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Milton's Imagery

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BY

THEODORE
HOWARD
BANKS

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To MY WIFE

whose profound and cheerful ignorance
of Milton has been a godsend

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Throughout this volume the quotations from Milton are taken from *The Works of John Milton* (18 vols., Columbia University Press, 1934-1936); the references are to volume and page.

THEODORE H. BANKS

Middletown Connecticut
October, 1949

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Introduction

SINCE many books might be written on Milton's use of imagery, it is desirable to explain at the outset the method and purpose of this particular one. The subject is very complex, as anybody may understand who reads no more than the chapter in Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature* entitled "Image, Metaphor, Symbol, Myth." There is, in the first place, the difficulty of definition. An image may be considered as a word that recalls to our minds a sensation, an impression, not merely visual but belonging to any of the senses: sound, smell, balance, pressure, heat and cold, and the like. Miss Rosemond Tuve's *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* attacks the problem from this point of view. On the other hand, an image may be considered a figure of speech, that is, a simile, metaphor, or personification. Many books have adopted this definition, notably Miss Spurgeon's *Shakespeare's Imagery.* This is the definition upon which this study is based. Even within the framework of so limited a concept many lines of approach may be followed. Yet they all fall into one of two main divisions: they are primarily concerned either with the form or with the content of the imagery. Clearly the form or structure of imagery may be made the subject of fruitful study. Everyone uses its various devices to relieve the monotony of flat statement and to give life and vividness to his speech or writing. Hence, imagery is a highly individual stylistic element. Its differences in intensity and complexity, its force or delicacy, its range of depth and fullness, its rhetorical function as an embellishment or as an integral

part of the thought—all do much to illuminate our understanding of a writer's art.

If, however, we wish to examine not the writer's art but his character, we find the imagery equally helpful. In this case, we must turn from its form to its content and must consider the sources from which it is derived: books, nature, and so on. We need not be precise in our definition; indeed we may on occasion deliberately overstep the limits of figurative language. Aesthetic considerations are largely irrelevant. We are concerned not with the various types of images, the degree of their elaboration, or their literary quality or function, but only with the manner in which they reveal the writer's fields of interest: his preoccupations and beliefs, his likes and dislikes, his knowledge or ignorance, his experience or lack of it, in short, his personality. Undertaking to explore, through an analysis of the subject matter of Milton's images, the various aspects of his complex character, this book cannot be said to change our basic impressions of him. Yet new lights and shadows, new background and new perspective make a familiar portrait more lifelike and more memorable.

Certain difficulties inherent in this method of approach became apparent at once. To be valid, the analysis had to be comprehensive and not selective; hence, elaborate charts, tables of percentages, and other statistics had to be compiled. In this process formidable problems arose in classification and enumeration, which had sometimes to be solved by what amounted to hairsplitting. Furthermore, statistics could not discriminate qualitatively between one image and another—between, for example, a brief commonplace and an involved Homeric simile—so that they were, without interpretation, more misleading than helpful. They had, therefore, ultimately to be discarded, and they do not appear in this book. Yet this should be said: images may be unimportant singly but significant cumulatively, and this

significance can be uncovered only by statistical methods.

In this connection the question arises of the validity of the argument from silence. To this there is no simple and clear-cut answer. Whether or not the absence of a certain type of image is significant depends partly on the total number of images under consideration (in this study some six thousand Miltonic and some two thousand non-Miltonic images), partly on whether or not the missing images are readily usable in a given context, and partly on the evidence of related images. For example, three figures, of which early instances can be found, come from the game of chess: pawn, check or checkmate, and stalemate. Yet none of them is used either by Shakespeare, who has many images of other games and sports, or by Milton, who has few. Obviously the same explanation for this circumstance will not serve in both cases.

This problem leads to the next, that of whether or not a given image is conscious or subconscious. So far as this book is concerned the problem is irrelevant. No assumption is here made that all the images are conscious, although many of them obviously are, such as those involving historical or mythological references. On the other hand, no theories are here advanced concerning Milton's subconscious mind. The author is not among the number of literary critics who rush in where trained psychologists fear to tread. The assumption is made, however, that the imagery reveals Milton the man, since he is speaking to us directly, except of course in *Comus, Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes.* Some qualification might have to be made when an image is found in a speech by a character in one of these poems—one such image is noted as representing the point of view of Comus—but the qualification would surely be slight, much slighter than in the case of Shakespeare.

Another obvious difficulty was the danger of attaching importance to images that were in fact stereotyped both in themselves and in their treatment, with the added danger

of judging Milton by modern standards of conventionality. Only a complete catalogue of the literature existing in his day would accurately reveal the commonplaceness of any given image. In default of such a guide, selected examples had to serve. Accordingly, an analysis was made: of the works of poets, such as Giles and Phineas Fletcher, whose subject matter was similar to that of Milton; of extensive passages from numerous prose writers, such as Hooker and Joseph Hall, and from pamphleteers, such as Lord Brooke (Robert Greville), William Godwin, John Goodwin, John Lilburne, Henry Parker, and William Walwyn; *Eikon Basilike;* and all the non-Miltonic pamphlets on both sides of the Smectymnuus controversy. It is hoped that these writings have served as a sufficient control.

Since merely their content was considered, the images were often lifted from their context, and a complex image or a close-knit group of images was always dissected and treated as a series of independent units. Yet this procedure, inadmissible in a rhetorical study, does not invalidate the approach adopted here. There seem to be no significant sequences or associations of images such as those of Shakespeare discussed by Spurgeon (eyes-tears-vaults; or dogs-licking-candy), and no image that dominates a given piece of writing. Since, however, no special attention was given to these characteristics, they may have escaped observation.

When all is said and done, this study is basically subjective, but in being so it is no different from nearly all literary criticism. It is merely one evaluation of the evidence. If anyone else wishes to voyage across chaos, to

> tempt with wandring feet
> The dark unbottom'd infinite Abyss
> And through the palpable obscure find out
> His uncouth way

the opportunity is still his.

CHAPTER I

London Public Life

IN spite of Milton's seven years at Cambridge, his long seclusion at Horton, and his Continental travels, it is natural to think of him primarily as a Londoner. For most of his life he lived at the center of governmental, business, and social activity, exposed to the influence of all the classes of men and all the incidents of life in a great metropolis. His response reveals certain clearly marked qualities.

Considering first his attitude toward the social order of his day with its pronounced stratification, we find that the images drawn from the upper classes are relatively few and unimportant. Those based on the king's court or on the household of a great noble are not sharply defined, being for the most part concerned merely with the general function or habitual course of action of a servant, retainer, or official. Only occasionally do they visualize a specific action: a busy almoner deals out his supplies, nimble servitors trip about at command, a herald is alert to deliver his greeting. Nor does Milton seem to have been especially interested in the machinery of government, as he has only a few miscellaneous images that have to do with it: taxation, the oath of allegiance, the seals of office, the granting of patents, and the like. The rather startling metaphor of a heavenly council, where Christ was

> wont at Heav'ns high Councel-Table,
> To sit the midst of Trinal Unity, (*Nat. Ode,* I, i)

An usher, page, fool, sewer, doorkeeper, purveyor, secretary, favorite, and retainer wearing his patron's badge.

is probably derivative.[2]

When, however, we come to his attitude toward the nature of government itself, we come to a problem that is interesting and important, but one that lies for the most part outside the scope of this study.[3] At the beginning of his career Milton, like his contemporaries, thought in terms of monarchy. His early works are filled with royalist imagery eulogistic in tone; to be dominant or superior is to reign as king or queen:

> then . . . with bearing erect and lofty, Knowledge appears ... it enthrones itself on high with the intellect as king and emperor, whence it views farther down, as it were lowly and underfoot, whatever is done by the will; and finally it ... takes to itself . . . preeminence, renown, and majesty almost divine; *(Prolusion VII,* XII, 261)

> For what lesse indignity were this, then as if Justice her self the Queen of vertues, descending from her scepter'd royalty . . . should compound . . . with sin; *(Doct. Div.,* III, 473)

royal dignity is founded on justice and virtue,[4] a monarch commands the utmost respect, since he is by right the head of the state:[5]

> Justice, truly royal, compels reverence to herself;
> *(Prolusion VII,* XII, 271)

this respect is enhanced not only by his throne and scepter, but by other constituents of his "thrice-gorgeous ceremony";

> the fall of Prelacy . . . cannot shake the least fringe that borders the royal canopy; *(Ref.,* III, 49)

> [The bishops are] meddling to turne, and dandle the *Royall Ball* with unskilfull and *Pedantick palmes; (Ref.,* III, 52)

[2] See Phineas Fletcher, "That Trine-one with himself in councell sits," *The Purple Island,* I, st. 44.

[3] Its wider implications are discussed in M. M. Ross, *Milton's Royalism* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1943). Ross's conclusions are not supported by the present study.

[4] See Chapter 6, where this foundation is contrasted to a house of cards.

[5] In his long fable of the members of the body, the head—by implication the king—rightfully holds the first place. See Chapter 2, note 32.

his escutcheon should symbolize his preeminence:[6]

[A Biblical reading that made God speak unmajestically] were as if a Herald in the *Atcheivment* of a King, should commit the *indecorum* to set his helmet sidewaies and close, not full fac't and open in the posture of direction and command. *(Tetra.,* IV, 109)

He is attended by armed guards:

it stood more with the Majesty of that office [Roman censor] to have no other Serjeants or maces about them but those invisible ones of Terror and shame; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 251)

and is followed by a retinue of attendants:

Affections and Desires . . . those Pathetick handmaids of the soul . . . [lead truth] to their Queen [the understanding];

(R. Ch. Gov., Ill, 249)

all noble sciences attending upon the traine of Christian doctrine.

(Anim., Ill, 167)

Even when surrounded by evil counselors he is not himself to blame for what they do; he is like Samson in the hands of the Philistines—an image of the greatest interest in the light of the future:

I cannot better liken the state and person of a King then to that mighty Nazarite *Samson;* who being disciplin'd from his birth in the precepts and the practice of Temperance and Sobriety, without the strong drink of injurious and excessive desires, grows up to a noble strength and perfection with those his illustrious and sunny locks the laws waving and curling about his god like shoulders. And while he keeps them about him undiminisht and unshorn, he may with the jaw-bone of an Asse, that is, with the word of his meanest officer suppresse and put to confusion thousands of those that rise against his just power. But laying down his head among the strumpet flatteries of Prelats, while he sleeps and thinks no harme, they wickedly shaving off all those bright and waighty tresses of his laws, and just prerogatives which were his ornament and strength, deliver him over to indirect and violent councels, which as those Philistims put out the fair, and farre-sighted eyes of his

[6] This image, which is based on a minor detail, suggests that Milton's knowledge of heraldry was extensive. The suggestion is supported by a reference in his *Commonplace Book* (XVIII, 195) to Guillim. John Guillim, *A Display of Heraldrie,* was a comprehensive treatment of the subject, which went through six editions between 1610 and 1666.

natural discerning, and make him grinde in the prison house of their sinister ends and practices upon him. Till he knowing his prelatical rasor to have bereft him of his wonted might, nourish again his puissant hair, the golden beames of Law and Right; and they sternly shook, thunder with ruin upon the heads of those his evil counsellors, but not without great affliction to himselfe. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 276-277)

Moreover, religious no less than political thinking was based on kingship. Royalist symbolism is applied to God throughout the Bible; even in the teaching of Jesus no phrase comes to mind more readily than "the kingdom of heaven." Hence, Milton speaks of excommunication as the

> inviolable Prerogative of *Christs* diadem, *(Ref.,* III, 71)

and invests Christ with all the regalia of kingly office,

> Come forth out of thy Royall Chambers, O Prince of all the Kings of the earth, put on the visible roabes of thy imperiall Majesty, take up that unlimited Scepter which thy Almighty Father hath bequeath'd thee; *(Anim.,* III, 148)

> [Ministers boast their own discipline] to be the throne and scepter of Christ. *(Tenure, V,* 38)

Such imagery occurs naturally in Milton's early poems and pamphlets, but after he had been associated with a government that had cut off the King's head, he found this mode of thought coming into violent conflict with his politics. In consequence, he makes an obvious, conscious effort to fit his writing to his new philosophy. Royalist imagery becomes for the first time derogatory—imagery, that is, directed against kingship as an institution, not that directed against the person of Charles I. A king is hostile and threatening:

> you [Morus] spoke in a menacing tone, and like a king;
> *(Def. of Him. IX,* 113)

his utterances are weighty, but only because they are backed by the strength of the law; otherwise they do not rise above the common level:

The words of a King, as they are *full of power,* in the authority and strength of Law, so like *Sampson,* without the strength of that *Naza-*

rites lock, they have no more power in them then the words of another man; *(Eikon.,V,* 257)

he himself is either a nonentity or bad, never good:

it is well and happy for the people if thir King be but a cypher, being oft times a mischief, a pest, a scourge of the nation;
(Ready & Easy Way, Vl, 121)

he demands excessive adulation:

a king must be ador'd like a Demigod.
(Ready & Easy Way, Vl, 120)

Yet, though apparently formidable, he is a contemptible thing:

kingship, though looking big, [is] yet indeed most pusillanimous, full of fears, full of jealousies, startl'd at every ombrage.
(Ready & Easy Way, Vl, 142)

Surrounded by flattery, a queen is filled with self-assurance. Satan realizes that a woman sent to tempt Christ would fail utterly even if she were

confident
As sitting Queen ador'd on Beauties throne. *(P.R.,* ll, 431)

Other images, concerned not with the king himself but with royal affairs, are likewise uncomplimentary. A sermon addressed to King Charles I is trivial:

These petty glosses and conceits [of King Charles on the events of the war] are so weake and shallow, and so like the quibbl's of a Court Sermon, that we may safely reck'n them . . . fetcht from such a pattern. *(Eikon.,V,* 147)

The clergyman preaching, just before the Restoration, in favor of King Charles II renders himself in Parliament's

just resentment of this boldness, another Doctor *Manwaring,*
(Brief Notes, Vl, 154)

Charles I's chaplain, who in 1628 was fined and imprisoned by Parliament for preaching the absolute authority of the King. The pomp of a royal procession is tedious.[7]

[7] Sec below: [Adam] "walks forth," etc.

Habit, however, is hard to break. Kings had been revered for centuries, and Cromwell or no Cromwell, the royalist imagery of the Bible remained the same. Hence, Milton often speaks in his early manner. Truth is still a queen,

> queen truth ought to be preferred to king Charles,
> (*Sec. Def.,* VIII, 139)

as is Eve when, in her innocence and nobility, she leaves Adam to his talk with Raphael:

> With Goddess-like demeanour forth she went;
> Not unattended, for on her as Queen
> A pomp of winning Graces waited still. *(P.L.,* II, 237)

Moreover, the heavens are still, to a large extent, monarchical: the sun is the "regent of day," the constellations from his lordly eye keep their due distance, and the clouds that attend his western throne are arrayed in brilliant colors. The moon "in her pale dominion" reigns over the night; she has a train of stars that are bright until she,

> Rising in clouded Majestic, at length
> Apparent Queen unvaild her peerless light. *(P.L.,* II, 128)

Finally, the morning star

> crownst the smiling Morn
> With thy bright Circlet. *(P.L.,* II, 150)

The inconsistency evident in this group of figures is interesting but not surprising, for Milton's unconscious mode of thinking had become fixed and could not be changed so easily as his conscious principles. Imagery in particular has a way of outliving its time. Even in this mechanical age, many of us who go back to the horse-and-buggy days still talk about holding your horses, or holding the whip hand over someone.

Milton did not, of course, have to readjust all his social values, since even after the execution of the King the social organization as a whole continued without appreciable change. Hence, Milton's images on levels below royalty remain constant. Those drawn from the professional classes

are rare: the apostles are the architects of the church; a minister is a physician to the soul; a wicked man thinks that he can bribe God like a corrupt judge; justice can no more compromise with sin than "some wretched itinerary Judge" can let the prisoners before him break his head. A conspicuous exception, however, is a group of images of teaching: law teaches like a schoolmaster, and like a strict one punishes every trespass; in interpreting Scripture it is against God's covenant of love for man to be too rigid, like a severe pedagogue; it is not fitting

> for the Majesty of Scripture to humble her self in artificial *theorems . . .* like a professor in the Schools; *(Tetra.,* IV, 107)

> [It is arrogance that King Charles] should sit ... Schoolmaster, to tutor those [Parliaments] who were sent by the whole Realme to be his Counselers and teachers; *(Eikon.,* V, 181)

> [You say] Whoever therefore is not punished offends not: it is not the theft but the punishment that makes the thief! Salmasius the Grammarian commits no solecisms now, because he has pulled his hand from under the ferule! *(First Def.,* VII, 435)

Certainly Milton the schoolmaster is speaking here.[8]

In regard to his father's business, the evidence is not so clear. While Milton has no images that specifically mention the profession of scrivener, there are a number that may possibly refer to it. In the seventeenth century, a scrivener made official translations of charters and like documents; made out certified accounts of records; drew up deeds (such as mortgages for loans) and conveyances (that is leases, etc.) for transferring the title to property; and acted as agent in making purchases and investments. Milton has a fair-sized group of images based on nearly all these activities:

> [Divorce is] this tenure and free-hold of mankind, this native and domestick Charter giv'n us by a greater Lord then that *Saxon* King the Confessor; *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 375)

[8] **Milton has also a large group of images of teaching from the schoolboy's point of view. See Chapter 2, in the discussion of the parent-child relationship.**

What hath the soulc of man deserv'd . . . that it should be morgag'd thus [restricted from divorce], and may not redeem it selfe . . . out of the hands of such ignorant . . . teachers; *(Tetra.,* IV, 221)

if I were certain to write as men buy Leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had, then to Gods glory by the honour and instruction of my country. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 236)

These, together with images that deal with debts, loans, and the deposit of money,[9] may reflect aspects of the scrivener's profession.[10] It is entirely possible, however, that they refer to general business or legal procedure, especially since Milton has a large number of legal figures, such as those of incurring and being released from a legal penalty,[11] and of taking part in various legal (and illegal) activities,[12] specifically those connected with actual courtroom practice.[13] He

[8] To pay and forgive a debt, go on trust for the future payment of a debt, break the terms of a loan, and deposit money for safe keeping.

[10] He has also images based on the coin itself. Those dealing with the coin's figure and inscription probably derive from the Biblical passage in which the Pharisees show Jesus the tribute money due to Caesar (Matthew 22:20), a passage that Milton discusses in *Tetrachordon* (IV, 142) :

> [Circe's] pleasing poison
> The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
> And the inglorious likenes of a beast
> Fixes instead, unmoulding reasons mintage
> Character'd in the face; *(Comus,* I, 104)
>
> How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
> Bear in their Superscription. *(S.A.,* I, 343)

More commonplace images deal with money as legal currency:

"the odde coinage of your [Remonstrant's] phrase which no mintmaister of language would allow for sterling"; *(Anim.,* III, 128)

[Bishops arc] "clippers of regal power and shavers of the law." *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 277)

[11] To cancel a purchased right, redeem from a claim, incur a forfeiture, and renew a lapsed or forfeited power.

[12] To compound and come to a treaty, go through bankruptcy and discharge a bankrupt, enact and comply with a statute, sue, go bail and jump bail, be an accomplice or confederate, take a fee on both sides, and make a champarty (an illegal procedure in which a person not concerned helps a suit on condition of receiving a reward).

[13] To draw a bill of attainture or a writ of error, bring in an indictment, cite for contempt of court, bring to the bar or into court, bind over to or arraign before the court, impanel a jury and appoint a foreman, put on the witness stand, and act as pursivant (attendant) and apparitor (an officer to execute the order of the magistrate).

can hardly be said, therefore, to show close and detailed interest in his father's profession.

Images of the lower and the middle classes, the ordinary citizens with whom he came into constant contact in the shops and streets, are larger in number and give a clearer reflection of the life about him. It is true that an extensive group of such images derive from books rather than life, a favorite image of Milton and of his contemporaries being that of bonds and bondage,[14] one that stems from the Biblical use of the words, both literal and figurative. In addition, Milton went to the Bible for his frequent image of a yoke or yoking,[15] and usually to the classics for those of a slave.[10] From books too, comes the image of a man laboring in the mines of knowledge. It is also true that Milton shows no real familiarity with the basic processes [17] or tools [18] of everyday life, his use of such figures being very perfunctory. Clearly he is not a man accustomed to doing things with his hands. Equally superficial, though not quite so commonplace, are his figures of distilling, spinning, dyeing, tailoring, various processes involving metal,[19] and various methods of sticking substances

[14] Also: chains, fetters, manacles, shackles, clogs, and the related verbs to tie, bind, etc.

[15] A very common figure throughout the Bible.

[16] In the cases of: a slave at a slave market; a menial household slave; a nomenclator, that is, a slave who tells his master the names of the people whom he meets in the streets; and a galley slave. In one case Milton refers to "Norman villenage," and in others the reference is generalized. For two images of Biblical slavery see Chapter 6, notes 87 and 88.

[17] Such as sifting, whetting, or dulling an edge.

[18] Such as a furnace, mould, forge, anvil, axle, pulley, and in particular a scales or balance. This last is a favorite 17th century image whose origin is doubtless the Bible, since these two words occur there many times both literally and figuratively.

[19] To file, polish, rivet, and blanch. There are two which do not show great knowledge but which are so sharply visual that they may well be the result of observation:

> [all parts of the sun are] alike informd
> With radiant light, as glowing Iron with fire; *(P.L.,* II, 98)
>
> [The gates of Hell] like a Furnace mouth
> Cast forth redounding smoak and ruddy flame. *(P.L.,* II, 69)

The second simile probably refers, like the first, to an iron foundry.

together.[20] None of these references show more than the average knowledge reflected also in the writings of his contemporaries. Indeed, the suspicion seems reasonable that in certain instances Milton has less than average knowledge. He often uses the figure of sifting grain or flour, but never that of judging the quality of a grainsack by one handful; [21] he uses the proverbial expressions of seeming a chip of the old block, of driving out one nail by means of another, and of meddling with edged tools, but does not use other common images of carpentry, such as those of green or seasoned wood, or of roughhewing.

Yet when these exceptions are made, there remain a smaller but more significant group of images that derive from his experience of the sights and sounds of the city, not only of the activities of specific trades but also of city life in general. Almost all of these occur in his prose, as they would not readily be suggested by the subject matter of his poems. In some cases the reference, usually derogatory, is merely to the occupation itself: Bishop Hall is a rude scavenger, he has thoughts lower than any beadle and talks like a cutler; the anonymous victim of Milton's *Colasterion* is a nameless hangman; Salmasius, hired as a public crier for the royalists' lies, is the pugilist of tyrants, a horse-boy, a buffoon, and plays the gypsy throughout his book. Versifiers yearn for the fabrication of a multitude of verses, and together with the actors, hanker after applause even when the play is over. In other cases, the images bring an individual action or scene before us: the watchman telling us that the night is passing; the chamberlain of an inn making a guest comfortable for the night; the grisly porter clapping the dungeon gate upon a prisoner; [22] the victualler diluting pure wine;

[20] To solder, glue, paste, and cement.

[21] Fuller, "Of Books," *The Holy State and the Profane State:* "The genius of the author is commonly discovered in the dedicatory epistle. Many place the purest grain in the mouth of the sack for chapmen to handle or buy."

[22] A similar vivid image derives from his imagination:

[Some married couples] "live as they were deadly enemies in a cage *to*gether."(Telra.,IV,89)

a runaway servant being stripped of his livery; the beggar in cast-off rags invoking charity with a written appeal; a harlot with the varnish laid thick on her cheek; a building in the course of erection with its piles of rubbish and its temporary scaffolding.[23] Some of the images are to the modern reader particularly revealing of the London of Milton's day: the smells of the streets,

> Where Houses thick and Sewers annoy the Aire; *(P.L.,* II, 276)

the litter of a bakery or a barber-shop:

> [Salmasius] you would not reject opinions to suit your argument though they were the sweepings of a baker's shop or a barbershop—yes, or of the very gallows; *(First Def.,* VII, 319)

the methods of the barber himself:

> [Milton's opponent] comes to the Position, which I sett down whole; and . . . slits it into fowr, that hee may the better come at it with his Barbar Surgery, and his sleevs turn'd up; *(Colast.,* IV, 250)

and those of a midwife :

> [Truth] never comes into the world, but like a Bastard . . . till Time the Midwife rather then the mother of Truth, have washt and salted the Infant, declared her legitimat; *(Doct. Div.,* III, 370)

the gruesome preparations for a funeral, and its ostentatious ceremonies:

> [The writer of a testimonial for More] from his solicitude to adorn an object so unworthy, appears less to decorate a living person, than to entomb a putrid corpse, stuffed with aromatics; *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 207)

[23] The prose images of building based on these two ideas are the only ones of any vividness that come within Milton's daily experience. The poetry supplies a few with the more remote and romantic suggestiveness of a palace or a tower. The large number that remain are either generalized commonplaces (to lay a foundation, groundwork, headstone; ground, found on; build (upon) ; place on a (solid, treacherous) foundation; erect, raise, rear a monument, superstructure, fablic; a (to) prop, buttress, pillar, rampart, bulwark; to undermine, lay low, pull, shake down; sink, tumble in pieces) or derive from Milton's reading of the classics (the banquet hall of the gods), Spenser (the House of Pride), or the Bible (the heavenly Jerusalem or the earthly Temple, and various figurative passages, such as to build on sand or a rock, the pillars of heaven, the body as the temple of God, and so on). One or two are vivid but not within his experience, such as the fall of a tower or the top of a pyramid.

[The opening of Salmasius's defense of the King was] most like the trumpery doleful wailings of hired mourner-women;

(First Def., VII, 17)

and, by contrast, the indecent haste of a pauper burial:

[Salmasius] you . . . spirit your tyrants away like paupers, hugger-mugger, for burial at dusk to conceal their violent deaths;

(First Def., VII, 335)

a robbery: Satan entered the garden of Eden as a wolf leaps into a sheepfold

> Or as a Thief bent to unhoord the cash
> Of some rich Burgher, whose substantial dores,
> Cross-barrd and bolted fast, fear no assault,
> In at the window climbs, or o're the tiles;[24] *(P.L..,* II, 113)

a meal in a tavern,

[In England the] Priest scruples not to paw, and mammock [break] the sacramentall bread, as familiarly as his Tavern Bisket; *(Ref.,* III, 19)

the Smithfield market:

[When the minister is preaching] his sheep oft-times sit the while to as little purpose of benefiting as the sheep in thir pues at *Smithfield;* and . . . by som Simonie or other, bought and sold like them;

(Hirelings, VI, 76)

These are the ordinary incidents and places connected with the daily routine, the kind of unconsidered details that always seem the inevitable accompaniment of living. Milton would have been surprised at our thinking them picturesque. There are also special occasions and ceremonies, things which impressed him by their comparative rarity, but

[24] The image originates in John 10: I: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." However, Milton gives the passage a specific, contemporary setting. The same image, in less elaborate form, appears earlier: "What they are for Ministers, or how they crept into the fould, whether at the window, or through the wall . . . wee know not" *(Articles of Peace,* VI, 270). Another image is almost equally vivid, although the picture is not specifically seventeenth century: "it was well knowne what a bolde lurker schisme was even in the houshold of Christ" *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 210).

which to us hardly seem more remote than the others: the noise made by the city watchmen and the church bells warning of a sudden emergency:

> [In the writings of the Church Fathers] the crosse-jingling periods . . . [are] worse then the din of bells, and rattles; *(Ref.,* III, 34)

a tableau or pageant proceeding through the streets with armed men to clear the way:

> *Remonst.* Hitherto they have flourish't, now I hope they will strike,
> *Ans . . .* now he is at the *Pageants*[25] among the Whifflers;
> *(Anim.,* III, 138)

the retainers of some noble or of the King, viewed from Milton's late, anti-royalist point of view:

> [Adam] walks forth, without more train
> Accompanied then with his own compleat
> Perfections, in himself was all his state,
> More solemn then the tedious pomp that waits
> On Princes, when thir rich Retinue long
> Of Horses led, and Grooms besmeard with Gold
> Dazles the croud, and sets them all agape; *(P.L.,* II, 156)

and possibly the grotesque images in a Lord Mayor's procession[26] and the elaborate festivities of a coronation:[27]

> [That the English hold from the King] the right of our common safety ... by meer gift, as when the Conduit pisses Wine at Coronations, from the superfluity of thir royal grace . . . was never the intent of God. *(Eikon.,* V, 202-203)

These images are individually fresh and successful and reveal Milton as responsive to his environment, but responsive

[25] The New English Dictionary quotes this use of the word as illustrative of the medieval mystery play, but in the context of the complete passage the reference seems unmistakably contemporary.

[26] The giants Gog and Magog. See Chapter 6, note 145.

[27] Charles I was crowned on February 2, 1625/6, but contemporary accounts suggest that there was no public display. See R. F. Williams, *Court and Times of Charles the First* (London, 1848), I, 72, 77, 79. The letter of D'Ewes which is referred to here is concerned only with the proceedings in Westminster Abbey. See J. O. Halliwell, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir S. D'Ewes.* D'Ewes (London, 1849), II, 173.

only as any alert and sensitive man might be.[28] As a group they do not show an individual reaction.

There are, however, certain phases of city life to which Milton reacted in a highly characteristic way. The first distinctive element in this reaction is his opinion of peddlers and hucksters, of itinerant hawkers and quack doctors, and of buffoons and jugglers. Milton is full of scorn for these tricksters who deceive the ignorant mob. The wares of the peddlers and hucksters are at best contemptible and at worst fraudulent: a rhapsodist, in contrast to a true poet, is a peddler of verse; commutings of penance are the deceitful peddleries of the bishops; the printer Vlaccus, in issuing Milton's pamphlet together with More's answer,

> resorted to this truly huckster-like combination, mixing the vicious and the vile with the vendible; *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 49)

Hawkers and quack doctors have developed the art of high-pressure salesmanship; Morus, in canvassing for favor, has surpassed them in this, and

> to complete your character of a hawking quack and bragging mountebank, it was only wanting that you should set yourself to sale with bepraisings and testimonials . . . with a display besides of the public faith ; *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 53)

they practice solely by the trial and error method, traveling about to collect as much money as possible:

> [In the olden times a bishop, with no fixed diocese, lived simply] Did he goe about to pitch down his Court, as an Empirick does his banck, to inveigle in all the mony of the Country? *(Ref.,* Ill, 15-16)

[28] Two aspects of seventeenth century London life are unaccountably absent: the traffic of the street with its congestion of horses and its danger of footpads (this is alluded to in the non-figurative "sons of Belial" passage in *Paradise Lost,* I, 26), and the traffic of the Thames. It seems remarkable that, in all Milton's castigation of the bishops, he never hit upon the simile of a boatman, as did Robert Greville, Lord Brooke:

"Ministers (like Water men) have looked one way and row'd another," *(A Discourse Opening . . . Episcopasie,* 1641, p. 50) and Burton, who applied the same image to the hypocrisy of the Jesuits *(The Anatomy of Melancholy,* ed. A. R. Shilleto (London, 1912, I, 57). Nor does Milton mention the traffic of the country highways (see Chapter 2).

they are commonly found at country fairs, where, among the crowds of gaping peasants, business would naturally be good:

[Salmasius] Like some itinerant hawker . . . touting from fair to fair, you in your preface kept raising great expectations of next day's performance . . . that you might peddle out to as many readers as possible those your wretched bottlefuls of rhetoric-paint and fustian dye. (*First Def.,* VII, 43)

These crowds are also entertained by the performances of the outdoor vaudeville artists; Milton has seen such things, possibly in Europe as well as in England:

[Salmasius] You take the voice of the beggarly refugees for the voice of the people; and like a foreign mountebank to the crowd, imitate the voices only of the vilest of animals; *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 177)

[The bishops call their opponents sectaries, schismatics, etc.] the people of England will not suffer themselves to be juggl'd thus out of their faith and religion by a mist of names cast before their eyes; (*R. Ch.* Gov., III, 217)

Re. Thus their cavills concerning *Liturgy* are vanish't
Answ. You wanted but *Hey-passe* to have made your transition like a mysticall man of *Sturbridge*[29] But for all your sleight of hand our just exceptions . . . are not vanisht. *(Anim.,* III, 134)

This scorn springs from his hatred of sham and pretense,[30] a feeling so deeply ingrained that he even regretted that his eyes gave no indication of his blindness:

In this respect only am I a dissembler; and here, it is against my will. *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 61)

This same trait underlies another equally unusual group of images, which should, therefore, be considered here.

[29] An annual fair near Cambridge. Milton also has one reference to the "Frankfort fair" *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 127).

[30] It is true that Italian mountebanks were the traditional objects of the playwrights' satire (see, for example, Jonson, *Volpone,* II, ii). However, Milton's references are specific — the juggler of the Sturbridge Fair — and seem best accounted for as a direct reaction to experience. They should be considered with reference to the next two groups of images following: bright substances and small shopkeepers.

These are concerned with substances which conceal evil under a superficially bright and attractive surface. There are six images of varnish or gloss:

[A hypocrite is always trying] to make his insatiate avarice, & ambition seem pious, and orthodoxall by painting his lewd and deceitfull principles with a smooth, and glossy varnish in a doctrinall way to bring about his wickedest purposes; *(Anim.,* Ill, 163)

One of these refers to a mask or visor, doubtless worn in a pageant or carnival, but always suggestive of deceit:

the third Verse . . . will be such a glosse to prove the constitution of a *Bishop* by, as would not onely be not so good as a *Burdeaux* glosse; but scarse be receiv'd to varnish a Visard of *Modona.*[31] *(Anim.,* Ill, 152)

In addition, he speaks of prelacy as blanching her deformities and presenting a false-whited resemblance of the true gospel; of the King who

washes over with a Court-fucus [dye, paint] the worst ... of his actions; *(Eikon.,* V, 72)

and of a marriage without intellectual elements as

but a certain formality; or guilding over of little better then a brutish congresse; *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 423)

and the like.[32]

[31] Milton takes the phrase "Burdeaux glosse," originating in a pun, from Hall's *A Defence of the Humble Remonstrance:*

"ye . . . answer *// this glosse corrupt not the text, we shall admit it;* implying therein . . . that the universall practice of the whole Primitive Church . . . may prove a Burdeaux-glosse to marre the Text." (p. 54)

In answering *Animadversions,* Hall picks up Milton's use of his original figure and elaborates it further:

"Though your bright and new-varnisht *Modona* vizard (under which you so hansomely play the hypocrite) have deceived the people, yet . . . others there be will know it to be but a vizard, especially when I shall have rendered it more ugly, by scraping off the paint. In doing which I must follow you . . . close." *(A Modest Confutation,* p. 34)

[32] The only other substances of which he makes any significant use are metals and stone. Gold, which may be embased by alloy or dross, is the symbol of physical or spiritual excellence; iron and lead are the symbols of harshness or inferiority:

[After the time of Constantine] "that saying was common that former times

Distinctive also, and almost as scornful, is Milton's attitude toward the small shopkeeper.[33] Trade is likely to be a dull occupation:

[Under the episcopal system the soul can only] plod on in the . . . drudging Trade of outward conformity; *(Ref.,* III, 3)

a shop, even if honestly run, is a somewhat degrading place:

[Writings] sent us from the shop of the Jesuites at *Lovain;*
(Prelat.Epis.,III,S7)

[We must appear before the bishops once a year to be taxed] our tuppences in their Chaunerly Shop-book of *Easter; (Ref.,* III, 74)

[The church, which should be the household of Christ, has become] a proud judiciall court where fees and clamours keep shop and drive a

had woodden Chalices and golden *Preists;* but they golden Chalices and woodden *Preists." (Ref., III,* 25)

[It is impossible] "To couple hatred . . . though wedlock try all her golden links, and borrow to her aid all the iron manacles and fetters of Law":
(Doct. Div., III, 500)

[Some men] aspire
To lay their just hands on that Golden Key
That ope's the Palace of Eternity. *(Comus,* I, 85)

This is aiso the symbolism of the non-figurative passage of *Lycidas:*

Two massy Keyes he bore of metal twain,
(The Golden opes, the Iron shuts amain). (I, 80)

Again,

That Golden Scepter which thou [Satan] didst reject
Is now an Iron Rod to bruise and breake
Thy disobedience. *(P.L.,* II, 175)

This figure is also found in *Ref.,* III, 69, and *P.L.,* II, 49. In all three passages he has in mind Psalm 2:9: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron." Milton may have gotten this symbolism of gold and iron from his reading: "The great historian Giovio [1483-1552], who enjoyed his leisure at the papal court for thirty-seven years, was accustomed to boast, 'I have a golden pen and an iron pen; the golden one for those who pay, the iron one for those who do not pay.' " (V. Marcu, *Accent on Power,* tr. R. Winston, New York, 1939, p. 282.)

Rock or stone symbolizes strength and immobility: waves break into froth and bubbles against a solid rock (see Chapter 4) ; marble or alabaster symbolizes the stillness of a statue (except in the phrase "the pure marble air," *P.L.,* II, 97, where he is thinking of the shining surface of the marble) : Melancholy, contemplating heaven, and Shakespeare's readers, poring over his works, become marble; Comus turns the lady to a statue with her nerves "all chained up in Alabaster." The freshness in these groups of images lies more in the degree to which they are elaborated than in the underlying thought.

[33] There is one image, neutral in tone, based on the casting of accounts by the use of an abacus (translated "counting-board"; *First. Def.,* VII, 389).

trade . . . the very sighs of a repentant spirit are there sold by the penny.[34] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 267)

In these figures Milton's primary objection to the debasement of church practices is made clear by his feeling that the process of trading is in itself to some extent a debasement. Shopkeepers, at any rate, cannot be expected to rise above their environment and act upon the highest principles:

[Some in Parliament] who had bin call'd from shops & warehouses without other merit to sit in supreme councels & committies, as thir breeding was, fell to hucster the common-wealth.
(Hist, of Brit., X, 319-320)

We must, to be sure, expect beginners to sell their best goods as cheaply as possible:

[Milton's opponent] is a tradsman of the Law, and must be born with at his first setting up, to lay forth his best ware, which is only gibbrish;
(Colast., IV, 271)

Hee begins with Law, and wee have it of him as good cheap, as any hucster at Law, newly set up, can possibly afford, and as impertinent; but for that hee hath receiv'd his hansel; *(Colast.,* IV, 240)

but shopkeepers are greedy:

[Ministers ask fees for baptism etc.] with a greediness lower then that of tradesmen calling passengers to thir shop; *(Hirelings,* VI, 71)

their goods arc trivial, and their methods reprehensible:

[Salmasius's attack on the character of the English is] that most egregious worn-out rhetorical cosmetic of yours, which you now . . . fetch out from the cabinets of your perfumery-shop . . . that stuff about the English being "fiercer than their mastiffs!" *(First Def.,* VII, 225)

[Presbyterian preachers were first against and then for the King] Thus in their pulpits, as if in a tradesman's shop, they sell whatever wares, whatever trumpery they please, to the poor, silly people; and what is worse, they reclaim what they have sold as often as they think proper.
(Sec.Def.,VIII, 163)

[34] **In this figure Milton may have had in mind Westminster Hall. This was the building in which the Court of the Exchequer met, but it was lined with small shops or booths. See Pepys, *Diary, passim.***

Finally, we find a highly individual knowledge of the general processes of commerce: buying, selling, bargaining, and exchanging. We may note that the possibility of sharp practice exists here also:

[The Church Fathers are mere] hollow antiquities sold by the seeming bulk. *(R. Ch.* Gov.,III,241)

He employs images of engrossing or monopolizing trade:

Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopoliz'd and traded in by tickets and statutes, and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in the Land, to mark and licence it like our broad cloath, and our wooll packs; *(Areo.,* IV, 327)

of hiring a manager:

A wealthy man . . . finds Religion to be a traffick so entangl'd, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade . . . What does he therefore, but . . . find himself out som factor, to whose care ... he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; som Divine of note . . . that must be. To him he ... resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keyes into his custody; *(Areo.,* IV, 333)

of the competition between good and bad merchandise, which once more involves the possibility of commercial trickery:

[For a man of high moral standards it is a burden to know] how and in what manner he shall dispose and employ those summes of knowledge . . . which God hath sent him into this world to trade with. And that which aggravats the burden more, is, that having received amongst his allotted parcels certain pretious truths of such an orient lustre as no Diamond can equall, which never the lesse he has in charge to put off at any cheap rate, yea for nothing to them that will, the great Marchants of this world fearing that this cours would soon discover, and disgrace the fals glitter of their deceitfull wares wherewith they abuse the people, like poor Indians with beads and glasses, practize by all means how they may suppresse the venting of such rarities and such a cheapnes as would undoe them, and turn their trash upon their hands;

(R. Ch. Gov., Ill, 229-230)

of importing goods:

as wine and oyle arc imported to us from abroad, so must ripe understanding . . . bee imported into our minds from forren writings;
(Hist, of Brit., X, 325)

[Under censorship there will be] nothing writt'n but what passes through the custom-house of certain Publicans that have the tunaging and poundaging of all free spok'n truth; *(Areo.,* IV, 334)

more then ifsomeenemy at sea should stop up all our hav'ns and ports, and creeks, it [licencing] hinders and retards the importation of our richest Marchandize, Truth; *(Areo.,* IV, 337)

and of foreign trade:

[Enemies will persecute] those that seek to bear themselves uprightly in this their spiritual factory:[35] which they foreseeing . . . cannot but testify to Truth and the excellence of that heavenly traffick which they bring against what opposition, or danger so ever.
(R. Ch. Gov., Ill, 230)

It is evident that in this last group the tone of scorn that was found earlier is absent, except for the two passages which suggest trickery. This difference of treatment is what we might expect from a man with Milton's detached point of view. Commerce in the abstract is respectable; commerce as practiced in shops and by shopkeepers is not, conditions being worst at the bottom of the commercial scale among the itinerant peddlers.

In general, then, Milton is unusual in his pronounced reaction to business practice and business theory. Although obviously untouched by the excitement or even the romance of the rapidly expanding commercial world of his day[36] and scornful of the petty tradesmen, he does show the effect

[35] A factory is an establishment for traders carrying on business in a foreign country; a merchant company's trading station.

[36] The East Indian trade might be considered an exception. The fleets of merchantmen from the spice islands stirred Milton's imagination, as did the stately ships of the Mediterranean (see Chapter 4, notes 52 and 53). Yet even in these two similes the emphasis is less on the fact of trade than on the beauty of the ships themselves and the euphony of the names of the places to and from which they are bound. A striking difference in treatment may be found in

of his family environment, for his images reflect both the growing importance of the seventeenth century merchant and the Puritan standards of business conduct.[37]

In other ways also Milton reveals his middle class standards. Take, for example, his attitude towards clothes.[38] He views with distaste the ostentatious and elaborately ornamented attire dictated by the fashion of his time. To his Puritan eye the ceremonies of religion were a disfiguring disguise of the angelic brightness of naked truth. The Jews followed heathen gods because

they saw a religion gorgeously attir'd and desirable to the eye,
(Apol., Ill, 355)

and Christians in their approach to the Scriptures are no better, since they have hidden their ignorance by

cloaking their Servile crouching . . . under the name of *humility,* and terming the Py-bald frippery, and ostentation of Ceremony's, decency. *(Ref.,* Ill, 3)

The bishops, naturally, are the chief offenders; their regalia and their doctrine are equally obnoxious:

they hallow'd it [the body], they fum'd it, they sprincl'd it, they be deck't it, not in robes of pure innocency, but of pure Linnen, with other deform'd and fantastick dresses in Palls, and Miters, gold, and guegaw's fetcht from *Arons* old wardrope,[39] or the *Flamins vestry;*
***(Ref.,* HI, 2)**

[They] thought the plaine and homespun verity of *Christs* Gospell unfit any longer to hold their Lordships acquaintance, unlesse the poore thred-bare Matron were put into better clothes; her chast and modest vaile surrounded with celestiall beames they overlai'd with wanton *tresses,* and in a flaring tire bespecckl'd her with all the gaudy allurements of a Whore; *(Ref.,* Ill, 25)

[37] Of course, honesty was not a monopoly of the Puritans. See Fuller, "The Good Merchant," *The Holy State and the Profane State.*

[38] Excluding the large group of conventional figures dealing with: clothes in general (garb, garment, cloak, robe, veil, mantle, etc.; to attire, deck, invest, divest, etc.) ; thread (to hang by a thread, spin, twist, or break a thread, etc.) ; blots or stains; and washing or wiping them off.

[39] Exodus 28.

[Extempore prayer] is the greatest decency that can be imagined. Which to dresse up and garnish with a devis'd bravery . . . addes nothing but a deformed uglinesse. *(Apol.,* Ill, 355)

the true Protestant religion

must undresse them of all their guilded vanities,
(R. Ch. Gov., Ill, 271)

because as long as the English liturgy

pranks her selfe in the weeds of *Popish* Masse, it may be justly fear'd shee provokes the jealousie of God, no otherwise then a wife affecting whorish attire kindles a disturbance in the eye of her discerning husband;[40] *(Anim.,* Ill, 129)

a few pages later it changes its whorish attire for a fool's motley,

the motley incoherence of a patch'd Missall. *(Anim.,* Ill, 132)

In like manner, he expresses his disapproval of other matters, particularly of elaborate literary style, in terms of the fantastic trimmings and adornments of clothes. *Eikon Basilike* is a book

containing little els but the common grounds of ... popery, drest up, the better to deceiv, in a new Protestant guise, and trimmly garnish'd over; *(Eikon.,* V, 64)

in it, the phrases that King Charles has borrowed from other writers and inserted in the prayers are like

painted Feathers, that set him off so gay among the people;
(Eikon., V, 88)

in his reply to Bishop Hall's pamphlet Milton is going

to unpinne your spruce fastidious oratory, to rumple her laces, her frizzles, and her bobins though she wince, and fling, never so Peevishly. *(Anim.,* Ill, 114)

[40] **Smectymnuus shared Milton's point of view: "if our fore-fathers should revive and see their daughters walking in *Cheapside* with their fannes and farthingales, &*c.* they would wonder what kinde of creatures they were, and say Nature had forgot her selfe and brought forth a monster: so if these holy Martyrs" [saw the present liturgy, they would say the same]. *(An Answer to ... an Humble Remonstrance,* p. 5.)**

We may recall in this connection his scornful image of the retinue of a noble with the "Grooms besmeared with Gold."[41] This attitude of Milton may be illustrated still more clearly by contrasting it to that of George Herbert; for Herbert a rainbow is a symbol of the peace to be found in beauty:

> Surely, thought I,
> This is the lace of Peace's coat. *(Peace,* 11. 8-9)

Here we have the reaction of an elegant aristocrat who, priest though he became, felt the charm of rich adornment. Not so John Milton.

On the other hand, the polluted rags and tatters of beggars were equally abhorrent to him.[42] This reaction is so strong and so peculiarly characteristic[43] that it may well reflect a personal fastidiousness.[44] He does not want Christian doctrine to depend too much on the Mosaic law,

> to backslide . . . into the Jewish beggery, of old cast rudiments; *(Ref.,* Ⅲ, 2)

he trusts that England,

> this great and Warlike Nation . . . casting farre from her the *rags* of her old *vices* may presse on ; *(Ref.,* Ⅲ, 78)

the King makes

> exceptions against Reformation pittifully old, and tatter'd with continual using; *(Eikon.,* V, 247)

he adjures the clergy

[41] See above, [Adam] "walks forth," etc.

