts to grasp it.

This “beatific” or heavenly divine vision thus becomes the characteristic foundation *sine qua non* for right discernment, and exemplifies the Son’s revolving ability in *Paradise Regain’d* to distinguish the tools from the aims of his mission, as well as to see through Satan’s various and seemingly equivocal temptations. For example, when Jesus denounces the rules of the classical tradition as “false, or little else but dreams, / Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm,” he does not reject the classical tradition itself, but the ends to which Satan would employ it (PR 4.291-292). He thus relocates its aim from Satan’s “celebration of bellicose oratory [that] reverses the fundamental assumption of Ciceronian humanism, namely, that rhetoric civilizes man.”³⁹ Again, however, the Son is not interested in restoring Cicero for Cicero’s sake. Rather, his purpose is two-fold: first, to undo Satan’s perverted conception of classical oratory as merely a coercively “resistless eloquence;” and second, in so doing, to employ the classical tradition as simply another building block for that “temple of the Lord,”⁴⁰ where he himself deems its fitting place (PR 4.268). In a similar manner, the Son can argue that the Greek and Roman arts originate in the Hebrew, as well as praise the pagans “*Quintius, Fabricus, Curius, Regulus* [as] names of men so poor / Who could do mighty things, and could contemn / Riches though offer’d from the hand of Kings” (PR 2.446-449). In this case, his notion of a “spirit and judgment equal or superior” applies, not simply to books, but to all such professors of knowledge (PR 4.324). Indeed, this very “spirit” of beatific vision thus becomes the condition of possibility for *Areopagitica*’s foundational tenet, that “To the pure, all things are pure.”⁴¹ Jesus’ task in *Paradise Regain’d*, then, is to exercise this discernment and in doing so render intelligible a virtue, rather than a particular doctrine.

The first example of such discernment occurs early in the poem, during the Son’s baptism and the subsequent descent of a heavenly Dove. This event is related to the reader three times,

the first account given by the narrator: “on him baptiz’d / Heaven open’d, and in likeness of a Dove / The Spirit descended, while the Father’s voice / From Heav’n pronounc’d him his beloved Son” (PR 1.29-32). Shortly thereafter, Satan reports to his devilish council how he witnesses “A perfect Dove descend, whate’er it meant” (PR 1.83). The multitude of these accounts, moreover, reiterates the central function of the notion of ‘copia’ in the poem: although referring to the same event, the differences between the accounts open a space for interpretation, as well as illustrate the Son’s beatific vision in contrast to Satan’s refusal to believe what he sees—even as he admits hearing “the Sovran voice” proclaim Jesus’ birthright (PR 1.84). Indeed, when the Son recalls how at his baptism “The Spirit descended on me like a Dove,” he clearly realizes what the dove “meant” (PR 1.282). His ability to see and recognize what the dove symbolizes thus exemplifies this beatific vision and right discernment. On the other hand, “Satan turns away from the voice of presence to the equivocal nature of the intervening sign... and more importantly, to the inherent ambiguity of the verbal medium itself.”⁴² That is, to focus on the sign alone without paying attention to what greater idea it might symbolize gives way to an infinitely tautological thinking that, unaided by any kind of discernment, ultimately leads to “nothing firm” (PR 4.292).

This sustained critique of unrepentant logic and bare rationalism characterizes much of the action in *Paradise Regain’d*, as the Son time and again outwits Satan’s continual absurdities of linguistic equivocation and tautology. For example, after the prolonged temptation of worldly power and kingship, where the Son indicates the flaws and declines leadership first of Parthia then of Rome, Satan offers them all “On this condition, if thou wilt fall down, / And worship me as thy superior Lord” (PR 4.166-167). The request seems utterly preposterous—Satan could not even convince Jesus to “sit down and eat” in the second book, to say nothing of bowing in the fourth—and in fact it is, because the logic behind the request depends on a twisted satanic syllogism (PR 2.377). Earlier in the poem, Jesus asserts “to give a Kingdom hath been thought / Greater and nobler done,” a notion that in the latter case Satan takes literally, thus failing to realize the complete illogic of his argument (PR 2.481-482). That is, “what Satan seems most unable to anticipate is the experience of gift. Satan seems to know that the Messiah will obtain a kingdom. But because he is unable to imagine what it would mean to ‘give a Kingdom’ or to be given one, Satan’s strategy for temptation revolves around the question of how to take one,”⁴³ either by force or deception only. Indeed, Satan’s literalist logic constrains his thinking to uncomplicated binary oppositions that seek definite ends or the conclusion of interpretation rather than its purposeful continuity.

Of course, the Son’s discernment in action inevitably and consistently counters that satanic and literalist desire for simple binary oppositions, and nowhere does the poem exemplify such a strange and shattering victory more than during the temptation at the temple pinnacle. Infuriated by the constant frustration of his attempts at Jesus, Satan in a final effort to break the Son tries to sever the miracle of the Incarnation itself—that is, he wants to draw a definite line between Jesus’ divinity and his humanity. Satan desires to exact from Jesus the spectacle of his divine power, because at this point in the poem he is convinced that the Son is “To th’ utmost of mere man both wise and good, / Not more” (PR 4.535-536). The pinnacle temptation thus tries

to test the Son's own divine power as separate from his human strengths. According to Satan's mutually exclusive tautological thinking, Jesus must either stand and prove his divinity, or fall and in so doing prove that his relation to the divine remains merely a form of nepotism toward a single and simply mortal man:

There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
 Will ask thee skill; I to thy Father's house
 Have brought thee, and highest plac't, highest is best,
 Now show thy Progeny; if not to stand,
 Cast thyself down; safely if Son of God:
 For it is written, He will give command
 Concerning thee to his Angels, in thir hands
 They shall up lift thee, lest at any time
 Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone. (PR 4.551-559)