[42] Beggars are a class not far removed from the hawkers and mountebanks whom, as we have seen, he despised.

[43] No figures of this sort have been observed in Milton's contemporaries, and only one is to be found in the Bible, Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

[44] For his revulsion from skin diseases see Chapter 2. To a lesser degree, he is scornful of things pieced up or mended with darns and patches. In this he differs sharply from his contemporaries, Shakespeare shows more minute knowledge but not scorn. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery,* New York, 1936, pp. 125-126.

while Christ is cloathing upon our barenes with his righteous garment . . . [not to cover] his righteous verity with the polluted cloathing of your ceremonies; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 247)

and he feels that they attach too great an importance to the authority of the Church Fathers:

we doe injuriously in ... searching among the verminous, and polluted rags dropt overworn from the toyling shoulders of Time, with these deformedly to quilt, and interlace the intire, the spotlesse, and undecaying robe of Truth. *(Prelat. Epis.,* Ill, 91)

Somewhere between these two extremes lies the ideal: garments substantial in material, perhaps even rich, but with little or no ornament, and always scrupulously neat and clean:

With me it fares now, as with him whose outward garment hath bin injured and ill bedighted; for having no other shift, what helpe but to turn the inside outwards, especially if the lining be of the same, or, as it is sometimes, much better. So if my name and outward demeanour be not evident anough to defend me, I must make tryall, if the discovery of my inmost thoughts can; *(Apol.,* Ill, 301)

> [Language] from thy wardrope bring thy chiefest treasure;
> Not those new fangled toys, and triming slight
> Which takes our late fantasticks with delight,
> But cull those richest Robes, and gay'st attire
> Which deepest Spirits, and choicest Wits desire;
>
> *(Vacat. Exer.,* I, 19)

little ... I fear lest any crookednes, any wrincle or spot should be found in presbyterial government. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 253)

The fact that Milton's sole approving reference to rich clothes occurs in the early *Vacation Exercise* is evidence that he became more severe in his attitude as he grew older. Further evidence is supplied by three of his portraits. At the age of ten, he has been dressed by his parents in a delicate lace collar;[45] at twenty-one, he has dressed himself in a linen collar without lace but starched and pleated;[46] in his ma-

[45] Miniature by Janssen in the Morgan collection.
[46] The portrait at Nuncham.

turity, he wears an absolutely plain linen band.[47] It is true that the portraits of other gentlemen of this period show that there was a gradual shift to a costume less elaborate than that of the Elizabethans, but Milton was not the man to follow a fashion unless he approved of it. Indeed, he was considerably ahead of the fashion in his soberness. There are some indications, though they are slight and inconclusive, that his reaction to jewels may have been similarly modified.[48] In the women's activities of needlework and embroidery he shows no interest whatever.[49]

Equally Puritanical is the almost complete absence of tavern life,[50] and the dearth of images of games and sports. There is one reference to tick-tack, an old variety of backgammon; there are a very few slight and commonplace references to a lottery and to a cast of the dice or of cards, and one to blowing down a house of cards.[51] The limited extent of his knowledge of these pastimes and of his interest in them is indicated by his reference to the then fashionable card game of primero, which he seems to have confused with a dice game:

> *Remon.* Could yee see no Colleges, no Hospitals built?
> *Answ.* At that *primero* of piety the Pope and Cardinals are the better gamesters, and will cogge a Die into heav'n before you.[52]
> (*Anim.,* III, 174)

Similarly, in his one figure of any importance concerning bullbaiting he confuses the parts of the dogs and the bull:

[47] **The portrait by Dobson.**

[48] **Milton uses jewels as symbols of brightness and preciousness: the stars are living sapphires, truth has a lustre that no diamond can equal, and is a precious gem among the numberless pebbles of the shore, etc.**

[49] **He has many figures based on the words "knot" or "weave" but never elaborates them.**

[50] **See Chapter i, a meal in a tavern, and Chapter 3, a pause for rest at an inn, and an inn sign-post.**

[51] See Chapter 6. The allusion is to Spenser's *The Faerie Queene.*

[52] **Very little is now known about the game, but there is no indication that it was played with anything but cards. The N.E.D. connects this passage with dice play: "to cog a die" means to cheat with dice. Just possibly Milton mixes the metaphor for the sake of a pun on "primero": if it is a question of getting to heaven *first,* the Pope and Cardinals will beat you by cheating. Milton's jokes, however, are generally more obvious than this.**

[The Pope] never ceast baiting, and goring the Successors of ... *Constantine* ... by his barking curses. *(Ref.,* III, 44)

There is one image that reveals his knowledge of fencing, though he doubtless regarded fencing more as a necessity than as a sport. There are no allusions to cock-fighting, bowls, tennis, chess, or the numerous group games such as blindman's buff.

To country pastimes he is likewise relatively indifferent. There are no significant images from archery, fishing, or hunting,[53] and none at all from falconry. Those from bird-snaring [54] reveal only average familiarity.[55]

He was not indifferent, however, to other forms of entertainment that involved the arts, such as music and drama. Indeed, music was one of his chief delights; his technical knowledge of it was extensive, and he regarded it as an important spiritual influence. He gave it a mystical significance that derived ultimately from the Pythagorean system of numbers, and he felt that the mathematical basis of pitch, rhythm, and the like—found in poetry and the dance as well as music—was part of the harmonious pattern of the universe itself. To this classic concept he added Christian elements based upon Scriptural references[56] These facts have been amply demonstrated and need no elaboration here. The images, so far as they go, fully support the other evidence. Milton's moral approval of music is most clearly

[53] **For hunting, sec Chapter 4, the sounds of early morning, and Chapter 5, bishops are wild animals hiding in a forest. These lack the impression of actual participation found in such images of Milton's contemporaries as the use of a stalking horse and a blind, and the sound of men hallooing the hounds. For deep sea fishing see Chapter 4, the Church Fathers are a fisherman's catch.**

[54] **See Chapter 5.**

[55] **Among the country activities mentioned non-figuratively in *L'Allegro* the only ones that could strictly be defined as pastimes are hunting, dancing, and storytelling. The famous personification of the "cloistered virtue" that "slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for" probably derives from St. Paul: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (I Corinthians 9: 24) ; and, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12: I).**

[56] **S. G. Spaeth, *Milton's Knowledge of Music,* Princeton, N.J. (printed in Weimar). 1913. PP. 57-8o.**

shown in his prose by his youthful *On the Music of the Spheres* and in his poetry by *At a Solemn Music,* which concludes with a lengthy metaphor. In the innocent world before the fall there existed a spiritual harmony with God like the musical harmony of an octave, "the most perfect concord excepting an actual unison,"[57] until the dissonance of sin ruined it:

[Let men "with undiscording voice" answer the "melodious noise" of the angels and just spirits in heaven]

As once we did, till disproportion'd sin
Jarr'd against natures chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair musick that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd
In perfet Diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good. *(Solemn Music,* I, 28)

In like manner, he uses "tune" and "harmony" with a favorable connotation:

[Ambrose teaches that] *a wife is tempered to a kind of harmony* . . . this argument . . . serves to divorce any untunable . . . matrimony; *(Tetra.,\V,* 211-212)

[There is no government] more divinely and harmoniously tun'd . . . [than] England; (Ref., Ill, 63)

and "discord," "jar," and "jangle" with an unfavorable one:

[Many things] may cause dislike of conversing even between the most sanctify'd [man and wife], which continually grating in harsh tune together, may breed some jarre and discord; *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 427)

we by our continual jangle among our selves make them [differing opinions] worse then they are indeed. *(True Relig.,* VI, 177)

In addition to their moral implications, these figures involve technical terms of music, employed, as we might expect, with accuracy. Other examples of such usage are numerous: the maintenance of harmony in changes of key:

And how to break off suddenly into those jarring notes, which this Confuter hath set me, I must be wary, unlesse I can provide against

[57] ***Ibid.,*** pp. 108-100.

offending the care, as some Musicians are wont skilfully to fall out of one key into another without breach of harmony; *(Apol.,* III, 341)

the disagreeable lack of harmony produced by the combination of two different modes or keys:

[Many wise books have been written extolling patience]
But with th'afflicted in his pangs thir sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune,
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint. *(S.A.,* I, 360)

the avoidance of monotony by variations on a theme:

[Extemporary prayers are preferable to set forms because] variety (as both Musick and Rhetorick teacheth us) erects and rouses an Auditory, like the maistcrfull running over many Cords and divisions [the splitting up of the notes of a tune into shorter notes] ; whereas if men should ever bee thumming the drone of one plaine Song [chant melody sung in unison], it would bee a dull Opiat to the most wakefull attention ;
(Anim., III, 133)

the soothing effect of cadence, that is, a gradually diminishing melody:

[Mammon] scarce had finisht, when such murmur filld
Th'Assembly, as when hollow Rocks retain
The sound of blustring winds, which all night long
Had rous'd the Sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Sea-faring men orewatcht, whose Bark by chance
Or Pinnace anchors in a craggy Bay
After the Tempest; (P.L., II, 48)

the rich and varied effects of fancies or fantasies, that is, "instrumental compositions of a free and informal type, producing the effect of improvisation."[58] "Nature . . . when sin had as yet caused no jarring discord . . . may be assumed to be a part of the universal harmony. It has the same characteristics as the heavenly music—instinctively concordant, yet untrammeled by the fetters of proportion or numbers:[59]

Nature here [in the Garden of Eden]
Wantond as in her prime, and plaid at will

[58] *Ibid.,* p. 160. [59] *Ibid.,* p. 77.

Her Virgin Fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wilde above Rule or Art; enormous bliss. (P.L., II, 154)

the pleasure arising from a recognition of the laws of harmony underlying an intricate composition:

And ever against eating Cares,
Lap me in soft *Lydian* Aires,
Married to immortal verse [60]
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of lincked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running;
Untwisting all the chains that ty
The hidden soul of harmony.[01] *(L'All.,* I, 39)

and in the tuning of stringed instruments: Two instruments cannot be in harmony if one is "intense," tight-strung, and the other is "remiss," slack or loosened:

Among unequals what societie
Can sort, what harmonie or true delight?
Which must be mutual, in porportion due
Giv'n and receiv'd; but in disparitie
The one intense, the other still remiss
Cannot well suite with either; *(P.L..,* II, 249)

[Jesus] skrues him up higher, to a task of that perfection, which no man is bound to imitate; (Doct. *Div.,* III, 457)

[60] **A reference to the increased importance of the words in the music of his time. Cf.**

Blest pair of *Sirens,* pledges of Heav'ns joy,
Sphear-born harmonious Sisters, Voice, and Vers. *(Solemn Munck,* I, 27)

See Spaeth, *op. cit.,* p. II.

[61] **Spaeth defines "chains" as the melodies involved in counterpoint *(op. cit.,* p. 156), but in his extended comment on the passage he implies that the voice is following a single line of melody: "With this visionary singer of. the visionary organist of *P.L.,* II, 365. The same delight in an orderly confusion of sounds is here evident. The singer is evidently so well-trained as to make his accuracy (heed) seem careless (wanton), and his scientific skill (cunning) a matter of mere recklessness (giddy). . . . Yet all this seemingly careless confusion, these brilliant runs and baffling combinations of notes, are really controlled by a definite system. It is only by solving these problems that the real soul of harmony is reached. Milton may well have had in mind compositions such as those of Monteverde, in which brilliant runs were a feature." In the last two lines there is a reference to Plutarch, *De Musica (op. cit.,* pp. 105-106).**

[No one can study] without somtime slackning the cords of intense thought and labour. *(Tetra.,* IV, 85)

He says nothing of the quality of tone of strings, although he does in the case of other instruments.[62] The mechanism of an organ, his favorite instrument,[63] forms the basis of one simile: In building Pandaemonium, some

> from the boyling cells
> By strange conveyance fili'd each hollow nook,
> As in an Organ from one blast of wind
> To many a row of Pipes the sound-board breaths. *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 33)

An organ produces great, vibrant bass notes that sustain a whole structure of melody, a fact which enables Milton to add a fresh detail to the idea of the music of the spheres, in which the Renaissance was immensely interested:

> [Ring out] And let your silver chime
> Move in melodious time;
> And let the Base of Heav'ns deep Organ blow.
>
> *(Nat. Ode,* I, 6)

A trumpet is stirring in various ways.[64] It is glorious,

[King Charles] hopes to erect *the Trophies of his charity over us.* And Trophies of Charity no doubt will be as *glorious* as Trumpets before the almes of Hypocrites; *(Eikon.,* V, 308)

awful—John the Baptist has

> a voice
> More awful then the sound of Trumpet—*(P.R.,* Ⅱ, 405)

or even harsh;

[62] **The images give an incomplete picture. Milton "always shows a thorough knowledge of the quality and effect of tones with which he deals." Spaeth, *op. cit.,* p. 38 (see also pp. 37-42).**

[63] **"Strictly speaking, the element of personal affection enters alone into Milton's treatment of the organ." *Ibid.,* p. 35 (see also pp. 29-31).**

[64] **The trumpet is "a conventional instrument of the Bible, and Milton adapts it ... to the music of his celestial choirs." In both the Bible and the classics it is employed "not as a part of a mixed band or orchestra, but as a signal, a sound of acclaim, or a mere noise." Milton follows this usage even though the trumpet in his own time "had become, to some extent, an instrument of harmony in a band." Spaeth, *op. cit.,* pp. 35-36.**

when God commands to take the trumpet and blow a dolorous or a jarring blast, it lies not in mans will what he shall say or what he shall conceal. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 231)

The remaining images are unimportant. Authorized by St. Paul, cymbals tinkle, and "cymbal doctors," as Milton calls the Anglican clergy, are teachers who give forth an empty sound. More vaguely, Apollo's lute [65] is musical and a sylvan pipe tunable, ideas obviously derived from the classics. From the same conventional source come also a large group of figures that identify poetry with song, sometimes with an accompaniment of a lute or pipe, or, adding a Biblical background, a harp. It is clear, therefore, from these images alone, which by no means exhaust the subject, that music played a large part in Milton's life, and that even in a musical age his response to it and his mastery of it were unusual.

His admiration for oratory is clear. One image shows an appreciation of the techniques of posture, gesture, and elocution:[66]

> As when of old som Orator renound
> In *Athens* or free *Rome,* where Eloquence
> Flourishd, since mute, to som great cause addrest,
> Stood in himself collected, while each part,
> Motion, each act won audience ere the tongue,
> Somtimes in highth began, as no delay
> Of Preface brooking through his Zeal of Right.
> So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown
> The Tempter all impassiond thus began. *(P.L.,* II, 284)

Presumably he is here thinking primarily of Demosthenes and Cicero, whose spirit and vigor he thinks could be ob-

[65] **Milton thought of a lute as the descendant of the classic lyre, and used the two names interchangeably. *Ibid.,* p. 32.**

[66] **There is a personification of Logic which seems to be based on oratorical gesturing: "Logic therefore so much as is useful, is to be referr'd to this due place with all her well coucht Heads and Topics, untill it be time to open her contracted palm into a gracefull and ornate Rhetorick" *(Educ.,* IV, 286).**

It is, however, merely an echo of a distinction made by Aristotle, Cicero, and many others between the closed fist of logic or dialectic and the open palm or outspread hand of rhetoric. See also *Prolusion II,* XII, 151.

tained by memorizing and delivering some of their orations.[67] It is not impossible that he followed his own advice and made himself a really proficient public speaker. Should this be so, it might give an answer, together with his mastery of Latin, to the rather puzzling question of why he was asked to deliver the important vaca*tion Exercise* before the whole university.[68]

With drama the case is somewhat different. Milton's knowledge of drama considered as a type of literature was, of course, profound,[69] but his knowledge of it considered as a stage spectacle does not seem exceptional. The images show him to be no more than an interested and intelligent theatre-goer. They have, however, a considerable range. Many, especially in the three *Defences,* refer to details of a theatrical performance: curtain raiser, prelude, fable, dialogue, dramatis personae, chorus, making an entrance or exit,[70] being hissed off the stage, having little to do in a walk-on part:

> [it is wearisome to read] so many names of Kings one after another, acting little more then mute persons in a Scene;
>
> *(Hist, of Brit.,* X, 185)

and acting as prompter;

> [Eve returns with an apple] in her face excuse
> Came Prologue, and Apologie to prompt. (P.L., II, 290)

He refers, moreover, to various types of stage amusement —an interlude, a morality play, a puppet show:

[67] *Education,* IV, 285-286. For other references to Cicero see Chapter 6; to Isocrates, Chapter 6; to the famous orators of Greece, *P.R.,* Ⅱ, 468.

[68] Tillyard says "that Milton was chosen to give it ... proves that he was by this time a popular and respected person" *(Milton Correspondence & Academic Exercises,* p. xxx). This may well be so, but, as Tillyard goes on to say, Milton was entirely unsuited by nature for a comic entertainment. He must have had other strong merits to balance this deficiency.

[69] For dramatic images based on literature see Chapter 6.

[70] In one apparently vivid image in the *First Defence* (VII, 15), "The door creaks [crepant fores]; enter the actor," Milton is merely quoting a conventional tag of the Latin playwrights.

[Without freedom to choose, Adam] had bin else a meer artificiall *Adam,* such an *Adam* as he is in the motions; *(Areo.,* IV, 319)

a masque:

[the allegorical frontispiece of *Eikon Basilike* is] the conceited portraiture before his Book, drawn out to the full measure of a Masking Scene; *(Eikon.,* V, 67)

But quaint Emblems and devices begg'd from the old Pageantry of some Twelf-nights entertainment at *Whitehall,* will doe but ill to make a Saint or Martyr;[71] *(Eikon.,* V, 68)

On the Scene he [King Charles] thrusts out first an Antimasque of two bugbeares, *Noveltie* and *Perturbation;* that the ill looks and noise of those two, may . . . drive off all endeavours of a Reformation; *(Eikon.,* V, 247)

and finally, a morris dance, once as a mere grotesquery:

[Milton's opponent] plaies the most notorious hobbihors [dancer with the figure of a horse fastened to his waist] . . . frisking in the luxury of his non-sense . . . that no antic hobnaile at a Morris, but is more hansomly facetious; *(Colast.,* IV, 257)

and once, in an image of great beauty, as a pattern of irregular rhythm:

> The Sounds, and Seas with all their finny drove
> Now to the Moon in wavering Morrice move. *(Comus,* I, 89)

All of these figures, even those of masques, are written from the point of view of a spectator; Milton never takes us to a rehearsal or backstage. From this circumstance we might reasonably infer that he was not involved in the performance of *Comus,* as nothing is more likely to make an impression on an amateur than his first share in the production of a play. In regard to the uplifting moral influence of the drama he is silent,[72] although he does not in any way con-

[71] This frontispiece is also spoken of in religious terms. "In one thing I must commend his op'nness who gave the title to this Book, EtxwvBaorxih that is to say, The Kings Image; and by the Shrine he dresses out for him, certainly would have the people come and worship him" *(Eikon., V,* 68).

[72] In his imagery. In the Preface to *Samson Agonistes* he says that "Tragedy, as it was antiently compos'd, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other Poems."

demn the theatre, a fact of some significance when we recall that nearly everything he wrote was subsequent to its closing.

The remaining arts may be dealt with more briefly, yet even in them Milton's interest is not negligible.[73] About the dance he has little to say except as it is applied to the movement of the stars and planets, a conception, with Milton, closer to philosophy than to art.[74] Engraving,[75] architecture, and painting[70] are likewise only slightly drawn upon; yet

[73] The reader is spared a demonstration of Milton's interest in the art of poetry, but mention should be made of two images drawn from this Meld: "he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought him selfe to bee a true Poem" *(Apol.,* Ill, 303) ; and, "But as the poet, who is styled epic . . . undertakes to embellish not the whole life of the hero . . . [but] one particular action ... so likewise ... I have at least embellished one of the heroic actions of my countrymen" *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 253).

[74] Again the imagery gives an incomplete picture. "Milton's conception of the dance is really threefold. In its best and highest form it is the embodiment of grace and dignity, of pure motion in its most sublime aspect, a mystic expression of the rhythm of nature, as shown in the stars, the seasons, the months and years. In its lower forms, among human beings and the lesser deities, it still retains grace and beauty, but its spirit is purely one of joy; without dignity or sublimity. Finally, when induced by intemperance and base passions, it loses even its grace and beauty, and becomes a mere wanton expression of sensuality." The classic sources for these ideas are Plato, *Laws* II, 654 *ft.*; VII, 802, 812. *Republic* Ill, 398-399. Spaeth, *op. cit.,* pp. 43-44, 141-142.

[75] His numerous figures of engraving are never developed, and turn almost entirely on the idea of a law engraven in men's hearts. When he uses the word "written" instead of "engraved" he follows numerous Biblical texts.

[76] Pictures have been suggested as the source of three images:

1. Lady that in the prime of earliest youth,
   Wisely hast shun'd the broad way and the green,
   And with those few art eminently seen,
   That labour up the Hill of heav'nly Truth.
   ("Lady That in the Prime," I, 61)

"Milton thought of Christ's saying that 'broad is the way that leadeth to destruction' (Mat. vii, 13), and probably also of one of Holbein's endlessly reproduced illustrations of the Table of Cebes, where young people play on the lawns among temptations at the foot of a rugged mountain while men and women climb a rocky path to the citadel of true felicity and are crowned by a king, who—in spite of the pagan origin of the Table—seems to be the Christian God himself." Hughes, *John Milton Paradise Regained The Minor Poems and Samson Agonistes,* p. 341.

2. At the creation of the sun
   The gray
   Dawn, and the *Pleiades* before him danc'd
   Shedding sweet influence. *(P.L.,* Il, 224-225)

it is quite possible that Milton regarded himself as an adequate critic of painting:

For many may be able to judge who is fit to be made a minister, that would not be found fit to be made Ministers themselves, as it will not be deny'd that he may be the competent Judge of a neat picture, or elegant poem, that cannot limne the like. *(Anim.,* III, 157)

Sculpture is the basis for several images: an alabaster statue, a marble sepulcher, a likeness in wax:

[Some prelates, pressed to show scriptural authority for episcopacy] try all their cunning, if the New Testament will not help them, to frame of their own heads as it were with wax a kinde of Mimick Bishop limm'd out to the life of a dead Priesthood ; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 208)

and the actual process of carving:

[Turbulence in the church is natural] No Marble statue can be politely carv'd, no fair edifice built without almost as much rubbish and sweeping. *(R. Ch.* Got., 111,224)

Finally, we come to the art of the goldsmith, as represented by inlaid work or mosaic of enamel or jewels.[77] Here Milton's images, although not numerous, are specific enough to show the attraction that this handicraft had for him:

One thing I cannot pass by, with which I suppose you intended to decorate the rest of this chapter as with some motto in mosaic inlay; *(First Def., VII,* 397)

An allusion to *Job* and "perhaps a recollection of Guido Reni's famous picture of the chariot of the sun, with the dawn flying before it, and seven nymphs—who correspond in number at least with the Pleiades—trooping alongside." Hughes, *John Milton Paradise Lost,* p. 233.

3. Should Christ be tempted by a woman
How would one look from his Majestick brow
Seated as on the top of Vertues hill,
Discount'nance her despis'd. *(P.R.,* II, 432)

Again probably the *Table* of Cebes, or "the arduous ascent up the hill to which Virtue is represented pointing in the best designs of *the Judgement of Hercules "* Todd, *The Poetical Works of John Milton,* 1826, IV, 104. Possibly the particular drawing by "Annibal Caracci in the Farnese palace in Rome." Hughes, *John Milton, Paradise Regained The Minor Poems and Samson Agonistes,* P- 477.

[77] Such work was often called an emblem, in the Greek sense of an insertion.

> [Neptune rules] the Sea-girt lies
> That like to rich, and various gemms inlay
> The unadorned boosom of the Deep; *(Comus,* I, 86)
>
> [In Eden various flowers] wrought
> Mosaic; underfoot the Violet,
> Crocus, and Hyacinth with rich inlay
> Broiderd the ground, more colour'd then with stone
> Of costliest Emblem. (P.L., II, 131)

In this last example Milton is, to be sure, preferring the work of nature to the work of man; still, his feeling for the beauty of man's artistry is evident.[78] We see, therefore, that the images drawn from the various arts have a considerable scope and significance. They make it clear that Milton can reconcile aesthetic enjoyment with moral earnestness.

We must now turn to an altogether different set of images, those of the body and bodily movement. These are very extensive and might possibly have revealed an interest in city life, where the various human activities would be constantly under his observation. However, except in his images of hands,™ an individual pattern does not emerge. This failure is due to the fact that images of motion, particularly human motion, are probably more common than any other type. Almost any activity is apt to be spoken of in physical terms. In writing a book such as this one, for example, an author must pick his way through details without a false step; he must sift and heap up evidence, brush aside what is irrelevant, and above all take care not to jump to conclusions. The more lively and vigorous is his style the more verbs of motion it contains.[80] Inevitably, then, there are a very large number of such images in Milton, more propor-

[78] **Miss Langdon's statement that Milton was "not unobservant of fine handicraft" might be more strongly phrased. Ida Langdon, *Milton's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts* (New Haven, Conn., 1924), pp. 30-32.**

[79] **See below.**

[80] **Spurgeon, therefore, overemphasized Shakespeare's love of motion *(op. cit.,* pp. 50 ff.).**

tionally than in his lesser contemporaries.[81] He has, however, essentially the same ideas and differs only in his more varied and more specific vocabulary.

In view of the amount of his controversial writing it is not surprising that nearly half of these images are of vehement action. Although, of course, such images spring naturally from other contexts—in *Samson Ayonistcs* for instance, the shouts of the Philistines rifted the air and tore the sky—they arc inevitable in an argument. Milton translated the printed words into terms of personal violence, often of actual warfare[82] The various adversaries lay hands on one another:

if it be their [expositors'] pleasure next to put a gag into the Apostles mouth, they are already furnisht with a commodious audacity toward the attempt;[83] *(Tetra.,* IV, 194)

I will handle you [Morus] somewhat more loosely, only, however, that I may by and by wring and grip you the harder;[84]

(Def. of Him., IX, 29)

[Presbyterians] since their heaving out the Prelats to heave in themselves . . . devise new wayes [of proceeding] ;[85]

(Articles of Peace, VI, 257)

that men [on Sundays] should bee pluck't from their soberest and saddest thoughts, and by *Bishops* . . . push't forward to gaming, jigging, wassailing, and mixt dancing is a horror to think.[86] *(Ref.,* III, 53)

strike one another:[87]

[Salmasius] You lie every way so open to blows that if one were minded for sport's sake to thrust at any part of you, he could hardly miss, were his aim never so ill; *(First Def.,* VII, 375)

[81] 9.7% of the total imagery of Milton as against 7.7% of non-Miltonic imagery. [82] See below.

[83] Also: stop the mouth, throttle, stifle, grasp by the throat.

[84] Also: squeeze, wrest, wrench.

[85] Also: fling, toss, throw, cast, sling, hurl; push, shove; drive, thrust; shake, brandish.

[86] Also: drag, draw, pull, tug, hale; snatch, seize, grip, grasp, lay hold of, lay hands on; catch at, hold, cling.

[87] Also: break, rend, tear, rift, rip, lay open; pierce, mangle, maim, hamstring, cut, smite; shatter, flog, cut the throat.

trample one another down:[88]

[Salmasius incites kings] to tread down all poor mortals, and to trample the wretches under foot; *(First Def.,* VII, 73)

dash against and overthrow one another :

the vulgar expositer beset with contradictions and absurdities round . . . rushes brutely and impetuously against all the principles both of nature, piety, and moral goodnes; and in the fury of his literal expounding overturns them all;[89] (*Tetra.,* IV, 169)

and employ the brutalities of official punishment:

this tormenter of semicolons [Hall] is as good at dismembring and slitting sentences, as his grave Fathers the Prelates have bin at stigmatizing & slitting noses; *(ApoL,* Ill, 307)

you [Hall] have us'd all your cramping irons to the Text.[90]
(Anim., Ill, 149)

Furthermore, Milton achieves an effect of still greater animation by personifying the hostile books themselves, sometimes under the names of their authors :

[Bishop Hall's] purpose was only to rub the forehead of his title with this word *modest,* that he might not want colour to be the more impudent throughout his whole confutation; *(Apol,* Ill, 290)

one section of his book ends short of breath, and another finds itself aggrieved; a chapter in Salmasius's book is doddering:[91]

Set the grave councels up upon their shelvs again, and string them hard, lest their various, and jangling opinions put their leavs into a flutter. *(Anim.,* Ill, 126)

[88] Also: spurn, kick down, turn the heel against; tread on, ride over; go underfoot, be prostrate at the foot of.

[89] Also: jostle, shoulder out; break through, plough through; lay level, bring down, bear down, turn upside down.

[90] Also: brand, sear, stigmatize; whip, scourge, lash, flog, rack.

[91] The personification of books, though in this case it does not involve action, is found early: [controversial writings are] "wranglings of crabbed old men, which, born if not in the cave of Trophonius, then certainly in the cells of monks, are betrayed by their odor and exhale the savage sternness of their authors and exhibit the frowns of the fathers" *(Prolusion III,* XII, 161).

Even when the proceedings are not combative, they are kept animated by this device. In *Arcopagitica,* for example, it is used many times and contributes conspicuously to the effectiveness of the argument. Books are living things:

[We should watch] how Bookes demeane themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are. *(Areo.,* IV, 297-298)

They go through the process of birth:

[You owned Greek manuscripts] some of whom, not yet seen in our age, seemed now, in their array, like Virgil's

souls enclosed deep within a green valley and ready to approach the threshold of the world above

to demand the active hands of the printer, and a delivery into the world ; *(Familiar Letters,* XII, 41)

[By securing a printer Salmasius] lends his obstetric services for bringing into the world [Morus's book] ; *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 39)

Till then [the Inquisition] Books were ever as freely admitted into the World as any other birth; the issue of the brain was no more stifl'd then the issue of the womb: no envious *Juno* sate cros-leg'd over the nativity of any mans intellectuall off-spring; [92] but if it prov'd a Monster, who denies, but that it was justly burnt, or sunk into the Sea. But that a Book in wors condition then a peccant soul, should be to stand before a Jury ere it be borne to the World, and undergo yet in darknesse the judgement of *Radarnanth* and his Collegues, ere it can passe the ferry backward into light, was never heard before.[93] *(Areo.,* IV, 305)

They survive their parents:

[Books are] the orphan remainders of worthiest men after death. *(Area.,* IV, 327)

[92] **Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* IX, 285-3x5. Milton is inaccurate; Juno sent Lucina, goddess of childbirth, to prevent Alcmena from giving birth to Hercules. Lucina sat with crossed legs. Juno, who was also present, kept her hands clenched.**

[93] **Radamanth, a legendary Cretan king, Minos, and Aeacus were judges of the souls of the dead.**

Such language is not, however, confined merely to books and their authors, for Milton constantly visualizes bodily posture and motion :[94]

[Parliament's] calme, and temperat connivence could sit still, and smile out the stormy bluster of ... [others] till their own fury had run it selfe out of breath ; *(Ref.,* III, 60)

For a Licencer is not contented now to give his single *Imprimatur,* but brings his chair into the Title leaf; there sits and judges up or judges down what book hee pleases; *(Colast.,* IV, 238-239)

For what with putting his [Bishop Hall's] fancy to the tiptoe in this description of himselfe, and what with adventuring presently to stand upon his own legs without the crutches of his margent ... he has not spirit anough left him . . . to avoide nonsense; *(Apol.,* III, 323-324)

[He would have to perjure himself unless he took an oath] with a conscience that would retch; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 242)

especially the acts of walking and running:[95]

[Censorship assumes the people to be] such an unprincipl'd . . . rabble, as that the whiffe of every new pamphlet should stagger them out of thir . . . Christian walking; *(Areo.,* IV, 329)

His first Argument, all but what hobbles to no purpos is this;
(Colast., IV, 241)

of following or straying from a path,[96] and in particular of making a circle:

[94] **Sit, stand, bear high one's head; lean, stoop, crouch, lie in ambush, hide; bear a load, load with a burden, lighten or remove a burden; wash, wipe; heap or pile up; embrace, hug; strew, shower, throw about, scatter; lay down, pick up, gather up, take up; scrape, rake, dig; set a mark on, hammer out; pin or hang on; swim, wade; wallow, roll, dance, swarm; fall, descend, sink, plunge; set far beneath; raise, lift, elevate, mount high, exalt, bear to a high pitch, climb, reach a height, swell, puff, blow up, inflate.**

[95] **Go, step, follow a step; walk straight, slow, side by side, at the same pace with; course, plod, overtake; tend, proceed, march; be at large, be on foot, tread the same round, trot out, troop, visit; stumble, hobble, stagger, hop, bound, halt, limp, creep, steal, reel, stir a foot, jump, leap, ramp, curvet, scramble, run, flee, fly; chase, rush or hunt after, hasten, race. So also: footstep, footing.**

[96] **Enter or tread a path; lead, guide, show, point, open or cut out the way, help forward; retreat, draw back, backslide; swerve, stray, wander, look for byways, pass beyond boundaries, rove, leave the track, gad, straggle, turn aside, lead astray, follow a devious way.**

If God come to trie our constancy [with truth] **we** ought not to shrink, or stand the lesse firmly for that, but passe on with more stedfast resolution to establish the truth though it were through a lane of sects and heresies on each side; [97] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 222-223)

[If, after a civil war, the people respect the person of the King, they will have] don no more but fetchd a compass only of thir miseries, ending at the same point of slavery, and in the same distractions wherin they first begun. *(Eikon.,* V, 303)

It should, perhaps, be repeated that all these basic ideas were generally current, and that Milton's contemporaries could at times make as telling use of them as he could himself. Lord Brooke, for instance, attacks the bishops with almost metaphysical vividness:

With one hand they [bishops] have laid pillowes under Princes, and all Governours . . . that so they might fall softly, while they thrust them downe with the other (the stronger) Hand, Arme and all. When These have been so surely, though gently, laid down asleepe; They have beene bold to tread on them, (yet with Plush slippers, lest they should chance to wake, stirre, and get up againe) and by Them, as so many staires or steppes, mount up themselves into this Height of Tyrrany.

(A Discourse Opening . . . Episcopacie, 103)

Except in Milton, however, such examples are rare.

The same thing holds true of the images based on the human voice; the other writers usually content themselves with such general words as speak, cry, or make a noise, but Milton is far more specific, chiefly for purposes of abuse. Salmasius bawls himself hoarse, chatters, stammers, and babbles; Morus whines, bellows, gabbles, mutters, and croaks.[98] It is noticeable, however, that the emphasis is primarily on the manner of speaking and only secondarily on the quality of the sound of the speech. Milton is not, like Shakespeare, "sensitive to the sound and timbre of the human voice ," [99] for he has only one such reference, "the harmony of the voice" of virtue.

[97] **Conceivably Milton was thinking of running the gauntlet.**

[98] **Elsewhere: clamor, prate, laugh to scorn, blurt, prattle, whisper, sob out, groan, ejaculate (bolt), beseech. " Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* pp. 71-73.**

The contrast between Milton and his contemporaries is even sharper in the case of images of the head and face, not because Milton is unusually subtle but because of the almost total absence of such images elsewhere. Milton speaks of looking aversely, looking with pity, and looking wan, of relaxing a frown, and the like,[100] but only once is he really vivid:

> Sometimes 5 *Imprimaturs* are seen together dialogue-wise in the Piatza of one Title page, complementing and ducking each to other with their shav'n reverences, whether the Author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his Epistle, shall to the Presse or to the spunge.
>
> *(Areo.,* IV, 304)

He has nothing approaching the range of Shakespeare's figures that show "the play of emotions in the human face," [101] as revealed by "the color quickly coming and going." [102] This he notes only once :

> piety and justice . . . stoop not, neither change colour for *Aristocracy.*
>
> *(Ref.,* Ill, 69)

Although he refers to blindness many times, both before and after he lost his sight, he does so always in the general sense of mental or spiritual blindness. In like manner, he equates eyes with understanding:[103] Athens is the eye of Greece; Adam and Eve, after eating the apple, have their eyes opened. He has a few, rather conventional, descriptive adjectives: quick-sighted watchfulness and zeal, meek-eyed peace, pure-eyed faith; squint suspicion, one-eyed and dim-sighted error. There are no distinctive, revealing physical details.

Other images of the body and its parts—blood, sinews,[104]

100 Wink, shut or cast one's eyes, look up, watch over or for, nod, glance, exhale, snore, puff, inflate one's cheek, spit, smile, bite, kiss.

[101] Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* p. 52.

[102] *Ibid.,* p. 58.

[103] Except for the conventional use of the sun as the eye of the world, the stars as the eyes of heaven, and the like.

[104] Also: nerves, joints, ligaments, marrow.

maw, and the like [105] need not detain us; one example will serve for them all:

For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rationall faculties ... it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cherfulnesse of the people is so sprightly up ... it betok'ns us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatall decay, but casting off the old and wrincl'd skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again.[106] *(Areo.,* IV, 344)

In only one particular—the action, nature, and appearance of hands—is Milton markedly conscious of the body.[107] Of course, a large number of the images that have just been considered involve the use of hands, as do another group peculiar to Milton: Wise men have taught the art of extreme rebuke

resembling it, as when wee bend a crooked wand the contrary way; not that it should stand so bent, but that the overbending might reduce it to a straightnesse by its own reluctance; *(Tetra.,* IV, 174)

[Christ checked the rabbis] by a countersway of restraint curbing their wild exorbitance almost into the other extreme; as when we bow things the contrary way, to make them come to their naturall straitnesse.[108] (Doct. *Div.,* Ill, 430)

Many times, however, he concentrates attention not on the motion but on the hands that make it: [109]

Doubt not . . . Senators ... to reach out your steddy hands to the . . . wearied life of man; *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 376)

to write a decree in allowance of sin, as soon can the hand of Justice rot off. *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 474)

Their grasp is firm or relaxed. We can trust divine law:

[105] There are no sexual images of any sort except one distinguishing lawful intercourse from fornication. See Chapter 2, in the images concerning divorce.

[106] The simile of the eagle "muing" her youth follows a few lines later.

[107] For figures of cooking and of food, implicitly though not explicitly related to the processes of digestion, see Chapter 2.

[108] Also: wreathe, wind, make supple, make pliable.

[109] Compare the motion of the hand in oratory, above, "as when of old some Orator renound," etc.

the uncorrupt and majestick Law of God, bearing in her hand the wages of life and death; *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 471)

but human law is a weaker thing:

[The Roman Censor was concerned with] such the most covert and spiritous vices as would slip easily between the wider and more material grasp of Law. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 250–251)

[In writing prose] I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 235)

Kings most commonly, though strong in Legions, are but weak at Arguments; as they who ever have accustom'd from the Cradle to use thir will onely as thir right hand, thir reason alwayes as thir left.

(Eikon., V, 63)

They differ also in their essential nature. Milton distinguishes, conventionally it is true in some instances, between the high hand of sin, the weak hand of magistracy, the equal and impartial hand of justice, the ready hands of watchfulness and zeal, the craving hands of cheaters which are never satisfied, the heavy hands of the King, the light palm of a bishop ready to ordain anyone who pays the proper fee, and God's wonder-working hand.

Finally, they differ in appearance: the hands of an epic poet must be stainless, those of charity immaculate; the clutch of ignorance is greasy; hope is white-handed, but vengeance, as Belial well remembers, is stained with the blood of battle—would not, he asks, our condition be worse

> Should intermitted vengeance arm again
> His red right hand to plague us? [110] *(P.L.,* Il, 44)

The explanation of this sensitivity is not altogether clear. Milton was indifferent to sports[111] and to the use of tools,[112] both of which demand dexterity. He does not speak of painting or sculpture from the point of view of the artist's shaping hand. As an organist, he would be conscious rather of

[110] An echo of Horace, *Odes,* I, 2.
[111] See above.
[112] See above.

his individual fingers than of his hands, which he would not watch while playing. Perhaps the answer is to be found in his considerable interest in oratory,[113] involving as this art does the conspicuous use of gesture.[114] This interest, however, is related not to London but to Cambridge, not to the citizen but to the student, who thought of oratory as one of the steps in the preparation for a life of significant achievement.

It was to this sort of life that Milton devoted his energies. Like other men of his social station and religious persuasion, he was high-principled and sober, turning against the tyrannical power of monarchy and the excesses of aristocratic ostentation. He found no time for sports and the other relaxations and frivolities of frailer beings, possibly not so much because such things were immoral as because they were trivial. Although accepting business and commerce in theory, he shrank from the actual mores of the market place and in particular from the spiritually contaminating trickery of those who preyed on the gullible public, just as physically he recoiled from the pollution of the rags and dirt of the beggars. He did not, however, allow his moral strictness to interfere with his aesthetic response to life. In so doing, he showed himself not the extreme one-surfaced Puritan but rather the many-faceted product of the English Renaissance. He was an artist in the high tradition of Sidney and Spenser, a man who shut out the importunities of questionable business and worthless enjoyment, but who opened himself to the ennobling influences of the arts. He was a man who, while sensitive to beauty, always kept this sensuousness subservient to the moral purpose to which he had dedicated his life.

[113] **Sec above, and also Chapter 6, Cicero.**

[114] **It is possible that he may have been impressed by the gestures of the exaggerated acting of his day, but there is no evidence of this.**

CHAPTER 2

London Private Life

IN the preceding chapter we were concerned with what might be called the public aspects of Milton's life as a citizen of London: with his attitude toward his fellow citizens and toward government, business, art, and the like. We must now consider the private side of his life, the side he exhibits as a householder and a family man.

In regard to the background of this life, the house itself, the picture that emerges is fairly extensive and clear-cut. It is true that many images refer to details of structure and furniture common to almost any house of the time;[1] yet certain more distinctive figures indicate that Milton thought in terms of a well-to-do, middle class home.- The walls were hung with tapestry:

> [It is bad for Parliament by the King's veto] to be struck as mute and motionless as a Parlament of Tapstrie in the Hangings;
>
> *(Eikon.,V,* 288)

there were traverses—galleries or, in this case, screens or partitions—of elaborate woodwork:

> [The church has degenerated from the Apostles] in point of *Episcopacy,* and precedency, things which could affor'd such plausible pretenses, such commodious traverses for ambition, and Avarice to lurke behind;
>
> *(Prelat. Epis.,111,* 98)

[1] Porch, partition, closet (small room) ; coffer, chest, casket; couch, bolster; footstool, bench, chair; mirror, vial; hinge, key, lock. Also: open, shut, look in, stand at a door; lay at one's door.

[2] He uses one remarkable metaphor of a parjetory, a wall-facing of plaster with ornamental designs: [Hall's book, *Mundus Alter & Idem,* is] "a meer tankard drollery, a venereous parjetory for a stewes" *(Apol.,* Ill, 295).

He is here surely speaking from hearsay, but a parjetory, or parget, was common in the type of house he was familiar with.

The rooms were provided with massive, carved furniture:

[King Charles complained of being deprived of his chaplains during his captivity, but chaplains, unmentioned by Scripture, are of no importance] Wherfore should the Parlament then take such implements of the Court Cupbord into thir consideration. *(Eikon.,* V, 259)

[Salmasius keeps using a certain figure of speech] Come all ye orators and schoolmasters . . , commit to your . . . cabinets this rhetorical cosmetic of this most eloquent man, lest it perish. *(First Def.,* VII, 343)

For a modern man, it is interesting to note that even in such a home the floor was strewn with rushes:

[Marriage is a] gracious, and certainly not inexorable, not rushlesse and flinty ordinance; (Doct. *Div.,* Ill, 478)

that the quality of glass in the windows was poor:

[Remonstrant boasts that he sees truth clearly] Not as through the dim glasse of his affections which in this frail mansion of flesh are very[3] unequally tempered; *(Apol.,* Ill, 322-323)

that lamps needed attention:[4]

The Lamps that burnt before him [God] might need snuffing, but the light of his Law never; *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 440)

[King Charles ought] not to walk by another mans Lamp, but to get Oyle into his own; *(Eikon.,* V, 263)

and that candles are feeble:

How should then the dim Taper of this Emperours age [Constantine] that had such need of snuffing, extend any beame to our Times;
***(Ref..* Ill, 24)**

Yet the inconvenience involved in these details of domestic life, although glaringly apparent to us, is so little stressed that Milton seems not to have been aware of it at all. Nor does he mention the discomfort of a smoky or badly burning fire, as does Shakespeare.[5] He does, however, have

[3] Columbia edition reads "every."
[4] **Most of his lamp figures are applied to the sun or stars.**
[5] **Shakespeare also mentions the various inconveniences of a lamp or candle (Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* pp. 112-114).**

numerous and varied figures of other aspects of a fire,[6] or of the activities connected with it, such as raking out the embers, blowing the coals, kindling it with a flint:

[Even though we should be exempt from external harm] we should never lin [cease] hammering out of our owne hearts, as it were out of a flint, the seeds and sparkles of new misery to our selves, **till** all were in a blaze againe, *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 381)

or using it as a source of additional light:[7]

Wicklefs preaching, at which all the succeding *Reformers* more effectually lighted their *Tapers,* was to his Countreymen but a short blaze soone dampt and stifl'd by the *Pope; (Ref.,* Ill, 5)

others are based on its appearance: the glowing embers, the burned out ashes, the renewed flame, its upward climbing,

[The Apostles had] unquenchable charity, which . . . like a working flame, had spun up to such a height of pure desire, *(Anirn.,* Ill, 156)

and its fluctuating life:

[God's] legal justice cannot be so fickle and so variable, sometimes like a devouring fire, and by and by connivent [dormant] in the embers. *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 440)

It is to be observed that, even in this last group of images, an aesthetic response to fire is not explicit, perhaps not even implicit. Milton does not sit in silence and enjoy "the flapping of the flame," as does Wordsworth, or notice with delight its resemblance to a stag's antlers, as does Katherine Mansfield, or recall "the beauty of fire from the beauty of embers," as does Masefield. Nevertheless, he is keenly aware of a fire, obviously because of its crucial importance in daily living.

[6] **Many involve only generalized ideas: to burn, blaze, flame, glow, be on fire, add fuel to the flame, inflame, kindle, quench, and extinguish.**

[7] **Out of doors, a fire may be a beacon. Once, a lamp is a beacon: [England is] "holding up, as from a Hill, the new Lampe of *saving Light* to all Christendome" *(Ref.,* Ill, 5).**

This seems to be a combination of Psalms 67: 1–2, "God . . . cause his face to shine upon us. . . . That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations"; and Matthew 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

So much for the house itself. Of the various activities carried on within it, doubtless cooking is the most important. About this Milton has more to say than we might have expected. With the kitchen itself he has little to do.[8] He makes several contemptuous references to the menial work of scouring,[9] presumably pots and pans.[10] He protests being "put to this under-work of scowring . . . the low and sordid ignorance [of his opponent]" *(Colast.,* IV, 271). Otherwise, he makes no mention of any kitchen article or activity. He is, however, familiar with the ordinary details of cooking—sweetening, seasoning, straining, roasting, the dropping of juice into the dripping pan, dressing, and the boiling over of water—although his references are perfunctory. Others, however, are sharply visual. The contents of a pot are likely to scorch:

[Milton's opponent] enters into such a tedious and drawling tale of *burning, and burning, and lust and burning,* that the dull argument it self burnes to, for want of stirring; *(Colast.,* IV, 254)

and when set to cool will congeal and skim:[11]

our *Ministers* ... no sooner advanc't to [Episcopacy] . . . hut like a seething pot set to coole, sensibly exhale and reake out the greatest part of that zeale . . . settling in a skinny congealment of ease and sloth at the top: and . . . their *devotion* most commonly comes to that queazy temper of luke-warmnesse, that gives a Vomit to GOD himselfe; *(Ref.,* Ⅲ, 11-12)

the scum is removed with a ladle:

[8] **Again he differs from Shakespeare, whose picture centers in the kitchen. Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* p. 112.**

[9] **Once, where God does the scouring, the reference is not contemptuous.**

[10] **Milton is not contemptuous of the polishing of armor. See Chapter 3, note 22.**

[11] **A somewhat similar image is found in *Comus* (l, 107):**

But evil on it self shall back recoyl,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last
Gathered like scum, and setl'd to it self
It shall be [self-consumed].

This may, however, refer to the dross on liquid metal, or to the standing water of a pond.

Remon. That scum may be worth taking off which followes.

Ans. Spare your Ladle Sir, it will be as bad as the Bishops foot in the broth ; the scum will be found upon your own *Remonstrance.*

(Anim., III, 114)

The Bishop's foot, a proverbial expression to which Milton was unfortunately attracted, he twice elsewhere elaborated with what he must have regarded as effective humor. Since, however, he was obviously mistaken in this opinion, we need not pursue the subject further. Much more successful are his references to another proverb:

[the book} is so spoyld, as a good song is spoyld by a lewd singer, or as the saying is, God sends meat, but the Cooks worke their wills;

(Anim., III, 176)

and to a Biblical passage[12] used to illustrate both bad cooking and bad food on which good cooking is wasted:

[God has given man a helpmeet] it is mans pervers cooking who hath turn'd this bounty of God into a Scorpion ; (*Tetra.,* IV, 84)

[The martyrs may have refined the liturgy but] they could not refine a Scorpion into a Fish, though they had drawn it, and rinc't it with never so cleanly Cookery. (*Anim., III,* 120)

It is noticeable that these images are unpleasant, involving accidents that spoil food, the unacsthetic appearance and taste of half-cooled liquid, and unsuccessful cooking. Milton's sharpest impressions seem to be disagreeable rather than agreeable.

There are clear indications that he has the same attitude toward food after it has arrived in the dining room. He shows his dislike of too much vinegar or mustard, of flavorless dough:

[Hall] demeanes himselfe in the dull expression so like a dough kneaded thing, that he has not spirit anough left him ... to avoide nonsense; *(Apol,* III, 324)

of a bad egg:

[12] Luke II: 11-12.

More [is] this addle and windy egg, from which burst forth that tympany—the *Cry of the Royal Blood.* This was thought at first a most delicious sup for our hungry royalists in Belgium; but now the shell is broken, they turn with loathing from the rotten and offensive contents; *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 37)

of the attempt to keep food from spoiling: [13]

a Divine of note . . . [had revised the pamphlet of Milton's opponent and] stuck it heer and there with a clove of his own *Calligraphy,* to keep it from tainting; *(Colast.,* IV, 238)

of the unpleasant results of hoarding meat or wine too long:

[it is wrong that] all benefit and use of Scripture, as to public prayer, should be deny'd us, except what was barreld up in a Common-praier Book with many mixtures of thir own, and which is worse, without salt. But suppose them savoury words and unmix'd, suppose them *Manna* it self, yet if they shall be hoarded up and enjoyned us, while God every morning raines down new expressions unto our hearts, in stead of being fit to use, they will be found like reserved Manna rather *to breed wormes and stink. (Eikon.,* V, 221—222)

At last, and in good howr we are com to his farewell, which is to bee a concluding taste of his jabberment at in Law, the flashiest and the fustiest that ever corrupted in such an unswill'd hogshead.

(Colast., IV, 269)

Milton gives us, then, a clear conception of what he does not like, but he is not so definite about what he does like.[11] His sonnet to Lawrence, in which he asks

> What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
> Of Attick tast, with Wine?

demonstrates his fastidiousness but does not specify individual dishes. On one occasion when he is specific, he is talking not of a special celebration but of ordinary meals:

[Remonstrant has argued that a prescribed order for the various parts of the church service necessitates a fixed form of prayers] Nothing will

[13] The metaphor is perhaps not disagreeable in itself, but the context makes clear that Milton thinks the attempt has failed,

[14] For his dislike of tough and unnutritious food in terms of thorns and thistles; see Chapter 4, in the images of gardening, and Chapter 5, in the images of Cambridge.

cure this mans understanding, but some familiar, and Kitchin phisick . . . Call hither your Cook. The order of Breakfast, Dinner, and Supper, answere me, is it set or no? Set. Is a man therefore bound in the morning to potcht eggs, and vinegar, or at noon to Brawn, or Beefe, or at night to fresh Sammon, and French Kickshoes? may he not make his meales in order, though he be not bound to this, or that viand ?

(Anim., III, 123)

In other passages, however, he speaks merely of hors d'oeuvres preceding a feast, of broth followed by "goodly flanks and briskets in ... stately chargers," of a generous wine that overstimulates, and the like.

Most of his allusions, whether pleasant or unpleasant, are even more broad than these, involving merely the acts of eating and drinking, and food and drink in general—sweet or sour, having relish or savor, and so on.[15] Usually when he is specific, he is bookish. One Biblical allusion has already been cited,[16] and he has many others : leaven, manna, the "sincere milk" of the Gospel,[17] and meats offered to idols:[18]

[King Charles, by including in his prayer a quotation from Sidney, thought God] fitt to be ... worshipt . . . with the polluted orts and refuse of *Arcadia's; (Eikon.,* V, 87)

[Since the text of Ignatius is corrupt] we doe injuriously in thinking to tast better the pure Evangelick Manna by seasoning our mouths with the tainted scraps, and fragments of an unknown table.

(Prelat.Epis.,III,91)

A large number of images both in Latin and English turn upon the use of the word salt in the sense of wit,[19] and four

[15] They are, however, numerous and varied: to feast, feed, drink, wet the lips, broach, swallow, devour, chew, nibble, taste, suck, gape, digest, nourish, snap at, store up, provision, starve, dish out, cut up, flavor; a feast, famine, food, morsel, mammock, draff, lees, dregs, unchewed, thirsty, famished, unsated, stuffed, stale, tasteless.

[16] See above, note 12.

[17] I Peter 2:2.

[18] Romans, 14: 14; I Corinthians 8.

[19] The Biblical meaning is not far from this: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man," Colossians 4: 6.

refer to a phrase of Juvenal,[20] "repetita crambe," warmed over cabbage:

> Can we not understand an order in Church assemblies of praying, reading, expounding, administring, unlesse our praiers be still the same Crambe of words? *(Anim.,* III, 124)

Finally, there is the *long* passage in *Prolusion VI,* in which the Cambridge undergraduates are compared to the various dishes of a banquet: boars, oxen, calves' heads, kids, green-feathered birds, a snipe,[21] cranes, geese, eggs, apples, and medlars:

> in the first course fifty fatted boars, soaked for three years in pickled beer . . . birds . . . fattened a long while with balls of paste, with pellets, and with powdered cheese . . . you should dine sparingly on these, because . . . they also push out the mange in the diners, provided the gourmand tells the truth. . . . Some Irish birds follow this . . . very like cranes ... I warn you to abstain from these, for they are very effective (provided the gourmand tells the truth) in the generation of inguinal lice. (XII, 235-237)

It is evident that these details are derived from some literary source, presumably Latin, but the gourmand is as yet unidentified.[22] Milton, then, was not an epicure, accustomed to the refinements of the table, but rather a man appreciative of occasional delicacies, and sensitive to the poor food that he was all too likely to encounter.[20]

Next to cooking, medicine, in the seventeenth century, was probably the most important concern of the household. It was then far more of a family affair than it is today. Remedies were often homegrown and homemade, so much so that Herbert in *A Priest to the Temple* feels that a parson should be "not only a pastor, but a lawyer also and a physi-

[20] *Satire VII* 154.

[21] Tillyard translates "gallinago" as "a turkey." *Milton Correspondence & Academic Exercises,* p. 97.

[22] Once, the source is a proverb: [The doctrine that bishops are necessary to the King is] "lettice for their lips" *(Ref.,* III, 40). The proverb is "Like lips like lettuce," in the sense of "Like has met its like."

[23] Many such occurrences are recorded in Pepys' *Diary.*

cian." [24] Both he and his wife, therefore, should have a knowledge of herbs, because "homebred medicines are both more easy for the parson's purse and more familiar for all men's bodies. So, where the apothecary useth either for loosening, rhubarb, or for binding, bolearmena, the parson useth damask or white roses for the one and plantain, shepherd's purse, knot-grass for the other, and that with better success. Accordingly, for salves his wife seeks not the city but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish gums. And surely hyssop, valerian, mercury, adder's tongue, yarrow, melitot, and Saint John's wort made into a salve, and elder, camomile, mallows, camphor, and smallage made into a poultice have done great and rare cures." [25] Moreover, in addition to such amateur practitioners, the professional himself made use of herbs to some extent, as we may learn from a non-figurative passage in the *Damon's Epitaph:*[20]

You will run through, for me, your healing potions, your herbs, the hellebore, and the lowly crocus, and the leaf of the hyacinth, all the herbs that yonder marsh possesses, and the arts, too, of the healers,

(I, 311)

a passage that reveals Milton's own knowledge. Yet this does not appear to have been very detailed, as there is scarcely any other mention of specific herbs as remedies.[27] The only figurative reference to herbs occurs in *Samson Agonistes:*

Thoughts my Tormenters arm'd with deadly stings
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation which no cooling herb
Or medcinal liquor can asswage,
Nor breath of Vernal Air from Snowy *Alp.* (I, 359)

[24] Chapter XXIII. The Parson's Completeness.
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] We may also note that the shepherd in *Comus* is "skilled In every virtuous plant and healing hearb," and that Circe makes use of "potent hearbs and baleful drugs."
[27] Milton twice speaks of herbs as "wholesome," but the reference is to food.

This noticeable paucity of reference to the more homely aspect of medicine is probably due both to his environment and to his physique. Unlike Herbert's country parson, he lived in London where "outlandish gums" were readily available. Furthermore, his progressive loss of sight was an infirmity beyond the scope of amateur treatment and would naturally give him a greater concern for professional medicine than the average man would feel.[28] This is doubtless the primary explanation of the unusually large number of medical images that he makes use of,[29] to say nothing of many non-figurative references, a conspicuous example of which is the list of diseases that rack fallen humanity.[30] He has, it is true, only three images based specifically on eye trouble, all of them in the early church and divorce pamphlets, and all turning merely on the use of "see" for Understand" :

If our *understanding* have a film of *ignorance* over it, or be blear with gazing on other false glisterings, what is that to Truth? If we will but purge with sovrain eyesalve that intellectual ray which *God* hath planted in us, then we would beleeve the Scriptures protesting their own plainnes. *(Ref.,* Ill, 33)

Yet he has many non-figurative passages referring to his disease in considerable detail.

A further explanation of the large number of medical images lies in his habits of controversy. An obvious weapon in seventeenth century pamphlet warfare was the discrediting of an opponent by turning his mental aberrations into physical infirmities. This type of image is found in all the

[28] "Almost all of Milton's medical lore—the structure and physiology of the human body, the pathology of various diseases, the efficacy of certain remedies —can be explained from . . . [the encyclopedias of science then popular by Batman, Bartholomew, and LaPrimaudaye]. Whether Milton turned to these specific books is debatable, for the information in them was available everywhere." K. Svendsen, "Milton and Medical Lore," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (Johns Hopkins), XIII, 183.

[29] About 4% of the total images in his prose as against 2% in the non-Miltonic prose. Hardly any such images appear in his poetry.

[30] *Paradise Lost,* Bk. XI, 11. 477-493.

polemical writers of the period, but Milton takes fuller advantage of his opportunities than his contemporaries. In one case, however, that of King Charles, he is very restrained, since he never speaks of the King himself as being diseased. He says only that Charles's "inordinate doings" had inflamed distempers in the nation which Parliament was to "allay and quench," and that Charles, considering as he did that all the blood spilled in the war was "exhausted out of his own veins," did not distinguish

> as he ought, which was good blood and which corrupt; the not letting out whereof endangers the whole body. *(Eikon.,* V, 201)

This moderation, which is also strikingly evident in the images based on animals and on historical and mythological characters, is clearly the result of a deliberate policy.[31] Bishop Hall is in worse case, but escapes fairly lightly: his understanding needs physic, his desire to instruct is like an eczema, and his book, filled with his phlegmatic sloth, moves with a heavy pulse. In *Colasterion* Milton is more contemptuous toward his nameless opponent, who quotes law in a fit of lunacy, and needs

> a draft of *Littleton* . . . [to] recover him to his senses; *(Colast.,* IV, 270)

and whose book suffers from

> the gout and dropsy of a big margent, litter'd and overlaid with crude and huddl'd quotations. *(Colast.,* IV, 234)

When Milton falls upon Salmasius and Morus, however, he throws aside all restraint. At monotonous length he calls them pests and plagues, mad and delirious, vomiting and belching abuse.

Yet, vigorous as his handling of filth may be, he certainly has no love of it for its own sake. Indeed, his very vividness probably springs from a deep revulsion, a characteristic he

[31] See Chapters 5 and 6.

shares with his master Spenser.[32] This supposition would explain the frequency of his images of skin disease: ulcers, tumors, festering sores, and the like, since these are the most conspicuous and disgusting forms of sickness:[33]

[in the case of a superstitious man] all the inward acts of *worship* issuing from the native strength of the SOULE, run out lavishly to the upper skin, and there harden into a crust of Formallitie; *(Ref.,* Ill, 3)

we must . . . cut away from the publick body the noysom and diseased tumor of Prelacie; *(Ref.,* Ill, 62)

Particularly effective in conveying his aversion is his adaptation of the classic fable of the belly and the other bodily members:

. . . [An argument for episcopacy is "No bishop, no king"] Sir the little adoe, which me thinks I find in untacking these pleasant Sophismes, puts mee into the mood to tell you a tale ere I proceed further; and *Menenius Agrippa* speed us.[34]

Upon a time the Body summon'd all the Members to meet in the Guild for the common good . . . the head by right takes the first seat, and next to it a huge and monstrous Wen little lesse then the Head it selfe, growing to it by a narrower excrescency. The members amaz'd began to aske one another what hee was that took place next their cheif; none could resolve. Wherat the Wen, though unweildy, with much adoe gets up and bespeaks the Assembly to this purpose. That as in place he was second to the head, so by due of merit; that he was to it an ornament, and strength, and of speciall neere relation, and that if the head should faile, none were fitter then himselfe to step into his place; therefore hee thought it for the honour of the Body, that such

[32] For images of dirty rags that show not moral revulsion but merely physical fastidiousness see Chapter I, images of beggars.

[33] Curiously, an exception must be made of images of the plague, which are never made vivid. He once calls Salmasius a "plague sore," but he has nothing approaching Hall's image: "I dare not say but there may be hid in my nature, as much venemous Atheisme ... as hath broken out at his lips; (Every one that is infected with the Sicknesse, hath not the Sores running upon him:)" *(A Modest Confutation. To the Reader).* This may refer to syphilis, rather than to the plague, but in any case it is far more specific than Milton's.

[34] Plutarch, *Coriolanus,* 6; Livy, II, 32. The same metaphor of a wen, but with no classic reference, is used by Prynne, *Lord Bishops,* p. 22 (W. T. Hale, *Of Reformation,* New Haven, 1916, p. 156); and by Lilburne (Masson, *Life of Milton,* Ill, 570).

dignities and rich indowments should be decreed him, as did adorne, and set out the noblest Members. To this was answered, that it should bee consulted. Then was a wise and learned Philosopher sent for, that knew all the Charters, Lawes, and Tenures of the Body. On him it is impos'd by all, as cheife Committee to examine, and discusse the claime and Petition of right put in by the Wen: who soone perceiving the matter, and wondring at the boldnesse of such a swolne Tumor, Wilt thou (quoth he) that art but a bottle of vitious and hardened excrements, contend with the lawfull and free-borne members, whose certaine number is set by ancient, and unrepealable Statute? head thou art none, though thou receive this huge substance from it, what office bearst thou? What good canst thou shew by thee done to the Common-weale? the Wen not easily dash't replies, that his Office was his glory, for so oft as the soule would retire out of the head from over the steaming vapours of the lower parts to Divine Contemplation, with him shee found the purest, and quietest retreat, as being most remote from soile, and disturbance. Lourdan, quoth the Philosopher, thy folly is as great as thy filth; know that all the faculties of the Soule are confin'd of old to their severall vessels, and *ventricles,* from which they cannot part without dissolution of the whole Body; and that thou containst no good thing in thee, but a heape of hard, and loathsome uncleannes, and art to the head a foul disfigurment and burden, when I have cut thee off, and open'd thee, as by the help of these implements I will doe, all men shall see. *(Ref.,* Ill, 47)

In addition to the specific ills that have been noted, Milton refers to many others, such as fever, quinsy, heartrburn, palsy, and the like.

Nor does he omit reference to the accepted medical theories of his day, the most basic of which was, perhaps, that of the four humors. An excess of any one of them caused ill health, and the standard remedy, coming down from Galen, was to counteract the overabundant humor by itsopposite:

> Christ meant not to be tak'n word for word, but like a wise Physician, adminstring one excesse against another to reduce us to a perfect mean. *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 429-430)

The humors were distributed by the blood, that was generated by the liver assisted by the spleen. Improper func

tioning of these organs resulted in corrupt blood, which, as we have seen,[35] should be drained off. The spleen, drawing to it the elements of the blood, might become hard if it could not make blood fast enough:[30]

[an obstinate person] who understands not after all this representing, I doubt his will like a hard spleen draws faster then his understanding can well sanguifie; *(Doct. Div.,* III, 484)

and an infected liver might require a violent remedy:

This [opinion concerning marriage] I admire how possibly it should inhabit thus long in the sense of so many disputing *Theologians,* unlesse it be the lowest lees of a canonicall infection livergrown to their sides; which perhaps will never uncling, without the strong abstersive of som heroick magistrat; *(Tetra.,* IV, 89)

Finally, the brain was thought to be divided into three (or six) cells, which were regarded as the seats of imagination (or fancy), reason, and memory,[37] and "infection or alteration in the cell of fancy was thought a prime cause of insanity. In *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,* Milton refers to such a morbid condition when he argues against the restraint of lawful liberties" :[38]

[The fantastic dreams of Anabaptists etc. may proceed] from the restraint of some lawfull liberty, which ought to be giv'n men, and is deny'd them. As by Physick we learn in menstruous bodies, where natures current hath been stopt, that the suffocation and upward forcing of some lower part, affects the head and inward sense with dotage and idle fancies. *(Doct.* ***Div.,*** III, 426)

Milton's knowledge of disease was, then, extensive, and his knowledge of its cure was no less so. He has many references to the general fact of healing,[30] to specific medical practices[40] and appliances:

[35] See above, King Charles did not distinguish "as he ought, which was good blood" etc. [36] Svendsen, *op. cit.,* pp. 163-164.
[37] *Ibid.,* p. 167. [38] *Ibid.,* p. 171. [39] To heal, remedy, allay, etc.
[40] To administer one excess against another, to relax the bowels, to use warm applications and chafing. Bad practices are: to attempt to cure merely by lecturing to the sick, to weaken health by excessive remedies, and to cure a scratch but leave the main wound spouting.

[Censorship assumes that the English people are] in such a sick and weak estate of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe of a licencer; *(Areo.,* IV, 328)

to the medicines themselves,[41] to lancing, to the searching of a wound, and to amputation. Many of these details are found in a single image running through more than three pages, that deals with the function of a magistrate[42] and that illustrates, among other things, the standard treatment of insanity:

Whatever else men call punishment ... is not properly an evil . . . but a saving med'cin ordain'd of God both for the publik and privat good of man, who . . . [was] left under two sorts of cure, the Church and the Magistrat . . . the civill Magistrat looking only upon the outward man ... if he find in his complexion, skin, or outward temperature the signes and marks ... of injustice, rapine . . . or the like, sometimes he shuts up as in frenetick, or infectious diseases; or confines within dores, as in every sickly estate. Sometimes he shaves by penalty, or mulct, or els to cool and take down those luxuriant humors which wealth and excesse have caus'd to abound. Otherwhiles he seres, he cauterizes, he scarifies, lets blood, and finally for utmost remedy cuts off. The patients which mostanend [for the most part] are brought into his hospital are such as are farre gon, and beside themselves (unlesse they be falsly accus'd) so that force is necessary to tame and quiet them in their unruly fits, before they can be made capable of a more human cure . . . this is all that the civil Magistrat . . . confers to the healing of mans mind, working only by terrifying plaisters upon the rind & orifice of the sore . . . not once touching the inward bed of corruption, and that hectick disposition to evill. . . . [God therefore joined to him the minister and] a certain number of grave and faithful brethren, (for neither doth the phisitian doe all in restoring his patient, he prescribes, another prepares the med'cin, some tend, some watch, some visit). *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 254-257)

About the other necessary household activities, aside from these major ones, Milton is almost silent. Once he mentions dust, which he seems to take for granted:

[41] **In general: dose, physic, drugs, purge, balm, cordial, salve, draught, drench, corrosive, caudle, pill, and opiate. Specifically: opium, hellebore, sulphur, and treacle.**

[42] **A few pages later *(R. Ch. GOV.,* Ill, 264), in discussing the function of a minister, Milton has a similar figure almost equally elaborate.**

[At the time of the Reformation] Then was the Sacred BIBLE sought out of the dusty corners where prophane Falshood and Neglect had throwne it, *(Ref.,* III, 5)

and once cleaning, in the Biblical phraseology of "sweeping and garnishing."[43] He says nothing about carpentry and similar work of maintenance and repair.[44] Balancing the drudgery of the household are the relaxations, but these are considered in detail elsewhere. To cards and indoor games he was indifferent;[45] his great delights were music[46] and reading,[47] in which he constantly indulged. Except for music, his household must have been quieter than those of his neighbors.

In one other, and much more important, particular his household also differed; it was afflicted with greater discord and unhappiness. Few men were deserted by their wives, and still fewer advocated divorce as a remedy for their situation.[48] Milton's images dealing with this problem throw a little fresh light on his attitude. His early references, antedating his marriage, assume the indissolubility of wedlock. The intimate artistic bond between the music and the voice singing the words of the song is a marriage:

Aires,
Married to immortal verse; *(L'ALL.,* I, 39)

Voice, and Vers,
Wed your divine sounds; *(Solemn Music,* I, 27)

as is the legal bond between the king and his kingdom:

Lawes, Statutes, and Acts of *Parliament* . . . are the holy Covenant of Union, and Marriage betweene the King and his Realme.
(Ref., III, 57)

In like manner, prelacy is the mate of discord:

[43] **Matthew 12:44; Luke 11:25.**
[44] **His knowledge of the basic trades was superficial. See Chapter I.**
[45] **See Chapter I.** [46] **See Chapter I.**
[47] **See *passim,* but especially Chapter 6.**
[48] **The establishment of 1642 as the date of Milton's marriage makes it practically certain that Mary Powell was at least partly the cause of his divorce pamphlets.**

So that in stead of finding Prelaty an impeacher of Schisme ... [I] think rather that faction and she as with a spousal ring are wedded together, never to be divorc't. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 212)

But these are commonplaces which we would not expect Milton to qualify by providing for divorce.[49] There is, however, one exception. In *Apology* (1641) he makes use of an image of a man divorcing his wife for adultery:

If we have indeed given a bill of divorce to Popery and superstition, why do we not say as to a divors't wife; those things which are yours take them all with you, and they shall sweepe after you? Why were not we thus wise at our parting from Rome? Ah like a crafty adultresse she forgot not all her smooth looks and inticing words at her parting; yet keep these letters, these tokens, and these few ornaments; I am not all so greedy of what is mine, let them preserve with you the memory of what I am? No, but of what I was, once faire and lovely in your eyes. Thus did those tender hearted reformers dotingly suffer themselves to be overcome with harlots language. And she like a witch, but with a contrary policy did not take something of theirs that she might still have power to bewitch them, but for the same intent left something of her own behind her. And that her whoorish cunning should prevaile to work upon us her deceitfull ends, though it be sad to speak, yet such is our blindnesse, that we deserve. *(Apol.,* III, 355-356)

Here the phrase "a bill of divorce" is an obvious echo of "a bill of divorcement" in Deuteronomy 24: I, one of the basic texts in his later arguments. Further, he is here adopting one of the causes for divorce which was accepted among all the Puritan and Independent sects, and which he himself advocates in his divorce pamphlets.[50] This image makes clear the fact that his attitude did not spring merely from his own misfortunes.[51] There is only one later image, but this is significant in its implications:

[49] There are a few minor references: the marriage of the vine with the elm, which has many literary sources; the marriage of Christ with the church, a religious commonplace; and the marriage in heaven of the virgins with the Lamb, based on Revelation 14:1-5.

[50] Of course, he argues that adultery should not be the only cause, and stresses what we now call incompatibility.

[51] Allan H. Gilbert ("Milton on the Position of Women," *Modern Language Review,* XV (1920), 7-27) has shown the importance of the problem of marriage in Milton's general philosophy and the likelihood that he had considered

If Church and state shall be made one flesh again as under the law, let it be withall considerd, that God who then joind them hath now severd them; that which, he so ordaining, was then a lawfull conjunction, to such on either side as join again what he hath severd, would be nothing now but thir own presumptuous fornication.

(Civil Power, VI, 25-26)

God, we observe, can as decisively sever as he can join.

Yet, except when such extraordinary circumstances arise, the organization of family life, as Milton pictures it, is the familiar seventeenth century one. The husband is of course the head of the household, since man is the superior sex:

[Cromwells government, although a minority, is as] worthy to have dominion over the rest, as men over women; *(First Def.* VII, 63)

[Men are not free who cannot] dispose and æ*conomize* in the Land which God hath giv'n them, as Maisters of Family in thir own house and free inheritance. *(Tenure,* V, 40)

The father trains his family in accordance with his own principles:

Certainly if God be the father of his family the Church, wherein could he expresse that name more, then in training it up under his owne all-wise and dear Oeconomy; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ⅲ, 188)

he reproves:

[Excommunication proceeds] not by Imprisonment . . . much less by stripes or bonds, or disinheritance, but by Fatherly admonishment, and Christian rebuke; *(Ref.,* Ⅲ, 71-72)

he expects to be honored and obeyed by his sons :

[A minister] ought to be honour'd as a Father . . . with a Sorc-like and *Disciple-like* reverence; *(Ref.,* Ⅲ, 64)

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it before his own marriage. C. L. Powell traces the extensive and complicated background of writing on the subject of marriage and divorce, with some of which at least Milton was demonstrably familiar *(English Domestic Relations,* New York, 1917, *passim,* but especially p. 93. Appendix B is superseded by the shift in the date of Milton's marriage). See also Tillyard, *Milton,* London, 1930, p. 148, who agrees that Milton's divorce pamphlets were "probably founded on earlier thought," though Tillyard does not seem to be aware of either Gilbert or Powell.

First therefore the government of the Gospell being economicall and paternall, that is, of such a family where there be no servants, but all sons in obedience, not in servility . . . how can the Prelates justifie to have turn'd the fatherly orders of Christs houshold . . . into the barre of a proud judiciall court. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 267)

To be sure, he is not without love for his family. He extends over them his protection;[52] he clothes their nakedness:

[After the fall of Adam and Eve, Christ]
As Father of his Familie he clad
Thir nakedness. (P.L., II, 312)

He would mourn their death, as Adam grieved at the vision of the flood:

on thy feet thou stoodst at last,
Though comfortless, as when a Father mourns
His Children, all in view destroyd at once. (P.L., II, 372)

He may even be indulgent when his sons have reached maturity:

[In the Gospel] wee being now his adopted sons . . . God being now no more a judge after the sentence of the Law, nor as it were a schoolmaister of perishable rites, but a most indulgent father governing his Church as a family of sons in their discreet age.[53]

(R. Ch. Gov., Ill, 256)

Yet they arc long in reaching maturity. Infants are helpless: thus, Samson is

in most things as a child
Helpless; *(S.A.,I,* 370)

they eat premasticated food:

[The King] *must chew such Morsels as Propositions ere he let them down.* So let him; but if the Kingdom shall tast nothing but after his chewing, what does he make of the Kingdom, but a great baby.

(Eikon., V, 187)

[52] To denote origin or care Milton uses indifferently the image of a father: the Pharisees are the fathers of the prelates, etc.; of a mother: censorship is a nursing mother to sects and a step-dame to truth, etc.; or of a parent: covetousness and ambition are the parents of episcopacy, etc.

[53] The reference is to Galatians 3:24-25. See below, note 55.

Children have little knowledge or discrimination:

[That Druids] would for want of recording be ever Children in the Knowledge of Times and Ages, is not likely; *(Hist, of Brit.,* X, 2)

the *Saxon Annals* deliver thir meaning with more then wonted infancy; *(Ibid., 210)*

[If men leave religion to the clergy] they will be alwaies learning and never knowing, alwaies infants; *(Hirelings,* VI, 100)

> [Men reading foolishly collect mere trifles]
> As Children gathering pibles on the shore. *(P.R.,* II, 471)

Their lives are regulated by rules enforced with the rod:

For those actions which enter into a man, rather then issue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivat under a perpetuall childhood of prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser; *(Areo.,* IV, 310)

[The doctrine of Paraeus is that of one who would chastise men] in mature age with a boyish rod of correction. *(Doct. Div.,* III, 507)

The father is for the most part the source of authority, but the mother has, on occasion, her own somewhat startling methods of discipline:

as a tender Mother takes her Child and holds it over the pit with scarring words, that it may learne to feare, where danger is, so doth excommunication . . . use her wholsome and saving terrors. *(Ref.,* III, 72)

Even when the children have grown older, they are still under the control of their father, or are wards of a guardian :

[Henry VIII was] made a boy of by those his two Cardinall Judges; *(Doct.Div.,* III, 502)

[The English people] more like boyes under age then men . . . committ all to [the King] ; *(Ready & Easy Way,* VI, 122)

[Under a system of censorship a learned author] must appear in Print like a punie [minor] with his guardian; *(Areo.,* IV, 325)

puny Law . . . brought under the wardship, and controul of lust. *(Ref.,* III, 38)

or, in the case of a daughter, are ruled by a nurse:

Truth [is] the daughter not of Time, but of Heaven, only bred up heer

below in Christian hearts, between two grave & holy nurses the Doctrine, and Discipline of the Gospel. *(Prelat. Epis.,* III, 91)

Such discipline was the accepted practice in Milton's time and for long after, but, even so, it seems to have made a remarkably strong impression on him. Perhaps as a boy, he looked forward to adult freedom, and as a man, he came to see the desirability of control. Furthermore, the absence of any tenderness or companionship between parent and child is here conspicuous. We do not find anything comparable to the touching vignettes of Bishop Hall and of Giles Fletcher:

God is no otherwise affected to this imperfect elocution [in extempore prayer] then an indulgent Parent is to the clipped and broken language of his deare childe, which is more delightfull to him then any smooth Oratory; (Hall, *Humble Remon.,* p. 13)

> [Christ tore out the stings of the serpent-demons]
> So may wee oft a vent'rous father see,
> To please his wanton sonne, his onely joy,
> Coast all about, to catch the roving bee,
> And stung himselfe, his busie hands employ
> To save the honie, for the gamesome boy.
> (Fletcher, *Christs Triumph over Death,* st. 24)

to say nothing of Shakespeare's images, remarkable both in number and in quality, of affectionate and indulgent parents.[54] Certainly Milton was not harshly treated by his father. On the contrary, the astonishing fact that the elder Milton, a successful businessman, was willing to continue the support of his son, whose life was to be devoted wholly to literature, shows a degree of sympathetic understanding rare even today. That Milton was deeply grateful he makes clear in *To my Father* and elsewhere. This relationship, established in the exceptional environment of his childhood and youth, might naturally be expected to appear in the imagery, but for some unknown reason it does not. We can-

[54] Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* pp. 137-139.

not explain its absence by assuming that the images reflect Milton's experience as a father himself, since many of them were written before his first marriage.

Milton was impressed not by his opportunities for study but by the study itself. This is by far the most vivid imprint that his home life made on him. To be a boy is practically the same thing as to be a pupil:

> Next I distinguish that the time of the [Mosaic] Law is compared to youth, and pupillage in respect of the ceremonial part, which led the Jewes as children; *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 507)

> [Had King Charles] also redeemed his overdated minority from a Pupillage under Bishops, he would much less have mistrusted his Parlament; *(Eikon.,V,* 185)

> [The people of England must learn self-control. Otherwise] like a nation in pupillage, you would then want rather a tutor, and a ... superintendent of your own concerns. *(Sec. Def.,VIII,* 251)

When a man loses his authority, he becomes again a boy at school:

> How then the ripe age of the Gospell should be put to schoole againe, and learn to governe her selfe from the infancy of the [Mosaic] Law, the stronger to imitate the weaker . . . the learned to be lesson'd by the rude, will be a hard undertaking to evince;
>
> *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 196-197)

> And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching, how can he be a Doctor in his book as he ought to be, or else had better be silent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal licencer ... I hate a pupil teacher, I endure not an instructer that comes to me under the wardship of an overseeing fist; *(Areo.,* IV, 325-326)

> [The bishops wish to] confine the *Monarch* to a kind of Pupillage under their *Hierarchy. (Ref.,* Ill, 59)

Conscientiousness in learning is of the first importance, for truancy is likely to have serious consequences:

> [Men neglected Scripture for incidental matters. Thus] they lost their time, and truanted in the fundamentall grounds of saving knowledge.
>
> *(Prelat. Epis.,* Ill, 94)

While the pupil is still very young, the process of education is somewhat sweetened:

[The Jews of St. Paul's time had the Mosaic Law as] thier Schoolmaister, who was forc't to intice them as children with childish entisements. But the Gospell is our manhood, and the ministry should bee the manhood of the Gospell;[55] *(Apol,* Ⅲ, 363)

and certain mechanical aids are provided for him:

[Under censorship] What advantage is it to be a man over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only scapt the ferular [rod, ruler], to come under the fescu [thin stick used in pointing out letters to children beginning to read] of an *Imprimatur?* if serious and elaborat writings, as if they were no more then the theam of a Grammar lad under his Pedagogue must not be utter'd without the cursory eyes of a ... licencer; *(Areo.,* Ⅳ, 324)

A Minister that cannot be trusted to pray in his own words without being . . . fescu'd to a formal injunction of his rote-lesson, should as little be trusted to Preach; *(Anim.,* Ⅲ, 124)

[Church councils should not distrust preachers so] as to tutor their unsoundnesse with the Abcie [spelling book] of a Liturgy.
(Anim., Ⅲ, 127)

He is not indulged for long, however, but must soon proceed on his own initiative:

[Even though set forms of prayer may] be granted to some people [ministers] while they are babes in Christian guifts, were it not better to take it away soone after, as we do loitering books, and *interlineary* translations from children; to stirre up and exercise that portion of the spirit which is in them. *(Apol,* Ⅲ, 350)

After all this, it is almost with a sense of incredulity that we come upon one simile based on a vacation:

No mortall nature can endure either in the actions of Religion, or study of wisdome, without somtime slackning the cords of intense thought and labour . . . We cannot therefore alwayes be contemplative, or pragmaticall abroad, but have need of som delightfull intermissions, wherin

[55] The reference is to Galatians 3:24-25: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Milton, however, did not depend on the Bible for his ideas of schooling.

the enlarged soul may leav off a while her severe schooling; and like a glad youth in wandring vacancy, may keep her hollidaies to joy and harmles pastime; which . . . she cannot well doe without [a wife]. *(Tetra.,* IV, 85-86)

Although his other types of images are not so characteristic as these, Milton does draw heavily on nearly all the remaining aspects of marital and family life. We find conception and birth:[56]

[Dalila] by the sent [of gold] conceiv'd
Her spurious first-born; Treason against me; *(S.A.,* I, 351)

Heresie begat heresie with a certaine monstrous haste of pregnancy in her birth, at once borne and bringing forth; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 211)

a child,[57] a son or daughter, a brother or sister.[58] He is fond of the metaphor of twins, which he uses eight times,[59] although it seems to have no special psychological significance :

It was from out the rinde of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evill as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the World. *(Areo.,* IV, 310)

However, his rather numerous figures of a virgin or virginity may be an indication of the importance that he attached to this virtue:

[In some situations] may a King injoy his rights, and Prerogatives undeflowr'd, untouch'd; *(Ref.,* III, 73)

[King Charles's] honour became so streitn'd with a kind of fals Virginity, that to the English . . . [no] demands could be granted. *(Eikon.,* V, 203)

This aspect of his character is too well known to need elaboration. The stress he put upon the ideal of virginity

[56] Also: to beget, procreate, breed, engender; give birth to, teem, be infanted, be born of, out of, have birth in; travail, suffer birth pangs.

[57] Also: brat, imp, offspring, progeny, first-born.

[58] There are various miscellaneous images: mate, consort; orphan, heir, bastard, foster-child; godfather, kin; ancestor, pedigree; comrade, friend; guest, mistress.

[59] For the "twins of Hippocrates," see Chapter 6, note 367.

was simply a part of his insistence on continence, self-control, and moral purity in general. However, what does need to be pointed out here is that a man with such exacting standards cannot easily fit into the normal pattern of family life. In his youth he was, perhaps, so wrapped up in his books that he simply did not notice what was being done for him. As he grew older, his self-absorption was increased by a natural anxiety about his eyesight. This is not to say that he was incapable of warm feelings; without response on his part he could not have inspired as he did both friendship and discipleship. He could even feel tenderness. It is a reasonable assumption that he married Mary Powell because he fell in love with her, and he certainly loved his "espoused saint" Katharine Woodcock.[60] But it is also a reasonable assumption that his friendship and affection could be had only on his own terms. His friends and wives had to meet his standards (and Mary Powell apparently did not); he could not accommodate himself to theirs. Probably Milton could never forget himself and his mission. Hence, when he became a father himself, he had no aptitude for familiar and undignified relaxation with his children. When he relaxed, he did so in the grand manner—with music, or great literature, or a choice repast worthy of Plato's symposium.

Even when we have made the necessary qualifications, we still think of Milton as less domesticated than isolated, less a paterfamilias than a recluse. We can hardly do better than echo Wordsworth: "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart."

[60] W. R. Parker ("Milton's Last Sonnet," *R.E.S.,* XXI, 1945, 235) has shown that it is possible to read this sonnet as referring to Mary Powell, but the reading remains only possible.

CHAPTER 3

Travel and War

CITIZEN of London though he was, Milton was also a citizen of England and of the world. During his years at Cambridge and at Horton he must have walked about the countryside and ridden frequently to and from London. It is from these journeys, as well as from his tour of the Continent, that his images of travel arise.[1] Some are based merely upon the fact of traveling;[2] others give us pictures of roadside incidents: an early start in the darkness,[3]

By this time, like one who had set out on his way by night, and travail'd through a Region of smooth or idle Dreams, our History now arrivs on the Confines, where daylight and truth meet us with a cleer dawn, representing to our view, though at a farr distance, true colours and shapes; *(Hist, of Brit.,* X, 31)

a noonday pause for rest at an inn,

[In showing Adam the vision of the future]
As one who in his journey bates at Noone,
Though bent on speed, so heer the Archangel paus'd;
(P.L., II, 378)

[Hall has the title of his book] hung out like a toling [enticing] signe-post to call passengers; *(Apol,* III, 289)

a hesitation at a cross-road,

[1] Not included are the conventional images of the journey of the sun, moon, etc. Sea travel is included in Chapter 4.

[2] To traverse a great distance, to ramble, run circuit, lead the way, and the like.

[3] This is also light-truth and darkness-ignorance image. See Chapter 4, notes 58, 59,

[In disputes of the schoolmen the reader] is left as though at a cross-way, quite uncertain in mind whether to turn in one direction or the other. *(Prolusion IV, XII,* 177)

Still others are based more specifically on travel by horse or afoot. Of these only a few actually visualize riding: [4]

For evil news rides post, while good news baits; *(S.A.,* I, 392)

[Do not overwork a conceit based on the word "blushing"] lest you bejade the good galloway [small, sturdy horse], your owne opionaster wit, and make the very conceit it selfe blush with spur-galling; *(Anim.,* III, 169)

To use the common simile, as a rider, who urges on a stumbling horse in a particular direction is the cause of its increasing its speed, but not of its stumbling, so God . . . may instigate an evil agent, without being in the least degree the cause of the evil. *(Ch. Doct.,* **XV,** 75)

and a few more visualize walking: [5]

Thus farre by others is already well stept ... if there remain a furlong yet to end the question, these . . . reasons may serve to gain it; *(Doct. Div.,* III, 499)

[I will] save the Reader a far longer travaile of wandring through so many desert Authours; *(Moscovia,* X, 328)

I shall not intend this hot season to bid you the base [challenge you to a race] through the wide, and dusty champaine of the Councels. *(Anim.,* III, 126)

These images are sharp but neither unusual nor extensive. On the whole he has little to say of life on the highways. He does not mention the vehicles, the private and public coaches,[6] the more humble stage wagons, or the country wains laden with produce; the herds of cattle or flocks of geese being driven to market; his fellow travelers, vagrants,

[4] **Most of them turn on bit, rein, etc. Others refer to various kinds of horses. See Chapter 5.**

[5] **To walk abreast, to step aside, follow close at heel, follow every step, lag after.**

[6] **Compare Bishop Hall: [To change our ancient form of religion for a foreign one] "what were it other, than to snatch the reines out of the hands of a skilfull Coachman and either to lay them loose on the horses necks, or to deliver them to the hands of some ignorant, and unskilfull lackeyes, that run along by them" *(Episcopacy by Divine Right,* 25).**

drunken rowdies, lawless soldiers, highwaymen, and suspicious watchmen; the fords and bridges; or the bad weather and frequent accidents.[7] Milton was not the traveler that Chaucer was.

His most numerous and characteristic images are those that focus attention not on the mode of travel but on the path or way itself. Only once is it recognizably English:

> The way propounded is plane, easie and open before us ... lies free and smooth before us; is not tangl'd with inconveniencies . . . requires no ... circumscription of mens lands and proprieties; secure, that ... no man or number of men can attain to such wealth ... as will need the hedge of an Agrarian law ... to confine them from endangering our public libertie. *(Ready & Easy Way,* VI, 133-134)

Here he is certainly thinking of the hedgerows of the countryside familiar to him. Usually, however, he is thinking of Biblical paths: straight,[8]

> [Let God's law be studied by men] able to shew us the waies of the Lord, strait . . . not full of cranks and contradictions, and pit falling dispenses; *(Doct. Div.,* III, 375)
>
> The method of holy correction ... is ... to limit and level out the direct way from vice to vertu, with straitest and exactest lines on either side, not winding, or indenting so much as to the right hand of fair pretences. *(Doct. Div.,* III, 474)

sloping down to destruction:[9]

> you did not bid me go where a highway lies open wide and broad, where the ground slopes more straightly to gain, (*To My Father,* I, 275)

or up to God:[10]

[7] Joan Parkes, *Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century,* Oxford Press, 1925, *passim.*

[8] Matthew 3: 3, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." See also Psalms 5: 8, Isaiah 40: 3, Jeremiah 31: 9, Hebrews 12:13.

[9] Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

[10] Psalms 24: 3, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" Psalms 43: 3, "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill."

How shall a man know . . . which way will leade him best to this hill top of sanctity and goodnesse above which there is no higher ascent but to the love of God? *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 261)

> Lady that in the prime of earliest youth
> Wisely hast shun'd the broad way and the green,
> And with those few art eminently seen,
> That labour up the Hill of heav'nly Truth.[11]
>
> ("Lady That in the Prime," I, 61)

Yet the Bible does not account for everything, since Milton often adds the unscriptural idea that the path is rugged. In this form the image appears all through his work. On its first occurrence, it is merely a detail in a larger figure:

while I survey . . . these empty little questions [of theological controversy], I seem to myself to be undertaking a journey through rugged deserts and uneven roads and through vast solitudes and precipitous passes of mountains, because it is not likely that the charming . . . Muses preside over these shrivelled subjects . . . there never was a place for them on Parnassus. *(Prolusion III,* XII, 163)

Later, the image is more elaborate and more specific:

[Milton intends to inculcate truth and virtue by writing great literature so that] whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they would then appeare to all men both easy and pleasant though they were rugged and difficult indeed; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 239)

I shall . . . conduct ye to a hill side, where I will point ye out the right path of a vertuous and noble Education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sounds on every side that [you will follow it] ;

(Educ., IV, 280)

You have rightly marked out for yourself the path of virtue in that theatre of the world on which you have entered; but remember that the path is common so far to virtue and vice, and that you have yet to advance to where the path divides itself into two. And you ought . . . to prepare yourself for leaving this common path, pleasant and flowery, and for being able the more readily, with your own will, though with

[11] The third and fourth lines may also be a classic reference. See Chapter I, note 76, and see below, notes 12, 13, and 14.

labour and danger, to climb that arduous and difficult one which is the slope of virtue only. *(Familiar Letters,* XII, 113)

These passages, involving the ascent of a mountain and the sharp contrast between a difficult and an easy path, are strikingly like passages from several classical authors, Hesiod,[12] Xenophon,[13] or Cebes,[14] any or all of which, together with widespread illustrations of them,[15] may well have been Milton's source. There is, however, one figure

[12] "Badness can be got easily and in shoals: the road to her is smooth, and she lives very near us. But between us and Goodness the gods have placed the sweat of our brows: long and steep is the path that leads to her, and it is rough at the first; but when a man has reached the top, then indeed she is easy, though otherwise hard to reach" *(Works and Days,* 287-292; "Loeb Classical Library").

[13] Xenophon quotes the above passage from Hesiod in his *Memorabilia of Socrates* and then continues with the account of the judgement of Hercules: [At the beginning of manhood] "a period at which the young . . . begin to give intimations whether they will enter on life by the path of virtue or that of vice, [Hercules] went forth into a solitary place, and sat down, perplexed as to which of these two paths he should pursue . . . [Vice approached] "I see that you are hesitating, Hercules, by what path you shall enter upon life; if, then, you make a friend of me, I will conduct you by the most delightful and easy road, and you shall taste of every species of pleasure, and pass through life without experiencing difficulties . . . [Vice specified the sensual delights. Virtue offered a much more austere program] Here Vice, interrupting her speech said . . . "Do you see, Hercules, how difficult and tedious a road to gratification this woman describes to you, while I shall lead you, by an easy and short path, to perfect happiness?"

(21-29; Everyman Edition, pp. 41-43.)