By thus denying the balanced and mysteriously intermingled nature of the Incarnation, Satan refuses to acknowledge the faith required to understand an infinitely meaningful symbol and thus fails to realize the depth of the Son's final response: "Also it is written, / Tempt not the Lord thy God; he said and stood" (PR 4.560-561). Thus saying, Jesus concisely expresses the depth of the Incarnation mystery: on the one hand, as a human he acknowledges he is not allowed to force the divine hand, as it were, to catch his leap; on the other, as divine, he commands Satan likewise. Both ostensibly opposite interpretations are correct. It is little wonder, therefore, that "Satan smitten with amazement fell" at witnessing this (PR 4.562). Interestingly enough, Jesus' first response also comprises only two lines, as well as gestures toward Jesus' ambiguous agency and subsequent faith: "Who brought me hither / Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek" (PR 1.335-336). The "Who" in this case can refer to the unknown divine that "by some strong motion [leads Jesus] Into this Wilderness," or to the Son himself as he enters that place physically alone (PR 1.290-291). In addition, both readings of the lines imply that Jesus neither needs nor wants anything Satan has to offer. Moreover, this beatific vision manifests itself not literally or merely spatially, but symbolically and thus requires, at his present moment, faith.

Therefore, the Son's symbolic understanding allows him to transcend the literalist logic behind many of Satan's arguments, as well as distinguish his divine objectives from the various means and methods he might employ or eschew at his discretion. The poem illustrates such an ability early on, when Jesus comments to himself, "But now I feel hunger, which declares / Nature hath need of what she asks" (PR 2.252-253). This enjambment exemplifies his ingenious revision, for by saying that "hunger...declares / Nature," the Son relocates the phenomenon of hunger from its otherwise dangerous position as a pressing ontological concern to its conception as a benignly natural feeling. Likewise, in "the context of prevalent doubt and uncertainty, Christ⁴⁴ responds to the temptations with certainty that there is another way to the same goals Satan presents, whether it be appeasing hunger or fulfilling God's purpose in redeeming enslaved Israel."⁴⁵ This certainty even transcends the logic of linear causality. The poem assembles the Son's dream in the second book, for example, from biblical allusions to the Books of Daniel and

Kings, which articulate the fulfillment of a desire to eat in the terms of the Law. The apparent illogic of the sequence—the Daniel allusion, whose description comes second during the dream, represents obedience to divine law, whereas the Elijah allusion represents the rewards of divine providence and as well the rewards of the aforementioned obedience, which logically should have come first—exemplifies the Son’s freedom from a merely linear conception of time.

Moreover, as Satan’s literalist logic always already manifests itself in a linear conception of time and causality, the Son’s freedom from that linearity allows him to undercut the ostensible logic of temptation. In attempting to comprehend and cater to the Son’s prophesized role as the savior of Israel, Satan’s literal-mindedness forces him to imagine that only “by conquest or by league [can Jesus] truly reinstall thee / In *David’s* royal seat [and ensure] Deliverance of thy brethren” (PR 3.370-374). The kingdoms temptation thus becomes an offer of worldly power that Satan thinks primarily necessary for action and the physical emancipation of Jesus’ people. Attempting to goad him into premature and literal action, Satan suggests that the Son is wasting his precious time: “Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe; the Son / Of *Macedonian Philip* had ere these / Won *Asia* and the Throne of *Cyrus* held / At his dispose” (PR 3.31-34). Jesus, on the other hand, freed from such literal notions of causation, can relocate the terms of his rescue mission. For example, when Satan offers him the Roman imperial seat by ousting the brutal emperor Tiberius, the Son intelligently responds, “I shall, thou say’st, expel / A brutish monster; what if I withal / Expel a Devil who first made him such?” (PR 4.128-129). Moreover, by thus suggesting that the end of Roman occupation does not require military force but instead spiritual action, Jesus opens up the possibility where such occupation might be defeated for good. That is, he recognizes that force only begets more force, so that a truly everlasting victory resides in performing the never-ending task of “he who reigns within himself, and rules / Passions, Desires, and Fears” (PR 2.466-467). Satan’s literalist thinking privileges an absolute physical and temporal presence, and so cannot even consider the more symbolic beatific vision that transcends material place and linear time.

Indeed, the Son’s ability to circumvent literalist linear causality bespeaks how his beatific vision also restores an understanding of history to its originally divine conception as infinite in all directions. In such a way, furthermore, the Son in *Paradise Regain’d* counteracts one of the main effects of the fall in *Paradise Lost*—namely, the merely chronological conception of time that presupposes the past history as forever lost. Such a literal and binary thinking characterizes Satan’s mindset and shatters Eden’s suspended temporality when Eve asks Satan disguised as a serpent, “How cam’st thou speakable of mute,”⁴⁶ driving a wedge between an apparently irrecoverable past and an ever-existing present:

The “of” of “speakable” is both paritive and genitive: the serpent has passed from silence to voice, is “speakable” and now must speak of silence, of muteness. Yet to be able to speak of mute(ness), to say what it was and what it means now, is always to relinquish or betray muteness: the performative (say) contradicts

the constative aspect (mute). History begins here—at the fall—
with the paradoxical command that muteness be spoken.⁴⁷

In other words, the fall is not some ‘event’ that occurred during the course of chronological time, somehow ‘in the past’. Instead, the fall acts like an afterthought that founds the human condition of thinking of time as a linear or chronological sequence. That sequential thinking forces Satan to presume, for instance, that redemption must first require power and force. Thus, in order to accomplish his historical mission, the Son must transcend the confining satanic limits of such an understanding of time, and align himself with the divine understanding of history and time as continuous instead of some base sequence of mere cause and effect.

Milton, as well as his poetic and theological contemporaries and forebears, would thus conceive of beatific vision as one and the same with this uninterrupted understanding of time and history. This conception derives from the belief in “God’s providential control of history”⁴⁸ that appears to differ little from the poet’s control of plot. To the discerning reader—of this poem as well as of history, in Jesus’ case—many apparent discrepancies in logic, once reexamined and reinterpreted, stand in perfect harmony with the divine. In *Paradise Regain’d*, this phenomenon first manifests itself at the start of the poem, when God summarizes essentially what will happen over the next four books: the Son will eventually vanquish Satan, and the action of the poem means “To exercise him in the Wilderness [where] he shall first lay down the rudiments / Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth / To conquer Sin and Death” (PR 1.156-159). The word “exercise” here functions interestingly, referring both to the Son’s dramatic trial and the reader’s own didactic trial of interpretation through right discernment. Equipped with this beatific vision, Jesus can read the apparent differences between characters of history in terms of the divine continuity that binds them into essential—though not absolute and leveled-out—unity.