[14] The old man explains the meaning of the table or diagram of life: "Then you see that little gate, and the way there before the gate, which looks as if it were but little used, lying in such a steepe discent of that craggy rock . . . you see more-over that hill there, that is environed on eyther side with inaccessible cliffes, having onely one narrow path to ascend it … That same path, is all the way we have to *true Instruction,* Truly, Sir, me thinketh it is almost impossible to get up it. You marke that steep rocke then by that other hill. [With two women, Continence and Tolerance, reaching out their hands to help man up] if they will climbe but a little, all the way after shall bee most plaine and easie. But when they come to the rock how shall they do to ascend? I see no meane they have to mount so steep a cliffe. [The two sisters] pull them up by degrees . . . shewing them how plaine, & how pleasant the tract is, now that thy have surmounted the former difficulty, and how cleare it is from all cragges and encombrances, as you see in the Table." (John Healey, *Epictetus Manuall. Cebes Table. Theophrastus Characters,* London, 1616, pp. 128-131.)

[15] See Chapter I, note 76.

which is unlike the others in that Milton stresses the actual danger of the path:

> [We have not correctly interpreted God's scriptural ordinances concerning marriage and divorce] where he set us in a fair allowance of way ... we have straitn'd and par'd that liberal path into a razors edge to walk on, between a precipice of unnecessary mischief on either side; and starting at every false Alarum, we doe not know which way to set a foot forward with manly confidence. *(Doct. Div.,* III, 497)

In this instance, it seems probable that the image springs not from books but from life and records the deep impression made upon him by his crossing the Alps on his continental tour,[16] an experience to which he refers elsewhere[17] and which may well have been disagreeable to him.[18] This experience, fusing with various Biblical and classical texts, became the symbol of man's lot in life: the giving up of the easy for the hard, the overcoming of great obstacles, and the attaining of a lofty goal. High places are holy places, and the paths leading to them are straight, narrow, and laborious.

Yet travel to and from London was a minor matter, and even his Grand Tour, however vividly remembered, was only one episode. Of far greater importance was the lifelong influence exerted upon him by the social and political world he lived in, a world whose most conspicuous characteristics were tension, confusion, and conflict. In his early youth, the civil and international struggles of the sixteenth century were of recent memory, the even more terrible Thirty Years War engulfed Europe, and religious and economic antagonism was splitting England apart. Throughout his maturity he lived in the midst of civil war. It is only natural, therefore, that war images should reflect these conditions.

[16] The entire tour made a lasting impression, giving rise to many images of the sea and of Italy. See Chapter 4.

[17] See Chapter 4.

[18] Milton says nothing of the beauty or grandeur of mountains. See Chapter 4.

Some of them, however, do not need a background of actual armed conflict to explain them. In England the pamphlet warfare was extensive, and men, when engaged in such polemics, turn naturally to the battlefield for their images. Further, since a large part of the controversy was over matters of religion, the writers on both sides availed themselves of the conventional language of the church militant and of the Bible itself. Hence, Lilburne calls the reformers

> valiant souldiers of Jesus Christ, *(A Worke of the Beast,* p. 20)

and urges them to

> fight manfullie in this his spirituall battell . . . gird on your Spirituall armour spoken of *Ephes* 6 [19] that you may quit your selves like good and faithfull Souldiers; *(ibid.)*

Goodwin's figure echoes the Psalms:

> he would . . . appear with shield and buckler for the Apostles defence;[20] *(Anti-Cavalierisme, p.* 16)

and Lord Brooke's disavowal of heat in argumentation,

> I shoot not Arrowes of Scorne,
> *(A Discourse opening . . . Episcopate,* p. 56)

is in terms of Old Testament rather than contemporary combat. Milton, employing relatively more war imagery in his controversial pamphlets than elsewhere, makes use of the same conventions. In the *Defence of Himself,* for example, he says that if a good man

> wants defence, and it is no uncommon thing for him to be assailed by slander and envious abuse, he entrenches himself in his own integrity, and in the impregnable consciousness of righteous deeds; where, as

[19] Ephesians 6: 13-17: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God. . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Milton has two metaphors of "spiritual armour" *(Eikon.,* V, 233, and *P.L.,* Bk. XII, 11. 490-492).

[20] Psalms 91:4, "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler,"

within a rampart and strong fortress, he receives the vain assaults, and frustrates the darts of unprincipled men, (IX, 215)

and we note overtones from the passage of Ephesians referred to by Lilburne and from the Psalms.[21] Other images of darts or arrows are probably, though not explicitly, Biblical:

these miseries . . . are still his [King Charles's] own handy work, having smitt'n them like a forked Arrow so sore into the Kingdoms sides, as not to be drawn out and cur'd without the incision of more flesh, *(Eikon., V,* 169)

A second source of war images is the less violent controversy of academic debate, in which a large number are introduced as rhetorical heightening. One such image is found in *Prolusion IV.* When setting forth the arguments for and against the thesis that "In the destruction of any thing a resolution to primary matter does not occur," he enlivens his highly abstract material in this way:

At this moment the battle becomes violent and victory sways to and fro, for they rush into the struggle anew in this fashion. (XII, 187)

Finally, others spring naturally from the theme of the work in which they are found: the struggle of Satan against God in *Paradise Lost,* or of Satan against Christ in *Paradise Regained.* For instance, in his soliloquy at the opening of Book IV of *Paradise Lost* Satan rejects the thought that he might be readmitted to God's grace,

> For never can true reconcilement grow
> Where wounds of deadly hate have peirc'd so deep. (II, 110)

Yet while some of Milton's war images may be accounted for on these various grounds, a large number remain, too detailed and technical to be so explained. Their range is very wide; in addition to the rather conventional ones,

[21] **Psalm 18:2, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." Other fortress images are in Psalms 31:3, 71:3, 91:2, and 144:2.**

already considered, of weapons and armor,[22] and of wounding, arming, and disarming, they include nearly all the activities of war: the assembly of the army, the army on the march and in camp, fortresses and arsenals and the methods of besieging and attacking them, the maneuvers of the army on the battlefield, and the various phases of individual combat. By merely making a selection from them we can construct an almost complete campaign, beginning with the declaration of war, and concluding with the treaty of peace. The proclamation of war[23] is accompanied with the traditional ceremonies:

[England has had the] *honour* from GOD to bee the first that should set up a Standard for the recovery of *lost Truth,* and blow the first *Evangelick Trumpet* to the *Nations.*[24] *(Ref.,* III, 5)

At this spot the army assembles:

as Armies at the call
Of Trumpet (for of Armies thou hast heard)
Troop to thir Standard, so the watrie throng,
Wave rowling after Wave [hastens to the ocean]; (*P.L.,* II, 222)

[At the Reformation came] the *Princes* and *Cities* trooping apace to the new erected Banner of *Salvation. (Ref.,* III, 5)

Once it has been levied and mustered, the army proceeds to invade enemy territory:

[Milton learned that More was collecting material to renew the controversy] either unable to place reliance upon the forces [letters of recommendation] which, by hard stripes he had levied upon the Genevese, or, thinking that with so small a body, he was not sufficiently pre-

[22] Except for one highly original and successful figure: [Those who] "set forth new positions . . . were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion they may yet serve to polish and brighten the armoury of Truth [they should be used]" *(Area.,* IV, 351).

[23] Once Milton speaks of proclaiming a fire-cross, the method of beginning a Scottish clan war, and once of proclaiming a crusade (Chapter 6, image attacking Hall).

[24] This passage was written before King Charles raised his standard in just this fashion at Nottingham, August 23, 1642. Compare *Paradise Lost,* Bk. I, 11. 431-540; Bk. II, 11. 985-986. See also Jeremiah 51:27, "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations."

pared to decide the contest by a single battle, that he was busy in raising by conscription, in France, a fresh army to be employed against me . . . and that consuls and even tipstaves[25] were approaching with a mighty host, and the display of hostile banners. At last, though long in coming, these new-raised troops stole in sight; and till they came up, the first array was seen, I suspect, to give ground, and to break. Now should any one wonder at the late appearance of this last levy of letters; that they should advance so slowly under the conduct of a man of so ready a wit; be it known that there were certain letters of the dead to be dug up from the repositories where they had long been at rest. Moreover, these consular reinforcements, with all their weight of armour, and with a laudable attention to the roads, were . . . "to be sent from France." *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 229-231)

Scounts reconnoiter the country and the opposing forces:

how can we more safely, and with lesse danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity then by reading all manner of tractats and hearing all manner of reason? *(Areo.,* IV, 311-312)

> [Satan] Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
> Of all this World at once. As when a Scout
> Through dark and desart wayes with peril gone
> All night; at last by break of chearful dawne
> Obtains the brow of some high-climbing Hill,
> Which to his eye discovers unaware
> The goodly prospect of some forein land
> First-seen, or some renown'd Metropolis
> With glistering Spires and Pinnacles adornd,
> Which now the Rising Sun guilds with his beams.
> Such wonder seis'd, though after Heaven seen,
> The Spirit maligne, but much more envy seis'd
> At sight of all this World beheld so faire. *(P.L.,* II, 96-97)

[Milton has looked over More's arguments] We have now also reconnoitred the whole of your forces, together with the supplement; and they are numerous enough no doubt, but, in truth, were collected for show, rather than for real strength. *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 269)

This invading army must not be encumbered with too great a supply train, and must be always on the alert, because otherwise it may find itself unexpectedly involved in a

[25] Columbia edition reads "tiptaves."

skirmish with hostile light cavalry or other troops, or even ambushed:

You are not arm'd *Remonstrant,* nor any of your band, you are not dieted, nor your loynes girt for spirituall valour, and Christian warfare, the luggage is too great that followes your Camp; your hearts are there, you march heavily. *(Anim.,* III, no)

neglecting the maine bulk of all that specious antiquity ... I chose rather to observe some kinde of military advantages to await him [Remonstrant] at his forragings, at his watrings, and when ever he felt himselfe secure; *(Apol.,* III, 285)

[Some writings lead people] from their strong guards, and places of safety under the tuition of holy writ ... [I thought I should] endeavour to recall the people of GOD from this vaine forraging after straw, and to reduce them to their firme stations under the standard of the Gospell; *(Prelat. Epis.,* III, 82-83)

schismaticks with whom the Prelats hold such hot skirmish;
(R. Ch. Gov., III, 215)

bishops not totally remov'd, but left as it were in ambush, a reserve.
(Ready. & Easy Way, VI, 115)

When it is necessary to establish a camp, perhaps winter quarters, engineers must be sent ahead to prepare the fortifications, sentries must be posted and kept awake, and the watchword set:

[For the building of Pandaemonium]
A numerous Brigad hastened. As when Bands
Of Pioners with Spade and Pickax arm'd
Forerun the Royal Camp, to trench a Field,
Or cast a Rampart; (P.L.,, II, 32)

[Samson's strength has returned] with his hair
Garrison'd round about him like a Camp
Of faithful Souldiery. *(S.A.,* I, 390)

[After Satan has addressed his followers on the
burning lake] up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake. (P.L., II, 20)

O let them not bring about their damned *designes* that stand now at the entrance of the bottomlesse pit expecting the Watch-word to open and let out those dreadfull [evils]. *(Ref.,* Ill, 76)

An invading army will certainly encounter an occasional fortress,[26] strongly situated, well stocked, and stoutly defended:[27]

> As when a spark
> Lights on a heap of nitrous Powder, laid
> Fit for the Tun some Magazin to store
> Against a rumord Warr, the Smuttie graine
> With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the Aire:
> So started up in his own shape the Fiend. *(P.L.,* II, 135)

[Censorship will make a clergyman lazy. There is an abundance of sermons already printed] so that penury he never need fear of Pulpit provision, having where so plenteously to refresh his magazin. But if his rear and flanks be not impal'd, if his back dore be not secur'd by the rigid licencer, but that a bold book may now and then issue forth, and give the assault to some of his old collections in their trenches, it will concern him then to keep waking, to stand in watch, to set good guards and sentinells about his received opinions, to walk the round and counter-round with his fellow inspectors, fearing lest any of his flock be seduc't, who also then would be better instructed, better exercis'd and disciplined. *(Areo.,* IV, 335-336)

Such a fortress must be besieged and reduced:

> Hear what assaults I had [to make me betray you] . . .
> What sieges girt me round, e're I consented. *(S.A.,* I, 367)

who can be a greater enemy to Mankind . . . then he who defending a traditionall corruption . . . driven from much of his hold in Scripture ... as if he had the surety of some rouling trench, creeps up by this meanes to his relinquish't fortresse of divine authority againe . . . and . . . traines on the easie Christian insensibly within the close ambushment of worst errors. *(Anim.,* Ill, 106)

[Bishops are] mining, and sapping the out-works, and redoubts of *Monarchy. (Ref.,* Ill, 56)

[26] Also: watch-tower, citadel, stronghold, castle, magazine, and arsenal.

[27] By palisades, impalements, breastworks, barricades, ramparts, mounds, bulwarks, or walls.

His next attempt is upon the Arguments [of Milton] . . . for the first, not finding it of that structure, as to bee scal'd with his short ladder, hee retreats; *(Colast.,* IV, 254)

> [Satan looks across chaos]. Nor was his eare less peal'd
> With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
> Great things with small) then when *Bellona* storms,
> With all her battering Engines bent to rase
> Som Capital City; (P.L., II, 70)

> [Satan's attempt on man] like a devillish Engine back recoiles
> Upon himself; *(P.L.,* II, 107)

> [Satan says that his revenge] back on it self recoiles;
> Let it; I reck not, so it light well aim'd,
> Since higher I fall short, on [man], *(P.L.,* II, 266)

Once the stronghold has been forced to surrender, the army may continue its advance until it comes up with the main force of the enemy. If this force occupies a naturally strong position, it may refuse an engagement:

> [When a man has] furnisht out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battell raung'd, scattered and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please; only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to sculk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licencing where the challenger should passe, though it be valour anough in shouldiership, is but weaknes and cowardise in the wars of Truth. *(Areo.,* IV, 347-348)

Otherwise, the issue is joined on the field of battle:

> [Since King Charles has left *Eikon Basilike* as the chief defence of his cause] it would argue doubtless in the other party great deficience and distrust of themselves, not to meet the force of his reason in any field whatsoever, the force and equipage of whose Armes they have so oft'n met victoriously. *(Eikon.,* V, 66)

At this point, however, it is not possible to build up a consistent picture of a battle, since Milton's images are those of individual as well as mass fighting and range over Roman, medieval, and Renaissance times. Those of individual com-

bat include: to hover for an attack, to find courage to give the first onset, to withstand an opponent's charge, to experience difficulty in maintaining one's ground, to fight hand to hand, to grapple together, to be a raw recruit engaging a veteran, to vanquish and tread under foot an enemy, to lay low an enemy and deck oneself with his spoils. All these images are in general terms and might apply to any period. Many others are specifically medieval: to provide a champion:

> the spacious Hall [of Pandaemonium]
> (Though like a covered field, where Champions bold
> Wont ride in arm'd, and at the Soldans chair
> Defi'd the best of *Panim* chivalry
> To mortal combat or carreer with Lance)
> Thick swarm'd; *(P.L.,* II, 35)

[Since no worthier adversary makes his appearance] such as yee turn him forth at the Postern, I must accept him. *(Colast.,* IV, 240)

to take up the gauntlet, enter the lists, and fight there:

[A faithful performance of ministerial duties] had beene a better confutation of the Pope and Masse than ... all this careering with speare in rest and thundering upon the steele cap of *Baronius* or *Bellarmine; (Anim.,* III, 175)

No wonder then in the reforming of a Church which is never brought to effect without the fierce encounter of truth and falshood together, if, as it were the splinters and shares of so violent a jousting, there fall from between the shock many fond errors and fanatick opinions. (R. *Ch. Gov.,* III, 224)

to shoot bolts from a cross-bow or catapult:

[I do not fear the loss of my reputation when I consider the] ridiculous aiming of these his [Remonstrant's] slanderous bolts shot so wide of any suspicion to be fastn'd on me; *(Apol,* III, 283)

Forc't *vertue* is as a *bolt* overshot, it goes neither forward nor backward, and does no good as it stands. *(Doct.* ***Div.,*** III, 495)

Other shooting is, specifically or by implication, that of the Renaissance:

But if your meaning be with a violent and bold *Hyperbaton* to transpose the Text, as if the Words lay thus in order . . . this were a construction like a *Harquebuze* shot over a File of words twelve deep without authority to bid them stoop; *(Anim.,* III, 149)

Cavaliers . . . whose mouthes let fly Oaths and Curses by the voley. *(Eikon., V,* 168)

In one final figure in this group, Milton's anger at the bishops needs for its expression the full scope afforded by both past and present:

if ... a tyrant . . . should come to grasp the Scepter, here [in the bishops] were his speare men and his lances, here were his firelocks ready, he should need no other pretorian band nor pensionry then these. *(R. Ch.Gov., III,* 271)

The images involving mass fighting by the whole army are particularly Miltonic. This army, generally thought of in classical terms, must first be drawn up in the order of battle, which, once established, should not be changed:

though he strive with all his might, he shall find how easily I will rout and overwhelm him, once I get . . . [my authorities] marshaled out in battle array; *(First Def.,* VII, 203)

[Scholars] must proceed by the steddy pace of learning onward, as at convenient times for memories sake to retire back into the middle ward, and sometimes into the rear of what they have been taught, untill they have . . . solidly united the whole body of the perfeted knowledge, like the last embattelling of a Roman Legion;

(Educ., IV, 287)

[Every parish consistory is] as it were a little Synod, and towards a generall assembly moving upon her own basis in an even and firme pro-

generall assembly moving upon her own basis in an even and firme p

main phalanx, an embleme of truth and stedfastnesse;

(R. Ch. Gov., III, 217)

[We should not now attempt to set up the ideal form of a Senate] The much better way doubtless will be in this wavering condition of our affairs, to deferr the changing or circumscribing of our [present] Senat, more then may be done with ease . . . Militarie men hold it dangerous to change the form of battel in view of an enemie.

When the armies are in position, the fighting begins, proceeding until one of the opposing forces is defeated and surrenders:

[Your wife threatened you, Salmasius] Wherefore you preferred to write rather than the trumpets should sound the charge!
(First Def., VII, 549)

to give them [opponents of church reformation] play front, and reare, it shall be my task to prove that Episcopacy [is not necessary to monarchy] ;(Ref.,III, 41)

thir shift of turning this Law into a custom wheels about, and gives the onset upon thir own flanks; (*Tetra.,* IV, 111)

[The opponent of the Parliamentary party thinks that its divided opinions are sources of weakness, and he will not] beware untill he see our small divided maniples cutting through at every angle of his ill united and unweildy brigade; *(Area.,* IV, 343)

> [At the edge of the universe] Nature first begins
> Her fardest verge, and *Chaos* to retire
> As from her outmost works a brok'n foe
> With tumult less and with less hostile din: *(P.L.,* II, 75)

> Then to com in spight of sorrow,
> And at my window bid good morrow . . .
> While the Cock with lively din,
> Scatters the rear of darknes thin; *(L'ALL,* I, 36)

with forces broken and scattered, you [Morus] wander about you know not whither, now in this direction, now in that, then retrace your steps; not aware how close up with you in this loose array is your enemy, and with vigour unimpaired, hangs upon your rear to surprise you foraging. *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 93)

[Those who read Milton's *First Defence]* vanquished by truth, surrender themselves captive. *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 15)

The negotiations for the treaty of peace follow:

[It is an indignity if Justice] should compound and treat with sin her eternal adversary and rebel, upon ignoble terms; *(Doct. Div.,* III, 473)

[King Charles] who took so hainously to be offered nineteen Propositions from the Parlament, capitulates heer [in his prayer] with God almost in as many Articles. *(Eikon.,* V, 266)

The extensive information contained in these images could not have been casually acquired. Doubtless it resulted in part from Milton's interest in the struggle then going on in England and in Europe, and from his concern for the cause of true religion and liberty. As is the case with us in our day, Milton must have absorbed a good deal of military information merely by keeping posted on current events. In many of his images, however, as we have seen, he thinks in technical terms that he uses exactly and that often refer to the past. Here we see a reflection of his systematic and intensive reading of history (nothing is so conspicuous in the historians whom he mastered as the almost incessant fighting that they record) and of military science.[28]

That he felt the great importance of military knowledge is evident from other sources than the imagery. In his *Of Education* he states that education should fit a man for leadership in both peace and war; he includes in the curriculum fortification, enginery (the art of the military engineer), and medicine, the latter science for the purpose of enabling an officer to preserve the health of his army; and he provides for military drill both on foot and on horseback to allow the students to gain experience in "all the skill of Embattelling, Marching, Encamping, Fortifying, Besieging, and Battering, with all the helps of ancient and modern strategems, *Tacticks* and warlike maxims." [29] He applied these principles of education by including military books in the reading required of his own pupils. Such principles were part of his "attempt to carry out consistently in a definite educational program the humanistic ideal, so nobly formulated by the scholars, philosophers, and poets of the Renaissance, of a trained leadership in which practical skill [including mili-

[28] See Hanford, "Milton and the Art of War," *SP.,* XVIII, 232-266. Since the first draft of this chapter was written before Hanford's article was read, conclusions arrived at independently have been allowed to stand without acknowledgment.

[29] *Of Education,* IV, 289.

tary matters] is integrated with and based on liberal culture."[30] Moreover, military knowledge was essential to Milton in his preparation for his own career of an epic poet who would enlighten and uplift his own time.[31] Hence, he studied the standard classic, Renaissance, and contemporary treatises that dealt with the techniques of warfare and with the broader questions of its discipline, morale, and philosophic or religious basis.[32]

The question of whether or not this comprehensive theoretical knowledge was supplemented by firsthand experience is settled by his statement in the *Second Defence* that he avoided the toils and perils of war only to toil in another way with no less peril, and that, setting an inferior value on the service of the camp, he betook himself to occupations in which his services would be of greater use.[33] He must, however, have been an eyewitness to a good deal of military activity. Before the actual outbreak of civil war the citizens of London were forming what amounted to militia regiments, the London Trained Bands, and were drilling in the City Artillery Ground.[34] That Milton had at least watched these drills, had indeed observed them closely, is evident from one elaborate figure:

> Divines . . . have thir postures, and thir motions no less expertly, and with no less variety then they that practice feats in the Artillery-ground. Sometimes they seem furiously to march on, and presently march counter; by and by they stand, and then retreat; or if need be can face about, or wheele in a whole body, with that cunning and dexterity as is almost unperceavable; to winde themselves by shifting ground into places of more advantage. And Providence onely must be the drumm, Providence

[30] Hanford, *op. cit.,* pp. 233-234.

[31] *Ibid.,* p. 234.

[32] Classic (including contemporary editions): Xenophon, Elian, Caesar, Frontinus, etc.; Renaissance: Machiavelli, *Arte della Guerra,* etc.; contemporary: Robert Ward, *Animadversions of Warre.* See Hanford, *op. cit.,* pp. 233-242.

[33] Quoted in Chapter *6,* in the discussion of Milton and Cicero. Masson overlooked this passage and therefore spent a great deal of time needlessly marshaling evidence and arguments to prove the point. See also Hanford, *op. cit.,* pp. 242-245.

[34] Masson, *Life of Milton,* II, 402.

the word of command, that calls them from above, but always to som larger Benefice, or acts them into such or such figures, and promotions. At thir turnes and doublings no men readier; to the right, or to the left; for it is thir turnes which they serve cheifly; heerin only singular; that with them there is no certain hand right or left; but as thir own commodity thinks best to call it. (*Tenure,* V, 56)

Milton's interest in these evolutions and admiration for them are obvious.[35] In addition, his descriptions in *Paradise Lost* of the maneuvers of Satan's followers in hell, of the angelic guard in the Garden of Eden, and of the rival armies in the battle in heaven also make clear his knowledge of such company and battalion drill, parade, and review, as well as the pike-manual.[36]

The need for such preparation was soon demonstrated when London, during the first part of the war, had its narrowest escape. After the battle of Edgehill, October 23, 1642, the road to the city lay open to the King, and for some weeks he was expected to attack. Accordingly, improvised defences were hastily thrown up: trenches were dug, guard houses erected, bars and chains stretched across the streets. Milton could not have avoided knowing about and seeing what went on. Apparently one detail is still fresh in

[35] Masson believes that Milton drilled himself because of his knowledge of details too specific to be otherwise acquired, and because of a non-figurative passage from *Apology,* published early in 1642 and therefore recording events of 1641:

[Every morning Milton first reads] "Then with usefull and generous labours preserving the bodies health, and hardinesse; to render lightsome, cleare, and not lumpish obedience to the minde, to the cause of religion, and our Countries liberty, when it shall require firme hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations, rather then to see the ruine of our Protestation, and the inforcement of a slavish life." *(Apol.,* III, 299)

Masson comments: "This is interesting; Milton, it seems, has for some time been practising drill!" *(op. cit.,* II, 402). However, the passage clearly means that Milton was merely taking some sort of vigorous and systematic exercise. His station was not to be in the camp. Hanford *(op. cit.,* pp. 242-243) shows that men of Milton's position were not expected to, and did not serve except as officers.

[36] For a discussion of the military allusions in Milton's writing see Hanford, *op. cit.,* pp. 248-262.

his memory many years later. After Satan has addressed his followers on the burning lake

> up they sprung
> Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
> On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
> Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake. (P.L., II, 20)

This is not the sort of incident that is likely to be found in Milton's reading; on the other hand, anyone with military experience will at once recognize its authenticity, and raw recruits such as were then defending London are precisely the kind of soldiers most likely to fall asleep on watch. The picture of the sentries instinctively leaping to their feet almost before their eyes are open, only to find the enemy or the officer of the guard upon them, is very convincing.[37] Perhaps Milton was told of the occurrence—it is the sort of thing that is talked about in any war—but the most reasonable explanation of it seems to be that he was present himself on some occasion when the guard was roused by a false alarm or an inspection.

The culmination of all this military activity was the curious incident of Turnham Green, a place a few miles outside of London, where the King's army approaching from the west met the Parliamentary army, reinforced by the London Trained Bands and other regiments, on November 13, 1642. For twenty-four hours the two armies faced one another and then marched away in opposite directions without having fired a shot. If Milton had been present, such an experience could hardly have failed to make a deep impression on him as being his nearest approach to actual battle. However, no allusion to this episode appears

[37] The passage can be read in two ways: Satan discovers the fallen angels prostrate on the lake, and they leap up as do sleeping sentries caught by their superior officer; on the other hand, Satan has just ended his exhortation of them with the suggestion that they may be permanently fixed there by their conquerors, whom, of course, they dread. Either the fallen angels are to Satan as the sentries are to an officer; or the fallen angels are to God's angels as the sentries are to the enemy.

in his imagery or anywhere else, and in any case it would be highly unlikely that he would be present among the spectators who accompanied the regiments.[38] His knowledge of soldiership remains that of a student and an observer of no more than drill and is indicative of a certain detachment on his part.

This aloofness is further emphasized by the fact that there is only one image based upon a specific incident of the war. This is found in *Eikonoklastes,* where Milton, in rebutting King Charles's account of his actions, naturally focusses his attention on the course of hostilities:

> As for that Protestation following . . . [unless King Charles] thought himself still in that perfidious mist, between *Colebrook* and *Houndslow,* and thought that mist could hide him from the eye of Heav'n as well as of Man . . . how could this ... be utter'd? *(Eikon.,* V, 240)

The reference is to Prince Rupert's attack on Brentford, November 12, 1642, while negotiations were in progress between the King and Parliament for a cessation of hostilities. This attack was regarded by Parliament as an act of duplicity. A second reference is probably, though not certainly, to the excesses of the Puritan zealots on various occasions :[39]

> this clause . . . [of scripture was inserted] against the foreseene rashnesse of common textuaries, who abolish lawes, as the rable demolish images, in the zeale of their hammers oft violating the Sepulchers of good men. *(Tetra.,* IV, 139)

Considered broadly, these images of travel and of war bring us by a different approach to the same central fact of Milton's character that we have already encountered—his

[38] **Masson argues *(op. cit.,* II, 486-487) that the title of Milton's sonnet "When the Assault Was Intended to the City" and its text show that Milton was in his house on that evening. This argument has no weight, since it assumes that Milton wrote the poem on the very evening in question. Poetry is seldom so written.**

[39] **For images from earlier English history see Chapter 6.**

core of resistance to outside pressure. His ideal life was an arduous one, a struggle upward to the heights, in which he would have been glad of other men's company and toward which he urged them; but their refusal to leave the plains did not deter him from setting out by himself. There was about him an element of withdrawal, of reserve, of self-sufficiency. His sonnet "When the Assault was Intended to the City," though not to be taken literally, still makes a distinction between himself and the rest of the world. His withdrawal was not, however, mere negation. He remained true to his great moral aim of serving his country with his pen even in the midst of civil war. Deeply stirred as he was by the religious and political bases of that war, he viewed it in the large perspective of history, and was as apt to think in terms of Thermopylae as of Naseby. Abandoning his great poem, he did not enlist in the army for which he quite rightly felt he was not fitted.[40] He wrote prose with his "left hand," but he wrote—on questions that were important to him whether or not they were of contemporary significance. Many of his pamphlets were, of course, concerned with matters of current interest, but divorce had nothing to do with the exigencies of 1643, and *Areopagilica,* arguing against a specific Act of Parliament, dealt with basic principles that went far beyond the immediate issue. He gave himself to no party. He joined Cromwell's military dictatorship because it was the only bulwark between England and the worse tyranny of another Stuart king, and his praise, in his *First and Second Defences,* of Cromwell and his associates sounds less like that of a subordinate in the government than like that of an equal sovereign power. In the last analysis, Milton could do nothing that was irrelevant to his purpose. He had always to be about his Great Taskmaster's business.

[40] **Hanford, *op. cit.,* pp. 244-245. Hanford feels, however, that Milton may have been considered for the post of adjutant general to Sir William Waller, doubtless "some important semi-civilian function on the general staff." *Op. cit.,* pp. 247-248.**

CHAPTER 4

Nature

Up to this point we have limited ourselves to Milton's reaction to his social environment: his life as a citizen of London, as a family man, as a traveler, and as a participant in a civil war. We must now move from the world of man to the world of nature and consider both the images based upon his reaction to the surface of natural phenomena and the more basic images that embody his philosophy of nature. In these philosophic images, nature is considered under two aspects: as the material universe, *natura naturala,* and also as the source of life, *natura naturans,* the creating and directing force behind the material universe. Once again we come to a problem that lies to a large extent outside the range of imagery alone and that is also complicated by difficulties of definition.

Nevertheless, Milton's fundamental position is clear. He thought of nature, both the material universe and its laws, as the creation of God. He never thought of it as fate or chance, or as a thing in itself, an impersonal machine. Two non-figurative passages of abstract definition from *Christian Doctrine* prove this point, which is essential to the correct interpretation of such images as Milton does use:

There can be no doubt that every thing in the world, by the beauty of its order, and the evidence of a determinate and beneficial purpose which pervades it, testifies that some supreme efficient Power must have preexisted, by which the whole was ordained for a specific end. There are some who pretend that nature or fate is this supreme Power: but the very name of nature implies that it must owe its birth to some prior agent, or, to speak properly, signifies in itself nothing; but means either the essence of a thing, or that general law which is the origin of every

thing, and under which every thing acts; on the other hand, fate can be nothing but a divine decree emanating from some almighty power. Further, those who attribute the creation of every thing to nature, must necessarily associate chance with nature as a joint divinity; so that they gain nothing by this theory, except that in the place of that one God, whom they cannot tolerate, they are obliged, however reluctantly, to substitute two sovereign rulers of affairs, who must almost always be in opposition to each other. In short, many visible proofs, the verification of numberless predictions, a multitude of wonderful works have compelled all nations to believe, either that God, or that some evil power whose name was unknown, presided over the affairs of the world. Now that evil should prevail over good, and be the true supreme power, is as unmeet as it is incredible. Hence it follows as a necessary consequence, that God exists. (XIV, 27-29)

The providence of God is either ordinary or extraordinary. His ordinary providence is that whereby he upholds and preserves the immutable order of causes appointed by him in the beginning. This is commonly, and indeed too frequently, described by the name of nature; for nature cannot possibly mean anything but the mysterious power and efficacy of that divine voice which went forth in the beginning, and to which, as to a perpetual command, all things have since paid obedience. (XV, 93)

Turning now to the images themselves, we find that the material universe, *natura naturata,* thus created by God, was shaped from the disorder of preexisting darkness and chaos:[1]

> a dark
> Illimitable Ocean without bound,
> Without dimension, where length, breadth, & highth,
> And time and place are lost; where eldest Night
> And *Chaos,* Ancestors of Nature, hold
> Eternal *Anarchie.* (P.L., II, 69)

Nature, as the system of law and order, is the enemy of confusion:

Trust this man, Readers if you please, whose divinity would reconcile *England* with *Rome,* and his philosophy make friends nature with the *Chaos. (Anim.,III,* 114)

[1] The origin of chaos is God *(Ch.* Doct. XV, 15-27).

But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heav'n
Shoots farr into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn; here Nature first begins
Her fardest verge, and *Chaos* to retire
As from her outmost works a brok'n foe. *(P.L.,* II, 74-75)

This victory of nature may, however, be only temporary. When human history has run its course, nature may lapse again into original chaos,

this wilde Abyss,
The Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave. *(P.L.,* II, 70)

Moreover, nature, conscious of being the creature of God, is humble before him and eagerly subservient to him: at Christ's birth,

Nature in awe to him
Had doff't her gawdy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize . . .
Confounded, that her Makers eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities; *(Nat. Ode,* I, 2)

at the temptation, Satan offers the banquet as the tribute of nature to Christ:

Nature asham'd, or better to express,
Troubled that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed
From all the Elements her choicest store
To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord
With honour. *(P.R.,* II, 436)

The same concepts underlie Milton's treatment of *natura nalurans,* the creative power of the universe. This power is great: the air and the elements are nature's eldest births;[2] in the garden of Eden she pours forth a wilderness of flowers and sweets, growing more fruitful when she is disburdened of them; she caters to all men with the abundance of her provisions. These and the other works of nature are har-

[2] There are many personifications of Mother Nature, some of them quite elaborate, and similar personifications of Mother Earth.

monious and proportional. In contemplating the stars Adam cannot understand

> How Nature wise and frugal could commit
> Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
> So many nobler Bodies to create,
> Greater so manifold to this one use
> [of lighting the world] ; *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 236)

he fears that in creating Eve nature erred to some extent:

> [I am] here onely weake
> Against the charm of Beauties powerful glance.
> Or Nature faild in mee, and left some part
> Not proof enough such Object to sustain,
> Or from my side subducting, took perhaps
> More then enough, *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 254)

but is corrected by Raphael for both these speculations:

> Accuse not Nature, she hath don her part.[3] *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 255)

In addition,(nature behaves in a morally acceptable manner. When Adam and Eve eat the apple, nature recognizes their sin and gives signs of woe] nature is wrongly blamed for turpitude and sluggishness in virtuous actions; she rejoices with heaven and earth in the spring, and so on.[4]

The other aspect of *natura naturans*—the directing force, the "law of nature," behind the material universe as well as in the heart of man—is hardly represented by the imagery. Milton's position, however, is set forth in a figure of light:

[3] One apparent contradiction is hardly to be taken literally. In the paradise of fools are found

> All th'unaccomplisht works of Natures hand,
> Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixt. *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 93)

Milton is probably being not philosophic but grimly humorous when he remarks that the embryos and idiots, eremites and friars, and their fellows are unnatural mixtures.

[4] Nature as a whole is often associated with various constituent parts:

> Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again
> In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,
> Sky lowr'd, and muttering Thunder, som sad drops
> Wept. *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 296)

THE LAW OF GOD is either written or unwritten. The unwritten law is no other than that law of nature given originally to Adam, and of which a certain remnant, or imperfect illumination, still dwells in the hearts of all mankind; which, in the regenerate, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is daily tending towards a renewal of its primitive brightness. *(Ch. Doct.,* XVI, 101)

This unwritten law, the law of nature, is, as we have seen, a force for good, having "guiltles instinct" and "sage motions," [5] and the higher authority of the written law, that is of Scripture, does not contradict but supplements and strengthens it.[6]

[In thus considering nature in all its aspects as an expression of the will of God, Milton was thinking in terms of standard seventeenth century Protestant theology. He also shared with his contemporaries a belief in a universe intricately organized. This belief was made vivid in the figure, deriving ultimately from Plato's *Timaeus,* of a chain of being. "This metaphor served to express the unimaginable plenitude of God's creation, its unfaltering order, and its ultimate unity. The chain stretched from the foot of God's throne to the meanest of inanimate objects. Every speck of creation was a link in the chain, and every link except those at the two extremities was simultaneously bigger and smaller than another: there could be no gap] The precise magnitude of the chain raised metaphysical difficulties; but the safest opinion made it short of infinity though of a finitude quite outside man's imagination." [7] This doctrine had various complicated theological implications about which Milton did not have wholly consistent opinions.[8] He did, however, feel the poetic richness of the idea and made use of

[5] *Doct. Div.,* Ⅲ, 500.

[6] *R. Ch. Gov.,* Ⅲ, 197; *Doct. Div.,* Ⅲ, 419, 476, 481-482; *Tetra.,* IV, 134, 135; *Ch.Doct.,* XV, 173.

[7] E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York, 1944), p. 23.

[8] Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp. 160-165.

it with great success in several passages, once with the aid of a fine image; Raphael explains to Adam that all things proceed from God and return to him, becoming "more refin'd, more spiritous, and pure" as they approach him.

> So from the root
> Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
> More aerie, last the bright consummate floure
> Spirits odorous breathes. *(P.L.,* Il, 161)

In this chain of being, man obviously had a unique and pivotal position since he served as a link between matter and spirit."He contained in himself samples of all the degrees of creation, excelling in this not only beasts but the angels, who were entirely spiritual beings. But it was not only a matter of including in himself these samples: man's very anatomy corresponded with the physical ordering of the universe.(His frame was compounded of the four elements, and on the same principles as was the sublunary world." [9] In the higher powers of mind and spirit there was a similar correspondence between man, the microcosm, and the universe, the macrocosm)These ideas account for three of Milton's images: an occasional failure to maintain conjugal love is rooted in blameless nature,

> For Nature hath her *Zodiac* also, keepes her great annual circuit over human things as truly as the Sun and Planets in the firmament; hath her *anomalies,* hath her obliquities in ascensions and declinations, accesses and recesses, as blamelesly as they in heaven. And sitting in her planetary Orb with two rains in each hand, one strait, the other loos, tempers the cours of minds as well as bodies to several conjunctions and oppositions, freindly, or unfreindly aspects, consenting oftest with reason, but never contrary; *(Tetra.,* IV, 190)

after the fall, Adam and Eve wept;

> nor onely Teares
> Raind at thir Eyes, but high Winds worse within
> Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate,
> Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord, and shook sore

[9] Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture,* pp. 62-63.

Thir inward State of Mind, calm Region once
And full of Peace, now tost and turbulent. (P.L., II, 300))

Satan explained away the tempest he had directed at Christ:

these flaws, though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillard frame of Heaven,
Or to the Earths dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable,
And harmless, if not wholsom, as a sneeze
To mans less universe, and soon are gone. *(P.R.,* II, 475)

It is evident, therefore, that in his philosophical images of nature Milton draws upon the commonly accepted ideas of his time, ideas that subordinated nature to God and that assigned to man an important place in the universe.

Also typical, in many respects, of the seventeenth century is his emotional response to what Wordsworth calls

The outward shows of sky and earth
Of hill and valley.

There is, of course, none of Wordsworth's mysticism in Milton, but neither is there Wordsworth's delight, shared by the other romantic writers, in the wild or magnificent aspects of nature. Wordsworth, for example, who traveled through the Alps, has much to say of their grandeur; Milton, who had the same experience, says nothing.[10] It is even possible that he reacted as did his contemporary, James Howell:

I am now got over the Alps and returned to France. I had crossed and clambered up the Pyrenees to Spain before; they are not so high and hideous as the Alps, but for our mountains in Wales, as Eppint and Pen winmaur, which are so much cried up amongst us,[11] they are molehills in comparison of these, they are but pigmies compared to giants, but blisters compared to impostumes, or pimples to warts. Besides our mountains in Wales bear always something useful to man or beast,

[10] The lines in L'A*llegro*
Mountains on whose barren brest
The labouring clouds do often rest
were written before he had ever seen a mountain. For an allusion to cold mountain air see Chapter 6, note 92.

[11] For their size, not their beauty.

some grass at least; but these uncouth huge monstrous excrescences of nature, bear nothing (most of them) but craggy stones.

(Epistolae Ho-elianae, "To Sir J. H., from Lyons," Vol. I, sec. I)

At any rate, Milton includes in Hell "many a Frozen, many a fierie Alpe" and in the Garden of Eden nothjng more rugged than gently sloping hills.[12] In general, the European landscape made little impression on him, for he has very few references to it. There is the memory of the Italian forests in autumn:

> [Satan] stood and call'd
> His Legions, Angel Forms, who lay intrans't
> Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks
> In *Fallombrosa,* where th'Etrurian shades
> High overarch't imbowr. *(P.L.,* II, 19)

Yet this is not in itself a scene peculiar to Italy; he might as easily have come upon it in England. A curious circumstance in connection with this passage is that today, and as early as I789,[13] the streams at Vallombrosa could not be thickly covered with leaves because the high overarching trees consist almost entirely of evergreens. Possibly he was characteristically using the proper names for their sonorous effect; possibly his recollection of the exact locale of this experience failed him; but more probably at a time subsequent to his visit the character of the timber changed for some reason such as the cutting of the forests or a fire.

The aftereffect of such a fire forms the basis of another simile which may be Italian in its setting. Satan's followers on the plain of Hell

> stood,
> Thir Glory witherd. As when Heavens Fire
> Hath scath'd the Forrest Oaks, or Mountain Pines,
> With singed top thir stately growth though bare
> Stands on the blasted Heath. (P.L., II, 30)

[12] The Garden is, of course, itself elevated to provide seclusion.
[13] *Milton's Poetical Works,* ed. Todd, II (1826), 49-50.

This is not easy to visualize, since mountain pines are represented as standing on a heath—relatively flat ground, though it may be high. Perhaps Milton is thinking of an Alpine upland.[14] In one final scenic simile he almost certainly had such a spot in mind: as the Great Consult ends with the plan for Satan's attack on man,

> Thus they thir doubtful consultations dark
> Ended rejoycing in thir matchless Chief:
> As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds
> Ascending, while the North wind sleeps, o'respread
> Heav'ns chearful face, the lowring Element
> Scowls ore the dark'nd lantskip Snow, or showre;
> If chance the radiant Sun with farewell sweet
> Extend his ev'ning beam, the fields revive,
> The birds thir notes renew, and bleating herds
> Attest thir joy, that hill and valley rings. *(P.L.,* II, 55)

It will be observed that even when Milton makes use of mountains, he does not think of them as beautiful; they are merely the spot where storms originate.[15]

(In Italy, Milton delighted not in the scenery but in the society. He was charmed with his flattering reception by the Academies, where he met many celebreties. So far as the imagery is concerned, all this experience is illustrated by his three references to Galileo) As early as *Areopagitica,* he speaks of visiting "the famous *Galileo* grown old, a prisner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise then the Franciscan and Dominican licencers thought." [16] The implication here is that ignorant churchmen had suppressed

[14] Critics suggest various literary parallels, particularly a passage in the *Iliad* (XIV, 414—417) in which Hector falls beneath the blow of a rock as an oak falls uprooted beneath the stroke of Zeus. The blasted heath, furthermore, suggests *Macbeth.* But the *Iliad* passage concerns a single tree, and one that is uprooted, not left standing. None of the suggested passages are close enough to make it more likely for Milton to have derived this image from books than from experience.

[15] Mountains may represent hardness and immovability: [If there is frigidity] "this adamantine *Alpe* of wedlock has leav to dissolve." *(Tetra.,* IV, 88)

[16] IV, 330.

scientific truth. By the time Milton wrote *Paradise Lost,* however, this visit had come to have tragic personal associations. The old and blind poet was moved by the memory of his young self gazing upon the old and blind astronomer. This is, of course, speculation, for the images do not mention Galileo's blindness or his own. Yet it seems to suggest the only plausible reason for the emphasis on this one particular man. Certainly Milton does not accept Galileo's theories, or at least has grave doubts about them:

> the broad circumference [of Satan's shield]
> 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; *(P.L.,* II, 18)

> [From the gates of Heaven Raphael sees]
> Earth and the Gard'n of God, with Cedars crownd
> Above all Hills. As when by night the Glass
> Of *Galileo,* less assured, observes
> Imagind Lands and Regions in the Moon; (P.L., II, 153)

The scientist may be searching for lands and rivers in the moon and may think that he has found them, but there is no certainty in the matter.[17] The same thing is true of sunspots:

> There [on the sun] lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
> Astronomer in the Sun's lucent Orbe
> Through his glaz'd Optic Tube yet never saw. *(P.L.,* II, 98)

"Perhaps" is the key word. Without it, the passage would mean that no sunspot, however portentous, could equal the Devil himself in malignancy. Such a thing does not admit of doubt. With it, the passage seems to mean that Satan was a real sunspot, and that perhaps an astronomer, in spite of all he had said, had never seen anything similar. If this is the correct interpretation, then Galileo is no longer the perse-

[17] The probability is that Milton had looked through Galileo's telescope on the occasion of his visit.

cuted champion of truth; he is the man whose infirmity Milton has the most poignant reason for remembering.

Nor does the landscape of England impress him as it did Wordsworth. He has no description like the panorama in *Tintern Abbey* with its characteristic details such as the "hardy hedgerows." Milton's landscape, the Garden of Eden,[18] is of course idealized and belongs to no specific locality. Its mingled and contrasted delights—fresh fountain, rippling brooks, and still lake; hills, valleys, and plains; sun-warmed meadows, and cool vine-shaded caves—suggest an artistic composition rather than the open country, except that the flowers grow at random instead of being disposed by

> nice Art
> In Beds and curious Knots. (P.L., II, 115)

Yet this is his only disparaging reference to the art of horticulture. In all other cases he shows an interest in it that is also a characteristic of his contemporaries. He felt that a garden was a delightful place through which to stroll in a moment of relaxation :

> And adde to these retired leasure
> That in trim Gardens takes his pleasure; (*Il Pen.,* I, 41)

but he had more than mere aesthetic appreciation of its charms. He knew how much was involved in its upkeep, as is made evident by two figures that between them cover a good many of the technical details of gardening. In the first, he attacks Oxford and Cambridge as

> those places, which were intended to be the seed plots of piety and the Liberall Arts, but were become the nurseries of superstition;
> (*ApoL,* III, 335-336)

in the second, he attacks the bishops' claims of jurisdiction. The figure, one of his most fully elaborated, might almost be called a fable:

[18] **For a discussion of the classical allusions in this description, see Chapter 6.**

which is the worthiest worke of these two, to plant, as every Ministers office is equally with the Bishops, or to tend that which is planted, which Prelates call jurisdiction, and would appropriate to themselves as a businesse of higher dignity? heare a Law case: A certaine man of large possessions, had a faire Garden, and kept therein an honest and laborious servant, whose skill and profession was to set or sow all wholsome herbs, and delightfull flowers, according to every season, and what ever else was to be done in a well-husbanded nursery of plants and fruits; now, when the time was come that he should cut his hedges, prune his trees, looke to his tender slips, and pluck up the weeds that hinder'd their growth, he gets him up by breake of day, and makes account to doe what was needfull in his garden, and who would thinke that any other should know better than he how the dayes work was to be spent? Yet for all this there comes another strange Gardener that never knew the soyle, never handl'd Dibble or Spade to set the least pot-herbe that grew there, much lesse had endur'd an houres sweat or chilnesse, and yet challenges as his right the binding or unbinding of every flower, the clipping of every bush, the weeding and worming of every bed both in that, and all other Gardens thereabout; the honest Gardener, that ever since the day-peepe, till now the Sunne was growne somewhat ranke, had wrought painfully about his bankes and seed-plots at this commanding voyce, turnes suddenly about with some wonder, and although hee could have well beteem'd [consented] to have thankt him of the ease hee profer'd, yet loving his owne handiworke, modestly refus'd him, telling him withall, that for his part, if hee had thought much of his owne paines, he could for once have committed the worke to one of his fellow-labourers, for as much as it is well knowne to be a matter of lesse skill and lesse labour to keepe a Garden handsome, then it is to plant it, or contrive it, and that he had already performed himselfe. No, said the stranger, this is neither for you nor your fellowes to meddle with, but for me onely that am for this purpose in dignity farre above you, and the provision which the Lord of the soyle allowes me in this office is, and that with good reason, ten fold your Wages; the Gardener smil'd and shooke his head, but what was determined I cannot tell you till the end of this Parliament. *(Anim.,* III, 158-159)

Here we find an understanding not only of the various jobs to be done in the garden itself but also of the preliminary work in the greenhouse, the management of seed plots, nurseries, slips, pot-herbs, and the setting of herbs.