This method of reading the past and historical figures, known as typology, enables Jesus to render the impetus behind many of Satan’s temptations meaningless. Armed with the bare knowledge of the coming messiah from prophecy and scripture, but literally unable to read beyond the specific individuals who would foreshadow the Son, Satan can only imagine the role of this messiah as either some warrior-king or philosopher-prophet. In attempting to pin down the exact nature of the Son—either only divine or only human—his mentality reduces the extremely complex idea of the Incarnation and the divine’s relationship with humanity to a dichotomy between mere anarchy and dictatorship. A haughty Satan states, “The Son of God I also am, or was, / And if I was, I am; relation stands; / All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought / In some respect far higher so declar’d” (PR 4.518-521). In this case, Satan cannot comprehend the phrase, “Son of God.” By his logic, the phrase refers only either to all created beings—in which case Jesus bears no distinction from the collective of “All men [who] are Sons of God”—or to Jesus and Jesus alone, as some child marked or “delcar’d” by mere favoritism and given dominion over the others rather meaninglessly. That is, Satan is looking for some ostensible mark in Jesus that would distinguish him as the Son of God. Not finding his literal answer, he simply concludes that it does not exist, and that the divine will unfairly elevate Jesus’ status among beings that are completely the same and equally deserving of power.

In addition, while the Son does not constrain himself to any single preceding historical type, such types nonetheless become necessary in order to make his divine mission intelligible, both for himself and for his future interpreters. For instance, in response to another one of Satan's offers of military and worldly glory, the Son cites the faithful Job, "Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth less known," as a more genuine hero (PR 3.68-69). He even includes pagan heroes who "could contemn / Riches though offer'd from the hand of Kings" as worthy past exemplars of his mission (PR 2.448-449). In such a way, this typological interpretation illustrates the "unavoidably particular and embodied instances of divine revelation that are necessary preparation for the fully human temporal apprehension of [infinite] divine love"⁴⁹ in the form of the messiah. Indeed, as the ideal student of a 'copia'-based education and the "living expression"⁵⁰ of scripture—law, history, and prophecy—the Son comes to exist as "summation, compendium, [and] completion"⁵¹ of that scripture and its historical types. Therefore, both Jesus and the biblical student must reread the old types in order to comprehend the Incarnation more fully, as those old types function as foreknowledge from which deeper understanding springs.

On the other hand, just as the Son requires his own agency separate from the scripture, so too must he discern his difference from the previous models. In terms of the poem's plot, this separation becomes a site of interpretive praxis necessary for this greater awareness: "This use of typology poses as part of Christ's puzzling intellectual task in the temptation the problem of how he ought to relate himself to history, how far the past provides a fit model for his actions and wherein he is to redefine its terms in order to become a fit model for the future."⁵² He completes this interpretive task by distinguishing the qualities of each type he wishes to emulate from those he would eschew. For example, during the temptation for classical learning, the Son only rejects accepting them wholeheartedly and without discernment. He simply believes the classical tradition "to our Prophets far beneath, / As men divinely taught, and better teaching / The solid rules of Civil Government" (PR 4.356-358). The rules themselves are solid—Jesus just prefers the biblical sources to the classical. By not forcing himself to choose only one path by rejecting the other in its entirety, the Son subsumes both; in addition, by still valuing one course over the other, he preserves his choice as unique to his situation, thus affirming his discernment.

Therefore, the Son's ability to assimilate previous historical types into the understanding of his mission serves as the main prerequisite for negating the apparent absoluteness of the fall. Jesus' reading method, which at once stresses the unity of disparate types while at the same time respecting their differences, stands in stark contrast to Satan's reductive logic, which desires to understand the Son only in order to mount some defense:

Good reason then, if I beforehand seek
 To understand my Adversary, who
 And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent,
 By parle, or composition, truce, or league
 To win him, or win from him what I can. (PR 4.526-530)

Indeed, the extended temptation for worldly kingdoms and military power stems from Satan's limited and literal grasp of the Son's mission. Satan's defeat, therefore, consists in the fact that his "best conjectures" are limited to literal, physical, and spatial realms of thought (PR 4.524).

In order to fulfill the archangel Michael's prophecy at the end of *Paradise Lost*, the Son must overcome devilish temptation "Not by destroying *Satan*, but his works / In thee and in thy Seed"⁵³—that is, Paradise is regained not by epic physical combat, but by a mental and spiritual revolution. The Son accomplishes his never-ending mission by giving humanity's progeny the tools for right discernment. This unceasing work of discernment and reinterpretation, however, does not translate simply into a kind of retreat into a contemplative realm of a mind closed off from the necessary realities of living. Indeed, without that beatific vision—precisely this "spirit and judgment equal or superior"—the human student very easily falls prey to the infinite breath of sources taken at face value, and although "Deep verst in books [becomes] shallow in himself, / Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys...As Children gathering pebbles on the shore" (PR 4.324-330). Jesus' mission, therefore, consists in teaching these "Children" of humanity how to read and act. Philip Donnelly articulates this mission, arguing that the "Son sends the Holy Spirit, who is promised by the Father, in order to regenerate within individual believers the image of God in which right reason embodies a unity of faith and love, and...impinges upon the world with consequence."⁵⁴ As this divining teacher, moreover, the Son can and must employ what means he sees fit to stimulate the learned understanding of his students.

Read in this light, the temptation for classical philosophy and rhetoric furnishes the Son with an occasion to distinguish his methods from others' aims within the context of what he has to teach. For example, Satan reduces the classical tradition's value as merely a means to "render thee a King complete / Within thyself, much more with Empire join'd," reinforcing his flawed literal conception of the Son's worldly kingdom (PR 4.283-284). That is, Satan thinks of the classical philosophies and oratorical strategies as meant to conquer and lord over people through persuasion; indeed, he thinks in terms of and so only cares about this literal lordship and domination. However, because Jesus thinks in more symbolic terms, he can reject the classical tradition as Satan portrays it, while simultaneously allowing for the prospect of its legitimacy and usefulness: "he who receives / Light from above, from the fountain of light, / No other doctrine needs, though granted true" (PR 4.288-290). These lines, moreover, aurally reinforce the Son's thoughtful preference. The extended subordinate clause, stretching over a line from "who receives" to "fountain of light," places a great degree of pressure on the already forceful "No other doctrine needs"—the n- and d-sounds, apart in "No other doctrine," fuse in "needs," keeping the clause almost completely self-contained—and almost lets the ear pass over Jesus' allowance for the authority of the classical tradition, "though granted true."

Interestingly enough, by thus granting a degree of truth to the classical tradition, the Son highlights and opens the possibility that divine truth might reside in and communicate through any form of human language. Such is the case when he relocates the aesthetic characteristics, normally considered as within the purview of the classical tradition, to his own language: "Or if I would delight my private hours / With Music or with Poem, where so soon / As in our native

Language can I find / That solace?" (PR 4.331-334). Of course, that *Paradise Regain'd* presents this argument in English instead of Aramaic reinforces his point. As the teacher or guide, the Son necessarily accepts the value of the languages he and his students speak, as "In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt" the infinity of the divine (PR 4.361). In such a way, the Son can address and counter what Goldsmith identifies as the "central problem of Milton's epic: the Word Incarnate enters a world where language has so fallen that all manifestations of it are equivocal."⁵⁵ That is, right discernment and beatific vision do not involve the destruction of all languages save the Edenic⁵⁶ but rather allows and requires the student to locate and exemplify the divine presence in any and perhaps also every language. Thus, both Jesus and the poem repudiate the apparent distinction between the Word and its vernacular expression.

The affirmations of verbal expression in *Paradise Regain'd* harken back to the writings of the early reformers, regarding the notion of 'copia' and the rhetorical efficacy it demands of its students. Keeping with the reformers' conception of eloquent speech as contingent upon the "hidden activity"⁵⁷ of memory, the poem thus argues that rhetorical proficiency bespeaks precisely that "Spirit of Truth [dwelling] In pious Hearts, an inward Oracle / To all truth requisite for men to know" (PR 1.462-464). In this case, the Son dismisses oracles like the one at Delphi as satanic signs and portents, replacing them with an individual access to the divine through beatific vision made manifest by thoughtful speech acts. In this way, the poem itself becomes at once a forum for and an act of Jesus' beatific vision and discernment. Even Satan admits, albeit unwittingly, the Son's mission of restoring the divine to the languages he perverts. Although he intends "Thence to the famous Orators repair" to suggest that Jesus retreat to an inactive life of unexercised contemplation, his final word "repair" entails the idea that Jesus must bring together seemingly distinct species—fallen human language and divine understanding that redeems it (PR 4.267). For that reason, he prefers the aesthetic pleasures scripture can afford him, over those of the classical tradition, which "far be found unworthy to compare / With *Sion's* songs, to all true tastes excelling, / Where God is prais'd aright, and Godlike men, / The Holiest of Holies, and his Saints" (PR 4.346-349). Proper art glorifies the divine, and this notion of repairing appears in *Paradise Lost* as well, when the chorus promises "never shall my Harp thy praise / Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin."⁵⁸ That is, to praise both Son and Father entails respecting their differences, and Jesus in *Paradise Regain'd* does just that with human languages.

Likewise, as an expression of the Son, *Paradise Regain'd* itself repairs the classical conception of poetry or epic, reconciling that tradition with the requirements for communicating the divine. This is no accident. Indeed, just as the Son can employ whatever tools necessary to accomplish his mission because he can discern their proper use at the proper time, so too does the poem assimilate its various sources—the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke, the classical tradition, early reformers and contemporary poets—in order that it might become an expression of the infinite divine for its time. For example, when Satan tempts Jesus with a display of Parthian military power, the poem's description compares the forces the Son sees to "the Peers of *Charlemagne*" (PR 3.343). In so doing, the poem transcends its historical setting in order to make the point, in this case, of the constancy of force, and the unceasing requirement therefore of beatific vision to defeat the need for such force in the first place. Moreover, itself a

redemption of language and epic poetry so conceived, the poem thus becomes Milton's response to the nuanced and specific demands of an age with "great interest in the production of a new Christian poetry fusing biblical subject and classical form, which would prove that a Renaissance artist could be both a good Christian and a good classicist."⁵⁹ Indeed, even the multifaceted meaning of Jesus' final response to Satan—the two lines simultaneously referring to his human and divine character—satisfies the Aristotelian as well as 'copia'-based value of brevity, and does so in order to exemplify the central idea of Christianity, the mystery of Incarnation. All of these figures—the Son, what he says, and the collected expressions of him saying, in both memory and text—thus under these terms share in the same being, "Differing but in degree, of kind the same."⁶⁰ This claim resonates with Milton's conception of individual duty as well as the duty of an ideal postlapsarian society, put forth in *Areopagitica*: "God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities and more than common industry, not only to look back and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further and go on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth."⁶¹ The reconstruction of ancient truth continues with *Paradise Regain'd*, which provides both the example of and the condition of possibility for the unceasing work of repairing language and humanity to the divine.