A garden with its wholesome herbs and flowers is, then,

the symbol of conscientious and loving interest and of pastoral care. Conversely, brambles and thistles stand for neglect and for barren controversies of the schoolmen, subjects which make asses of those who are forced to pursue them:

> it is not likely that the charming . . . Muses preside over these shrivelled . . . subjects . . . there never was a place for them on Parnassus, except perhaps some neglected corner at the bottom of the hill, dismal, rough and wild with brambles and thorns, covered over with thistles and dense nettles ... a place which neither yields laurels nor produces flowers; *(Prolusion III,* XII, 163)

> [under the present system of education] we have now to hale and drag our choisest . . . Wits to that asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles which is commonly set before them, as all the food ... of their tenderest . . . age; *(Educ.,* IV, 280)

> [students] comming to the Universities to store themselves with good and solid learning, and there unfortunately fed with nothing else, but the scragged and thorny lectures of monkish and miserable sophistry, were sent home again with such a scholastical burre in their throats, as hath stopt and hinderd all true and generous philosophy from entring, crackt their voices for ever with metaphysical gargarisms [gargles]. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 273)

In another important group of images, dealing not with the art of gardening or its neglect but with the flowers themselves, Milton's fondness for them is likewise evident, although it appears only in connection with those that bloom early. Spring blossoms represent youth. The cheeks of the girls whom he sees in London are compared to hyacinths and anemones.[19] Buds represent youthful vigor:

> [Comus offers the Lady] all the pleasures
> That fancy can beget on youthfull thoughts,
> When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
> Brisk as the *April* buds in Primrose-season; *(Comus,* I, no)

and youthful accomplishment:

[19] ***Elegy I,* I, 173. If Milton had in mind the classical hyacinth, the fritillary, it blooms in April.**

But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
(How soon hath Time, I, 60)

The thoughtless and untimely picking of a spring flower represents the death of a young lady:

So have I seen some tender slip
Sav'd with care from Winters nip,
The pride of her carnation train,
Pluck't up by som unheedy swain,
Who onely thought to crop the flowr
New shot up from vernal showr. *(An Epitaph,* I, 29-30)

The social standing of the lady (who was no less than a Marchioness) or her moral excellence is implicit in the image. The bloom is not an ordinary seedling that needs only a shower to make it grow; it is a choice slip, or cutting from an older flower, which had been carefully preserved through the winter and finally transplanted in the spring to the garden.

The killing of flowers by a late frost[20] represents the death of the young Lycidas:

[As killing as] Frost to Flowers . . .
Such, *Lycidas,* thy loss to Shepherds ear; (I, 78)

the death of an infant:

O fairest flower no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken Primrose fading timelesslie,
Summers chief honour if thou hadst out-lasted
Bleak winters force that made thy blossome drie;
(On the Death of a Fair Infant, I, 15)

or the dashing of a brief hope—at the thought of ransoming Samson, Manoah felt a joy

which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Nipt with the lagging rear of winters frost *(S.A.,* I, 393)

Doubtless the same association underlies the passage from *Lycidas* describing the flowers that strew his hearse,[21] Of the

[20] This image is rare except in Shakespeare. Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* p. 91.
[21] Lines 142-151. Some of the flowers are directly described, some are personified.

ten earthly flowers, excluding the legendary, unfading amaranthus,[22] all are in bloom by June, and all but one by May.[23] For the young Lycidas spring flowers would be more appropriate than any others. In the case of the passage describing the bower of Adam and Eve,[24] the evidence is almost as strong. Seven out of the nine flowers and flowering shrubs bloom early.[25] Milton selects blooms appropriate to the youthful innocence and freshness of the Garden in which

> Universal *Pan*
> Knit with the *Graces* and the *Hours* in dance
> Led on th' Eternal Spring.[26] *(P.L.,* Il, 116)

It is true that this spring included the luxuries of other seasons. When Eve entertained Raphael, on the table there was

> All *Autumn* pil'd, though *Spring* and *Autumn* here
> Danc'd hand in hand. *(P.L.,* Il, 158)

Yet though the fruits of Eden are late, its flowers are early.

This love of spring flowers is included in a wider response to the delights of that season. The ground thaws:[27]

we that have liv'd so long in abundant light, besides the sunny reflection of all the neighbouring Churches, have yet our hearts . . . benumm'd with the same fleshly reasonings, which in our forefathers soone melted and gave way, against the morning beam of *Reformation* ... if we

[22] This is probably included for its poetic associations and as a symbol of immortality. There is a real amaranthus, known as Prince's Feather or Love-lies-bleeding, but it is highly unlikely that this is the flower that Milton means.

[23] The early flowers are: primrose, crow-toe (either wild hyacinth which is also called bluebell; male orchis; or buttercup), pink, pansy, violet, woodbine (in England, the honeysuckle), cowslip, daffodil, and muskrose, assuming that this is the wild musk-mallow. If it is the white rambling rose, it blooms in July. The only flower later than May is the jessamine, which blooms in June.

[24] *Paradise Lost,* Bk. IV, 11. 689-703. The passage is non-figurative.

[25] The early flowers are: iris, crocus, hyacinth, violet, and jessamine; the later flower is the rose. The early shrubs are: laurel, and myrtle. In England, the acanthus blooms in July, but it is common in the region of the Mediterranean where, of course, it blooms earlier. It should, perhaps, be remarked that some varieties of roses bloom as early as June. In the Garden there is also citron, balm, myrrh, cassia and hard.

[26] Milton again associates flowers with spring in *P.L.,* Bk. X, 11. 678-679.

[27] Milton has several unusual images of freezing. See below, under touch images.

freeze at noone after their earely thaw, let us feare lest the Sunne for ever hide himselfe; *(Anim.,* III, 146)

in the renewed warmth the mists disperse, and not only flowers but also herbs and crops spring up:

[A true religious leader will come] like that Sun of righteousnesse that sent him, with healing in his wings, and new light to break in upon the chill and gloomy hearts of his hearers, raising out of darksome barrennesse a delicious, and fragrant Spring of saving knowledge, and good workes; *(Anim.,* III, 164)

[Bishops pride themselves on keeping away schism] The Winter might as well vaunt it selfe against the Spring, I destroy all noysome and rank weeds, I keepe downe all pestilent vapours. Yes and all wholesome herbs, and all fresh dews, by your violent & hidebound frost; but when the gentle west winds shall open the fruitfull bosome of the earth thus over-girded by your imprisonment, then the flowers put forth and spring, and then the Sunne shall scatter the mists, and the manuring hand of the Tiller shall root up all that burdens the soile without thank to your bondage. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 214)

Spring and spring flowers appeal to nearly everyone, but it is not clear in Milton's case why the later seasons with their flowers did not also appeal to him as they did, for example, to Bacon.

One further point should be noted. As a result of his weak eyesight he does not employ really delicate descriptive detail. In this respect he differs markedly from Shakespeare; for example, consider Milton's cowslip,

> Cowslips wan that hang the pensive head, *(Lycidas,* I, 82)

as compared to Shakespeare's,

> On her left breast
> A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
> I' the bottom of a cowslip. *(Cymbeline,* II, ii, 37-39)

Milton's other images dealing with details of horticulture and with growing things in general[28] do not show such

[28] The canker-worm; grafting; the growth and spread of a weed or plant (pumpkin, mushroom, and bean-pod are used in derogatory images); budding, blossoming; rinds, husks; vines, trees, trunk, branches (Milton puns on Moms

marked individuality, but a few examples may be cited to demonstrate their quality:

[In *Eikon Basilike,* the King revealed] more of Mysterie and combination between Tyranny and fals Religion, then from any other hand would have bin credible. Heer we may see the very dark roots of them both turn'd up, and how they twine and interweave one another in the Earth, though above ground shooting up in two sever'd Branches;
(Eikon., V, 226)

[The composition of verses and the like] are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like . . . the plucking of untimely fruit;
(Educ., IV, 278)

[If Adam is temperate]
So maist thou live, till like ripe Fruit thou drop
Into thy Mothers lap, or be with ease
Gatherd, not harshly pluckt, for death mature. *(P.L.,* II, 364)

In the more practical activity of farming he shows much less interest. He has a few images of country folk: a harvest queen crowned with a garland, a laborer returning home in the evening,[29] a young hind

ambitious to shew his betters that hee is not so simple as you take him,
(Colast., IV, 257)

a farmer, observing the sky in a drought, or fearful of a storm[30]—angels confronting Satan

began to hemm him round
With ported Spears, as thick as when a field
Of *Ceres* ripe for harvest waving bends
Her bearded Grove of ears, which way the wind
Swayes them; the careful Plowman doubting stands
Least on the threshing floore his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff; (P.L., II, 141)

He also makes use of a number of homely details that in all probability he had observed at first hand: the manner in which seed propagates,

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and morus-mulberry) ; woods, forest; soil, seeds; as well as other images that may or may not apply to a garden, such as planting, decay, and rot.

[29] See below, "The Cherubim descended," etc.

[30] This is developed from *Iliad,* II, 147.

It is not therefore man as a regenerate being, but man in his animal capacity, that propagates his kind; as seed, though cleared from the chaff and stubble, produces not only the ear or grain, but also the stalk and husk; *(Ch.Doct.,XV,* 197)

methods of raising and preserving the crop,

[Milton's opponent depends on] his margent, which is the sluce most commonly, that feeds the drouth of his text; *(Apol,* III, 323)

let us not for feare of a scarre-crow [encroachment on the King's prerogative] . . . stand hankering; *(Ref.,* III, 73)

[Anselme] little dreamt then that the weeding-hook of reformation \would . . . pluck up his glorious poppy from insulting over the good corne; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 208)

harvesting:

[Do not be awed by men who quote the Church Fathers] Do but winnow their chaffe from their wheat, ye shall see their great heape shrink and wax thin past beliefe; *(Apol.,* III, 358)

[King has quoted from Sidney's *Arcadia]* I lookt rather to have found him gleaning out of Books writt'n purposely to help Devotion;

(Eikon.,V, 88)

and distributing the grain:

should ye suppresse all this flowry crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this City, should ye set an *Oligarchy* of twenty ingrossers over it, to bring a famin upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measur'd to us by their bushel? *(Areo.,* IV, 345)

In addition, he includes a study of agriculture in his scheme of Education.[31] Yet since England was still largely rural, his farming images are not very different from those of men as unlike farmers as Lord Brooke and Bishop Hall.[32]

[31] "The next step would be to the Authors *Agriculture, Cato, Varro,* and *Columella,* for the matter is most easie, and if the language be difficult, so much the better, it is not a difficulty above their years. And here will be an occasion of inciting and inabling them hereafter to improve the tillage of their Country, to recover the bad Soil, and to remedy the waste that is made of good: for this was one of *Hercules* praises" *(Educ.,* IV, 282).

[32] "Errour being like the Jerusalem-Artichoake; plant it where you will, it overrunnes the ground and choakes the heart" (Brooke, *A Discourse opening*

These, then, are the less original aspects of his response to nature, but they are relatively unimportant. Much more conspicuous, and highly individual, are the images devoted to the pageantry of the heavens, the rising, shining, and setting of the sun, moon, and stars, by which he was fascinated throughout his life. The sun is pure, powerful, and dazzlingly brilliant:[33]

Truth is as impossible to be soil'd by any outward touch, as the Sun beam; *(Doct. Div.,* III, 370)

[Prelacy is like a serpent] shot to death with the darts of the sun, the pure and powerful beams of Gods word.[34] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 275)

We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the Sun it self, it smites us into darknes. Who can discern those planets that are oft *Combust,* and those stars of brightest magnitude that rise and set with the Sun, untill the opposite motion of their orbs bring them to such a place in the firmament, where they may be seen evening or morning. The light which we have gain'd, was giv'n us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge.

(Area., IV, 338)

It serves as the symbol of God's truth:

such is the order of Gods enlightning his Church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it;

(Areo., IV, 350)

as well as of the merits of Parliament:

no sooner did the force of so much united excellence meet in one globe of brightnesse and efficacy, but encountring the dazl'd resistance of tyranny they [conquered], *(Apol,* III, 337)

As the sun drops low, the mist rises:

. . . *Episcopasie,* p. 59) ; "Divine Institution . . . [can stand alone] but Humane is like the weake *Vine* or *Hop,* which without a pole, must creepe, and so rot, upon the earth" *(ibid.,* p. 89) ; "No hay-cock hath beene oftner shaken abroad, and tossed up and downe in the winde, then every argument of yours hath been agitated by more able pens then mine" (Hall, *A Short Answer,* p. 100).

[33] Occasionally the sun is hot.

[34] This figure is of course based primarily on the myth of the slaying of the python by Apollo. See Chapter 5. For other descriptions of nature involving myths see Chapter 6.

[About to expel Adam and Eve from the garden]
The Cherubim descended; on the ground
Gliding meteorous,[35] as Ev'ning Mist
Ris'n from a River o're the marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the Labourers heel
Homeward returning. (P.L., II, 401)

The level rays reach across the country:[36]

[If, after a storm] the radiant Sun with farewell sweet
Extend his ev'ning beam, the fields revive.[37] (P.L., II, 55)

Then comes the brilliant display of sunset colors, like the worldly ostentation of a monarch's court, followed by the sharply contrasting monotone of twilight, suggestive of religious holiness:

[The sun is]
Arraying with reflected Purple and Gold
The Clouds that on his Western Throne attend:
Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray-
Had in her sober Liverie all things clad; *(P.L.,* II, 127)

the gray-hooded Eev'n
Like a sad Votarist in Palmers weed
Rose from the hindmost wheels of *Phoebus* wain. *(Comus,* I, 92)

Night is still, and the song of the nightingale brings a sense of relaxed calm and makes the moon itself pause in delight:

Philomel will deign a Song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While *Cynthia* checks her Dragon yoke,
Gently o're th' accustomed Oke.[38] (// *Pen.,* I, 42)

[35] **A meteor was any atmospheric phenomenon. Mist (as here), dew, etc., were aqueous meteors.**

[36] **The simultaneous effect of long shadows is found in a non-figurative line from *Lycidas:***

And now the Sun had stretch'd out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the Western Bay. (I, 83)

[37] **For the complete passage see above, under Italian scenery: "Thus they thir doubtful consultations," etc.**

[38] **Cynthia, the moon goddess, was identified with Hecate. Ovid's Renaissance commentators attributed to Hecate the dragon-chariot sent to Medea in answer to her prayer. D. P. Harding, *Milton and the Renaissance Ovid,* (Urbana, 111., 1946), p. 50.**

On a cloudy night the darkness seems sinister to one who is lost :

> [The Lady's brothers left her]
> And envious darknes, e're they could return,
> Had stole them from me, els O theevish Night
> Why shouldst thou, but for som fellonious end,
> In thy dark Lantern thus close up the Stars; *(Comus,* I, 92)

until the moon breaks through:

> I did not err, there does a sable cloud
> Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
> And casts a gleam over this tufted Grove. *(Comus,* I, 93)

Here the effect is that of a small opening in a heavy cloud. A quite different effect is produced by a cloud's thining out across the face of the moon:

> Unmuffle ye faint Stars, and thou fair Moon
> That wontst to love the travellers benizon,
> Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
> And disinherit *Chaos,* that raigns here. *(Coinus,* I, 97)

And a still different one when the sky is filled with small, broken clouds:

> [Milton sees] the wandring Moon,
> Riding neer her highest noon,
> Like one that had bin led astray
> Through the Heav'ns wide pathles way;
> And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
> Stooping through a fleecy cloud; (// *Pen.,* I, 42)

Here the moon shines full enough on the clouds to make them white, but keeps appearing and disappearing behind a succession of them. Finally, if the sky clears, the moon diffuses a radiance over everything:

> *Hesperus* that led
> The starrie Host, rode brightest, till the Moon
> Rising in clouded Majestic, at length
> Apparent Queen unvaild her peerless light,
> And o're the dark her Silver Mantle threw. *(P.L.,* II, 128)

Compared to the moon, the stars are faint. By the time Satan returned to Hell after the temptation, the brightness of his form had dwindled from the "excess of glory ob scured," like that of the sun behind clouds,[39] to the glitter of starlight:

> At last as from a Cloud his fulgent head
> And shape Starr bright appeer'd, or brighter, clad
> With what permissive glory since his fall
> Was left him, or false glitter. (P.L., II, 320)

Yet, alone in the dark sky, they shine like jewels,[40] in a cluster of fine, bright rays:

> Mark what radiant state she [the Countess] spreds,
> In circle round her shining throne,
> Shooting her beams like silver threds; *(Arcades,* I, 72)

Falling stars also made a deep impression upon him. He notes their brightness and speed :

> Swift as the Sparkle of a glancing Star,
> I [Attendant Spirit] shoot from Heav'n; *(Comus,* I, 88)
>
> [Mulciber] Dropt from the Zenith like a falling Star;
> *(P.L.,* II, 35)

their extended path across the sky:

> [Azazel] from the glittering Staff unfurld
> Th'Imperial Ensign, which full high advanc't
> Shon like a Meteor streaming to the Wind; (P.L., II, 27)

and their seasonal occurrence:

> Thither came *Uriel* gliding through the Eeven
> On a Sun beam swift as a shooting Starr
> In *Autumn* thwarts the night, when vapors fir'd
> Impress the Air, and shews the Mariner
> From what point of his Compass to beware
> Impetuous winds; *(P.L.,* II, 126)
>
> [Satan] like an Autumnal Star
> Or Lightning thou shalt fall from Heav'n. *(P.R.,* II, 481)

[39] See below, under images of dawn.

[40] Nearly all the images turn on the brightness of the stars; only a few on their number.

Yet lovely as these may be, a comet is far more awe-inspiring. Once seen it is never forgotten: his progress barred by the figure of Death,

> Incenst with indignation *Satan* stood
> Unterrifi'd, and like a Comet burn'd,
> That fires the length of *Ophlucus* huge
> In th'Artick Sky, and from his horrid hair
> Shakes Pestilence and Warr. *(P.L.,* II, 63)

While Milton must have known of the various comet similes in literature,[41] he is here almost certainly recalling a childhood experience. In 1618 a magnificent comet with a tail of great length appeared in the constellation Ophiuchus,[42] and such a spectacle with all its attendant superstitious agitation must surely have made a profound impression on the mind of a ten-year-old boy. Ophiuchus, however, is not in the Arctic regions; it extends over the celestial equator, partly in the Northern and partly in the Southern Hemisphere. The phrase "th'Artick Sky" is, therefore, puzzling.[43] Finally, there is the figure of an imagined event more awe-inspiring than any comet. As Michael and Satan began their single combat, the other angels retired

> unsafe within the wind
> Of such commotion, such as to set forth
> Great things by small, If Natures concord broke,

[41] Vergil, Dante, Tasso, Spenser, DuBartas, and others. Milton and DuBartas both compare the sword brandished over the Garden of Eden to a flaming comet. See below, note 98.

[42] G. F. Chambers, *The Story of the Comets* (Oxford, 1910), pp. 228-229.

[43] The least unsatisfactory explanation is that Milton changed its position in order to increase the effectiveness of his simile; the comet is identified with Satan, Ophiuchus means "the serpent-bearer," and Satan is associated with the regions of the north. It is hard to believe that Milton would thus juggle astronomical facts. On the other hand, he is not likely to have made a mistake. Since he knows that Ophiuchus is huge, presumably he also knows where it is; furthermore, if the comet of 1618 really made a lasting impression, he doubtless remembered that he saw it in the south. He may possibly have confused Ophiuchus with Draco, the Dragon, also applicable to Satan, which is both huge and in the arctic sky. "Artick" cannot mean "wintry" or "cold," because during the coldest part of the winter Ophiuchus is too near the position of the sun to be visible.

Among the Constellations warr were sprung,
Two Planets rushing from aspect maligne
Of fiercest opposition in mid Skie,
Should combat, and thir jarring Sphears confound. *(P.L.,* II, 189)

At last the stars give way to the dawn, the day-star alone remaining still bright:

Fairest of Starrs, last in the train of Night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crownst the smiling Morn
With thy bright Circlet. *(P.L.,* II, 150)

Dawn is a time of freshness and purity:

[Christ shall] rise
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light; (P.L., II, 393)

[Adam begs Eve not to] cloud those looks
That wont to be more chearful and serene
Then when fair Morning first smiles on the World.
(P.L., II, 148)

Dawn is therefore hated by evil creatures such as Comus:

[Cotytto's rites must be completed]
Ere the blabbing Eastern scout,
The nice Morn on th' *Indian* steep
From her cabin'd loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun discry
Our concealed Solemnity. *(Comus,* I, 90)

The stillness is broken by the song of the lark and other birds, the crowing of the cock, the barking of hounds, and the sound of the huntsman's horn. The scented wind springs up in the leaves:[44]

the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbring leaves; *(Arcades,* I, 74)

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet. (P.L., II, 129)

The "high lawns," drenched in dew, appear in the first grey light that, like evening, breathes the spirit of holiness:

[44] Cf. [Dawn] "The season, prime for sweetest Sents and Aires" *(P.L.,* II, 267).

While the still morn went out with Sandals gray; *(Lycidas,* I, 83)

morning fair
Came forth with Pilgrim steps in amice gray;
Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of Thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly Spectres. *(P.R.,* II, 474)

Later the light deepens, sometimes turning to a clear, bright rose:

the Morn,
All unconcerned with our unrest, begins
Her rosie progress smiling; *(P.L.,* II, 351-352)

sometimes to an angrier red, the indication of later storm:

the epithet of modest there [in the title of the Remonstrant's book], was a certaine red portending signe, that he meant ere long to be most tempestuously bold, and shamelesse. *(Apol.,* III, 309)

Conversely, a dull dawn often precedes a fine day:

I wish that the beginning of my oration should resemble the very early dawn from whose gloomy clouds the clearest day is usually born. *(Prolusion I,* XII, 123)

Generally, there are clouds of some sort—dark rain clouds:

Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appeer,
Not trickt and frounc't as she was wont,
With the Attick Boy to hunt,
But Cherchef't in a comely Cloud,
While rocking Winds are Piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the russling Leaves,
With minute drops from off the Eaves; (// *Pen.,* I, 44)

red:

the Sun in bed,
Curtain'd with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an Orient wave; *(Nat. Ode,* I, 10)

or brilliantly varied:

[Milton sometimes walks]
Right against the Eastern gate,
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Roab'd in flames, and Amber light,
The clouds in thousand Liveries dight. *(L'ALL,* I, 36)

Finally, the sun is fully risen, still partly obscured:

[Satan appeared no less than] th' excess
Of Glory obscur'd: As when the Sun new ris'n
Looks through the Horizontal misty Air
Shorn of his Beams, or from behind the Moon
In dim Eclips disastrous twilight sheds; *(P.L.,* II, 29)

or shining clear :

pleasant the Sun
When first on this delightful Land he spreads
His orient Beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flour,
Glistring with dew; (P.L., II, 129)

and the cycle begins again:

Many [women] are in each Region passing fair
As the noon Skie. *(P.R.,* II, 429)

It is evident, therefore, that his most markedly individual nature images are those that record the ever changing beauties of the sky. For him "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

Second only to these images of the sky are his images of the sea. In his youth, he seems to have been indifferent to the sea, even though London was a port,[45] and up to 1639 he has only a few commonplaces referring to it.[46] In that year, however, he began his Grand Tour, which, in addition to his crossing of the Channel, included a voyage from Nice to Genoa. This experience, brief as it was, seems to have been

[45] The London river life never appears. See Chapter I, note 28.

[46] A harbor of rest, the sea of knowledge, and the helm of affairs. Among the late images we also find commonplaces such as: storms, waves, rocks, a pilot, and the like.

sufficient to awaken his interest in nautical matters and to broaden his knowledge of them.[47] Many of the figures have all the earmarks of direct observation;[48] they are correct in their use of technical terms, and are considerably more original than those of his contemporaries. We find significant figures: from the sea itself including both the shallows of the coast and the stormy deeps; from coastal navigation and commerce, the arrival of a ship in port, and the unloading of its freight; from the methods of keeping a ship afloat and of sailing it on the high sea; from naval warfare; and from sea life in general. There is, however, no indication of professional knowledge of deep-sea navigation, plotting a course, and the like. If these figures derive from experience, the impressions behind them must have been sharp. If they do not, his experience must have stimulated him to acquire his nautical knowledge through books.

Let us examine in detail these various aspects. The sea itself: the shallow waters along the shore delay and impede sailing; the high seas, on the other hand, are stormy and should not be ventured upon without proper ballast. Under the conventional system of education in Milton's day, the pupils were shifted too suddenly from the shallows to the deeps:

> [The pupils] having but newly left those Grammatick flats and shallows where they stuck unreasonably to learn a few words . . . [are] transported under another climate to be tost and turmoird with their unballasted wits in fadomless and unquiet deeps of controversie.
>
> *(Educ.,* IV, 278-279)

Again, shoal water is an impediment to progress:

> we are in danger to fall again upon the flats and shallows of Liturgie.
>
> *(Eikon.,V,* 261)

[47] **There is nothing in the history of seventeenth-century mercantilism to account for this awakened interest.**

[48] **Shakespeare's images are nearly all those of a landsman. Spurgeon, *op. cit.* pp. 47-48.**

It serves also as a measure of intellectual height; a fool soon gets out of his depth, Milton taunts his adversary with being a learned fool,

> with much toyle, and difficulty wading to his [Hall's] auditors up to the eyebrows in deep shallows that wet not the instep. *(Anim.,* III, 163)

From coastal navigation and commerce: to sail in the creek of custom and conventional thinking is easy; to go 'Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone" is hard. Hence, Milton does not expect his ideas on divorce to be well received by

> such whose capacity, since their youth run ahead into the easie creek of a System . . . sayls there at will. *(Doct. Div.,* III, 378)

At the end of a voyage the last task is to pass over the ford, or shallow water, that lies before the port. The final section of the book that Milton is refuting presents no greater difficulty:

> we have the Port within sight; his [Hall's] last Section which is no deepe one, remains only to be foarded, and then the wisht shoare; *(Apol,* III, 357)

Milton, bringing to land his mental cargo, will gladly submit to the custom's inspection of a liberal Parliament:

> [I] am returned, as to a famous and free Port, my self also bound by more then a *maritime* Law, to expose as freely what fraughtage I conceave to bring of no trifles; *(Tetra.,* III, 63)

His adversary has so unwieldy a cargo of citations that he needs extra room to unload them :

> Nor yet content with the wonted room of his [Hall's] margent, but he must cut out large docks and creeks into his text to unlade the foolish frigate[49] of his unseasonable autorities. *(Apol.,* III, 334)

From navigation on the high seas: a well-built and well-equipped ship is safe:

[49] Frigate applies to a merchantman as well as to a man-of-war.

[Sects] are but winds and flaws to try the floting vessell of our faith whether it be stanch and sayl well, whether our ballast be just, our anchorage and cable strong; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 222)

an unsound ship, on the other hand, is dangerous; furthermore, a square-rigged ship "upon the lee" has its sails aback, that is to say, is pointing into the wind, with the wind blowing on the forward side of the sails; in such a position it is without steerageway and practically helpless:

[The problem is] how to soder, how to stop a leak, how to keep up the floting carcas of a crazie, and diseased Monarchy . . . betwixt wind, and water, swimming still upon her own dead lees. *(Ref.,* III, 38)

The bishops in their elaborate vestments are like ships under full sail with their mazes of ropes:

see them under Sayl in all their Lawn, and Sarcenet, their shrouds, and tackle;(Ref.,III, 74)

they are as sure of themselves, as carelessly insolent in their dizzy and dangerous heights as sailors in the rigging:

Bishops [are] swaggering in the fore-top of the State. *(Ref.,* III, 52)

By mistakenly calling Parliament a Convocation, Remonstrant has been able

with one words speaking to clap as it were under hatches the King with all his Peeres. *(Apol,* III, 333)

From naval warfare: King Charles had determined to protect the Earl of Strafford but

both his conscience and this his strong resolution strook saile ... to his stronger fear *(Eikon.,* V, 92)

as one man-of-war to another.

From sea life, his most telling image is drawn from fishing. Attacking the authority of the Church Fathers, he declares that they are mere chance survivals, as miscellaneous a lot as the catch of a fisherman:

Whatsoever time, or the heedlesse hand of blind chance, hath drawne down from of old to this present, in her huge dragnet, whether Fish, or Sea-weed, Shells, or Shrubbs, unpickt, unchosen, those are the Fathers. *(Prelat. Epis.,* Ill, 82)

It will have been observed that the figures under all these categories are found in the prose written within a few years of his return when his interest would naturally have been keen. Yet several of the finest figures are found in his late writings and may well reflect the still vivid memories of this episode of his youth, although the proper names, doubtless employed for their romantic suggestiveness, disguise the actual circumstances. Making a landfall would have been, for the novice that he was, an exciting and hence memorable experience: Raphael, looking down from heaven, sees the earth as a

> Pilot from amidst the *Cyclades*
> *Delos* or *Samos* first appeering kenns
> A cloudy spot.[50] (P.L., II, 153)

So would have been the sighting of a ship on the horizon against a bank of clouds, among which it would seem to hang:[51] Satan is seen flying toward the gates of Hell,

> As when farr off at Sea a Fleet descri'd
> Hangs in the Clouds, by *Æquinoctial* Winds
> Close sailing from *Bengala,* or the Iles
> Of *Ternate* and *Tidore,* whence Merchants bring
> Their spicie Drugs; they on the Trading Flood
> Through the wide *Ethiopian* to the Cape
> Ply stemming nightly toward the Pole. So seem'd
> Farr off the flying Fiend;[52] *(P.L.,* II, 60)

[50] In a letter to the author Hughes writes: "I have always wondered whether there was not a specific literary source. The first sight of Delos must have been a great moment for those great 'concourses, both of Ionians and of the islanders round about' whom Thucydides describes as making annual pilgrimages to the shrine of Latona and Apollo by water. Hobbes's translation, 1676, p. 134."

[51] It is unlikely that Milton was thinking of a mirage.

[52] Fitzgerald writes to Charles Eliot Norton: "Tennyson again used to say that the two grandest of all Similes were those of the Ships hanging in the Air, and 'the Gunpowder one' [P.L., Bk. IV, 11. 814-819. See Ch. 3], which he

and for anyone a seventeenth-century ship must have been a thing of beauty, in particular when equipped with its long and purely decorative pennants: At Dalilah's approach the Chorus exclaims

> But who is this, what thing of Sea or Land?
> Female of sex it seems,
> That so bedeckt, ornate, and gay,
> Comes this way sailing
> Like a stately Ship
> Of *Tarsus,* bound for th' Isles
> Of *Javan* or *Gadier*
> With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
> Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
> Courted by all the winds that hold them play.[53] *(S.A.,* I, 362)

Two further images do not necessarily suggest a sea voyage but do show an awareness of the sea. When Satan gave his haughty answer to the loyal Abdiel, his followers approved :

> as the sound of waters .deep
> Hoarce murmur echo'd to his words applause. *(P.L.,* II, 175)

After Christ has repulsed one effort, Satan continues to tempt him, as

> surging waves against a solid rock,
> Though all to shivers dash't, the assault renew,
> Vain battry, and in froth or bubbles end. *(P.R.,* II, 459-460)

Basically this simile is commonplace, but the last line gives it freshness and shows that Milton had his eye on the ob-

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used slowly and grimly to enact, in the Days that are no more." *Letters of Edward Fitzgerald* (Macmillan, 1894), II, 193.

[53] G. M. Young *(TLS,* Jan. 9, 1937, p. 28) notes a similar figure in Harrington, *A Word concerning a House of Peers,* 1659: In comes the Commonwealth . .. with all its tackling, full sail, displaying its streamers, and flourishing with top and top-gallant. (Milton has also some details suggestive of the description of Cleopatra's barge in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra.* Dover Wilson, *TLS,* Jan. 16, 1937, p. 44). Harrington is hardly the source for Milton. It is more probable that both derive from a common source: either observation, if the dressing of a ship with streamers was a sufficiently ordinary occurrence; or accounts of sea-life.

ject. It seems clear, therefore, that once he had had an experience with the sea he found its appeal strong.

This appeal, as well as the others that we have been considering, was, of course, to his sense perceptions. In this connection, since almost all the evidence is furnished by the nature images, we must here analyze the physical effect that Milton's blindness had upon him.[54] A pronounced effect is hardly to be expected, as he did not wholly lose his sight until he was forty-four. Yet there is a perceptible change. We are told by Miss Eleanor G. Brown, who went blind early in her life and who bases her conclusions on her own experience as well as on medical authority, that "it is likely that the senses of odor, touch, and sound, which Milton manifested in his early poetry became even more acute in his blindness."[55] This is precisely the change that the images reveal.[56] It should, however, be realized that this increased acuteness is, so to speak, retroactive and includes not only experiences of his late years but also recollections of his early life which might otherwise have faded. Furthermore, it should be realized that with Milton, as with anyone else, the overwhelming majority of his sense impressions were visual, as is fully demonstrated by the passages already quoted. Consequently, even after his blindness, his images remained prevailingly visual.

The largest group of his visual images are those of brightness. There are so many of these that it might perhaps be said that he thought more in terms of light and darkness than of color.[57] Some are purely sensory: dew has the shimmer of glass beads or pearls; truth excels the orient lustre

[54] **All the evidence, that is, which is figurative. Obviously, much of it is not figurative, so that the question cannot be completely answered by means of imagery alone. However, since no answer has as yet been attempted, even partial and tentative conclusions are of value.**

[55] ***Milton's Blindness*** **(New York, 1934), p. 136.**

[56] **The images of taste, which throw no light on the problem, are included under the discussion of food, Chapter 2.**

[57] **The light is often specifically that of the sun. See Chapter 4.**

of a diamond; the spangled host of stars are blazing diamonds and living sapphires, and so on. The great majority of light images, however, have strong moral connotations; light symbolizes goodness or knowledge, darkness evil or ignorance.[58] This idea, commonplace in itself,[59] pervades his writing, and the variations he plays on the theme are remarkable. It appears as one of the basic concepts of *Paradise Lost,* where the brilliance of God, heaven, and the angels is contrasted to the darkness of hell and the progressive dimming of Satan's lustre. It appears equally prominently in his early works. The person of the infant Christ is, of course, as bright as that of the Father;[60] he is

> That glorious Form, that Light unsufferable,
> And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty; *(Nat. Ode,* I, i)

the discovery of truth resembles the dawn, a commonplace that Milton turns into a satiric thrust at the Presbyterians:

> He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be sent down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of *Geneva . . .* Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy, and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements; *(Areo.,* IV, 347)

truth is direct, error reflected light:

> [Milton dislikes being] put from beholding the bright countenance of truth ... to come into the dim reflexion of hollow antiquities;
> *(R. Ch. Gov.,* HI, 241)

virtue shines outwardly:

> Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
> So clear, as in no face with more delight;
> ("Methought I saw," I,69)

[58] **See Chapter 3, the start of a journey; Chapter 4, the coming of spring, and the sun. Nearly half are commonplaces: the light of reason, the light of nature, etc.**

[59] **For Milton it doubtless originated in the Bible, where it is found many times.**

[60] **See Arthur Barker, "The Pattern of Milton's *Nativity Ode," University of Toronto Quarterly,* X, No. 2 (January, 1941), 167-181.**

as well as inwardly:

> He that has light within his own cleer brest
> May sit i' th' center, and enjoy bright day,
> But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts
> Benighted walks under the mid-day Sun. *(Comus,* I, 99)

Closely allied to his partly sensuous and partly moral use of brightness is his use of color, an aspect of his visual sense that is purely physical.[61] Of his color images the largest single group is concerned with the varied hues of flowers and clouds: [62] in Eden, flowers

> with rich inlay
> Broiderd the ground ; *(P.L.,* II, 131)

at sunrise we see

> The clouds in thousand Liveries dight. *(L'All.,* I, 36)

The mingled colors of the countryside also appear several times, notably in the splendid lines of *Comns,* derived, no doubt, from Shakespeare: [63] Neptune rules

> the Sea-girt lies
> That like to rich, and various gemms inlay
> The unadorned boosom of the Deep. *(Comus,* I, 86)

It will be noticed that the second of these passages is poetic hyperbole, and that the others, fine as they are, show the vagueness of imagination rather than the sharpness of direct observation. He is fond of generalized effects where color is implied but not stated specifically, a fact which suggests that his color sense was not very discriminating.

This suggestion is borne out by his use of individual colors, a use neither extensive nor subtle. He speaks of the grey, red, and yellow of sunrise; of the purple and gold of sunset; of the grey of twilight; and of the silver and amber of the

[61] A small number employ white and black, like light and dark, in a moral sense: the whiteness and innocence of divine law; the black deeds of Morus, and the like.

[62] A smaller group has to do with the colors in clothes: rich robes, painted feathers, and a fool's motley. See Chapter I.

63 "This precious stone set in the silver sea" *(Richard II,* II, i, 46).

moon. He mentions green grass, ivy, flower-stalks, and water; black mist and thunder-clouds; white cliffs and snow; red lightning, the "glorious" poppy, the blushing anemone, the purple hyacinth, dark ("brown") myrtles, pale ("wan") cowslips, and "sad"-colored flowers; and gold, purple, azure, and green butterflies.[64] It is worth remarking that mist is not black, nor lightning red, but aside from these inaccuracies his sense of color seems normal,[65] and shows the same pattern throughout, almost every color being mentioned both early and late. However, these references are significant in that considerably more of them occur before his blindness than after,[66] although the difference is not decisive. Another significant fact is that the late poems do not make use of color where we might expect it; to cite only a few examples, the air is easily mixed, fluid, pure, still, gently breathing, but never blue; dewdrops are like stars, not like diamonds; a drop of water on the dust is conglobed—its shape is noted but not its color.[67] These differences are not in themselve conclusive, but they do suggest that in his later years he became less conscious of color.

The evidence of the images of smell points to the opposite conclusion.[68] In the early poems we find [69] the fragrance

[64] Outside of his nature images there are a few scattering color references: grey authority, locks white as down, the ruddy flame of a furnace mouth, and the like.

[65] The "three listed colours gay" of the rainbow were then normal, as only the primary colors of red, yellow, and blue were counted.

[66] Forty-one early, 27 late.

[67] Compare Marvel's dewdrop "dark beneath but bright above" *(On a Drop of Deiv).* In his prose Milton uses a water drop as a symbol of purity. Self-reverence is the fountainhead of virtuous action, but it "hath in it a most restraining and powerfull abstinence to start back, and glob it self upward from the mixture of any . . . unbeseeming motion, or any soile wherewith it may peril to stain it self" *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 260).

[68] A large number, like some of the color images, are given a moral significance. We find the scent of adultery, the reek of flattery, the stench of avarice, and the like. The most effective image characterizes the books that a censor would have to read in order to pass judgement upon them. This task is "an imposition which I cannot beleeve how he that ... is but of a sensible nostrill should be able to endure" *(Areo.,* IV, 322).

[69] In addition to non-figurative references to flowers, syrups, and spices.

of marigolds and roses, and less particularly of dawn [70] and of spring; [70] we find the beautiful, and for Milton very rare, use of smell to describe sound:

> [The Lady's song] a soft and solemn breathing sound
> Rose like a stream of rich distill'd perfumes; *(Comus,* I, 105)

and we find the wind scattering the smell of spices:

> And West winds with musky wing
> About the cedar'n alleys fling
> *Nard,* and *Cassias* balmy smels. *(Comus,* I, 122)

Yet these images hardly compare in number and quality to those of the late poems. In them we find as before the fragrance of flowers:

> the bright consummate floure
> Spirits odorous breathes;[72] *(P.L.,* II, 161)

> [At the creation of the earth the herbs] made gay
> Her bosom smelling sweet; (P.L., II, 223)

but this is now carried to the extreme of hyperbole :

> (*Eve* separate he spies,
> Veild in a Cloud of Fragrance, where she stood,
> Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round
> About her glowd. *(P.L.,* II, 275)

The picture is one of great beauty, our enjoyment of which is heightened by our remembering that Milton elsewhere tells us that the roses were "without thorn.)" Again, the idea of the wind's scattering odor is elaborated: at the banquet prepared by Satan,

> winds
> Of gentlest gale *Arabian* odors fann'd
> From their soft wings, and *Flora's* earliest smells. *(P.R.,* II, 437)

Here we find the odors of both spices and flowers ("earliest" may refer either to spring or to dawn), and in addition the soft touch of the air.[73] In another passage we find also its

[70] See above. [71] See above.
[72] For the entire image see above, the chain of being: "So from the root" etc.
[73] See below, images concerning air.

soft sound as well as the songs of birds:[74] as Adam led Eve to the nuptial bower,

> the Earth
> Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
> Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Aires
> Whisper'd it to the Woods, and from thir wings
> Flung Rose, flung Odours from the spicie Shrub,
> Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night
> Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Eevning Starr
> On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp. *(P.L.,* II, 253-254)

Finally, we have the elaborate description of the Garden of Eden heightened and enriched with echoes of his reading:[75]

> now gentle gales
> Fanning thir odoriferous wings dispense
> Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
> Those balmie spoiles. As when to them who saile
> Beyond the *Cape of Hope,* and now are past
> *Mozambic,* off at Sea North-East windes blow
> *Sabean* Odours from the spicie shoare
> Of *Arable* the blest, with such delay
> Well pleas'd they slack thir course, and many a League
> Chear'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.
> So entertaind those odorous sweets the Fiend
> Who came thir bane, though with them better pleas'd
> Then *Asmodeus* with the fishie fume,
> That drove him, though enamourd, from the Spouse
> Of *Tobits* Son, and with a vengeance sent
> From *Media* post to *Ægypt,* there fast bound. *(P.L.,* II, 112)

The perfumes are native to the Garden of Eden, yet they are as delightful as the exotic odors blown by the ocean wind from Arabia, as Diodorus Siculus tells us; and are especially delicious in contrast to the disgusting stench that, according to the book of *Tobit,* routed the demon.

Furthermore, in addition to these literary exhalations, we

[74] See below for other images of the sound of air.

[75] From his reading comes also the simile of a volcanic eruption with its thunderous noise and its stench. See below, note 97.

find a new and striking contrast between the unpleasant city and the pleasant country smells:

> As one who long in populous City pent,
> Where Houses thick and Sewers annoy the Aire,
> Forth issuing on a Summers Morn to breathe
> Among the pleasant Villages and Farmes
> Adjoynd, from each thing met conceaves delight,
> The smell of Grain, or tedded Grass, or Kine,
> Or Dairie, each rural sight, each rural sound;
> If chance with Nymphlike step fair Virgin pass,
> What pleasing seemd, for her now pleases more,
> She most, and in her look summs all Delight.
> Such Pleasure took the Serpent to behold
> This Flourie Plat, the sweet recess of *Eve. (P.L.,* II, 276)

Though the simile culminates in a visual image, there are no less than six specific odors listed in contrast to the generalized delights of "each rural sight, each rural sound."

In his reaction to the sounds of nature a somewhat surprising detail is the large number of references, figurative or direct,[76] to the song of birds, particularly the nightingale. It is surprising because, for the most part, the singing is merely mentioned but not described and is therefore not made especially conspicuous. Only two images avoid such general phrasing as "melodious sound" and the like. One, the metaphor of his hearing Shakespeare

> Warble his native Wood-notes wilde, *(L'ALL.,* I, 39)

suggests the delightful, but irregular and uninstructed cadences of a bird's song, contrasted by implication to the artificial symmetry of man-made music; and the other turns, even more specifically, on the monotony of the cuckoo's cry :

> how weakly is the using of sett forms [of prayer in the church service] attributed ... to *constancy,* as if it were constancie in the Cuckoo to be alwaies in the same liturgie. *(Eikon.,* V, 224)

Even here, however, he is far less definite than Wordsworth with his extraordinarily exact description of the cuckoo's

[76] See Chapters 4 and 5.

"two-fold shout." [77] Yet these images show no change in quantity or quality throughout Milton's writing, and throw no light on the problem under consideration. The images recording the sound of wind or storm are, however, very suggestive. Before his blindness we find only two. The first describes the night of Christ's birth:

> The Winds with wonder whist,
> Smoothly the waters kist,
> Whispering new joyes to the milde Ocean. *(Nat. Ode,* I, 3-4)

It will be observed that this is not really a sound image. A gentle wind playing over the surface of calm water would not whisper; it would not make any sound at all. Milton is here not trying to record a *sense* impression but is merely personifying nature in building up a mood. The second image, a personification of morning "civil-suited" and "kerchiefed," ends in a sharply detailed description of the leaves rustling and the drops falling slowly from the eaves.[78] To put against this single early image we have five late images: the whispering—the word is now accurately used—of the wind on the flowers and leaves:

> [Adam whispered to Eve] with voice
> Milde, as when *Zephyrus* on *Flora* breathes; *(P.L.,* II, 144)

> [As Adam led Eve to the nuptial bower] the Earth
> Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
> Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Aires
> Whisper'd it to the Woods; *(P.L.,* II, 253-254)

and the various stages of a storm.[79] Its approach:[80]

> [The Great Consult breaks up]
> Thir rising all at once was as the sound
> Of Thunder heard remote; *(P.L.,* II, 54-55)

[77] There are also a few images of the noises of animals, and two or three drawn from sources other than nature: the jangling of city bells, the uproar of a city's destruction, etc.

[78] The passage is quoted above in the images of dawn.

[79] For the visual effect of the wind in the grain see above, in the discussion of farming. Milton has a good many figures of thunder, lightning, and wind.