Situating itself, therefore, between a Greek form of epic poetry and the demands of being a good Christian student, *Paradise Regain'd* invites its readers to investigate the differences in its Christian and classical origins, holding that this act of interpretation informs an understanding of both. For Adam, the most profoundly lamentable consequence of the fall, far worse even than death, was precisely this loss of the spatial and temporal presence of the divine that Eden had previously afforded him: "This most afflicts me, that departing hence, / As from his face I shall be hid, depriv'd / His blessed count'nance."⁶² Therefore, in a brilliant stroke of logic—made possible, perhaps, only by this kind of beatific vision—faced with the apparent loss of divine presence, the Miltonic Christian thus chooses to worship its absence as a 'sign' of that presence. However, the difficulty of this task becomes clear with the fact that the act of speech or interpretation is itself an act of representation, of making-present, that thus threatens to cover up or betray the truth of that absence. Therefore, the Son states that "many books / Wise men have said are wearisome" because to consider only the books in themselves ignores what those books try to say but ultimately and fundamentally cannot (PR 4.321-322). Ambiguously aware of this fact, the early reformers would ground their justification for 'copia' and its call for unceasing reinterpretation in the "inscrutability of divine intention,"⁶³ thereby refusing to grant the absoluteness of divine truth to any single interpretation, no matter how all-encompassing that interpretation might appear. This understanding privileges unceasing discernment as the means of making some sense of the disordered collections of knowledge in light of the absence of truth.

In such a manner, Milton through *Paradise Regain'd* not only repairs fallen humanity's relationship to the divine, but also in a way resurrects the ancient Greek tradition of a godly art in reevaluated and renewed terms. Indeed, if the diffuse epic instantiates the Christian belief in the absence of the divine in the world on account of the fall, this poem's expression of that divine incarnation into human temporality parallels the "immediacy of the Greeks, for whom art was the direct mode of the 'knowledge of the Absolute.'"⁶⁴ As an expression and example of the

Word, *Paradise Regain'd* functions in a similar manner, though adjusted to fit Milton's Christian context of "truth as subject to historical and philosophical mediation or accommodation."⁶⁵ Uninterested in simply resuscitating a long-dead tradition as if it never had died—if such an act was ever possible, given the fall—Milton's ideal of beatific vision still permits him to rebuild, even with Greek tools, a truly Christian temple.

In this sense, both *Paradise Regain'd* and its protagonist must exemplify in as complete a way as possible the impossible mystery of the Incarnation, where the divine absence embodies itself in the figure of the Son of God. The penultimate temptation for classical learning thus occasions Jesus to expound that explanation in terms of what the Greek philosophies lack: an intellectual humility. Earlier in the poem, he praises "Poor *Socrates*... For truth's sake suffering death unjust" in the same breath as "patient *Job*" (PR 3.95-98). However, his discernment allows him to locate the limits of his praise—and in doing so reject Satan's offer to become merely another version of Socrates—when he states that "The first and wisest of [the Greeks, Socrates] profess'd / To know this only, that he nothing knew" (PR 4.293-294). The Son does not simply poke fun at the famous phrase, saying merely that Socrates does not know anything. Rather, in light of divine absence, his remark accuses Socrates of the greatest intellectual hubris—knowing and so possessing the divine. Moreover, that Socrates "[knows] this only" means that his knowledge does not translate into action, and so remains "unexercised and unbreathed."⁶⁶ For the Son, on the other hand, the purpose remains "To know and knowing worship God aright" (PR 2.475). The phrase, "knowing worship," a participle made verb, is thus no mere accident. It highlights the deliberately conscious character of a true and thoughtful prayer, or oration. Thus the Greek philosophers' misplaced foundation leads Jesus to chastise them as "all awry / And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves / All glory arrogate, to God give none" (4.314-315).

A similar cleaving occurs during the Son's indictment of classical poetry—an indictment, moreover, that allows the poem to navigate successfully the difference between the methods and the aims of Jesus' mission. In lines that compare Greek verse to "swelling Epithets thick laid / As varnish on a Harlot's cheek," the only ostensible evil is the "Harlot" upon whom those "Epithets" rest (PR 4.343-344). On the other hand, as the historical Jesus is rather famous for protecting outcasts like harlots, the removal of this "varnish" also signifies a return to original purity. Here again, both of these seemingly divergent interpretations of the same line hold true, as both highlight different aspects of the Son's same mission of redemption—of language on one hand, and of individuals on the other. In addition, during one of his responses to the extended kingdoms temptation, Jesus contends that couching in flowery rhetoric an ultimately improper idea proves just as futile as trying to redeem a sinful humanity by military force: "What wise and valiant man would seek to free / These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd, / Or could of inward slaves make outward free?" (PR 4.143-145). In all of these cases, only through reading beyond the entrapping superficialities might the proper course of action divulge itself. Milton's own stance on the role of Greek philosophy or art in an appropriate Christian education reveals as much, for to hold as equal the "concepts of metaphysics and scholastic philosophy [and] truths of scripture would clearly corrupt religion. However, human learning might also be understood

in terms of methods, e.g., as the languages and the arts of textual analysis that could be useful in explicating God's textbook, the scripture."⁶⁷

Therefore, given how Milton thus conceives of the function of aesthetic representation in revealing the infinities of the divine, *Paradise Regain'd*—even as an expression of the incarnate Word—must stand as an incomplete reinterpretation. In this sense, Jesus' first and last responses to Satan gain an added significance. In the first instance, when Satan feigns innocent curiosity in asking after his purpose in the Wilderness, the Son's reply, "Who brought me hither / Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek," unapologetically admits the fact of his incomplete knowledge at this early point (PR 1.335-336). The ambiguous antecedent of "Who"—the word could refer to God or Jesus—highlights the fact that no single, entirely knowable or correct, answer exists. "Who" thus counters the satanic desire for mutually exclusive conceptions. The fact that the poem provides the reader with the benefit of foresight a mere two hundred lines earlier, when God admits to "mean / To exercise him in the Wilderness," does not detract from Jesus' interpretive faith (PR 1.155-156). Indeed, his final response exemplifies that very faith in action, as its brevity—this time, without the benefit of divine gloss within the poem—justifies and demands the reader's attention and interpretation beyond the mere existence of the poem. In that sense, "the silence on the pinnacle is two-sided: on the one hand, it authorizes and redeems language for the proclamation of the Word by the Word; on the other hand, as a minimal image of the Father's ineffable glory, it is also a reminder that such glory is never fully present in words or the Word."⁶⁸ A truly divine glory entails putting right discernment into action, and so the poem's last spoken words, "Now enter, and begin to save mankind," point to an unspecified future not only for the Son, but also for Milton as well as all students of this poem whose salvation comes from always making sure to read right (PR 4.635).

In such a way, *Paradise Regain'd* can enact its pedagogy by demonstrating the humility of speech acts of interpretation by means of those speech acts of interpretation. In construing the Son's mission as never-ending—or at least, beyond its own confines—the poem likewise circumscribes the ongoing duty of Milton and his poetic contemporaries. The Son's completed victory over Satan in the Wilderness stands in for all his future encounters with evil; and so for the same reason, his "redemption of language...is not a completed act in itself; it is necessary for Jesus' preaching ministry of the kingdom and for the writing of religious poetry."⁶⁹ The poem thus describes and founds the condition of possibility for an ongoing Christian poetry that faithfully adheres to the directives of "saving Doctrine" and whose only purpose would be to "guide Nations in the way of truth...and from error lead / To know and knowing worship God aright" (PR 2.473-475). He thus attains the glory Satan offers without having to accept the diminished version of the glory of the single individual "who of his own / Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs / But condemnation, ignominy, and shame" (PR 3.134-136). The Son directs the language act toward praising the divine, instead of disobeying and denying its order for the sake of a false and fleeting individual glory.

For Milton and his poetic as well as political contemporaries, discerning the appropriate use of language in light of theological constraints would bear critically on the question of

republican survival after the restoration of Charles II. Indeed, although *Paradise Lost* portrays Milton's historical situation dramatically in the figure of a failed revolutionary, Satan, the diffuse epic still degrades that seeming hero into the irate monster he, perhaps, always had been. The plot and protagonist of *Paradise Regain'd*, on the other hand, gives Milton the opportunity to portray a kind of unceasing victory through interpretation, no matter what the superficial situation might be. In fact, the unending nature of Jesus' victory could be "exemplary, [so] his followers need not depend on one historically fixed, once-and-for-all victory to which they themselves must turn for strength or inspiration...Instead, they can re-exemplify and thereby reconstitute victory for themselves."⁷⁰ On the other hand, such an interpretation of the poem treads dangerously close to the folly of the Greek thinkers and their overbearing emphasis on individual intellectual prowess. Reinterpretation taken too far could revert into an inactive revisionism, and to "suggest people could be saved from sin by simply following Christ's example of virtue is to ascribe to *Paradise Regained* the very stoicism which the poem openly rejects"⁷¹ during the temptation for classical learning.

However, at the heart of Milton's argument—unifying these divergent points—lies the demand for an individual humility, in terms both of interpretation and its consequent action. In this sense, Krook's exemplary reading of the poem succeeds in highlighting the ongoing nature of the Son's victory, though Donnelly is correct to point out the theological limits of simply repeating the Son's act in a kind of rote ritual. He is mistaken, however, in thinking that the student merely repeats an "example" or act: that conception splits the interpreting from its action, forgetting that both collaterally exist as the poem and the Son, the "instantaneous bond between language and action."⁷² Interestingly enough, this demarcation between the limits of human action on one side and the infinities of the divine omnipotence on the other appear even in the prelapsarian world of *Paradise Lost*. During his conversation with God that results in Eve's creation, Adam cites the fundamental incompleteness unique to his human condition:

No need that thou [God]
Shouldst propagate, already infinite;
And through all numbers absolute, though One;
But Man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his Image multipli'd,
In unity defective, which requires
Collateral love, and dearest amity.⁷³

The Son's task, therefore, remains in straddling the delicate divide between these two critics' viewpoints, and Adam's lines provide valuable clues as to how he might do so. In short, Jesus exercises a kind of active humility that transforms, and perhaps 'revolves, Adam's lament of the human weakness into an argument of strength.

Indeed, in a sense Adam is correct to complain about his “single imperfection” in the face of the perfection of the divine infinity. The Son’s conception of that same human condition, on the other hand, allows him to posit the idea of faith in the space of humanity’s fundamental incompleteness. That faith in turn frees him from the satanic reliance upon such external signs of glory as: riches, territorial conquest, or the fleeting acclaim of “people [who are] but a herd confused, / A miscellaneous rabble, who extol / Things vulgar, and well weigh’d, scarce worth the praise” (PR 3.49-51). In other words, as Adam’s lament of incompleteness comes from his own observations, Jesus can thus preempt such lamentations by moving his trust away from the external evidence and understanding any such incompleteness as a sign of the necessity for an active faith—or perhaps, as another way of phrasing it, discernment through beatific, not actual or physical, vision.

Reading *Paradise Regain’d* in this way, as an incomplete expression of the infinite divine embodied in a definite historical time and place, provides valuable clues by which the puzzle of the poem’s being becomes clear. Although in theological terms, the perhaps greater victory of the Son over Satan occurs outside the context of the poem—specifically, at the crucifixion or the apocalypse—only during this trial of temptation does the condition for his victory, as well as the victories of Adam and his progeny, become at all possible. Indeed, even before the beginning of this poem Milton tells his readers not to expect a once-and-for-all defeat of Satan after which, chronologically, postlapsarian humanity might live forever free from temptation. Toward the end of *Paradise Lost*, Michael reminds Adam that even after his “fall from Heav’n, a deadlier bruise,” Satan still remained “Disabl’d not to give thee thy death’s wound.”⁷⁴ In other words, regardless of the apparent magnitude of Satan’s defeats, the threat of temptation to disobedience and sin remains ever on the horizon of human will and action.