[80] See below, the joining of two storm clouds: "Such a frown," etc.

the downpour of rain, or perhaps sleet:[81]

> [Zophiel tells the loyal angels before the battle in heaven] this day will pour down,
> If I conjecture aught, no drizling showr,
> But ratling storm of Arrows barbd with fire; *(P.L.,* II, 197)

and the long continued aftereffects:

> He scarce had finisht, when such murmur filld
> Th'Assembly, as when hollow Rocks retain
> The sound of blustring winds, which all night long
> Had rous'd the Sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
> Sea-faring men orewatcht, whose Bark by chance
> Or Pinnace anchors in a craggy Bay
> After the Tempest: Such applause was heard
> As *Mammon* ended. (P.L., II, 48)

Equally suggestive are the images recording the sound of water.[82] Not one of these is early; all occur in *Paradise Lost* and show a wide range of effects: the swift and almost inaudible flow of a rivulet, after the flood the sun made the waters

> shrink
> From standing lake to tripping ebbe, that stole
> With soft foot towards the deep; (P.L., II, 375-376)

its cascading in spray and mist:

> [Adam awoke from his sleep] which th' only Sound
> Of leaves and fuming rills, *Aurora's* fan,
> Lightly dispersed, and the shrill Matin Song
> Of Birds on every bough; *(P.L.,* II, 144)

the quiet murmur of a full stream:

> [Adam wishes more information] as one whose drouth
> Yet scarce allay'd still eyes the current streame,
> Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites; *(P.L.,* II, 214)

[81] Sec below, the arrows of the Parthians.

[82] Nearly all of his images of water are visual: to pour, flow, overflow, flood ; a fountain, stream dividing into two branches, flowing muddily, etc. There is one fine personification: as the flood subsided, the wind "Wrinkl'd the face of Deluge, as decai'd" *(P.L.,* II, 375).

and the roar of a river in spate or of dashing waves:

> [God's] Chariot rowld, as with the sound
> Of torrent Floods; *(P.L.,* II, 207)

> [Satan spoke in scorn to Abdiel] and as the sound of waters deep
> Hoarce murmur echo'd to his words applause. *(P.L.,* II, 175)

This class of images, then, presents strong evidence that, after his blindness, Milton became more conscious of the sounds of nature or tended to think more in terms of sound.

As an experiment to check the reliability of this evidence, an analysis was made of all the non-figurative references to the appearance or sound of water in four early poems *(Comus, L'Allegro, II Penseroso,* and *Lycidas)* and three late poems *(Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes).* In the early poems the references are almost entirely visual:[83] the dimpled brook, the glassy cool translucent wave, the wide-watered shore, smooth-sliding Mincius, and the like. The only sound references are: the barking waves of Scylla and the soft applause of Charybdis, the water's murmuring, and the sounding seas. Even when allowance is made for the fact that a writer has a wider choice of sight words than of sound words, it is clear that in these poems the former are used with far more discrimination than the latter.

The late poems are markedly different. The visual references are about the same in quality as before: the cool crystalline stream, lucid streams, silver lakes, and so on, although it could be argued that no one descriptive adjective is as successful as the early "dimpled" or "smooth-sliding." They are, however, far less in quantity, while the sound references have increased in number,[84] and improved in quality: the murmuring sound of waters, the liquid lapse of murmuring streams, the whispering stream, the murmuring water's fall, the purling brook. They are still not equal to the

[83] Twenty-five sight, 4 sound. [84] Eleven sight, 5 sound.

sight references, but they are decidedly better than they were. The non-figurative passages, therefore, agree with the images in revealing an increase in emphasis on sound in his late work.[85]

The touch images show a similar change in emphasis. Many, it is true, are commonplace. We find heat and cold always given a moral meaning: the bishops are

hot Volumists and cold Bishops. *(Anim.,* Ill, 174)

We find the inflexibility of steel, the softness of snow and dew, the fragility of cobwebs, the heaviness of lead, the hardness of stone, rock, adamant, and flint. But we also find the very unusual hardness of ice or of substances frozen together:

our Saviours words touching divorce, are as it were congeal'd into a stony rigor; (Doct. *Div.,* Ill, 383)

> [Pharaoh] oft
> Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as Ice
> More hard'nd after thaw; *(P.L.,* II, 385)

[The obedient unanimity produced by censorship would be] doubtles a stanch and solid peece of frame-work, as any January could freeze together; *(Areo.,* IV, 335)

we may as soon fall again into a grosse conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of *wood and hay and stubble* forc't and frozen together;[86] *(Areo.,* IV, 349)

A few other miscellaneous images, both early and late, are also fresh:

> [Nature] set to work millions of spinning Worms,
> That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk;
> *(Comus,* I, III 12)

> [A child is a] Soft silken Primrose;
> *(On the Death of a fair Infant,* I, 15)

[85] This is a change peculiar to Milton. Shakespeare, for instance, is prevailingly visual, Wordsworth, to a much higher degree, auditory.

[86] The italicized phrase is from I Corinthians 3: 12, but the figure there is that of building on a foundation.

[Excommunication has] such a penetrating force, that swifter then any chimicall sulphur ... it scorches the inmost soul;
(R. Ch. Gov., III, 266)

[Parthians] shot
Sharp sleet of arrowie showers against the face
Of thir pursuers. *(P.R.,* II, 453)

One touch image is used very effectively to heighten the emotion at an important point in *Paradise Lost.* Just after Adam has eaten the apple, he and Eve lie down on the lap of earth. In the *Vacation Exercise* and in an earlier book of *Paradise Lost*[87] this lap is described as flowery; here the specific flowers produce a richer effect of color :

Flours were the Couch,
Pansies, and Violets, and Asphodel,
And Hyacinth, Earths freshest softest lap, (P.L., II, 297)

and to make the experience more luxurious, more sensuous than before the fall the flowers are also fragrant and soft.

All these images, while successful, show no chronological change. In the late poems, however, is found a group recording for the first time, with one exception,[88] a sensitivity to the movement and quality of the air. Only once is the experience disagreeable:

But prayer against his [God's] absolute Decree
No more availes then breath against the winde,
Blown stifling back on him that breaths it forth. (P.L., II, 356)

Once, the air is completely silent and breathless:

[Satan's] look
Drew audience and attention still as Night
Or Summers Noon-tide air. *(P.L.,* II, 48-49)

For the most part Milton is conscious of its freshness, coolness, purity, and gentleness. The opening lines of *Samson Agonistes* express the delight of being able to feel the warmth

[87] P.L., Bk. IV, 1. 254. Adam, however, wakens "soft on the flowery herb" (P.L.,Bk. VIII, 1.254).

[88] Milton does not wish to leave "the quiet and still air of delightfull studies" *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 241).

of the sun, the cool of the shade, and in particular the reviving stir of wind, the breath of heaven:

> A Little onward lend thy guiding hand
> To these dark steps, a little further on;
> For yonder bank hath choice of Sun or shade,
> There I am wont to sit, when any chance
> Relieves me from my task of servile toyl,
> Daily in the common Prison else enjoyn'd me,
> Where I a Prisoner chained, scarce freely draw
> The air imprisoned also, close and damp,
> Unwholsom draught: but here I feel amends,
> The breath of Heav'n fresh-blowing, pure and sweet,
> With day-spring born. *(S.A.,* I, 337)

The adjectives contrasting the two kinds of air make clear the poignancy of such an elementary experience. There can be little doubt that Milton is here describing how he felt on any occasion after his blindness when he went outdoors in the dawn of a clear day. It is possible, however, that he is describing an even more moving experience. Soon after the Restoration, he was, for a short period, under arrest and presumably actually in prison.[89] This passage may be based on his recollection of his confinement, "In darkness, and with dangers compast round," and of his being led out, free and safe, after the Act of Oblivion. However this may be,[90] it is certain that he makes use of his own sensations in a later passage in the same poem.[91] Samson's griefs are like festering wounds, his thoughts

> Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
> Dire inflammation which no cooling herb
> Or medcinal liquor can asswage,
> Nor breath of Vernal Air from snowy *Alp. (S.A.,* I, 359)

This sudden jump from a cool draught of medicine to a cool mountain breeze is totally unexpected and highly effective.

[89] Masson, *The Life of John Milton,* VI, 184-195.

[90] **It is true that the composition of *Samson Agonistes* cannot be dated, but there seems no reason to doubt that it was at least subsequent to 1660.**

[91] **The passage is discussed as a medical image in Chapter 2.**

Milton breathed such Alpine air when he journeyed from Italy to Switzerland in the spring of I 639,[92] and he recalled its keen purity some thirty years later. Cool air is especially grateful in summer. It may rise in light puffs from the surface of a stream: Satan tempted dreaming Eve that

> he might taint
> Th' animal Spirits that from pure blood arise
> Like gentle breaths from Rivers pure; *(P.L.,* Il, 135)

or it may be felt in the shadow of a passing cloud: Satan hoped that Christ

> Would stand between me and thy Fathers ire …
> A shelter and a kind of shading cool
> Interposition, as a summers cloud. *(P.R.,* Il, 450)

No less delightful than the coolness of the air is its purity, a characteristic of the yet innocent earth and in particular of Eden: As Satan draws near it,

> of pure now purer aire
> Meets his approach. (P.L., II, 111-112)

Its gentleness is recorded in three late descriptions of odorous winds, a detail which is unmentioned in early images of the same type.[93]

To sum up the evidence, we may say that the sensory images indicate that Milton's response to nature underwent a change. His visual sense, judging from his use of color, weakened, but his other senses—smell, hearing, and touch—became more quick and sharp. In so doing, they showed a development characteristic of a man who goes blind.

Finally, we come to a third class of nature images, which are neither philosophic nor sensory but literary. Most of these arise from Milton's subject matter. In many of the figures which have already been discussed he conveys an im-

[92] He left Venice in May and was in Geneva on June 10, 1639 (Masson, *op. cit.,* I, 776-779).

[93] See the wind images above.

pression of the hugeness, might, or dignity of Satan, or of the multitude of the forces he commands.[94] Often, however, he can find nothing in his familiar environment or in his memories that would enable him to produce the desired effect. In such cases he has recourse to his reading. For example, when surrounded by Gabriel's angelic guard

> *Satan* allarm'd
> Collecting all his might dilated stood,
> Like *Teneriff or Atlas* unremov'd. *(P.L.,* II, 141)

Presumably Milton used these mountains, which he had not seen, rather than such Alps as he had seen because they were not only famous but also more appropriate; Teneriffe, a single island peak, emphasizes Satan's isolation; the legendary Atlas, strong and high enough to support the heavens, emphasizes his power.

Again, when Satan and Death confront one another,

> such a frown
> Each cast at th' other, as when two black Clouds
> With Heav'ns Artillery fraught, come rattling on
> Over the *Caspian,* then stand front to front
> Hov'ring a space, **till** Winds the signal blow
> To joyn thir dark Encounter in mid air. *(P.L.,* II, 63)

The stormy Caspian appears several times in literature,[95] and this particular kind of storm is so unusual that he was far more likely to have read about it than to have experienced it.

Again, as the causeway from Hell is built, the scene is hardly more dreadful than the wild desolation of the Arctic ice fields described by the voyagers. Sin and Death pile up the crude elements of chaos

> As when two Polar Winds blowing adverse
> Upon the *Cronian* Sea, together drive
> Mountains of Ice, that stop th' imagin'd way

[94] See this chapter, *passim.*

[95] Horace, *Odes,* II, 9, 2. Similar references in Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered,* VI, 38; and Spenser, *faerie Queene,* II, vii, 14, doubtless derive from Horace.

Beyond *Petsora* Eastward, to the rich
Cathaian Coast. (P.L., II, 314-315)

In like manner, the fallen angels are as numberless as the hot sands of the North African desert,[96] and when transformed to snakes swarm more thickly than those on the Island of Ophiusa (now Formentera, one of the Balearic group) ; Hell is as bottomless as an Egyptian quicksand, "that *Scrbonian* bog," and looks like the crater of a volcano after an eruption.[97] So, too, Samson tugs at the pillars of the temple with the force of an earthquake.

On other occasions the bookish images are more unexpected. Milton could have found fitting ones in his environment, but he remembered what he had read rather than what he had experienced:[98]

[Corruption from foreign books] will finde a passage to the people farre easier and shorter then an Indian voyage, though it could be sail'd either by the North of *Cataio* Eastward, or of *Canada* Westward;

***(Areo.,* IV, 313)**

[Milton mentions a topic on which he feels strongly] I am come to a streame head copious enough to disburden it selfe like Nilus at seven mouthes into an ocean; *(English Correspondence,* XII, 324-325)

[If Parliament and the people had referred the King's death back and forth to one another] what resting place had there been in this Euripus

[96] **In two other figures Milton refers to the power of the sun over the desert of Libya and to the scorched and scorching air.**

[97] **See Chapter 6, note 143.**

[98] **In some cases the origin of the image must remain doubtful. For example, a flower heavy with dew is a common enough sight: Dalilah**

with head declined
Like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew, she weeps, *(S.A.,* I, 363)

but books are as likely a source, for the editors have noted similarities in Homer, Vergil, Tasso, and Phineas Fletcher. Again, Milton was on one occasion deeply impressed by a comet (see Chapter 4, notes 42 and 43), but in a passage in *Paradise Lost,* when the angels came to banish Adam and Eve

The brandisht Sword of God before them blaz'd
Fierce as a Comet; *(P.L.,* II, 401)

here he is probably echoing DuBartas's *La Semaine,* as translated by Sylvester: the entrance to Eden is guarded by

A waving sword whose body shined bright
Like flaming comet in the midst of night
(The Imposture; the Second Part of the First Day of the II Week).

[a strait between Euboea and Boeotia with violent tides] ;

(Sec. Def., VIII, 151)

[Milton is disputing with Bishop Hall about the meaning of a Biblical passage] But if your meaning be with a violent and bold *Hyperbaton* to transpose the Text, as if the Words lay thus in order, neglect not the gift of *Presbytery;* this were a construction like a *Harquebuze* shot over a File of words twelve deep without authority to bid them stoop, or to make the word *gift* like the River *Mole* in *Surrey* to runne under the bottome of a long Line, and so start up to governe the word *Presbyterie,* as in immediate *Syntaxis,* a device ridiculous enough to make good that old wives tale of a certaine Queene of *England* that sunk at *Charing-crosse,* and rose up at *Queene-hithe. (Anim.,* III, 149)

How characteristic such a recourse to books is may be realized from the fact that this type of image is almost nonexistent outside of Milton. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the imagery by no means reveals all of the use to which he puts his extensive knowledge of geography. "One has only to think, for example, of the appeal to the nymphs in *Lycidas,* of the lines describing the worship of Moloch and Chemos, of the passage enumerating the far-flung places mysteriously revealed to Adam in *Paradise Lost,* and of the similar roll of cities and countries in *Paradise Regained* to realize the importance and the beauty of the geographical elements in Milton's poetry." " This geography included a careful study of contemporary maps, which together with "the related explanation are indisputably part of the actual stuff with which Milton's creative imagination worked."[100]

' To Milton, then, nature, in a philosophical sense, meant the world both created and creating, the creature and agent of God; in an aesthetic sense, it meant the spring flowers and gardens of England, the clouds of the English skies, the colors of dawn and sunset, and the varied aspects of the sea and sea life; in an intellectual sense, it meant the wonders

[99] **G. W. Whiting, *Milton's Literary Milieu* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1939), p. 94.**
[100] ***Ibid.,* p. 96. For an image illustrating this point sec Chapter 5, note 22.**

found in the pages of ancient historians and Elizabethan explorers, and on the imaginative maps with their sportive, monsters and their roll call of golden names, "Mombaza and Quiloa and Melind." It is this last bookish element that is peculiarly Miltonic.

CHAPTER 5

Animals

EVER since he could write, man, secure in the knowledge that animals could not, has used them as the basis for derogatory comparisons. Milton so fully avails himself of his human privilege that nearly half of his animal imagery is of this kind. Most of it, swinish gluttony and the like, is, of course, familiar to us and needs no special comment. This triteness is particularly true of the early poems, yet we may note a few images in the *Prolusions* because they embody Milton's characteristic dislike of the curriculum of Cambridge and of his contemporaries. Logic, in itself a noble subject, is so mistaught that

> Here, not men, but just finches indeed feed on thistles and thorns;
> *(Prolusion VII, XII, 277)*

philosophy has reached a point where plausible arguments are to be found on both sides of every question, leaving

> the wretched reader . . . long tossed and torn this way and that, as it were between two monsters, and almost killed with weariness.
> *(Prolusion IV,* XII, 177)

Yet the studies are no worse than the students, many of whom have

> cast off all concern for time, character, or health by eating and drinking after the manner of sea beasts. *(Prolusion VII,* XII, 275)

If such men call Milton effeminate, they merely show their usual folly:

> would that they could as easily lay aside their asshood as I whatever belongs to womanhood. *(Prolusion VI,* XII, 241)

Later in his career, Milton is equally contemptuous of his fellow citizens who

Hated not Learning wors then Toad or Asp.
(On the Detraction, I, 62)

I did no more, he says, than recommend greater liberty

When strait a barbarous noise environs me
Of Owles and Cuckoes, Asses, Apes and Doggs.[1]
(*I did but prompt,* I, 62)

Aside from these outbursts, there is little to remark in the early poems, as they do not offer Milton much opportunity for disparagement.-

The prose, however, offers him an almost unlimited opportunity. The first object of his attack is the episcopal system.[3] Prelacy, more horrible than any ordinary beast, can be likened only to a mythical monster:

More like that huge dragon of Egypt breathing out wast, and desolation to the land, unlesse he were daily fatn'd with virgins blood. Him our old patron Saint *George* . . . slew . . . And if our Princes and Knights will imitate . . . that old champion . . . farre be it that they should uphold and side with this English Dragon; but rather . . they should . . . pursue & vanquish this mighty saile-wing'd monster * that menaces to swallow up the Land, unlesse her bottomlesse gorge may be satisfied with the blood of the Kings daughter the Church; and may ... fill her dark and infamous den with the bones of the Saints;
(R. Ch. Gov., Ill, 275)

But Milton does not stop here. The dragon of Christian legend recalls to his mind the serpent of classical legend, the python produced from the mud left on the earth after the deluge of Deucalion, and ultimately slain by Apollo. Milton continues:

[1] **His critics are also hogs before whom pearls are cast, but this image is primarily a Biblical one.**

[2] **Comus and his rout howl like "stabl'd wolves, or tigers at their prey"; his victims "roule with pleasure in a sensual stie." In the sonnet to Fairfax, "new rebellions raise Thir Hydra heads," and the false North imps "their serpent wings." There are other scattered images in *Comus* and the Latin poems.**

[3] **It is also attacked by Biblical, historical, and mythological comparisons, not involving animals. This is also true of the other objects of Milton's attacks that are taken up in this chapter.**

[4] Milton is here thinking of Spenser's treatment of the St. George story, *Faerie Queene,* I, xi, 10.

Nor will any one have reason to think this as too incredible ... to be spok'n of Prelaty, if he consider well from what a masse of slime and mud, the sloathful, the covetous and ambitious hopes of Church-promotions and fat Bishopricks she is bred up and nuzzl'd in, like a great Python from her youth, to prove the general poyson both of doctrine and good discipline in the Land. For certainly such hopes and such principles of earth as these wherein she welters from a yong one, are the immediat generation both of a slavish and tyrannous life to follow, and a pestiferous contagion to the whole Kingdom, till like that fenborn serpent she be shot to death with the darts of the sun, the pure and powerful beams of Gods word.[5] *(ibid.)*

The bishops themselves, as well as the system considered in the abstract, are reptilian. In an indignant rush of mixed metaphor Milton exclaims:

The soure levin of humane Traditions mixt in one putrif'd Masse with the poisonous dregs of hypocrisie in the hearts of *Prelates* that lye basking in the Sunny warmth of Wealth, and Promotion, is the Serpents Egge that will hatch an *Antichrist* wheresoever, and ingender the same Monster as big, or little as the Lump is which breeds him . . . wee shall see *Antichrist* shortly wallow heere, though his cheife Kennell *beat Rome.*[6] *(Ref.,* III, 54)

Again:

[Bishops] dissevered principles were but like the mangl'd pieces of a gash't Serpent, that now begun to close, and grow together Popish againe. *(Anim.,111,* 117)

An individual bishop is of the same serpent brood. Bishop Hall is a viper; he

flings out stray crimes at a venture, which he could never, though he be a Serpent, suck from any thing that I have written; but from his own stufft magazin … of slanderous inventions, over and above that which he converted to venome in the drawing; *(Apol.,* III, 295-296)

he is so quick-sighted in finding unthought-of things in Milton's text that he can "see clearer then any fenell rub'd Ser-

[5] See Chapter 6, notes, 193, 217, 231.

[6] Cf. "the dens and cages of her [Rome's] uncleane wallowings" *(Apol..* III, 356).

pent."[7] Hall is other animals as well: a malevolent fox, a barking dog, a neighing horse, even a seagull, probably either because the gull is greedy or because it is a scavenger:

> [I am] already weary of pluming [plucking] and footing [seizing in talons like a bird of prey] this Seagull, so open he lies to strokes; and never offers at another, but brings home the dorre [mockery] upon himselfe. *(Apol.,* III, 310)

So, too, bishops are not merely snakes. They are vultures gorging themselves on the bait of church livings, caterpillars secretly gnawing at monarchy, dogs, dumb and greedy, following the lure and whistle of earthly preferment, animals that fetch and carry for a morsel; they are ravens that would peck out the eyes of all knowing Christians; they are fattened like boars; in attempting to attain civil jurisdiction they make the church into an ass bestriding a lion;[8] they are eager disputants and little else:

> hot Volumists and cold Bishops: a swashbuckler against the Pope, and a dormouse against the Devil. *(Anim.,* III, 174)

They are but

> slightly train'd up in a kind of hypocritical and hackny [worn out like a tired horse; trite] cours of literature to get their living by;
> *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 273)

Hence, when they try to conduct a religious controversy, they behave like horses:

> when they have like good sumpters [pack horses] laid ye down their hors load of citations and fathers at your dore ... ye may take off their packsaddles, their days work is don. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 241-242)

[7] The folklore is from Pliny. See G. W. Whiting, *Milton's Literary Milieu,* p. 80. Additional folklore is in the following: "that *Viper* of *Sedition,* that . . . hath been breeding to eat through the entrals of our *Peace;* but let her cast her Abortive Spawne" *(Ref.,* III, 77). This Vulgar Error was refuted by Sir Thomas Browne.

[8] This is based on Christ's entry into Jerusalem and Paraeus's identification of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5) as Christ (Hughes, *Milton Prose Selections,* p. 120). Hughes gives a reference to Luke 19: 35-38, but Luke and Mark speak of Christ's riding on a colt, Matthew (21:5-8, and John (12:12-15) to His riding on an ass.

It is to such "citers of Counsels and Conclaves" that Milton devotes one of his longest images, in which they appear successively as ferrets, wild beasts, and whales:

many of those that pretend to be great Rabbies in these studies . . . have bin but the Ferrets and Moushunts [weasels or other mousehunting animals] of an Index: yet what Pastor . . . does not now bring both his cheeks full blown with Oecumenical, and Synodical, shall be counted a lank, shallow, unsufficient man. . . . [Reformers can see their] drift in thus calling for Antiquity, they feare the plain field of the Scriptures; the chase is too hot; they seek the dark, the bushie, the tangled Forrest, they would imbosk: they feel themselvs strook in the transparent streams of divine Truth, they would plunge, and tumble, and thinke to ly hid in the foul weeds, and muddy waters, where no plummet can reach the bottome. But let them beat themselvs like Whales, and spend their oyl till they be dradg'd ashoar: though wherfore should the Ministers give them so much line for shifts, and delays? *(Ref.,* III, 34-35)

The first three divorce pamphlets have only one image that need detain us, but this is a remarkable one in that it has a certain contemptuous humor. Milton's conclusion of a long argument is that a marriage in which there is no spiritual contentment

is not of Gods institution, and therfore no mariage. Nay in concluding this, I say we conclude no more then what the common Expositers themselves give us. ... But the truth is, they give us in such a manner, as they who leav their own mature positions like the eggs of an Ostrich in the dust; I do but lay them in the sun; their own pregnancies hatch the truth; and I am taxt of novelties and strange producements, while they, like that inconsiderat bird, know not that these are their own naturall breed. *(Tetra.,* IV, 87-88)

In the fourth divorce pamphlet, however, we find a large number of insulting figures descriptive of Milton's anonymous adversary. He is a pork, a barrow,[9] a snout:

Hee passes to the third Argument, like a Boar in a Vinyard, doing nought els, but still as hee goes, champing and chewing over, what I could mean . . . notions and words never made for those chopps; *(Colast.,* IV, 261)

[9] Castrated boar.

His doctrine came out of some sty. He is a hackney, a fox, a brain-worm, an incogitant woodcock,[10] a cock-brained solicitor. It is beneath Milton to send a

> Reply to the buzze of such a Drones nest, *(Colast.,* IV, 238)

but he is so annoyed that he must take vigorous action:

> But if a man . . . must bee infested, somtimes at his face, with dorrs [bees or hornets] and horsflies, somtimes beneath with bauling whippets, and shin-barkers [dogs barking at the shins] . . . what defence can properly bee us'd in such a despicable encounter as this, but either the flap or the spurn? *(Colast.,* IV, 271-272)

In *Eikonoklastes* Milton is comparatively restrained. To be sure, bishops and ministers are wolves,[11] dogs, and vermin, but the King is the target of only four images: his remark about the escape of the Five Members is fit for a vulture at the escape of its prey; his wonder at a certain statement is fox wonder; his saying that "as Swine are to Gardens, so are Tumults to Parlaments" ignores the fact that

> one great Hogg may doe as much mischief in a Garden, as many little Swine; *(Eikon.,V,* 115)

his power of vetoing acts of Parliament is a remora, "that little pest at Sea," that stops the ship of the commonwealth from sailing to a reformation. While these comparisons cannot be called complimentary, they are relatively mild and remarkably few. Charles is, however, the object of many derogatory comparisons, Biblical or historical in character; he is, for example, a greater tyrant than any Saul or Ahab. Yet this abuse, while extensive and stinging, still leaves him with some dignity, as the animal images do not. Charles is a dangerous and a bad man but not a disgusting or ridiculous one. It seems clear that Milton feels a really vicious attack on the King to be poor strategy.

No such inhibitions influence him in his three *Defences.* In

[10] A woodcock was proverbially a stupid bird, and symbolized a fool.

[11] A large number of images of wolves and sheep are classified under the head of religion whenever the phrasing or context indicates that they were derived from the Bible.

each of them his opponent is overwhelmed with abuse. A stream of insulting images drawn from nearly every part of the animal kingdom is hurled at the head of Salmasius. He is a raving distracted cuckoo, a dunghill cock,[12] a magpie; he is a loathsome beast, a barking mongrel, a braying ass, a willing horse spurred on to write by his wife, a sheep; he is a worm, a drone, a gadfly, and a beetle. He is, however, chiefly a wolf. In five images, all but one of them long and complicated, Milton puns on the word "lupa" meaning both she-wolf and immoral woman, and thereby attacks the character of Salmasius's wife and ridicules his relations with her. The shortest of them will indicate their quality:[13]

you yourself, Sire du Loup, have leave to send forth whatever philosophy you please from your wolf-bitch's den. *(First Def.,* VII, 287)

Morus fares even worse. Like Salmasius, he is a dog (yelping, fawning, and slavering), an ass, and a horse (lasciviously neighing) ; he is a daw,[14] a parrot, a cackling goose; he is a rank goat, a raging and foaming wild beast, sometimes lying hidden, sometimes breaking cover, a filthy boar dragged into the open struggling and twisting back his neck, a hyena; he is a croaking frog, a bookworm of a grammarian, a winged and venemous insect, a tunny entangled in a woman's net, and a cockchafer.[15] Yet, after all, Morus is relatively unimportant; Milton will dispose of him while awaiting the second volume of Salmasius:

You yourself, then, like the little fish which goes before the whale . . . are merely the harbinger of the whale Salmasius, who is threatening an

[12] This image is nineteen lines long, with references to Aesop's *Fables* and Plautus's *Aulularia.*

[13] Others involve references to St. Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, Martial's *Epigrams,* Vergil's *Eclogues,* and the Roman Lupercalia.

[14] One daw image is twenty-two lines long, with references to Aesop's *Fables* and Aristophanes's *Birds.*

[15] " 'He had been of a happy disposition had he refrained from irritating the wasps': that is, his rivals; not as the eagle indeed, but as that wasp-born cockchafer of old irritated the flies" *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 67). The allusion has not been identified.

invasion of our shores! We sharpen our harpoons and instruments of iron, that we may secure whatever oil or pickle may be obtained from that invasion. *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 55)

There are many other images of this type throughout Milton's prose, but they are similar to those directed against his chief adversaries and throw no further light on his ability to call names. In general, it may be said that his choice of animals does not differ in any appreciable degree from that of contemporary controversialists. All of them make obvious use of creatures who have long been symbols of various undesirable qualities. Milton's figures, however, tend to be more complicated, and to involve more direct literary allusions.

Although the late poems, not being polemical, have a smaller percentage of derogatory images than the prose, there are many of a familiar fierceness/Adam, after the fall, is bitter in his rejection of Eve's first efforts at reconciliation:

> Out of my sight, thou Serpent, that name best
> Befits thee with him leagu'd, thy self as false
> And hateful. (P.L., II, 335)

Satan suggests that Christ might expel the monster Sejanus from his throne "now made a sty." Samson and the Chorus between them call Dalilah a hyena, a viper, a poisonous bosom snake, and a serpent armed with a sting. This is the same invective that we found in the prose. Akin to it is Samson's self-condemnation: he has been shorn of his precious fleece like a tame wether, is now a burdenous drone, and may be dragged through the Philistines' streets like a wild beast; he has no relief

> From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
> Of Hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
> But rush upon me thronging.[16] *(S.A.,* I, 337)

Of a somewhat different tone, however, are many of the images applied to Satan and, to a lesser degree, his followers,

[16] See also *Samson Agonistes,* 623-624.

in which Milton arouses not only indignation but also awe. This group consists of highly elaborated similes that suggest the moral hideousness of Satan but at the same time something of his grandeur, and occur appropriately in the early books of *Paradise Lost.*[17] The first is the most impressive of them all:

> [Satan] extended long and large
> Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
> As [the giants who warred on the gods or] that Sea-beast
> *Leviathan,* which God of all his works
> Created hugest that swim th' Ocean stream:
> Him haply slumbring on the *Norway* foam
> The Pilot of some small night-founder'd Skiff,
> Deeming some Island, oft, as Sea-men tell,[18]
> With fixed Anchor in his skaly rind
> Moors by his side under the Lee, while Night
> Invests the Sea, and wished Morn delayes:
> So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay. (P.L., II, 15)

Like Leviathan the greatest individual thing of his kind, Satan is almost overwhelming in his mere size, and is also a thing of evil in his untrustworthiness; he has deceived the angels and will deceive man, just as the sea beast of the travelers' tales deceived the sailors, and as the Biblical Leviathan, according to the tradition of the Church Fathers and the bestiaries, is intentionally treacherous.[19] In book two, we see Satan struggling across chaos:

> As when a Gryfon through the Wilderness
> With winged course ore Hill or moarie Dale,
> Pursues the *Arirnaspian,* who by stelth

[17] J. Whaler, "The Miltonic Simile," *P.M.L.A.,* XLVI (December, 1931), 1034 ff., demonstrates that the elaboration of the similes consists of their stating or implying many points of resemblance between the thing compared and the simile itself, including points that are apparent only if the reader anticipates the subsequent action of the poem. This elaboration is one of Milton's refinements on the practice of his epic predecessors.

[18] The source is probably Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionibus,* Rome, 1555, translated into English in 1658. The story is, however, widespread.

[19] For an analysis of this image, see Whaler, *op. cit.,* p. 1050.

Had from his wakeful custody purloind
The guarded Gold: So eagerly the fiend
Ore bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings or feet pursues his way,
And swims or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flyes. (P.L., II, 71)

Satan, like a griffin, is a huge,[20] fierce, winged, unnatural monster, capable of swift and relentless pursuit of an evil-doer, as man, like the Arimaspian, will soon discover.[21] He is at once terrifying and magnificent. In the next three images, Satan, while still fierce or disgusting, has become somewhat less awe-inspiring; he is now no huger or more monstrous than a vulture, a wolf, or a tiger. Having crossed chaos, Satan lights on the convex shell of the primum mobile:

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 thir canie Waggons light:
So on this windie Sea of Land, the Fiend
Walk'd up and down alone bent on his prey. *(P.L.,* II, 92-93)

Satan, intent on making man his prey, is in every particular like a vulture flying from northern regions to the "most rich and fortunate" land of India, and on the way alighting on a windswept plain.[22] When he has found his way to the

[20] Mandeville states that a griffin is eight times as large as a lion ("Griffin," *Encyclopaedia Britannica).*

[21] Browne *(Pseudodoxia Epidemica,* Bk. III, ch. II) considers a griffin, whom he calls "mixed and dubious," a noble creature, the emblem of various virtues such as attention, courage, and tenacity, but from the point of view of the Arimaspian these virtues lose their charm.

[22] Whiting *(op. cit.,* pp. 117-118) shows the strong probability of this figure's having come from Milton's study of a map in Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum,* in which there is a picture of the Chinese in sail-equipped waggons.

Death also is a vulture:

earth and to the Garden of Eden, he leaps with ease over its boundary

> As when a prowling Wolfe,
> Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
> Watching where Shepherds pen thir Flocks at eeve
> In hurdl'd Cotes amid the field secure,
> Leaps o're the fence with ease into the Fould.
>
> (P.L., II, 113)

This image has more religious association than literary; indeed, it is included here only to complete the list to animals to which Satan is compared. In it he remains sufficiently fierce to retain our respect, although the passage immediately following, in which he is compared to a burglar climbing in the window, greatly lowers his dignity. Once inside the garden, he keeps watch upon Adam and Eve:

> about them round
> A Lion now he stalkes with fierie glare,
> Then as a Tyger, who by chance hath spi'd
> In some Purlieu two gentle Fawnes at play,
> Strait couches close, then rising changes oft
> His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground
> Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
> Grip't in each paw. (P.L., II, 120-121)

This beast[23] is not so bold as we should naturally expect him to be; rather he seems animated with the same "sly circumspection" that Satan displays a little later. When, in spite

---

> 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.
> So sented the grim Feature. *(P.L.,* II, 314)

Lucan, *Pharsalia,* VII, 831-837; Fletcher, *The Beggar's Bush,* and Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar,* V, i, 85-87 have been suggested as sources.

[23] Satan has literally assumed the shape of a tiger, but his actions are here figuratively described. He follows Adam and Eve as a tiger would stalk his prey. The other animal shapes of Satan are actual disguises, not figures of speech.

of his caution, Satan is digtovered, arrested, and rebuked by the angelic guard,

> The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
> But like a proud Steed reind, went hautie on,
> Chaumping his iron curb. *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 137)

Here Satan, though still haughty, is no longer terrifying; curbed by the power of virtue, he is, indeed, entirely harmless, as he soon afterward discovers on seeing the scales of God hung in the heavens. This long series of images devoted to Satan is of considerable interest in that it reveals a steady loss of dignity and power on his part, a degeneration which Milton also makes apparent in other ways than by the use of imagery.

The fact that the Satan of *Paradise Regained* is an independent product of Milton's imagination, conceived without any of the grandeur of the earlier figure though with a subtle power of his own, is emphasized by the one animal image devoted to him in the later poem.[24] Although his efforts to tempt Christ had failed, he yet persisted.

> as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
> About the wine-press where sweet moust is powr'd,
> Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound. *(P.R.,* Ⅱ, 459)

Flies inspire no awe whatever, merely annoyance and disgust.[25]

[24] There is possibly one other:

> So spake the Son of God, and Satan stood
> A while as mute confounded what to say . . .
> At length collecting all his Serpent wiles,
> With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts. *(P.R.,* II, 442)

If this means "collecting all his wiles as subtle as those of a serpent," the passage is figurative; if it means "collecting those wiles that he had displayed on the occasion when he tempted Eve in the form of a serpent," it is not. In either case, Satan lacks grandeur.

[25] In the case of Satan's followers, they are first described as rising from the burning lake in hell like

> a pitchy cloud
> Of *Locusts,* warping on the Eastern Wind,
> That ore the Realm of impious *Pharaoh* hung

Next to his derogatory images, the most conspicuous group is that relating to birds,[26] a type of figure also numerous in Milton's contemporaries -[27] and in Shakespeare.[28] More than one half of this group is based on snaring,[29] with which Milton was evidently familiar. He speaks of entering the very lime twigs of Comus's spells, of Satan's well-couched fraud, well-woven snares, and so on. His most unusual image of this kind illustrates what he regards as the corruption of the clergy:

now commonly he who desires to be a minister, looks not at the work but at the wages; and by that lure or loubel[30] may be toald from parish to parish. *(Hirelings,* VI, 93)

This familiarity, however, is no greater than that of his contemporaries. Furthermore, in sympathy for the snared bird, so evident in Shakespeare,[81] Milton is almost wholly lacking. Most of these images are neutral in their emotional tone and a few are definitely unsympathetic:[32]

The rest of his preachment is meer groundless chat, save heer and there a few granes of corn scatterd to intice the silly fowl into his net;
(Brief Notes, VI, 157)

And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
With lickerish baits fit to ensnare a brute? *(Comus,* I, in)

This is but to fling and strugle under the inevitable net of God, that now begins to inviron you round ; *(Anim.,* III, 170)

Like Night, and darken'd all the Land of *Nile. (P.L.,* II, 20)
There is here a certain magnificence which is entirely lost when Milton speaks of these same angels being driven from heaven
as a Heard
Of Goats or timerous flock together throngd. *(P.L.,* II, 208)

[26] This is cross-classification. Many bird images are derogatory.

[27] Forty-seven percent of the animal imagery in Milton, 42 percent in the other writers examined. But see below, note 33.

[28] Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* p. 48.

[29] Twenty-six percent of the total animal imagery.

[30] A loubel or low-bell is a bell used in fowling at night. The word does not occur in either Shakespeare or Spenser.

[31] Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* pp. 105-106.

[32] Some of the following examples apply as well or better to animals, but all illustrate the point of sympathy or lack of it.

Only two show sensitivity: when the attendant Spirit in *Comus* speaks of the Lady,

> And O poor hapless Nightingale thought I,
> How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
> (*Comus,* I, 106)

and when Milton speaks of the husband and wife of an unhappy marriage as two ensnared souls. This group of images, therefore, does not make a particularly clear-cut impression, especially since the great majority turn upon a single word, such as snare or bait, where Milton may quite well be echoing the Bible without being conscious of the underlying figure.[33]

A similar lack of precision exists in the next largest group, based on Wings or plumage, and soaring or flight, since it is by no means certain in every case that Milton is employing a bird image. In one figure he is of course using Christian symbolism, when he speaks of the spirit of God that

> with mighty wings outspread
> Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss:
> And mad'st it pregnant; (P.L., II, 9)

> Darkness profound
> Cover'd th' Abyss: but on the watrie calme
> His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspred,
> And vital vertue infus'd. (*P.L.,* II, 219-220)

Less obvious, however, are the numerous figures he applies to his song, to himself, or to his muse:

> [May God inspire] my adventrous Song,
> That with no middle flight intends to soar
> Above th' *Aonian* Mount; (P.L., II, 8-9)

> above th' *Olympian* Hill I scare,
> Above the flight of *Pegasean* wing.[34] (P.L., II, 211)

[33] **There are over one hundred passages in the Bible that involve a figurative use of (en)snare, (en)trap, and net, though many of these refer to four-legged animals rather than birds. In similar cases in Milton the same doubt arises.**

[34] **In a letter to Diodati in 1637 his muse is not so ambitious: "[I am] grow-**

Here he may possibly still be thinking of the dove as a symbol of God's inspiration,[35] or more probably, in the second figure, of Plato. Pegasus may well have been associated in his mind with the *Phaedrus,* in which Plato symbolizes the soul as a charioteer driving a pair of winged steeds, one noble the other ignoble. The perfect soul soars with them up to the region of the absolute verities, the abode of the gods; the imperfect soul loses its feathers, or has its wings broken by unskillful driving, and "drooping in its flight, at last settles on the solid ground." This same passage of Plato seems the most likely source of two other figures:

> [With the growth of religious ceremony] the Soule . . . bated her wing apace downeward . . . her pineons now broken, and flagging, shifted off from her selfe, the labour of high soaring any more, forgot her heavenly flight; *(Ref.,* III, 2)

> Wisdoms self
> Oft seeks to sweet retired Solitude,
> Where with her best nurse Contemplation
> She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all to ruffl'd, and somtimes impaired. *(Comus,* I, 178)

Likewise, we cannot be sure of how we are to visualize his muse. In two of his Latin poems he furnishes her with wings, but in all other instances speaks of her in human terms: when he writes Latin she moves with halting step, is poorly nourished, and so on. Here, presumably, he has the classic Muses in mind, ladies who are, however, conspicuous for their lack of wings. In the *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* his muse is heavenly, and is urged to run and lay

---

ing my wings and meditating flight; but as yet our Pegasus raises himself on very tender pinions" *(Familiar Letters,* XII, 27). See also his dismounting from his flying steed, *P.L.,* Bk. 7, 11. 12-19.

[35] Cf. Bishop Hall: "That soul that can soar aloft upon the strength of his own wings, or hath its flagging Pinions completely ymped with feathers from the *Dove,* the Spirit of God, shall little need such advantages as are these things which we speak of [set forms of prayer] . . . onely take heed you do not, *Icarus-like,* over-dare" *(A Modest Confutation,* p. 32).

the poem at the Christ child's feet. Doubtless Milton is in this case thinking of Christian rather than classic inspiration, as he certainly is in *Paradise Lost,* where he specifically denies the classic lineage of his celestial patroness Urania. A heavenly being, not an empty dream like her Greek name sake, she is the daughter of God and the sister of Eternal Wisdom.

Similar uncertainty obtains in the case of figures turning only on the word flight or soar, particularly when things other than persons are involved: the mind, thought, human capacity, even a book:

> the whole Booke scares to a Prophetick pitch in . . . Allegories.
> *(Anim.,* Ill, 154)

Again, when only the word plumage or wing is mentioned, the case is not always clear: a woman married to a heretical husband and having "recours to the wing of charity, and protection of the Church" *(Tetra.,* IV, 79), is probably based on the figure of a mother hen; the wings of the wind doubtless derive from the Bible where the figure occurs several times, but the wings of sleep, night, silence, darkness, verse, joy, vengeance, and prayer must, to say the least, remain ambiguous. On the whole, in spite of certain notable exceptions, both the images of snaring and of flight lack vividness, since even when we are sure that they concern a bird, they are not particularized. We have, for example, merely the flight of any bird, not the characteristic flight of an individual species.[36]

Of course, Milton does have some specific knowledge. He must certainly have heard the nightingale "most musical most melancholy" in the spring evening, the reiterated notes of the cuckoo, the discordant screech of the owl, the gabble of domestic geese, and the cry of wild geese on the wing. Equally certainly he has observed the swift upsoaring of the lark in

[36] **Shakespeare speaks of the lapwing running close by the ground, the dive-dapper peering through a wave, etc. Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* pp. 48-49.**

the dawn, which he makes into a magnificent symbol of eager joyfulness:

> Thus wore out night, and now the Herald Lark
> Left his ground-nest, high towring to descry
> The morns approach, and greet her with his Song:
> As lightly from his grassy Couch up rose
> Our Saviour, *(P.R.,* II, 434)

and he has heard its sudden burst of song "startle the dull night." He has listened to the "lively din" of a cock in the early morning; he has seen it scratching on a dunghill, and perhaps ravens pecking at an animal's eyes. He knows, presumably from experience, that finches feed on insects and seeds, and that magpies and parrots can be taught to speak.[37] He refers to details of nesting, hatching, fledging, and molting. We may note, for instance, one figure of an unfertilized egg that is very unusual and that he twice puts to scornful use:

> [The King thinks his assent a necessary addition to a vote of Parliament] So that the Parlament, it seems, is but a Female, and without his procreative reason, the Laws which they can produce are but wind-eggs; *(Eikon.,* V, 185)

> [Milton's adversary has defined the church canons as the laws of England] From such a wind-egg of definition as this, they who expect any of his other arguments to bee well hatcht, let them enjoy the vertu of thir worthy Champion; *(Colast.,* IV, 237)

and another equally unusual simile of a sick bird:

> [Skillful commanders would not allow their men] to shed away from about them like sick feathers. *(Educ.,* IV, 289)

Less individual but still vivid is the reference to his contemporaries at Cambridge, of whom

> there are hardly one or two that do not fly off unfeathered to Theology. *(Familiar Letters,* XII, 13)

All this knowledge he has, but nevertheless a good deal

[37] **If he considered the sea-gull greedy (see above in the attack on Hall), he may have observed this fact for himself.**

of his bird imagery depends on folklore or on books. From these sources he has learned that the cuckoo is ill-omened, the woodcock stupid, the peacock and the daw vain, the ostrich neglectful of its eggs, and the vulture greedy.[38] He makes extensive use of legends about the eagle and the phoenix. Twice he alludes to the eagle's fierceness or might: Samson fell upon the Philistines as an eagle falls upon barnyard fowl; on the chariot of the Son sat victory, eagle-winged. Once he alludes to its pride:

[Milton does not wish to argue a petty detail] A soar-Eagle, would not stoope at a flye,[39] *(Anim.,* III, no)

having in mind in these figures the fact that the eagle is the symbol, as in heraldry,[40] of power and majesty. Again, one of his most famous passages is based upon its proverbially piercing sight, and upon its power of self-renewal:

Methinks I see her [England, rousing herself like a strong man and] as an Eagle newing[41] her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unsealing her long abused sight at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticat a year of sects and schisms.[42] *(Areo.,* IV, 344)

He alludes to the phoenix as a self-begotten, self-renewed, and seldom seen bird, and in one of his finest images to its uniqueness: Raphael flies toward the earth

[38] **These bookish figures tend to be longer and more elaborate than those drawn from experience. See the similes of the ostrich, above, in the attack on bishops; the daw, note 14, above; and the vulture, note 22, above. He also makes use of the Greek proverb "From a bad crow a bad egg."**

[39] **Cf. Phineas Fletcher, *The Apollyonists:***

The Eagle scornes at lesser game to flie;
Onely this warre's [vs. Spain] a match worthy . . . Thee [Charles]. (V, 39-)

[40] **For Milton's knowledge of heraldry see Chapter I, note 6.**

[41] **The emendation of "muing" proposed by R. S. Loomis *(M.L.N.,* XXXII, 437) and G. V. Yule *(R.E.S.,* XIX, 61-67) and adopted by Hughes *(Milton Prose Selections,* p. 259).**

[42] **Cf. Giles Fletcher, *Christs Victorie:***

[Justice] as the Eagle ... so, and more brightly shin'd
Her lamping sight. (I, 10)

till within scare
Of Towring Eagles, to all the Fowles he seems
A *Phoenix,* gaz'd by all, as that sole Bird
When to enshrine his reliques in the Sun's
Bright Temple, to *Ægyptian Theb's* he flies. *(P.L.,* II, 153)

Raphael, like the bird, is "unique, winged, gorgeous, translunary, of immortal essence," and on his way to a friendly visit to Adam, suggests the proverbial saying "a faithful friend is like a phoenix."[43]

Aside from birds, there remain various other categories of animal images that may be considered more briefly. Travel being what it was in his day, Milton must of necessity have known how to ride a horse. He has many references, though all of them are commonplace, to the use of the bit, bridle, stirrups, and reins. With more originality he speaks of a horse foundering himself and, as we have seen,[44] of a hackney, a pack-horse laying down his load, a willing horse spurred on, and a proud steed champing his bit. He refers to pedigreed stock:

if the race of Kings were eminently the best of men, as the breed at *Tutburie* is of Horses, [they could justly command us]
(Eikon., V, 202)

All this demonstrates his knowledge, but does not demonstrate any of the sympathy for horses characteristic of Shakespeare,[45] or any enthusiasm for horsemanship.