Far from emphasizing the futility of finally defeating evil, however, Michael’s lines highlight the never-ending character of the Son’s victory. Indeed, the valedictory of the choir of angels at the end of *Paradise Regain’d* proclaims precisely as much: “whatever place, / Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing / The Son of God” (PR 4.600-602). Again, however, comes the caution against falling into a false sense of complete security: “A fairer Paradise is founded now...when time shall be / Of Tempter and Temptation without fear” (PR 4.613-617). In this case, the poem’s use of a present-signifying “now” in the same sentence as a future-signaling “shall be” reinforces as well as clarifies Michael’s message. In spite of the ever-presence of temptation, discernment and reinterpretation armed with beatific vision—that is, exercising the rational faculty with respect to the absence of total truth, as opposed to some easy external scale of simple ‘correctness’—founds a world free from the “fear” of thoughtless satanic coercion. Then and only then, at this point of spiritual awareness, can the poem’s final spoken imperative authorize true divine-like action: “Now enter, and begin to save mankind” (PR 4.635). Such action bears in mind the responsibility of consequence at once without the expectation of an immediate reward or a perceivable result. In addition, this never-ending victory clarifies why Milton chooses an episode from two of the synoptic gospels—Matthew and Luke—rather than the singular book of Revelation. Milton and his poem highlight the importance of retelling a

story, because that act of retelling grants and bespeaks, not rote memorization, but incorporation and genuine understanding.

In this sense, *Paradise Regain'd* puts forth an understanding of beatific vision that shifts focus away from external, physical objects to a more internal apprehension or attunement toward an unseen ideal. That is, *what* is seen becomes far less important than *how* that is seen and consequently employed. Armed thus with such an understanding, the Son can easily dismiss the satanic spectacle of the Parthian military as an “argument / Of human weakness rather than of strength” (PR 3.401-402). In addition, when Satan earlier fancies himself an executor of divine will—for instance, when he tested Job—the Son shifts the focus away from Satan’s deed to his intention, asking “Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear / Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?” (PR 1.422-423). Jesus recognizes that Satan feigns ‘obedience’ merely because he fears the divine wrath or just enjoys tormenting people. That is, whereas Satan thinks himself obedient because of what he does, the Son reminds him that true obedience resides with intention. This intention, moreover, is much more important than any act, as it bespeaks a kind of attunement that always already constrains Satan’s vision. Jesus hammers home that point when rearticulating Satan’s short allowance back into Heaven during Job’s trial, declaring that that “happy place / Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy, / Rather inflames thy torment, representing / Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable” (PR 1.416-419). In this instance, the Son’s insight in *Paradise Regain'd* revolves one of Satan’s most famous lines in *Paradise Lost*—“The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n”⁷⁵—to highlight the terrifying folly of satanic rhetoric. Indeed, only a mind so terribly fallen and perverse could make a “Hell of Heav’n.” Likewise, Satan’s overemphasis on external or literal actions as the only proof of divinity ignores the fact that, “for Milton, being *is* an action, which therefore is to be identified not with any particular gesture or set of gestures, but with an orientation or commitment of which any gesture can be an expression.”⁷⁶

This understanding revolves the fundamentally external logic behind Satan’s temptations, as well as the foundation for a coercive positive law, emphasizing instead the transcendent “inscrutability of divine intention”⁷⁷ that both necessitates and institutes copious human actions. Taking a clue from the early reformers who examine this idea in terms of biblical exegesis, Milton crafts his Jesus as having totally assimilated the divine scripture into his being, and even Satan admits to the Son that “Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words / To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart / Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape” (PR 3.9-11). In this sense, Stanley Fish is absolutely right to point out an internal attunement or orientation toward the divine as the true source of any meaningful actions. Satan’s haughty claim to be “self-begot, self-rais’d / By our own quick’ning power”⁷⁸ thus becomes both the emblem and the foundation for a profound disobedience against the divine order: “Love of self is the temptation underlying all others in a universe where true agency belongs only to deity, and the only act available to creatures is the (self-diminishing) act of acknowledging dependence on another”⁷⁹. Fish goes too far, however, in concluding that Miltonic morality demands the abolishment of every person’s individual uniqueness. Even that course of action, for Milton and anyone who reads him rightly, would be too easy an answer.

Instead, *Paradise Regain'd* strives to foreground and impart a kind of authentic selfhood or individuality, avoiding the extremes of a satanic self-centeredness on the one hand and a conformist self-destruction on the other. The historical context of the poem—the ruin of republic and the return of monarchic spectacle—suggests Milton's need for such authenticity as a fit response to the Restoration. Moreover, his copious lesson does not even contain itself in the brief epic alone, requiring an understanding that stretches across the all poetry of his later life: *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regain'd*, and *Samson Agonistes*. These works thus become for Milton the expression of his 'copia', and he absolutely intends them to fulfill, at once together and individually, his own educational or pedagogical mission. That is, while each work can almost stand alone as an expression of Miltonic morality, a faithful examination—one that tries to keep in mind what his words try to say, but ultimately and fundamentally cannot—of his other poems and tracts helps to suture the incompleteness inherent in any single work.

When understood in this light, the critical debate as to the whether the poem operates in a dramatic or didactic manner ceases to have any meaning; and attempting to speak certainly of the Son's rigid perfection or adventuring humanity becomes a pointless quest. Taken in and of themselves only, both the dramatic and didactic readings strive for a once-and-for-all understanding of the poem and its protagonist, and thus ignore the necessary work of rereading and reinterpretation for which the reader is responsible. Indeed, whether that understanding comes in the form of a dramatic catharsis or a didactic repetition of theology, both readings merely leave behind easy and uncomplicated answers that in a way satisfy the satanic desire for formulated phrases. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the search for answers comes from or satisfies satanic desires. Toward the end of *Paradise Lost*, Adam claims to understand the value of humility required for 'reading' a world seemingly devoid of the divine presence, and Michael responds:

This having learn't, thou hast attain'd the sum
Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the Stars
Thou knew'st by name, and all th' ethereal Powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
Or works of God in Heav'n, Air, Earth, or Sea,
And all the riches of this World enjoy'dst,
And all the rule, one Empire; only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,
Add Virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
By name to come call'd Charity, the soul
Of all the rest: then thou wilt not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt posses
A paradise within thee, happier far.⁸⁰

These lines beautifully describe a divinely-obedient action rooted in a likewise divinely-oriented being. Even this stunning use of language, however, cannot succeed in perfectly portraying the simultaneity of that action and being. *Paradise Regain'd* does that—not by simply showing its lesson once and for all, but by forcing the reader to interpret beyond the scope of the text itself. It is the final, great hope of the Miltonic education that in this way we shall regain lost Paradise.