Likewise, he shows no fondness for dogs. Backed by Scriptural authority, he considers them unpleasant animals:

No marvell if the people turne beasts, when their Teachers themselves as *Isaiah* calls them, *Are dumbe and greedy dogs. (Apol,* III, 345)

Their greed is apparent in the following passages: God is watching Sin and Death approach the world

[43] **Whaler, "Animal Simile in *Paradise Lost," P.M.L.A.,* XLVII (June, 1932), 544—545. The bird is carrying the bones and marrow of its former body, a detail that cannot be made to apply to Raphael.**
[44] **See above.**
[45] **Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* pp. 108-109.**

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 *(P.L.,* II, 327)

they will be hurled by the Son down to hell;
Vlaccus attacked Milton and then pirated his pamphlet:

What conduct could be more like that of the dog?—At whose head, as he was barking at me, having flung with violence that bone, you also begin to yelp and growl; **till,** finding the bone to have meat about it, you presently turn to fawning, then fall to gnawing and slavering up its nice pickings. *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 75)

In addition, they make nuisances of themselves by barking at a man's shins,[46] adding to the "barbarous noise" of the other animals, the owls, cuckoos, asses, and apes. Sheep are contemptible: [47]

Monarchs . . . aim is to make the people, wealthie indeed perhaps and well fleec't, for thir own shearing and the supplie of regal prodigalitie; but otherwise softest, basest, vitiousest, servilest, easiest to be kept under; and not only in fleece, but in minde also sheepishest;
(Ready & Easy Way, VI, 145-146)

These are the ordinary creatures of the countryside that came within the range of his observation. Yet this range was limited, probably because of his weak eyesight.[48] Certainly he had never looked closely at a snail; otherwise he would not have said that when poor speakers have exhausted their supply of words they

crawl slowly off like certain little animals with their horns drawn in,
***(Prolusion I,* XII, 123)**

since, of course, a snail is curled up in its shell when its horns are not extended. It is interesting to compare Milton in this particular with Shakespeare, who has three similes of great delicacy and sympathy turning on the tender horns of a

[46] **See above, the controversial images from *Colasterion:* "But if a man," etc.**
[47] **Cf. Samson's reaction. He has been shorn like a tame wether. See above.**
[48] **Cf. the lack of detail in his images of flowers, Chapter 4.**

snail withdrawn into or peeping forth from its shell.[49]

Furthermore, in many instances he could not have observed the animals at all. Many illustrations of this fact have already been given in this chapter[50] and more may here be added: in *On the Fifth of November* Satan pursues unwary sinners like a Caspian tigress; in *Paradise Regained* he tells Christ that the inhabitants of the wilderness are inured to thirst more than the camel. Samson is a lion in strength and fierceness, and, presumably for the same qualities, an evening dragon attacking roosting fowls; he has learned the wisdom of the adder by refusing to listen to Dalilah's attempt to charm him;[51] Harapha would not believe that Samson's strength had returned even though his hair were like the bristles of a chaffed wild boar or ruffled porcupine. This last beast, indeed, Milton might have seen, but it so closely resembles Shakespeare's "fretful porpentine" as to make *Hamlet* a much more likely source for the image than experience.

This same pattern repeats itself in the case of images of insects. Many are based on observation or accepted belief: flies swarming about one's head are objectionable,[52] ephemeral:

> [Common men] Grow up and perish, as the summer flie,
> (S.A.,I,361)

and foolish:

> [Mosaic law] holds out fals and dazling fires to stumble men: or like those miserable flies to run into with delight, and be burnt.
> *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 434)

Bees, except idle drones, attack one with their stings;[53] the

[49] Spurgeon, *op. cit.,* p. 107.

[50] Sea beasts, a dragon, serpents, a python, an ostrich, remora, hyena, Leviathan, griffin, vulture, wolf, tiger, etc.

[51] Psalms 58:4-5: The wicked "are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely." Milton refers to the same proverb in *Tetrachordon.*

[52] See above, in the images from *Colasterion:* "But if a man," etc.

[53] See above, in the images from *Colasterion:* "But if a man," etc., and *Samson Agonistes.*

taintworm was regarded as fatal to cattle. Other images are based on his reading. For example, at the creation, butterflies are brilliantly colored:

> At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
> Insect or Worme; those wav'd thir limber fans
> For wings, and smallest Lineaments exact
> In all the Liveries dect of Summers pride
> With spots of Gold and Purple, azure and green. (P.L., II, 228)

but not with the various shades of orange, yellow, and brown most commonly found in English butterflies. Like the newly formed animals—lion, ounce, libbard, tiger, stag, behemoth, river horse, and crocodile—they are the creatures of the tropics.[54] Milton's careful description of their tiny and delicately made limbs is curiously unconvincing. We have only to compare it with Keats's description of the moonlit casement window,

> Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
> As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings,
> (*Eve of St. Agnes,* st. 24)

to realize that it lacks the stamp of authenticity.[55]

In three cases, moreover, two similes of flies and one of bees, he uses figures that have a literary ancestry going back to Homer. His first use of the fly simile occurs in his early, imitative *On the Fifth of November,* where he seems to have had in mind a passage from the *Iliad,* a natural source for such a poem.[56] In Homer we find:

> Even as the many tribes of thick flies that hover about a herdsman's steading in the spring season, when milk drencheth the pails, even in like

[54] **Between "behemoth" and "river horse" Milton inserts "flocks bleating and fleeced," a domestic touch.**

[55] **There is one bookish image of fishes: A man doing certain things is "less wise then that noted Fish" (*Tetra.,* IV, 141). This is the proverbial "It is a silly fish that is caught twice with the same bait" or "That fish will soon be caught that nibbles at every bait."**

[56] **Fly similes occur in Spenser (*Faerie Queene,* V, ii, 33 ; V, xi, 58 ; VI, xi, 48) and elsewhere, but they are not so close to Milton in expression or so likely as sources.**

number stood the flowing-haired Achaians upon the plain in face of the Trojans, eager to rend them asunder; *(Iliad,* Ⅱ, 469-471)

and in Milton:

A rabble rout, gathered here [in the dwelling of Rumor], rouses varied whisperings, like the noises made by the swarms of flies when they buzz about the milking pails, or in the sheep-cotes of rushes interwoven, when the Dog-Star is seeking the heights of heaven, the peak of the skies in the summer days. *(On Fifth Nov.,* I, 251)

Here Milton has elaborated and improved upon his original by making the figure turn not merely on one but on two points of comparison, the number and the sound of flies, and by suggesting a third point, the triviality and worthlessness of the people and their action. In his second and late use of the same simile, already discussed in another connection,[57] we find the same elaboration and suggestiveness even more fully developed: though his efforts to tempt Christ had failed, Satan renewed his attack

as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet moust is powr'd
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound. *(P.R,* Ⅱ, 459)

Satan, like the flies, is tedious, persistent, yet entirely ineffective. His arguments are a monotonous drone. Christ's words, on the other hand, are sweet and rich as wine.Furthermore, the time of harvest is at hand; Christ's ministry is about to begin, in which, according to John, his first act is to change the water into wine at the marriage in Cana.

This same characteristic, the elaboration of a figure derived from a specific literary source, is seen even more clearly in his adaptation of the bee simile, one of the most widely used epic similes in existence:[58] the great hall of Pandaemonium

Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air,
Brusht with the hiss of rustling wings. As Bees

[57] **See above, note 24.**

[58] **See the exhaustive analysis of the bee simile in Whaler, "Animal Simile in *Paradise Lost" PMLA,* XLVII (June, 1932), 545-552, where Milton's figure is compared to nineteen others.**

> In spring time, when the Sun with *Taurus* rides,
> Pour forth thir populous youth about the Hive
> In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
> Flie to and fro, or on the smoothed Plank,
> The suburb of thir Straw-built Cittadel,
> New rub'd with Baum, expatiate and confer
> Thir State affairs. So thick the aerie crowd
> Swarm'd and were straitn'd; till the Signal giv'n,
> Behold a wonder! they but now who seemd
> In bigness to surpass Earths Giant Sons
> Now less then smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room
> Throng numberless. *(P.L.,* II, 35-36)

This certainly gives a detailed and accurate picture of the activities of a bee colony, but Milton's motive in writing it springs not so much from a delighted observation of the insects as from a desire to emulate his poetic predecessors. He has succeeded in his attempt because of the brilliant ingenuity with which he has fitted the image into the body of the poem. The fallen angels not only are, like bees, a winged multitude, busy about the various affairs of their highly organized community, but also, at the moment of comparison, shrink to a size not much larger than bees, and are themselves on the point of conferring about their state affairs. Milton achieves a triumph of imagination rather than observation.

Generally speaking, then, his animals are bred as much in the study as in the fields. He could not avoid knowing about horses and the other common creatures, yet it is clear that they played no large part in his life. We look in vain for any trace of the sympathetic insight with which Burns describes a field mouse or an old mare, or Frost describes a colt or a pair of deer. Instead, we find Milton often taking his animals on hearsay or making use of their traditional qualities, chiefly for the purpose of insulting his adversary. We find him speaking of animals native to Africa or Asia rather than England, to say nothing of such mythical creatures as the phoenix or the python slain by Apollo. Fur-

ther, we find him not content with an ordinary figure; for example, when he speaks of Salmasius's approval of his own books, Milton begins by calling him a cock crowing on a dunghill, and then continues by alluding to a cock in Aesop and another in Plautus. Here, as he writes, his mind characteristically turns from the barnyard to books, and the passage as a whole leaves us with a feeling, not of how much Milton has seen, but of how much he has read. Lastly, we find him, as in the case of the bee simile, deliberately, from the start, building up a figure in imitation of earlier writers.

Quantitatively, then, we find an unusually large number of animal images that have a literary flavor. Qualitatively, the case is even clearer, since the ones which are most stamped with his individuality, some of them among his most famous passages, are elaborated by numerous, often recondite, literary allusions and enriched by literary overtones blended into harmony by the sheer power of his imagination. To convey to us his own enkindled vision of Satan on the lake of hell, Milton conjures up the huge bulk of the giants battling the gods of Olympus, the Biblical monster Leviathan, and the astounding animal encountered off the Norwegian coast by sixteenth-century mariners. It is with breath-taking creatures such as this, rather than the sober beasts of everyday life, that Milton is most at home.

CHAPTER 6

Books and Learning

EVEN in the preceding chapters, concerned primarily with Milton's sense perceptions and with the facts of social intercourse, there is evidence that he often supplements life with books. His knowledge of music and oratory is theoretical as well as practical; [1] his knowledge of drama is more that of a reader than that of a spectator; [2] he has learned a good deal about law[3] and medicine;[4] he has read the classic treatises on agriculture;[5] he has studied many accounts, general and specialized, of warfare;[6] he is familiar with geography and the narratives of the explorers;[7] his animals have ink as well as blood in their veins.[8] It now remains to investigate other and more important aspects of his learning—scientific, religious, and literary.

In general, it may be said that his mind moves as freely in the world of books as in the world of experience. He is vividly conscious of the act of writing and of the written manuscript or printed book. Of the images of writing, those dealing with the laws of God, written on the Mosaic tablets and charactered or imprinted in our own nature, are derived from various Biblical texts.[9] Others, more specific and less commonplace, visualize sharply the quality of the script or

[1] See Chapter I.
[2] See Chapter I.
[3] See Chapter I.
[4] See Chapter 2.
[5] See Chapter 4, note 31.
[6] See Chapter 3, note 32.
[7] See Chapter 4.
[8] See Chapter 5.
[9] II Corinthians 3:2-3: "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." See also Jeremiah 31:33, Romans 2:15, Hebrews 8:10.

the physical process of writing it. Something that is obvious is something that is written in a large, easily read hand:

[God has judged the King] and hath writt'n his impartial Sentence in Characters legible to all Christendom; *(Eikon.,* V, 90)

New Presbyter is but *Old Priest* writ Large.
(On the New Forcers of Conscience, I, 71)

Conversely, a scribble is something hasty, tentative, or meaningless : in an attempt to explain the stars' motions, foolish men will

gird the Sphear
With Centric and Eccentric scribl'd o're. *(P.L.,* II, 238)

Here we can see the astronomer bent over his littered table and involved in the intricacies of his vain speculations.

Writing should be exact to the smallest particular, to the last jot and tittle.[10] When a mistake has been made it must be cancelled, blotted, or erased: [11]

[Bishops are wrong in turning the symbolism of baptism into a sacrament] baptising the Christian infant with a solemne sprinkle, and unbaptizing for your own part with a profane and impious forefinger: as if when ye had layd the purifying element upon his forehead, ye meant to cancel and crosse it out again with a caracter not of Gods bidding. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 247-248)

Finally, the finished document must be signed and sealed. Such a document is of course a manuscript, whose authority depends upon whether it is an original or a copy:

[The Judaic law is either political or moral] That which is thus morall, besides what we fetch from those unwritten lawes and ideas which nature hath ingraven in us, the Gospell, as stands with her dignity most, lectures to us from her own authentick hand-writing, and command, not copies out from the borrowed manuscript of a subservient scrowl, by way of imitating; *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 197)

[10] In Hebrew, a vowel point or accent. See Matthew 5:18, Luke 16:17.
[11] Also rase out, blur (over), blot (out), and the nouns blot, etc. See Colossians 2:14: Christ "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us."

[King Charles interprets our misfortunes as punishments] as if the very manuscript of Gods judgements had been deliverd to his custody and exposition. But his reading declares it well to be a fals copy which he uses . . . But to counterfeit the hand of God is the boldest of all Forgery. *(Eikon.,* V, 272)

Printed books, however, are even more numerous than manuscripts. Hence, we find metaphors of the book of God's providence, the book of virtue, the book of knowledge (the works of nature), and the like. Morus, scratched by the fingernails of Pontia, is a volume embellished with a frontispiece, inscribed, annotated, and rubricated. Such book images are naturally most fully developed in *Areopagitica:*

The Windows also, and the *Balcone's* must be thought on, there are shrewd books, with dangerous Frontispices set to sale . . . The villages also must have their visitors to enquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebbeck reads ev'n to the ballatry, and the gammuth of every *municipal* fidler, for these are the Countrymans *Arcadia's* and his *Monte Mayors. (Areo.,* IV, 317)

In short,

what ever thing we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing may be fitly called our book. *(Areo.,* IV, 320)

One of the many hazards to which a book is exposed is to be spotted by mold, an idea used in an exceptionally effective metaphor describing the work of censors:

such iron moulds as these shall have autority to knaw out the choisest periods of exquisitest books. *(Area.,* IV, 327)

Milton conveys the impression that such a calamity is analogous to a man's becoming crippled. In this connection we may recall that in *Areopagitica* Milton constantly personifies books, considering them as much living creatures as the men who wrote them.[12]

[12] See Chapter I, images of bodily action. Milton has many other personifications, chiefly of abstractions—virtue, sin, truth, law, justice, mercy, charity, reason, mirth, fancy, wisdom, ignorance, faction, prelacy, tragedy, etc.—but as they are merely rhetorical embellishments and throw no light on his character, they have been omitted.

With this sensitivity to books as an introduction, let us turn to his knowledge of science. As is to be expected, his images from this area of knowledge, while by no means negligible, are not extensive. Perhaps the most interesting single image is the one which reveals his attitude toward the laws of arithmetic and geometry; they are the symbols of absolute certainty:

> For the ways of justice are exactest proportion; if for one trespass of a King it require so much remedie or satisfaction, then for twenty more as hainous crimes, it requires of him twentyfold ; and so proportionally, till it com to what is utmost among men . . . For this golden rule of justice and moralitie, as well as of Arithmetic, out of three termes which they admitt, will as certainly and unavoydably bring out the fourth, as any Probleme that ever *Euclid,* or *Apollonius* made good by demonstration. *(Tenure,* V, 53-54)

This is the sole use he makes of mathematics with the exception of two or three obvious images of a cipher. One of these, however, is given a fresh, if somewhat over-ingenious, development :

> [It is a disgrace for Parliament by the King's veto to be] dissolved, and cast away like so many Naughts in Arithmetick, unless it be to turne the O of thir insignificance into a lamentation with the people, who had so vainly sent them. *(Eikon.,* V, 288)

Nor is the case very different with geometry. He Has nothing further to say about geometrical laws but is interested, like his contemporaries, in the patterns of geometrical figures, such as lines laid parallel or meeting in a center:

> [Protestantism could be organized so that] all controversie may end in the finall pronounce or canon of one Arch-primat, or Protestant Pope. Although by this meanes for ought I see, all the diameters of schisme may as well meet and be knit up in the center of one grand falshood. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 213)

For him, as for many others, the circle is the symbol of unity and eternity, although he is not fascinated by it as is

John Donne.[13] Far more original is the use he makes of the pyramid and the cone, figures whose constantly diminishing sides and sharp points make them the antitheses of the continuity of the circle and the cube. In one complex and highly elaborated image the pyramid stands for the organization of the Episcopal church, and the cone, rather fantastically, for the miters of the bishops themselves:

> [To prevent schism the primitive Christians would call a counsel] Of such a councell as this every parochiall Consistory is a right homogeneous and constituting part being in it selfe as it were a little Synod . . . Whereas on the other side Prelaty ascending by a graduall monarchy from Bishop to Arch-Bishop [logically ends in a Pope] ... I say Prelaty thus ascending in a continuall pyramid upon pretence to perfect the Churches unity . . . what does it but teach us ... that her pyramid aspires and sharpens to ambition, not to perfection, or unity . . . So that Prelaty if she will seek to close up divisions in the Church, must be forc't to dissolve, and unmake her own pyramidal figure, which she affirmes to be of such uniting power, when as indeed it is the most dividing, and schismaticall forme that Geometricians know of, and must be faine to inglobe, or incube her selfe among the Presbyters; which she hating to do, sends her haughty Prelates from all parts with their forked Miters, the badge of schisme or the stampe of his cloven foot whom they serve I think, who according to their hierarchies acuminating still higher and higher in a cone of Prelaty, in stead of healing up the gashes of the Church, as it happens in such pointed bodies meeting, fall to gore one another with their sharpe spires for upper place, and precedence, till the councell it selfe prove the greatest schisme of all.
>
> *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 217-218)

He shows some knowledge of the rudimentary physics of his day, for he has images based on the attraction of iron by a magnet, and on the center of equilibrium both as the point from which it is difficult to move an object and as the point at which an object loses its weight.

Almost equally rudimentary was astronomy, the science which was then giving rise to far more controversy than any

[18] See M. A. Rugoff, *Donne's Imagery* (New York, 1939), pp. 64 ff.

other. There had, of course, been speculation about the nature of the universe since the days of the ancient Greeks, but in the seventeenth century the question had become urgent. The theory of Copernicus, together with its modifications by Tycho Brahe and others, and the discoveries resulting from the invention of the telescope had shaken the traditional beliefs and had brought science into conflict with Scripture.) Milton's attitude is revealed chiefly by the cosmology adopted as the framework of *Paradise Lost* and by the astronomical dialogue between Raphael and Adam in Book Eight. Exhaustive studies have demonstrated that this attitude was that of a well-grounded layman, who was, however, either not fully informed of all the technical aspects of this science, especially its newest developments, or not interested in them for the reason that he felt such speculations to be essentially both pointless and irreverent[14] Yet, important as this subject must have been to Milton, he has very few astronomical images, only one of which needs discussion here.[15] In analyzing a passage from *Deuteronomy* concerning divorce and in rejecting certain explanations of it, he says that he can do better himself:

> I trust anon by the help of an infallible guide to perfet such *Prutenick* tables as shall mend the *Astronomy* of our wide expositors.
>
> *(Doct. Div.,* Ⅲ, 389)

The *Tabulae Prutenicae,* calculated on Copernican principles by Erasmus Reinhold, appeared in 1551 and represented celestial movements far more accurately than did the previous *Alfonsine Tables* of 1252. It is evident, therefore, that Milton, at this time at any rate, regarded the Copernican system as superseding previous ones. It is also evident that

"McColley, "The Astronomy of Paradise Lost," *S.P.,* XXXIV (1937), 232-234, 246-247. See also F. R. Johnson, *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England* (Baltimore, 1937), p. 285.

[15] For the images of the regions of the moon and of sun spots, see Chapter 4, images concerning Galileo. There are also images of the regular orbits of the planets, the immortal quintessence of which they are made, and the boundless empty space beyond the world.

he had not kept up with scientific discoveries, because in 1643, when he wrote the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,* the *Tabulae Prutenicae,* based as they were on the assumption that the planets moved in circular orbits, had been themselves superseded by the *Rudolphine Tables* of Kepler, published in 1627. These tables, computed from elliptical orbits, retained their authority for a century. By the time Milton came to write *Paradise Lost,* however, the relative accuracy of the various theories seemed of less importance to him.[16]

Intimately associated with astronomy was astrology, toward which Milton's attitude is not altogether clear. It seems evident from various passages in *Paradise Lost*[17] that he believed in the influence of the stars on growing things, but it is doubtful if he believed that this influence extended to mankind. There are a few images that could reflect a real conviction on Milton's part.[18] Certainly the passage describing the tremendous power of Sin and Death, who, after the fall of Adam and Eve,

> Thir course through thickest Constellations held
> Spreading thir bane; the blasted Starrs lookt wan,
> And Planets, Planet-strook, real Eclips
> Then sufferd, *(P.L.,* II, 319)

loses much of its effectiveness now that we no longer believe in the malignancy of the stars.[19] On the other hand, there

[16] It will be observed that the image discussed above supports the conclusion of Professor McColley that Milton's astronomical knowledge was out-of-date (McColley, *loc. cit.).* It also does not conflict with his conclusion that in *Paradise Lost* Milton in his astronomical discussion was directly indebted to pamphlets by Wilkins and Rosse. If Rosse's anti-Copernican *The New Planet No Planet* influenced Milton, it did not appear until 1646 (McColley, *Milton's Dialogue on Astronomy, PMLA,* LII, 1937, 728-762).

[17] Bk. IV, 11. 667-673; Bk. VIII, 11. 511-513; Bk. X, 11. 656-672.

[18] The ladies' eyes that rain influence *(L'ALL.,* 11. 121-122) is perhaps merely literary convention, and the baneful spell of a star that is causing Thyrsis's melancholy *(Damon's Epitaph,* 78-80) could be dismissed as expressing the opinion not of Milton but of the shepherd speaking.

[19] See also *Hist, of Brit.,* X, 102; *Def. of Him.,* IX, 187; *Arto.,* IV, 345.

are references which strongly suggest skepticism or downright disbelief. There is, first, a non-figurative passage from the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce:* a certain inborn love or hate exists in human beings that acts as an attracting or repelling force. As to the cause of these feelings in, among other things, "the supernall influence of Schemes and angular aspects"[20] of the stars, he dares not think himself enough of a philosopher to conjecture about such a subject, considering the attainments of the men whom he is to encounter in argument; a less abstruse belief makes God the cause. Here there is surely an undertone of sarcasm. The implication is like the explicit conclusion of the astronomical dialogue that we have already discussed: such theorizing is a waste of time.[21] In addition to this passage there are three figures whose contexts tend to discredit astrology. In the first, Milton uses astrology's technical language to describe the detested hierarchy of the Church of England:

> [The primitive system of parish councils made for unity] Whereas on the other side Prelaty ascending by a graduall monarchy from Bishop to Arch-bishop, from thence to Primat, and from thence, for there can be no reason yeilded neither in nature, nor in religion, wherefore, if it have lawfully mounted thus high, it should not be a Lordly ascendent in the horoscope of the Church, from Primate to Patriarch, and so to Pope. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 217-218)

In the second, he ridicules Bishop Hall for statements about Milton's character and mode of life, statements as grotesquely inaccurate as the astrological fortunetelling of a gypsy:

> In his tenth Section he will needs erect figures, and tell fortunes. 7 *am no Bishop,* he sayes, 7 *was never borne to it;* let me tell therefore this wizzard since he calculats so right, that [I hate bishops] . . . But hee proceeds; and the familiar belike informs him, that *a rich Widow, or a Lecture, or both, would content me;* whereby I perceave him to be more ignorant in his art of divining then any Gipsy . . . And that he may furder learne how his Astrology is wide all the houses of heav'n

[20] III, 418.

[21] See above, note 14.

in spelling manages, I care not if I tell him . . . [that I] would choose a virgin of mean fortunes honestly bred, before the wealthiest widow. The feind therefore that told our *Chaldean* the contrary was a lying feind. *(Apol,* Ill, 341-343)

Finally, he has Satan read in the book of the stars the horoscope of Christ:

> Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven,
> Or Heav'n write aught of Fate, by what the Stars
> Voluminous, or single characters,
> In their conjunction met, give me to spell . . .
> A Kingdom they portend thee, but . . .
> no date prefixt
> Directs me in the Starry Rubric set. *(P.R.,* II, 472-473)

This act could hardly have seemed other than blasphemous to Milton. On the whole, the evidence supports the conclusion that he did not share the widespread seventeenth-century belief in the influence of the stars on man's destiny, a conclusion hardly surprising in view of his never-ending insistence on free will. What is surprising is the fact that his attitude is in any degree ambiguous.[22]

Not at all ambiguous, however, is his reaction to the other important pseudo-science of the time, alchemy, which he regards as contemptible; His first metaphor sets the tone:

> [The bishops'] trade being, by the same Alchymy that the *Pope* uses, to extract heaps of *gold,* and *silver* out of the drossie *Bullion* of the Peoples sinnes . . . [they fear that the people may] looke with a good judgement into these their deceitfull Pedleries. *(Ref.,* Ill, 56)

Subsequent images, while not so explicit, are equally clear.[23] Bishop Hall, in attacking Milton, is not only, as we have seen,[24] a bad astrologer but also a tricky alchemist:

[22] **For a discussion of belief in astrology in Elizabethan England see Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass* (New York, 1936), pp. 33-42.**

[23] **One metaphor has no implications one way or the other: prelacy "is a distill'd quintessence, a pure elixar of mischief" *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 276). It is, however, again applied to prelacy.**

[24] **Sec above.**

where my morning haunts are he wisses not. Tis wonder, that being so rare an Alchymist of slander, he could not extract that, as well as ... [other false charges] which his art could distill so cunningly, but because his Limbeck failes him ... He tell him. *(Apol,* Ill, 298)

The irony here is plain. Hall's slanders are as fraudulent as an alchemist's gold. Again, censorship is evil:

it will be a harder alchymy then *Lullius* ever knew, to sublimat any good use out of [it]. *(Areo.,* IV, 306)

The force of this metaphor depends upon the belief that it was difficult, if not impossible, for Lully to sublimate anything. Finally, in two non-figurative passages in *Paradise Lost* Milton speaks disparagingly of the vain search for the philosopher's stone,[25] and of the belief of the sooty and empirical alchemist that transmutation is possible.[26]

It is not in science that Milton is most at home, and all this information is inconsequential in comparison to his profound knowledge of the Bible and the great body of English

almost by heart needs no demonstration here; what should be pointed out is the fact that nothing could more clearly show the way in which habitual thought is embodied in imagery. Milton lived with the Bible at his elbow, and nearly four hundred images based on Biblical texts (with others doubtless overlooked) have been listed in the course of this study. These texts are drawn from twenty-three books of the Old Testament, fourteen of the New Testament, and six of the Apocrypha.[27] The books chiefly utilized are Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, I Kings, Matthew, Mark, and Luke (usually texts common to all three), and Revelation. The synoptic gospels and Revelation are by far the most heavily

[25] Bk. Ill, II.598-602. 26 Bk. v, 11.439-443.

[27] **Those books missing are: from the Old Testament, Leviticus, Ruth, I Chronicles, Ezra, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and almost all the minor prophets: Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi; from the New Testament most of the lesser epistles: Philippians, Colossians, Titus, Philemon, James, II Peter, I, II, III John, Jude.**

represented.[28] In addition, there are a very large number of references that cannot be localized, such as sheep,[29] Philistines, Pharisees, the ark of the covenant, and the like. The fact that any subject was likely to suggest a Biblical figure may be illustrated by the references noted in the diverse material of the preceding chapters.[30] We may here note the variety of images applied to the same subject. Take, for example, divorce:

[Those interpreting Milton's doctrine as licence] discern themselves like that *Assyrian* blasphemer . . . reproaching not man but the Almighty; [31] *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 371)

[In converting a heathen wife a man may] set some reasonable time to himselfe after which he may give over washing an Ethiope, if he will heare the advice of the Gospell;[32] *(Doct. Dh.,* Ill, 414)

[28] Matthew, Mark, Luke, 39 images involving 36 texts; Revelation, 38 images, *26* texts.

[29] Also shepherd, sheephook, flock, herdsman, wolves.

[30] See Chapter I: a king (Samson), coin (tribute to Caesar, note 10), bonds and bondage, yoke and yoking (note 15), scales and balance (note 18), buildings (build on sand, etc., note 23), thief (thief entering sheepfold, note 24), iron fetters or rod (rod of iron, note 32), bishops' regalia (Aaron's robes, note 39), virtue's avoiding a race (St. Paul's running a race, note 55), clergy or "cymbal doctors" (St. Paul's tinkling cymbals), poetry—personified—with a harp, engraving (laws engraven in the heart, note 75), a broad path (the way leading to destruction, note 76), the influence of the Pleiades (note 76) ;

Chapter 2: lamp of saving light on a hill (saving health among nations, city set on a hill, note 7), poor cooking (scorpion given for fish, note 12), food (leaven, manna, sincere milk note 17, meats offered to idols note 18), salt (seasoned with salt, note 19), cleaning (sweeping and garnishing, note 43), union of church and state (God joining man and woman in one flesh), father's treatment of children (no longer under a schoolmaster, note 53), schooling (Mosaic Law a schoolmaster, note 55) ;

Chapter 3: path (straight path of the Lord note 8, leading to destruction note 9, ascending the hill of God note 10), fighting (spiritual armor, note 19), fortress (note 21), proclaim war (set up a standard, note 24) ;

Chapter 4: light of goodness or knowledge, darkness of evil or ignorance (note 59), conformity (wood and hay forced together, note 86);

Chapter 5: Milton's critics (hogs before whom pearls are cast, note l), civil power of church (ass riding lion, note 8), snare or bait (note 33), wings of the wind, Samson (wisdom of the adder, note 51).

[31] II Kings 18, 19, especially 19:22: "Whom hast thou [King of Assyria] reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel."

[32] Jeremiah 13:23: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

[What can be worse in marriage than] to force a mixture of minds that cannot unite, and to sowe the furrow of mans nativity with seed of two incoherent and uncombining dispositions; [33] *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 417)

[In cases of rooted hatred divorce] like a divine touch in one moment heals all;[34] and like the word of God, in one instant hushes outrageous tempests into a sudden stilnesse and peacefull calm;[35]

(Doct.Div., Ill, 485)

[Those who permit divorce] shall set free many daughters of *Israel,* not wanting much of her sad plight *whom Satan had bound eighteen years;* [36] *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 510)

[Unhappy marriage] wraps us in a misery worse then any wildernes, as the Spirit of God himself judges. Prov. 19;[37] *(Tetra.,* IV, 87)

hee who taught us that no man puts a peece of new cloth upon an old garment, nor new wine into old bottles, that he should sow this patch of strictnes [of divorce] upon the old apparel of our frailty, to make a rent more incurable . . . this were [absurd].[38] *(Tetra.,* IV, 173)

Or take, for a second example, England or the English people. It is here interesting to observe Milton's change of attitude from optimism to pessimism. In 1644 his hopes are high:

Why else was this Nation chos'n before any other, that out of her as out of *Sion* should be proclam'd and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all *Europ;* [39] *(Areo.,* IV, 340)

What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge. What wants there to such a towardly and

[33] **Deuteronomy *22:* 9: "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled." Milton has quoted this passage, incorrectly, on the same page.**

[34] **Christ's miracles of healing—no specific text.**

[35] Matthew 8:26, Mark 4:39, Luke 8:24.

[36] Luke 13: Il-16.

[37] **Proverbs 21:19: "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman."**

[38] Matthew 9:16-17, Mark 2:21-22, Luke 5:36-37.

[39] **Isaiah 40:9: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" Romans 11:26: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."**

pregnant soile, but wise and faithfull labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies. We reck'n more then five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already;[40] *(Areo.,* IV, 341)

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks;[41]

(Areo., IV, 344)

In 1649 he has come to realize that some Englishmen insist upon their fondness for King Charles:

[Men who are infatuated with the King] may have none to blame but thir own folly, if they live and dye in such a strook'n blindness, as next to that of *Sodom* hath not happ'nd to any sort of men more gross, or more misleading;[42] *(Eikon.,* V, 67)

God knows he [King Charles] *had no passion, designe or preparation to imbroyle his Kingdom in a civill Warr.* True; for he thought his Kingdom to be *Issachar* a *strong Ass that* would have *couch'd downe betweene two burd'ns,* the one of prelatical superstition, the other of civil tyrannic;[43] *(Eikon.,* V, 162)

[To restore the King's power would be to] put us back to a second wandring over that horrid Wilderness of distraction and civil slaughter, which . . . we have . . . survived;[44] *(Eikon.,V,* 288)

And if by sentence thus writt'n it were my happiness to set free the minds of English men from longing to returne poorly under that Captivity of Kings, from which the strength and supreme Sword of Justice hath deliverd them, I shall have don a work not much inferior to that of *Zorobabel:* who by well praising and extolling the force of Truth, in that contemplative strength conquer'd *Darius;* and freed his Countrey,

[40] John 4:35: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then comcth harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

[41] Psalms 19:4-5: "In them [heavens] hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." Also Samson, Judges 13-16.

[42] Genesis 18.

[43] Genesis 49:14.

[44] Exodus 14 ff. Milton also uses the figure of the wilderness to refer I) to the period in the Church of England since the Reformation, which delivered it from the bondage of Egypt *(Anim.,* Ill, 144, 147), and 2) to the period of the Commonwealth when the English people were freed from their Pharaohs in Egypt *(First Def.,* VII, 179).

and the people of God from the Captivity of *Babylon.* Which I shall yet not despaire to doe, if they in this Land whose minds are yet Captive, be but as ingenuous to acknowledge the strength and supremacie of Justice, as that heathen king was, to confess the strength of truth;[45]

(*Eikon.,* V, 293)

And in 1659 he is desperate :

[If we call back a king, this act] will render us a scorn and derision to all our neighbours. And what will they at best say of us and of the whole *English* name, but scoffingly as of that foolish builder, mentiond by our Saviour, who began to build a tower, and was not able to finish it.[46] Where is this goodly tower of a Commonwealth, which the English boasted they would build to overshaddow kings, and be another *Rome* in the west ? The foundation indeed they laid gallantly ; but fell into a wors confusion, not of tongues, but of factions, then those at the tower of *Babel;*[47] *(Ready & Easy Way,* VI, 117-118)

[The restitution of the Long Parliament was] a signal Victory, when so great a part of the Nation were desperately conspired to call back again thir Egyptian Bondage;[48] *(A Letter to a Friend,* VI, 102)

[45]The story of the three pages and the decree of Darius: I Esdras 3 : 1-4:48 "Now king Darius made a great feast unto all his subjects . . . Then the three young men of the body-guard . . . spake one to another: Let every one of us say one thing which shall be strongest: and he whose sentence shall seem wiser than the others, unto him shall Darius the king give great gifts and great honours in token of victory . . . The first wrote, Wine is the strongest. The second wrote, The king is strongest. The third wrote Women are strongest, but above all things Truth beareth away the victory . . . Then the third, who had spoken of women, and of truth (this was Zorababel) began to speak . . . and all the people then shouted and said, Great is truth, and strong above all things. Then said the king unto him, Ask what thou wilt more than is appointed in writing, and we will give it thee, inasmuch as thou art found wisest . . . Then said he unto the king, Remember thy vow, which thou didst vow to build Jerusalem . . . Then Darius the king . . . wrote letters for him unto all the treasurers and governors . . . that they should safely bring on their way both him and all those that should go up with him to build Jerusalem."

The story is also told by Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews,* Bk. XI, ch. 3 *(Works,* ed. W. Whiston, New York, 1889, II, 207 ff.).

[46] Luke 14:27-30: "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

[47] Genesis II : 1-9.

[48] Exodus.

[The people] seem now chusing them a captain back for *Egypt*[49] *(Ready & Easy Way,* Vl, 149)

Yet even the marriage tie and the welfare of England were of minor importance. The subject that chiefly engaged his attention was religion. Involved as he was in prolonged controversies, the text of the Bible provided him not only with arguments and illustrations but also with an abundance of imagery. By this means he expressed his hatred of the Church Fathers, church ritual and observances, and in particular the episcopal system, the bishops themselves and the clergy as a whole. Reverence for the Church Fathers, or antiquity, is a kind of idol worship:[50]

More tolerable it were for the *Church* of GOD that all these Names [martyrs, fathers, Christian Emperors, and authorities in general] were utterly abolisht, like the *Brazen Serpent;* then that mens fond opinion should thus idolize them;[51] *(Ref.,* Ill, 10)

But if any shall strive to set up his *Ephod* [official garment of Jewish priest], and *Teraphim* [images connected with magical rites] of Antiquity against the brightnesse, and perfection of the *Gospell,* let him feare lest he and his *Baal* be turn'd into *Bosheth* [the shameful thing, an expression used to designate Baal] ;[52] *(Prelat. Epis.,* Ill, 104)

[We shall] throw down your *Nebuchadnezzars* Image [antiquity] and crumble it ... as well the gold of those Apostolick Successors that you boast of, as your *Constantinian* silver, together with the iron, the brasse, and the clay of those muddy and strawy ages that follow.[53] *(Anim.,* Ill, 140-141)

[49] Numbers 14:4: "And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

[50] For other, non-biblical derogatory images see Chapter I: their seeming bulk is hollow; they are polluted rags dropped from the shoulders of Time; Chapter 4: they are more chaff than wheat; the miscellaneous catch of a fisherman; the dim reflection of truth.

[51] Numbers 21:9: "And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." II Kings 18:4: "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it."

[52] For teraphim, see Judges 17-18.

[53] Daniel 2: 35.

It is disgusting:

[The bishops] have started back from the purity of Scripture ... to the old vomit of your traditions.[54] *(Apol,* Ill, 325)

Moreover, Milton strenuously objects to the liturgy of the English church of his day.[55] It is a pagan corruption of the gospel and should be done away with:

[Liturgy is] a pollution and disturbance to the Gospell it selfe; and a kinde of driving us with the foolish *Galatians* to another gospell;[56] *(Apol.,* Ill, 355)

Remon. It is no little advantage . . . that our Liturgy is taught to speak severall languages for use and example.

Answ. The language of *Ashdod* [Philistine city] is one of them, and that makes so many English-men have such a smattering of their *Philistian* Mother;[57] *(Anim.,* Ill, 122)

wee ought to ... rid our selves of corrupt Discipline, as wee would shake fire out of our bosomes.[58] *(Ref.,* Ill, 66)

He ridicules the efforts of the English bishops to have their ritual adopted by other countries:

[Liturgy had a] greedy desire to win Proselites by conforming to them [Catholics] unlawfully, like the desire of *Tamar,* who to raise up seed to her Husband sate in the common road drest like a Curtezan, and he that came to her committed incest with her.[59] *(Anim.,* Ill, 130)

What Milton chiefly dislikes about the liturgy is its formality: its responsories, litanies, and set forms of prayer, which he

[54] Proverbs 26: II: "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."

[55] For other non-Biblical derogatory images see Chapter I : it is Popishly attired, like a matron in a whore's clothes; it covers truth with polluted clothing; Chapter 2: it is a scorpion that no cooking can turn into a fish.

[56] Galatians 3:1: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?"

[57] I Samuel 5; II Chronicles 26, etc.

[58] Proverbs 6: 27: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?"

[59] Genesis 38. A second image does not involve a Biblical text: "And indeed our *Liturgie* hath run up and downe the world like an English gallopping Nun [a lay religious pensioner], proffering her selfe, but wee heare of none yet that bids money for her" *(Anim.,* Ill, 122).

calls "Rabbinical fumes." [60] This last detail gave rise to a great deal of controversy in which Milton took part, arguing for extemporary prayers. Another hotly disputed practice was the railing off of the altar:

> a repugnant and contradictive Mount Sinai in the Gospell.[61]
> *(R.Ch.* Got;., Ill, 261)

The sacrament of Communion is offensive to him:

> by such arguments . . . [the bishops] were setting up the molten Calfe of their Masse againe; [62] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 203)

as are aesthetic embellishments in general:[63]

> the Idolatrous erection of Temples beautified exquisitely to out-vie the Papists, the costly and deare-bought Scandals, and snares of Images, Pictures, rich Coaps, gorgeous Altar-clothes. . . . What other materials then these have built up the *spirituall* BABEL to the heighth of her Abominations?[64] *(Ref.,* Ill, 54)

Along with these details, there are a number of others which should be considered here even though the images do

[60] His other images on these points do not involve Biblical texts:

> [To repeat the King's arguments concerning prayers] "would turn my answers into *Responsories,* and begett another Liturgie, having too much of one already"; *(Eikon.,* V, 262)

> [Multiple imprimaturs of censors] "are the prety responsories, these are the deare Antiphonies that so bewitcht of late our Prelats, and their Chaplaines with the goodly Eccho they made"; *(Areo.,* IV, 304)

> [In responsories the functions of priest and people are confused] "The like, or worse may be said of the *Litany,* wherein neither Priest nor people speak any intire sense of themselves throughout the whole I know not what to name it; only by the timely contribution of their parted stakes closing up as it were the schisme of a slic't prayer" *(Apol.,* Ill, 351-352).

For other derogatory figures concerning set prayers see Chapter I: they are the ugly garnishing of the decency of extempore prayers; the drone of plain song; Chapter 2: corrupt and saltless meat barreled up; a lesson learned by rote under a schoolmaster's rod; interlineary translations provided for children; Chapter 4: as monotonous as a cuckoo's cry.

[61] Exodus 19:12.

[62] Exodus 32. A second image does not involve a Biblical text: [In the episcopal ceremony the Eucharist is] "pageanted about, like a dreadfull Idol" *(Ref.,* Ill, 4).

[63] Contrast the high-roofed cloisters, storied windows, pealing organ, and full-voiced choir that dissolve him into ecstasies (// *Pen.,* I, 45).

[64] Genesis II: 1-9.

not involve Biblical texts. Obviously Milton objected to Catholic particularities: indulgences and commutation of penance—

[The King] like a kind of Pope, sold them [Irish Catholics] many indulgences for Mony; *(Eikon.,* V, 190)

[To put licencers in place of bishops] is but an old canonicall slight of *commuting* our penance. *(Areo.,* IV, 331)

rosaries, or rubrics; the belief in saints, martyrs, and relics—

[The King left his prayers in *Eikon Basilike,* hoping] by these goodly reliques to be held a Saint and Martyr; *(Eikon.,* V, *go)*

and in the stigmata. He is also scornful of the Jewish phylactery:[65]

reverend and lerned Divines, as they are stil'd in the Phylactery of thir own Title page; *(Tenure,* V, 53)

[Hall did not write under his title of Bishop] in disguise without his superscription or *Phylactery* either of *holy* or *Prelat. (ApoL,* III, 310)

On the eve of the Restoration, he expresses his bitter consciousness that the Royalists were about to reimpose episcopalianism in a figure based on its detested observances:

If thir absolute determination be to enthrall us, before so long a Lent of Servitude, they may permitt us a little Shroving-time first, wherin to speak freely, and take our leaves of Libertie.

(Ready & Easy Way, VI, ill)

Yet in spite of this comprehensive objection to ceremonial, he has some figures that are not derogatory. When he wrote *L'Allegro,* he had not, perhaps, yet broken with the Church of England:

> And Crop-full out of dores he flings,
> Ere the first Cock his Mattin rings. (I, 38)

This is not the case in the church and divorce pamphlets. Here the neutral images remain inconsistencies. Either Milton did not notice these vestiges of an earlier way of think-

[65] A small leather box, containing scriptural texts, worn during prayer; hence, a charm.

ing [66] or he made deliberate artistic use of them without feeling obliged to indicate his disapproval: [67]

> These [self-reproaches] and such like lessons as these,
> *I* know would have been my Matins duly, and my Even-song.
> *(R.Ch.Gov.,III,233)*

[Milton is one who] now for haste snatches up a plain ungarnish't present as a thanke-offering to [God] ; *(Anim.,* Ill, 148)

[If liturgy copies Romish forms] How can we believe ye would refuse to take the stipend of Rome, when ye shame not to live upon the almes-basket of her prayers? [68] *(Apol.,* Ill, 354)

[Truth is ignominious at birth until time has] Churcht [69] the father [of it] ... from the needlesse causes of his purgation;
(Doct. Div., Ill, 370)

Christ himselfe sends not our hope on pilgrimage to the worlds end.
(Tetra.,IV, 201)

All these observances are part and parcel of the episcopal system, and it is this that bears the brunt of Milton's attack.[70] Prelacy is a babel; it is pagan idol worship:[71]

[The King] hath the same fix'd . . . esteem of his old *Ephesian* Goddess, call'd the *Church of England.*[72] *(Eikon.,* V, 279)

Bishops [73] are Canaanites and Philistines; they have almost

[66] Also altar, shrine, cathedral, sanctuary, diocese.

[67] For a similar inconsistency in regard to royalty see Chapter I.

[68] The scorn in this image is not directed against the alms-basket.

[69] The ceremony of the churching of women after childbirth. Cf "Methought I saw my late espoused Saint."

[70] As does, of course, the Catholic Church: the "whore sitting on that beast in the *Revelation" (Hirelings,* VI, 81) or the beast itself. For an image attacking Jesuits see Chapter I, shopkeepers.

[71] For other derogatory images see Chapter I: it blanches its deformities and presents a false-whited resemblance of the true gospel; it is a drudging trade, a corrupt judicial court, a wax image; Chapter 2: a screen to hide ambition and avarice, a wen, the mate of discord; Chapter 5: a serpent slain by the sun of God's word.

[72] Acts 19:28.