Bibliographic Notes

¹ *Paradise Lost*, book XII, lines 386-388, in *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. M.Y. Hughes (New York 2003).

² *Paradise Lost*, book XII, lines 396-397.

³ Barbara Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning, and Art of Paradise Regained* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1966), p. 109.

⁴ Louis Martz, "Paradise Regained: The Meditative Combat," *ELH*, vol. 27, no. 3 (September 1960): 240.

⁵ *Areopagitica*, in *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, p. 728; "unbreathed" here means 'unspoken', and exercising virtue through speech is precisely the tone of this epic's battle.

⁶ Ken Simpson, "Lingering Voices, Telling Silences: Silence and the Word in *Paradise Regained*," *Milton Studies* 22 (1997): 184-185.

⁷ Terrence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 109.

⁸ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 110.

⁹ Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, p. 53.

¹⁰ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (London: Dent, 1973), p. 4.

¹¹ *Paradise Lost*, book VII, line 396.

¹² Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹⁴ *Paradise Lost*, book VIII, lines 425-426.

¹⁵ *Paradise Lost*, book VIII, lines 450-451.

¹⁶ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 25.

¹⁷ "Revolve" actually occurs three times; in the last time, Satan ends his penultimate temptation with it (PR 4.281).

¹⁸ *Paradise Lost*, book I, line 254.

¹⁹ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 37.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²² *Paradise Lost*, book V, lines 488-489.

²³ Steven Goldsmith, "The Muting of Satan: Language and Redemption in *Paradise Regained*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 27, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 136.

²⁴ *Sonnet XIX*, line 14, in *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*; this line appears only after the speaker bewails his anxiety of how to be accountable to the divine.

²⁵ Goldsmith, "The Muting of Satan," 129.

²⁶ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 131.

- ²⁷ Simpson, "Lingering Voices," 185.
- ²⁸ *Sonnet XIX*, line 3.
- ²⁹ *Areopagitica*, p. 727.
- ³⁰ Thomas Festa, *The End of Learning: Milton and Education* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 160.
- ³¹ *Areopagitica*, p. 728.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 728.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 742.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 742.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 744.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 744.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 741.
- ³⁸ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 109.
- ³⁹ Price McMurray, "Aristotle on the Pinnacle: *Paradise Regained* and the Limits of Theory," *Milton Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 1 (March 1998): 11.
- ⁴⁰ *Areopagitica*, p. 744.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 727.
- ⁴² Goldsmith, "The Muting of Satan," 128-129.
- ⁴³ Phillip Donnelly, "*Paradise Regained* as Rule of Charity: Religious Toleration and the End of Typology," *Milton Studies* 43 (2004): 187.
- ⁴⁴ Many critics use the term "Christ" synonymously with "the Son" or "Jesus." However, in all of Milton's poetry, the word "Christ" appears only once. I believe Milton intended this in order to prevent his readers from blindly accepting the Son's mysteriously dual nature, which foregrounds humanity's unceasing work of reinterpretation. I will therefore abstain from using the term "Christ" myself, but will keep it when quoting the critics who do not.
- ⁴⁵ Anne Krook, "The Hermeneutics of Opposition in *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 36, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 133.
- ⁴⁶ *Paradise Lost*, book IX, line 563.
- ⁴⁷ Bill Readings, "'An Age Too Late': Milton and the Time of Literary History," *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 466.
- ⁴⁸ Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 111.
- ⁴⁹ Donnelly, "*Paradise Regained* as Rule of Charity," 178.
- ⁵⁰ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 85.
- ⁵¹ Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, p. 167.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 182.
- ⁵³ *Paradise Lost*, book XII, lines 394-395.

- ⁵⁴ Donnelly, “*Paradise Regained* as Rule of Charity,” 181.
- ⁵⁵ Goldsmith, “The Muting of Satan,” 126.
- ⁵⁶ Recall that the divine has no language, and that language belongs only to the purview of the lower ontological beings, like people: “Immediate are the Acts of God, more swift / Than time or motion, but to human ears / Cannot without process of speech be told” (PL 7.176-178).
- ⁵⁷ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 131.
- ⁵⁸ *Paradise Lost*, book III, lines 414-415.
- ⁵⁹ Lewalski, *Milton’s Brief Epic*, p. 54.
- ⁶⁰ *Paradise Lost*, book V, line 490.
- ⁶¹ *Areopagitica*, p. 748.
- ⁶² *Paradise Lost*, book XI, lines 315-317.
- ⁶³ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 109.
- ⁶⁴ Readings, “An Age Too Late,” 459.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 459.
- ⁶⁶ *Areopagitica*, p. 728.
- ⁶⁷ Barbara Lewalski, “Milton on Learning and the Learned-Ministry Controversy,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 4 (August 1961): 278.
- ⁶⁸ Simpson, “Lingering Voices,” 180.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 192.
- ⁷⁰ Krook, “The Hermeneutics of Opposition,” 135.
- ⁷¹ Donnelly, “*Paradise Regained* as Rule of Charity,” 185.
- ⁷² Goldsmith, “The Muting of Satan,” 136.
- ⁷³ *Paradise Lost*, book VIII, lines 419-426.
- ⁷⁴ *Paradise Lost*, book XII, lines 391-392.
- ⁷⁵ *Paradise Lost*, book I, lines 254-255.
- ⁷⁶ Stanley Fish, *How Milton Works* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 353
- ⁷⁷ Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 109.
- ⁷⁸ *Paradise Lost*, book V, lines 860-861.
- ⁷⁹ Fish, *How Milton Works*, p. 307.
- ⁸⁰ *Paradise Lost*, book XII, lines 575-587.