[73] Chaplains are summarily disposed of; not being a scriptural order of ministers "they are left ... to such a furder examining as the Sons of *Sceva* the Jew met with." *(Eikon.,* V, 259) They were exorcists who tried to cast out spirits in Jesus' name, but who were attacked and wounded by the evil spirits (Acts 19:13-16). When King Charles in his captivity was deprived of his chaplains he made "more Lamentation for the want of ... [them than]

driven God's saints into the Red Sea; they are open sepulchers; they have infected a third part of the kingdom like the apostate star in *Revelation;* they torment men like the locusts at the day of judgement.[74] Milton brings a detailed list of charges against them.[75] They are greedy;[70] their two gods are Mammon and their belly; they are as base as the priests of Bel or as Simon Magus, who offered to buy the apostles,'power; as Gehazi or as Amnon:

Nor content as *Gehazi* was to make a cunning, but a constraind advantage of what thir master bids them give freely, how can they but returne smitten, worse then that sharking minister, with a spiritual leprosie?[77] *(Hirelings,* VI, 68)

when they have stufft their Idolish temples with the wastefull pillage of your estates, will they yet have any compassion upon you . . . will they be but so good to you as that ravisher [Amnon] was to his sister [Tamar], when he had us'd her at his pleasure, will they but only hate ye and so turne ye loose?[78] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 270)

They are money-changers who have made the church a den of thieves, selling

not doves, but the dove, the holy spirit itself.[79]

(Scc.Def., VIII, 237)

Seated under their spreading vine, they are luxurious in their manner of living:[80]

Micah . . . [for] his houshold Priest" *(Eikon.,* V, 260). See Judges 17-18.

[74] Revelation 9:2-3.

[75] For other derogatory images see Chapter I: they are hawkers and jugglers; they deck the body not in innocence but in elaborate clothes; they have hands ready to ordain for money; Chapter 2: they put their foot in the broth (interfere) ; Chapter 3: they are the soldiers of tyranny; Chapter 4: they are strange gardeners claiming authority and ten-fold wages; they suppress schism as winter suppresses the delights of spring; they are ships under full sail, and sailors in the rigging; Chapter 5: they are serpents, dormice, hackneys, pack-horses, ferrets, wild beasts, whales, wolves, dogs, and vermin.

For ministers in general, see Chapter I: they are as greedy as shopkeepers; Chapter 3: their maneuvers are as devious as a battalion drill; Chapter 5: they are lured by wages as a bird is lured by a fowler's low-bell.

[76] See Chapter I, shopkeepers.

[77] II Kings 5:20-27.

[78] II Samuel 13 : 1-22.

[79] Matthew 21:12-13.

[80] Including plurality of cures: Under censorship, "the Pastor of a small un-

Two Leeches they have that still suck, and suck the Kingdome, their Ceremonies, and their Courts;[81] *(Ref.,* Ill, 54)

[God] can easily send labourers into his Harvest, that shall not cry, Give, give, but be contented with a moderate and beseeming allowance.[82] *(Anim.,* Ill, 163)

They and their fellow ministers are gluttonous, Capernaitans capable only of belly-cheer,[83] eager for the fleshpots of Egypt:

Prelats revell like *Belshazzar* with their full carouses in *Goblets,* and *vessels* of *gold* snatcht from *Gods Temple*[84] *(Ref.,* Ill, 55)

and unmindful of the example of Christ's frugality:

[A rich man's chaplain is] better breakfasted then he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between *Bethany* and *Jerusalem*[85] *(Areo.,* IV, 334)

They are tyrannous; Egyptian taskmasters, Ephesian beasts, and cruel Nimrods; they have made England a house of bondage

till all the Land grone, and cry out, as against a whippe of Scorpions.[86] *(Ref.,* Ill, 49)

and are endeavoring to make all the people docile slaves,

by their corrupt and servile doctrines boring our eares to an everlasting slavery,[87] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 270)

among whom the unthinking mob are slaves already:

[The King's prayers may] catch the worthies approbation of an inconstant, irrational, Image-doting rabble; that like a credulous and hapless

learned Parish, on the sudden shall be exalted Archbishop over a large dioces of books, and yet not remove, but keep his other cure too, a mysticall pluralist" *(Areo.,* IV, 331).

[81] Proverbs 30:15, "The horseleech hath two daughters, crying Give, give."
[82] Matthew 9: 38, Proverbs 30: 15.
[83] Christ rebuked Capernaum for its unbelief. Matthew II: 23; Luke 10:15.
[84] Daniel 5:1-4. [85] Matthew 21:17-22. [86] I Kings 12:11.
[87] Exodus 21:6: A Hebrew slave must serve six years and may then go free but must leave his wife and children in slavery. If, however, he renounces his freedom, "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever."

herd . . . hold out both thir eares ... to be stigmatized and board through in witness of thir own voluntary and beloved baseness.[88]

(Eikon., V, 309)

They are proud; stiff-necked merchants of Babylon (the great men of the earth), they step up into the chair of pontifical pride and sit lording it over the church in their fat bishoprics, even claiming the right to seats in Parliament; they trace their line of apostolic descent as did the Bishop of Armagh

enforcing himselfe with much ostentation of endlesse genealogies, as if he were the man that S. *Paul* forewarnes us of in *Timothy.*[89]

(R. Ch. Gov., Ill, 205)

Yet proud as they are, they depend on the King:

[Prelates must] lift up their eyes to the hils of the Court, from whence only comes their help.[90] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 272)

In his fall they mourn for him as for Tammuz, and cut their flesh for him like the rueful priests whom Elijah mocked. They are dull of mind; as slavish as the Jews when they left Egypt, as dead-alive as the church of Sardis, they are mere dumb beasts,

those Beasts of *Amalec,* the Prelats,[91] *(Eikon.,* V, 152)

fat oxen fit to be sacrificed. They are lazy; they'leave the ministerial work which should be their own concern to underlings :

[88] In these two passages the phrasing *("everlasting* slavery"; *"voluntary* baseness") points unmistakably to Exodus (see above) as a source. It is true, however, that the boring of the ears was a common oriental custom and that Roman slaves from the East were so treated (H. W. Johnston, *The Private Lives of the Romans.* Rev. ed., New York, 1932, p. 103). Milton has a third image referring to this treatment and to the whitening of the feet, which was a universal Roman custom (Johnston, *loc. cit.):* "Though you [Salmasius] stood forward . . . with both ears bored and gypsum-whitened feet, exposed for sale, you would not be so much the most contemptible of slaves as now you are" *(First Def.,* VII, 367). Milton is here probably thinking of Juvenal, *Satire I*, 102-111, though there are other references.

[89] I Timothy 1:4: "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith."

[90] Psalms 121: I. [91] 1 Samuel 15.

who is he so arrogant so presumptuous that durst dispose and guide the living arke of the holy Ghost, though he should finde it wandring in the field of *Bethshemesh,* without the conscious warrant of some high calling. But no profane insolence can paralell that which our Prelates dare avouch, to drive outragiously, and shatter the holy arke of the Church, not born upon their shoulders with pains and labour in the word, but drawne with rude oxen their officials, and their owne brute inventions. Let them make shewes of reforming while they will, so long as the Church is mounted upon the Prelaticall Cart, and not as it ought betweene the hands of the Ministers, it will but shake and totter, and he that sets to his hand though with a good intent to hinder the shogging of it, in this unlawfull waggonry wherein it rides, let him beware it be not fatall to him as it was to *Uzza.*[92] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 187-188)

They are deceitful:

[Bishops claim to be the only protection against a flood of sects] And thus doe they raise an evill report upon the expected reforming grace that God hath bid us hope for, like those faithlesse spies, whose carcasses shall perish in the wildernesse of their owne confused ignorance.[93]

(R. Ch. Gov., III, 214)

And they are as hypocritical as Pharisees, straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel; [94] some of them advance arguments for at least partial opposition to the King and then change their position, seeming

to stand with great zeale and confidence on the wall of *Sion;* but like *Jebusites* [inhabitants of Jerusalem], not like *Israelites,* or *Levites:* blinde also as well as lame, they discern not *David* from *Adonibezec* [Lord of Besek, a city of Canaan] : but cry him up for the Lords anointed, whose thumbs and great toes not long before they had cut off upon thir Pulpit cushions.[95] *(Tenure,* V, 57)

Milton's attack was directed not only against the episcopal system in general but also against individual bishops, notably Bishop Hall.[96] He is a son of Belial without the hire

[92] II Samuel 6:1-11. [93] Numbers 13:17-33.

[94] After the Presbyterians turned against Parliament, Milton attacks them much as he does the bishops: they talk as little to the purpose as Saul did when he prophesied; their covetousness is as bottomless as the pit from which their fellow locusts were released; the Belfast Presbytery are Carmelites, and haughty in their pontifical see. [95] Joshua 15: 63, Judges I: 1-8.

[96] For other derogatory images see Chapter I: he is a scavenger, a beadle,

of Jezebel, a cursing Shimei, a Laodicean, an unfaithful spy of Canaan,[97] a man that looks with Balaam's eyes, a dauber, a Joab, and a Caiaphas:

[The bishops are corrupt] and yet this Dauber would daub still with his untempered Morter: But hearken what God sayes by the Prophet *Ezekiel,* Say unto them that daub this wall with untempered Morter, that it shall fall, there shall be an overflowing shower, and yee O great hailstones shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rend it, and I will say unto you, the wall is no more, neither they that daubt it; [98] *(Anim.,* III, 170)

Remon. Now come these brotherly Slanderers.

Answ. Goe on dissembling *Joab,* as still your use is, call brother and smite; call brother and smite, till it bee said of you, as the like was of *Herod,* a man had better be your hog then your Brother; [99]

(Anim., III, 136)

[Milton has charged the bishops with being pluralists, an accusation which proved to be true in Hall's case. Hence,] our inrag'd Confuter, that he may be as perfet an hypocrite as *Caiaphas,* ere he be a High Priest, cries out, *horrid blasphemy!* and like a recreant Jew calls for *stones.*[100] *(Apol.,III,3o8)*

In similar fashion he falls upon his other opponents. King Charles[101] is Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Agag; he

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a cutler, a participant in a pageant; his oratory has elaborate laces, frizzles and bobbins; he tortures a text, and slits sentences as bishops slit noses; his modesty is pretence; he strains his fancy in describing himself, and cannot stand on his own legs in an argument; Chapter 2: his writing is as dull as dough; his understanding needs physic; his desire to instruct is like an eczema; his book has a heavy pulse; Chapter 3: he overworks his wit like a horse; Chapter 4: he thinks shallow reasoning deep, and his book is shallow; he unloads citations of authorities like cargo; Chapter 5: he is a viper, a serpent, a fox, a dog, a horse, and a seagull.

[97] See above, note 93. [98] Ezekiel 13:10-16.

[99] II Samuel 20:8-10: "When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out. And Joab said unto Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith . . . and he died."

When Herod executed his son Antipater, Augustus said, "It were better to be such a man's swine than his son," a remark which makes a pun in the Greek (Macrobius, *Saturnalium Conviviorum Libri Septem,* 11:4).

[100] Matthew 26:65, *Mark* 14:64.

[101] For other derogatory images see Chapter I: he hides his worst actions

is devoted to perdition worse than any Antiochus;[102] he is cursed as bitterly as was Meroz.[103] He accuses the reformers of being factious as Pharaoh accused the Israelites of being idle. His invective against those appealing for redress of grievances is as sharp as Rehoboam's, and he has

acted in good earnest what *Rehoboarn* did but threat'n, to make his little finger heavier then his Fathers loynes, and to whip us with his two twisted Scorpions, both temporal and spiritual Tyranny.[104]

(Eikon., V, 277-278)

He displays

impenitence and obstinacy to the end (for he was no M*anasseh),*[105]

(Eikon., V, 278)

He is as crafty as Balak:

outwardly professing the same Religion with them [the Puritans], he could not presently use violence as *Pharaoh* did . . . [but] like to *Balac* the son of *Zippor,* against a Nation of Prophets thinks it best to hire other esteemed Prophets, and to undermine and weare out the true Church by a fals Ecclesiastical policy.[106] *(Eikon.,* V, 227)

He is as malignant as Sanballat or Tobiah at the building of Jerusalem.[107] He is a greater tyrant than Saul or Ahab

seizing no one . . . one *Naboths* Vineyard, but . . . whole Inheritances under the pretence of Forrest, or Crown-Lands;[108]

(Eikon., V, 76)

The Ministers which were sent him [in his captivity] no marvel he indur'd not; for they Preacht repentance to him: the others [the King's own chaplains] gave him easie confession, easie absolution, nay

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with dye; his hands are heavy; Chapter 2: he inflamed the nation; he could not distinguish good from corrupt blood; Chapter 5: he is a vulture, a fox, a hog, and a remora.

[102] Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) attempted to abolish the Jewish religion, his persecutions resulting in the Maccabean rebellion.

[103] Judges 5:23. [104] I Kings 12:1-14.

[105] II Chronicles 33:11—13: "Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him."

[106] Numbers 22. [107] Nehemiah 4: 1-6. [108] I Kings 21: 1-14.

strength'nd his hands and hard'nd his heart by applauding him in his wilfull wayes. To them he was an *Ahab,* to these a *Constantine;* it must follow then that they to him were as unwelcome as *Eliah* was to *Ahab*[109] these as deer, and pleasing as *Amaziah* the Priest of *Bethel* was to *Jeroboam.* These had learnt well the lesson that would please; *Prophesie not against Bethel, for it is the Kings Chappel, the Kings Court;* and had taught the King to say of those Ministers which the Parlament had sent, *Amos hath conspir'd against me; the Land is not able to beare all his words.*[110] *(Eikon.,* V, 261)

In writing his three *Defences* Milton cannot find so many Biblical texts to apply to his opponents, yet he does what he can.[111] Salmasius,[112] in quoting the prophets is a rascally false prophet; he is a second Balaam solicited by a second King Balak:[113]

Now your very speech bewrays you right Balaam; for where you designed to vomit out all the venom of your bitterness, there unwittingly and against your will you have pronounced a blessing.[114]

(First Def., VII, 503)

Being an ass ridden by his wife,

and being overgrown with the healed heads of the bishops that heretofore you had wounded, you seem to present a sort of miniature portrait of that beast in Revelation.[115] *(First Def.,* VII, 549)

[109] I Kings 21:14-24. [110] Amos 7:10-13.

[111] There are no Biblical images directed against his opponent in *Colasterion.* For others, see Chapter I: he is a hangman, a barber, a tradesman setting up shop, a huckster, a hobbyhorse; his argument hobbles; Chapter 2: his ignorance needs scouring; his dull book needs stirring and a clove to keep it from spoiling, and is fusty wine; being mad he needs a draft of medicine; the margin of his book has gout and dropsy; Chapter 5: he is a pork, a barrow, a snout, a boar, a hackney, a fox, a brain-worm, a woodcock, a bee, a horsefly, a dog; he is cock-brained; his doctrine came out of a sty.

[112] For other derogatory images see Chapter I: he is a public crier, a pugilist, a horse-boy, a buffoon, a gypsy; his arguments are the sweepings of a shop; his defence of Charles I is the wailing of hired mourners; he is a hawker, a mountebank; his attack on the English is a worn-out cosmetic; one chapter is doddering; he bawls, chatters, stammers, and babbles; Chapter 2: he is a pest, a plague and a plague sore, mad and delirious, vomiting and belching abuse; Chapter 5: he is various disgusting animals.

[113] Milton has eight images based on this episode, almost all of them unfavorable to Balaam.

[114] Numbers 22-24. [115] Revelation 17: 3.

Morus [116] is shameless:

as he has determined with himself, that his only hope is in daring, having wiped his mouth like the harlot in the divine proverb ... he struts abroad;[117] *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 77)

hypocritical: having declared that he was pronounced innocent of certain charges,

Riverius himself, embracing you, "Never, (says he,) was Ethiopian so whitened as you have been this day." And are you a man so extremely dull of sense, as not to perceive that, by this proverb, you are ridiculed rather than acquitted, when Riverius, by washing you, whitened an Ethiopian and expended his labour and chalk to no purpose?[118] Hail to you, then, Ethiopian, or if you had rather, whited wall; since the president of the synod has decorated you with the same title as Paul did Ananias;[119] *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 255)

and at the same time ineffective: he is fierce, malicious, and the like, and

you would almost think him another Beelzebub, but that he merely cast out flies.[120] *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 279)

All this array of textual images, controversial and non-controversial, while not exhaustive, is sufficient to show how habitually Milton thought in Scriptural phrases. Yet important as the Bible was to him, it did not by any means constitute the whole of religion. Consequently we find images derived from various other aspects of the subject: orthodox (in Milton's eyes), heretical, and Catholic opinions, Judaism, paganism, and popular superstitions. Orthodox is the belief in angels, heaven, and hell: the cherub contemplation

[116] For other derogatory images see Chapter I: he is a corpse, a quack; he whines, bellows, gabbles, mutters, and croaks; Chapter 2: he is an addled egg, a pest and a plague, mad and delirious, vomiting and belching abuse; Chapter 5: he is various disgusting animals.

[117] Proverbs 30:20, "Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness."

[118] Jeremiah 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

[119] Acts 23: 3, Matthew 23: 27.

[120] The word Beelzebub means Lord of Flies.

soars on golden wings; God's grace is the speediest of his winged messengers; Eve's virtues

> create an awe
> About her, as a guard Angelic plac't; *(P.L.,* II, 255)

her looks are the heaven of mildness and she has heaven in her eye. Heaven and hell are spiritual states. Milton tells us again and again that Satan never escapes from hell:

> Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell; (P.L., II, 109)

But they are also actual places, as are purgatory and limbo, which Milton does not seem to distinguish sharply from hell itself: the Inquisition put books

> into the new Purgatory of an Index; *(Areo.,* IV, 303)

> sought out new limbo's and new hells wherein they might include our Books also within the number of their damned; *(Areo.,* IV, 305)

and in reading Hall's book, Milton says,

> I am met with a whole ging [gang] of words and phrases not mine, for he hath maim'd them, and like a slye depraver mangl'd them in this his wicked Limbo. *(Apol,* III, 307)

Heretical is the dualism of the Manichaeans:

> [Hall as the author of a book of humor] like that other principle of the *Maniches* the *Arch evill one,* when he had look't upon all that he had made and mapt out, could say no other but contrary to the Divine Mouth, that it was all very foolish. *(Apol,* III, 294)

Catholic, and therefore heretical in Milton's eyes, is the belief in miracles outside of Scripture, such as are frequently mentioned in the various monkish chronicles:

> as in the early periods of the reformation, the monks, from their weakness in argument, were used to have recourse to all manner of spectres and imaginary monsters; so you, after all other things have failed, resort to cries which were never heard [More's book *The Cry of the Royal Blood to Heaven]* and to arts of despicable friars.
>
> (Sec. Def., VIII, 45)

Judaism is represented by three images derived from Jewish religious scholarship. Milton's interpretation of the Old

Testament texts on which the first part of *Tetrachordon* is based is

this plain and Christian *Talmud;*[121] *(Tetra.,* IV, 133)

Christ preserved the Mosaic Law

with a more accurat and lasting Masoreth, then [any other] ;[122]
(Doct. Div., III, 376)

Since commentators often interpret Christ's speeches as hyperbole

why in this one text should they be such crabbed *masorites* of the Letter, as not to mollifie a transcendence of literal rigidity.[123]
(Tetra., IV, 174)

Paganism is represented by figures based on idolatry and on the gods themselves:

Nor let any man be deluded by ... our dancing Divines, who . . . come with Scripture in thir mouthes, gloss'd and fitted for thir turnes with a double contradictory sense, transforming the sacred verity of God, to an Idol with two Faces, looking at once two several ways;
(Tenure, V, 5)

[Parliament] should have the goodnesse like gods, as ye are call'd, to . . . administer . . . redresses. *(Tetra.,* IV, 72)

These might be the gods of any religion. Often, however, Milton particularizes. There are figures based on the abject adoration of the gods of India, who were often demons, and on the belief in reincarnation: Scriptural commentators invest marriage

with such an awfull sanctity . . . as if it were to be worshipt like some Indian deity. *(Doct. Div.,* III, 425)

The claims of kings to divine right were not established. They

had not yet fortified themselves by the blind superstition of the vulgar. The lower orders . . . had not yet degenerated into a barbarism viler

[121] The Talmud is the body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law, both text and commentary.

[122] The Masora is the early Jewish tradition as to the correct form of the text of the Scriptures; also in the written editions, the marginal notes, or the **text** and notes, embodying the results of this tradition.

[123] A Masorete is a Jewish scholar contributing to the Masora.

than what disgraces the Indians … for these merely worship as gods those malignant demons they are unable to put to flight; while those, that they might not cashier tyrants when they had it in their power, exalted them into gods; *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 7-9)

[If we believe that] all miseries . . . [come] for sin, we must let them all lye upon us like the vermin of an Indian *Catharist,* which his fond religion forbids him to molest.[124] *(Tetra.,* IV, 78)

There are several images of the gods of the Mediterranean lands: of Babylon, equated in the Protestant writing of the time with Rome, of Phrygia, and of Crete :

[Morus] you never give over [preaching] ; and like a priest of the Phrygian mother[125] not yet mutilated, or one of the Curetes,[126] you willingly strike your cymbals, not to drown any fabulous cry, but that you may overwhelm the rumours of your profligacies, which are but too true, with fanatical vociferation. *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 285)

but chiefly of Egypt: In *Eikon Basilike* the King took a prayer from Sidney's *Arcadia.* The royalists are angry

that I should dare to tell abroad the secrets of thir *Ægyptian Apis;*
(Eikon., V, 86)

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his Apostles after him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who as that story goes of the *Ægyptian Typhon* with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good *Osiris,* took the virgin Truth, hewd her lovely form into a thousand peeces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the carefull search that *his* made for the mangl'd body of *Osiris,* went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall doe, till her Masters second comming; he

[124] **A member of one of various purist or extremist sects, who believed that the less spiritually advanced were subject to reincarnation.**

[125] **The goddess Cybele.**

[126] **Earth-born demi-gods, attendants upon Rhea, in Crete, who, when she gave the infant Zeus into their charge, executed a wild dance so that the clamor drowned the child's cries and concealed his presence from Cronus; also, priests of the Cretan Rhea.**

shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortall feature of lovelines and perfection.[127]

(Areo., IV, 337-338)

There is another reference which is, strictly speaking, not an image but merely a comparison, yet which may be included here as an rare example of effective though not bitter humor:

Remon. Whether the professed slovenlinesse in Gods service, &c.

Answ. We have heard of *Aaron* and his linnen Amice, but those dayes are past; and for your Priest under the Gospell that thinks himselfe the purer, or the cleanlier in his office for his new washt Surplesse, we esteem him for sanctitie little better than *Apollonius Thyanceus* [128] in his white frocke, or the Priest of *Isis* in his lawne sleeves, and they may all for holinesse lie together in the suds. *(Anim.,* III, 172-173)

So much for what may properly be called religion. There remain to be considered various superstitions, most of them having to do with the powers of darkness, of which Milton makes especially effective use. One of the most interesting things about this group of images is the fact that they do not reveal with certainty the extent to which Milton himself shared the popular beliefs. The images concerned with ghosts give no clue:

[We are not ready for liberty] I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linnen decency yet haunts us; *(Areo.,* IV, 348)

[Opponents of civil freedom ask what the state will do about blasphemy] Them I would first exhort not thus to terrific and pose the people with a Greek word . . . But we shall not carrie it thus; another Greek apparition stands in our way, *heresie* and *heretic;*

(Civil Power, VI, 10-11)

[127] Merritt Y. Hughes points out that this myth is found in Plutarch's *Moralia,* and that Milton's interpretation is shared by many of his contemporaries. ("Milton as a Revolutionary," *ELH,* X, No. *2,* June, 1943, 104). See also Douglas Bush *(Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition,* p. 269, note 52) for other possible sources.

128 of Tyana in Cappadocia, a Neo-Pythagorean philosopher, born about 4 B.C. He obtained great influence by pretending to miraculous powers.

[The King has spoken of demagogues. We may set] aside the affrightment of this Goblin word. *(Eikon.,* V, 112)

Of course Milton believed in the Devil and probably in the potency of exorcism: [129]

[Censorship was designed to prevent evil. One book was licenced by four different censors] Sure they have a conceit, if he of the bottomlesse pit had not long since broke prison, that this quadruple exorcism would barre him down. *(Areo.,* IV, 304)

It is quite likely that he also believed in the Devil's ministers, witches and wizards, with their powers over men and nature.[130] Certainly the Scriptures give warrant for such a belief.[131] The Witch of Endor called up Samuel, although, as Milton points out,[132] she called up only an empty shade, not the man himself:

[The students whom Milton is addressing are compared to the dishes of a feast] these dishes, like those nocturnal feasts which are prepared by the devil for witches, are not seasoned with salt;

(Prolusion VI, XII, 239)

[When England broke away, Rome] like a witch, but with a contrary policy did not take something of theirs that she might still have power to bewitch them, but for the same intent left something of her own behind her; *(Apol.,* III, 356)

Sin sits surrounded by her brood of hell hounds

> 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

[129] Scripture tells of Christ's and the Apostles' power of exorcism. A passage in *Christian Doctrine* seems to imply that Milton objected only to its misuse—to "superstitious and mercenary exorcism" (XVII, 133).

[130] Milton has little to say about wizards. He applies the term to the divines supporting the King *(Eikon.,* V, 73), to an astrologer, and to the Wise Men who visited the infant Jesus.

[131] As they do for demonic possession: [If we attack bishops we find that their power is false and] "that they have also this guift, like a certaine kinde of some that are possest, to have their voice in their bellies, which being well drain'd and taken downe, their great Oracle, which is only there, will soone be dumbe" *(Apol.,* III, 366).

[132] *First Def.,* VII, 95.

With *Lapland* Witches, while the labouring Moon
Eclipses at thir charms. [133] *(P.L.,* II, 61)

One of the implements used by such evil creatures was a prospective glass, a mirror for looking into the future:

For once it was my dismal hap to hear
A *Sybil* old, bow-bent with crooked age,
That far events full wisely could presage,
And in times long and dark Prospective Glass
Fore-saw what future dayes should bring to pass.
(Vacation Exercise, I, 21)

Who could be angry . . . but those that are guilty, with these free-spoken, and plaine harted men that are . . . the prospective glasses of their Prince? *(Anim.,* III, 113)

Other agents of the Devil were the "Fiery Spirits," the chief of whom were Will-o'-the-Wisp and Jack-o'-the-Lanthorn: As Satan leads Eve to the Tree of Knowledge,

Hope elevates, and joy
Bright'ns his Crest, as when a wandring Fire,
Compact of unctuous vapor, which the Night
Condenses, and the cold invirons round,
Kindl'd through agitation to a Flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends
Hovering and blazing with delusive Light,
Misleads th' amaz'd Night-wanderer from his way
To Boggs and Mires, and oft through Pond or Poole,
There swallow'd up and lost, from succour farr,
So glister'd the dire Snake, and into fraud
Led Eve. (P.L., II, 282-283)

In this instance at any rate, it seems clear that Milton is a sceptic, because of the care with which he first gives a scientific explanation of the phenomenon, and then prefaces the diabolic explanation with "they say."

More innocent were fairies and elves, although they too did harm, such as substituting a changeling for a human in-

[133] **The Night-Hag is probably Hecate, the queen of the witches. All the details embody traditional beliefs: witches rode through the air, killed infants, danced, were apt to live in Lapland, and caused eclipses.**

fant ; [134] like witches, they had power over the moon : in Pandaemonium the fallen angels reduced their immense size

> Now less then smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room
> Throng numberless like . . .
> Faerie Elves,
> Whose midnight Revels, by a Forrest side
> Or Fountain some belated Peasant sees,
> Or dreams he sees, while over-head the Moon
> Sits Arbitress, and neerer to the Earth
> Wheels her pale course,[135] they on thir mirth and dance
> Intent, with jocond Music charm his ear;
> At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds. (P.L., II, 36)

In this instance also, we might say that the qualification "Or dreams he sees" shows Milton's scepticism, were it not for the fact that in this passage he is imitating Vergil : [136] Aeneas, in the Elysian Fields, sees or thinks he sees, Dido like the moon through the clouds.

Against all this sorcery and witchcraft were pitted charms and prayers :

> [Those who still credit what the King says are men] fatally stupifi'd and bewitched, into such a blinde and obstinate beleef. For whose cure it may be doubted, not whether any charm, though never so wisely murmur'd, but whether any prayer can be available. *(Eikon.,* V, 72)

Certainly it cannot be said that Milton makes his attitude toward these matters altogether clear. Nor is the question settled by other non-figurative passages, the most pertinent of which we may be justified in citing. They give two further details about witches :

> But indeed how comes it that I have been so suddenly made a 'Father'? … [Have various classical metamorphoses befallen me?] Has some Thessalian witch smeared me with magic ointment? [187]
>
> *(Prolusion VI,* XII, 241)

[134] Fairies were widely believed to be fallen angels and evil spirits (Whaler, "The Miltonic Simile," *PMLA,* XLVI, December, 1931, 1055).
[135] Probably the moon was pale with alarm.
[136] *Aeneid,* VI, 450–455.
[137] The context here suggests disbelief.

You [Morus] upbraid me however with the blindness of the cyclops; and to mend your impudence, you repeat the insult, at the very moment that you deny you have given it. The eyes which before were no eyes, are now removable and like those of a witch.

(Def. of Him., IX, 123-125)

They make evident the fact that at least some of Milton's readers feared enchantment or a spell:

[Milton's doctrine of divorce, although novel,] will deserve on all hands to be not sinisterly received in that it undertakes the cure of an inveterate disease crept into the best part of humane societie: and to doe this with no smarting corrosive but [gently] . . . and without inchantment if that be fear'd, or spell us'd, hath regard at once both to serious pitty, and upright honesty. *(Doct. Div.,* III, 386)

They speak of witchery or sorcery [138] in a way that may or may not be literal:

what ever lust, or wine, or witchery, threate, or inticement, avarice or ambition hath joyn'd together . . . shall we say this is Gods joyning? *(Tetra.,IV,* 151)

[Some men are hopelessly servile] The rest, whom perhaps ignorance without malice, or some error, less then fatal, hath for the time misledd, on this side Sorcery or obduration, may find the grace and good guidance to bethink themselves, and recover. *(Eikon.,* V, 309)

The most natural interpretation of these passages, however, is that Milton ranks witchery with lust, wine, and the rest, as a real cause of marriage; and ranks sorcery with intractable hardheartedness as a real cause for refusing to recognize the truth. It is surely significant that his allusions to superstition, both figurative and non-figurative, taken as a whole do not reveal disbelief. That being the case, the presumption is that Milton, at least partially, agreed with the vast majority of his contemporaries. It may be safely concluded that he probably believed when he found Scriptural authority for so doing but hesitated to believe without such authority.

All the religious images, not merely those dealing with superstition, show the overwhelming authority of the Bible

[138] Sorcerers bear the ark of Osiris *(Nat. Ode,* \. 220).

over the thinking of Milton's century. But in Milton's attitude toward Scripture we find a conspicuous difference between him and the others of his contemporaries who also devoted themselves in one way or another to the cause of religion. For them, the Bible was practically their only book; for him, the Bible was the book of paramount importance but by no means the only one. His love of literature took him far beyond the confines of religion, and the Bible is supplemented and enriched by the classics.[139] He wrote as the last great examplar of the Renaissance tradition of classical culture, modified by the moral earnestness of that tradition in England and by his own religious nature. The result is that we find a frequent juxtaposition or even fusion of pagan and Christian elements in his writing. Much of this lies outside the imagery, but an analysis of the opening lines of *Comus* may serve as sufficient illustration : "The speech is a sort of Euripidean prologue, spoken by a guardian angel, about angels and the souls of virtue's servants, who live in Hesperian gardens. The description of the gardens seems to unite traditional accounts of happy isles with the Olympus of the *Odyssey.* 'Above the smoke and stir' is a clear echo of Horace's *fumum el opes strepitumqne Romae.* And with 'sainted seats' we come to the white-robed elders seated round the throne in *Revelation."* [140] The images show the same phenomenon Eve's plot of flowers was

> Spot more delicious then those Gardens feign'd
> Or of reviv'd A*donis,* or renownd
> *Alcinous,* host of old *Laertes* Son,
> Or that, not Mystic, where the Sapient King
> Held dalliance with his faire *Egyptian* Spouse;[141] *(P.L.,* Il, 276)

[139] In non-Miltonic writers 62 percent of the images of learning are religious, 12 percent classic; in Milton, 38 percent religious, 41 percent classic. For other classic images of Milton see Chapter I: notes 16, 23, 61, 64, 65, 91, 92, 93; Chapter 2: note 20.

[140] Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (Minneapolis, 1932), p. 263.

[141] Adonis revived for six months of the year, bringing the fruits. His

[Satan] on the Flood, extended long and large
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the Fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or *Earth-born,* that Warr'd on *Jove,*
Briareos or *Typhon,* whom the Den
By ancient *Tarsus* held, or that Sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim th' Ocean stream.[142] *(P.L.,* II, 15)

Here the distinction is made between fable or myth and the facts of Scripture, but it is not clear-cut, since in each case the fable was regarded as a moral or Christian allegory.[143]) On

gardens are mentioned by Pliny. Milton is probably here thinking of the elaborate description of Spenser, *Faerie Queene,* III, vi, 29—51. The garden of Alcinous bloomed and ripened perpetually *(Odyssey,* VII, 125-128). Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter (I Kings 3:1).

[142] The Titans, sons of Earth (Gaea) and Heaven (Uranus), were ruled by the youngest brother Cronus or Saturn. Later they were overthrown by Saturn's son Zeus. Briareos was also a son of Earth and Heaven but a Giant as distinct from the Titans. He and his brothers assisted Zeus against the Titans. Typhon was still another son of Earth, a monster part serpent. He aspired to sovereignty but was vanquished by Zeus. He retreated, as here, to Asia Minor, or was buried under Mt. Aetna.

It is interesting to find this same grouping of names as early as *Prolusion I:* "However that may be, have I affirmed that Night arranged a contest with Day . . . What an undertaking is this? Do the Titans renew the ancient war . . . Has Typhoeus forced himself out of the mass of Mount Aetna . . . Has Briareus . . . released himself from the adamantine chains?" (XII, 123-125)

There is one more reference to the giants, in particular, probably, to the hundred-handed Briareos: [to force upon the people a set form of prayer] "is a tyranny that would have longer hands then those Giants who threatn'd bondage to Heav'n" *(Eikon.,* V, 221).

[143] Adonis, for the classical writers, represented the reviving power of the sun, and for Spenser, in addition, the immortality of love.

The Renaissance commentators on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* interpreted Typhon (and Phaeton) as a symbol of pride and ambition. His fight against the gods was equated with the revolt of Satan, and his burial under Mt. Aetna with Satan in Hell (D. P. Harding, *Milton and the Renaissance Ovid,* Urbana, Ill., 1946, pp. 85-86). Hence Milton's comparison of Hell to the soil of Aetna (and the neighboring promontory of Pelorus) after an eruption: Satan rises from the lake and

on dry Land
He lights, if it were Land that ever burn'd
With solid, as the Lake with liquid fire;
And such appear'd in hue, as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a Hill
Torn from *Pelorus,* or the shatter'd side

other occasions, even when there is no suggestion of allegory, the distinction is omitted. The vision of his wife, veiled and robed in white, suggests Alcestis brought back from the grave as well as a woman undergoing the Mosaic ceremony of purification after childbirth. Similarly, the corruption of the primitive Christianity embodied in the writings of the Church Fathers is like any one of several gigantic pagan images—the historical Colossus of Rhodes,[144] the literary Polyphemus contrasted to the pigmies—and a Biblical idol: the Bible is the perfect instrument of knowledge

But hee that shall bind himselfe to make Antiquity his rule . . . [cannot have time to master it all]. Why doe wee therefore stand worshipping and admiring this unactive, and livelesse *Colossus,* that like a carved Gyant terribly menacing to children, and weaklings lifts up his club, but strikes not, and is subject to the muting [dropping] of every Sparrow. If you let him rest upon his *Basis,* hee may perhaps delight the eyes of some with his huge and mountainous Bulk, and the quaint workmanship of his massie limbs; but if yee goe about to take him in pieces, yee marre him;[145] and if you thinke like *Pigmees* to turne and wind him whole as hee is, besides your vaine toile and sweat, he may chance to fall upon your owne heads. Goe therefore, and use all your Art, apply your sledges, your levers, and your iron crows to heave and hale your mighty *Polyphem* of Antiquity to the delusion of Novices, and unexperienc't Christians. Wee shall adhere close to the Scriptures of God . . . and with this weapon, without stepping a foot further, wee shall not doubt to batter, and throw down your *Nebuchadnezzars* Image and crumble it like the chaffe of the Summer threshing floores, as well

Of thundring *Ætna,* whose combustible
And fewel'd entrals thence conceiving Fire,
Sublim'd with Mineral fury, aid the Winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involv'd
With stench and smoak: Such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. *(P.L.,* II, 16)

[144] Described by Pliny, XXXIV, 7, 18. For another allusion see *Prolusion I,* XII, 139.

[145] This may also be a reminiscence of the contemporary London effigies Gog and Magog, carried in the processions of the Lord Mayor, which were the predecessors of the two giants erected in the Guildhall in 1708. Milton's descripton is so vivid as to suggest that he had seen them. The matter could be settled by finding an account of the earlier figures. Neither of the later ones carries a club.

the gold of those Apostolick Successors that you boast of, as your *Constantinian* silver,[146] together with the iron, the brasse, and the clay of those muddy and strawy ages that follow.[147] *(Anim.,* Ill, 139-141)

Again, in an elaborate personification, Truth speaks not like Proteus but like the prophet Micaiah:

For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty; she needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licencings to make her victorious, those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power: give her but room, & do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old *Proteus* did, who spake oracles only when he was caught & bound, but then rather she turns herself into all shapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as *Micaiah* did before *Ahab,* untill she be adjur'd into her own likenes.[148]

***(Areo.,* IV, 348)**

In the Latin poems we find a complete fusion of Christian thought and pagan language which gives astonishing results. In heaven the soul of Diodati

will consummate, eternally, immortal nuptials, where there is singing, where the lyre revels madly, mingled with choirs beatific, and festal orgies run riot, in bacchante fashion, with the thyrsus of Zion.

(Damon's Epitaph, I, 317)

Elijah was caught up alive into heaven; therefore his

head the merciless Parcae had no power to outrage.

(Gunpowder Plot, I, 225)

From these passages it is clear that Milton's mind moved as freely over secular as over religious literature and that he used this freedom in a manner that to him did not seem artis-

[146] **The Donation of Constantine, 317 A.D., a fictitious edict giving to the Pope the sovereignty of Italy and of the Western Empire.**

[147] **Daniel 2: 31-35.**

[148] **I Kings 22: 15-18: "So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord? And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?"**

tically incongruous. However, he did feel more keenly than many of his Renaissance predecessors a dissonance between the falsity of the various stories, even those not obviously degrading, about the gods and the truth about God revealed by God himself. This moral disapproval was in conflict with his aesthetic enjoyment of the way in which the stories were told, by Ovid for instance. The result of this clash is that Milton's attitude toward myths is complex.[149] On the one hand, myths are subordinated to the Bible. Early as well as late he points out their untruth. He begins in his *Prolusions* and *Elegies* and in letters of his college and Horton days:

[If night had married day she would] have been burned to a crisp, just as once they say happened when Semele was consumed against his will by her lover Jupiter; *(Prolusion I,* XII, 133)

your temples were whiter than the plumes 'neath which, so story says, Jove hid;[150] *(Elegy II, I,* 177)

[Gill has sent one of his poems to Milton] that I should have been made by you the judge of so excellent a poem I no less glory in and regard as an honour than if the contending musical gods themselves had come to me for judgment, as they fable happened of old to Tmolus, the popular god of the Lydian mountain ;[151] *(Familiar Letters,* XII, 9)

[God] has instilled into me, if into any one, a vehement love of the beautiful. Not with so much labour, as the fables have it, is Ceres said to have sought her daughter Proserpina as it is my habit day and night

149 The mythology of Milton's poetry—but not his prose—has been extensively studied, chiefly by C. G. Osgood, *The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems* (New York, 1900), and Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry.* Osgood stresses Milton's contradictory attitude but makes little attempt to explain it; Bush feels that Milton's attitude changed as he grew older. In his more recent book, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1945), pp. 386-387, Bush has modified his position. It is not necessary to summarize his later point of view, as this study, in the following pages, gives detailed support for it.

150 The love of Zeus in the form of a swan for Leda.

151 Tmolus judged the musical contest between Apollo and Pan. Because of his disagreement with the verdict in favor of Apollo, Midas was given the ears of an ass. In his sonnet to Lawes, Milton speaks of scanning with Midas' ears; in the *Second Defence* he works an allusion to this contest and to the contest of the goddesses judged by Paris into an elaborate compliment to Queen Christina of Sweden for her excellent judgement in preferring Milton to Salmasius *(Sec.Def.,* VIII, 193).

to seek for this idea of the beautiful, as for a certain image of supreme beauty, through all the forms and faces of things.[152]

(Familiar Letters, XII, 27)

And he continues in the pamphlets and letters of his middle period:

[Politicians encourage evil] till having thus disfigur'd and made men beneath men, as *Juno* in the Fable of Iö, they deliver up the poor transformed heifer of the Commonwealth to be stung and vext with the breese [gadfly], and goad of oppression under the custody of some *Argus* with a hundred eyes of jealousie; (*Ref.,* III, 38)

That undeflour'd and unblemishable simplicity of the Gospell, not she her selfe, for that could never be, but a false-whited, a lawnie resemblance of her, like that aire-born *Helena* in the fables, made by the sorcery of Prelats, instead of calling her Disciples from the receit of custome, is now turn'd Publican her self.[153]

(R. Ch. Gov., III, 267-268)

[God gave man a helpmeet only in proportion to his fallibility] els were his ordinance at least in vain, and we for all his gift still empty handed. Nay such an unbounteous giver we should make him, as in the fables *Jupiter* was to *Ixion,* giving him *a cloud* instead of *Juno,* giving him a monstrous issue by her, the breed of *Centaures* a neglected and unlov'd race, the fruits of a delusive mariage, and lastly giving him her with a damnation to that wheele in hell,[154] from a life thrown into the midst of temptations and disorders;[155] *(Tetra.,* IV, 86-87)

[Books] are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men.[156] *(Areo.,* IV, 298)

[152] This myth made a deep impression on him. He uses it in *Prolusion III* (XII, 167) as a symbol of the search for truth, and refers to it again (the search that "cost Ceres all that pain") in the famous passage in *Paradise Lost.* See below, note 200.

[153] According to the myth, made use of by Euripides among others, Paris took with him to Troy only a phantom; the real Helen was transported to Egypt where she stayed during the Trojan War. Milton makes use of the other version (that the real Helen went to Troy) in another image. See below: "Not that *Nepenthes"* etc. For the personification see Luke 5:27.

[154] Ixion's punishment in hell was to be chained to a perpetually revolving wheel.

[155] Milton refers to the myth again in *Paradise Regained,* Bk. IV, 11. 318-320. See below, note 228.

[156] Milton has three other images based on the myth of the Argonauts: the students came past the porter Sparks as safely as Jason attacked the fire-

But if you thinke . . . that I have given up my selfe to dreame away my yeares in the armes of studious retirement like Endymion with the Moone as the tale of Latmus goes, [you are in error].

(English Correspondence, XII, 323)

Two similar passages in the late poems have already been quoted: the comparison of Satan to the Titans, and of Eden to the garden of Adonis.[157] We may content ourselves with two more:[158] Should a woman

> Descend with all her winning charms begirt
> To enamour, as the Zone of *Venus* once
> Wrought that effect on *Jove,* so Fables tell
> [She would have no effect on Christ].[159] *(P.R.,* II, 431)

Samson bearing the gates of Gaza was

> Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heav'n.[160] *(S.A.,* I, 342)

To this evidence it might be well to add that of various non-figurative passages from his prose in which the Bible is preferred to the classics in general, not merely classic myths: it is a "better and more ancient authority" than Plato;[161] its songs are superior to Pindar and Callimachus not only in "their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of

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breathing oxen when he sowed the dragon's teeth *(Prolusion VI,* XII, 231) ; in his blindness Milton is as steadfast as if he had the keenness of sight of Lynceus *(Familiar Letters,* XII, 71) ; Satan, voyaging through chaos, was harder beset than when the Argo passed between the justling rocks.

(P.L., Bk. II, 11. 1016-1018)

[157] See above.

[158] Other images are: the bower of Adam and Eve is like the bower "though but feigned" of Pan and Sylvanus *(P.L.,* Bk. IV, 11. 705-707) ; the fruits of the tree of the garden of Eden were "Hesperian fables true" *(P.L.,* Bk. IV, 11. 249-251); Eve was more lovely than the "fairest goddess feigned" *(P.L.,* Bk. V, 11. 380-382; "the Ladies of the Hesperides," together with nymphs and naiades, were "feigned of old" *(P.R.,* Bk. II, 11. 352-359). Deucalion and Pyrrha are figures "In fables old" *(P.L.,* Bk. XI, 1. II). Non-figurative allusions are: *P.L.,* Bk. I, 11. 507-510, 740-747; Bk. II, 11. 627-628; Bk. VII, 11. 30-39; Bk. V, 11. 578-584; *P.R.,* Bk. II, 11. 295-297; Bk. IV, 11. 286 ff. In *P.L.,* Bk. IX, 11. 30-31, Milton alludes to the "fabled knights In battles feigned," of the Arthurian legends.

[159] Satan is, oddly, the speaker.

[160] Atlas. Hercules temporarily relieved him. For a discussion of Hercules, see below.

[161] *R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 181-182.

composition";[162] the "moral works of *Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laertius,* and those *Locrian* remnants . . . [are to be reduced] under the determinate sentence of *David* or *Salomon,* or the Evanges and Apostolic Scriptures . . . [Students] are to dive into the grounds of Law, and legal Justice; delivered first, and with best warrant by *Moses;* and as far as humane prudence can be trusted in ... *Licurgus, Solon* [and others]";[163] Milton will prove his point by authorities "nor many Heathen, but Mosaical, Christian, Orthodoxal";[164] the Bible speaks of schools of philosophy as "vain deceit."[165] There are also passages, in addition to the famous attack in *Paradise Regained,* in which Milton points out the immorality of some of the classics (or Arthurian legends).[166] It is thus obvious that throughout his life Milton consistently upheld the superiority of the Bible. The fact that he did not always stop to label the classics as false or untrustworthy does not affect Milton's position. Rather, it is surprising that he stops to make the distinction as often as he does.

Yet in spite of this disparaging attitude, the love that Milton felt for classical literature is equally obvious. He always responded to the beauty that was in many of the myths and even occasionally felt that they could be supposed to contain a disguised form of Christian truth. This habit of allegorizing the myths was so common in the Renaissance[167] that it is not remarkable that Milton was somewhat affected by it. In view of his intense love of the beautiful[168] he might well have been more influenced than he is, since allegory would have enabled him to eat his aesthetic cake and at the same time have his moral cake. Nevertheless,

[162] *R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 238. [163] *Educ.,* IV, 284-285.
[164] *Tenure,* V, 8. [165] *Hirelings,* VI, 98.
[166] *Apol.,* Ill, 303, 304, 305; *Area.,* IV, 299, 301.
[167] Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry,* pp. 240-247.
[168] See above: [God] "has instilled into me ... a vehement love of the beautiful."

the only myths that he allegorized to any important extent were those of Circe and Hercules.[169] The story of Circe's transformation of men into animals lent itself inevitably to such interpretation and appealed powerfully to Milton's cherished ideal of continence and rigid self-control.[170] Aside from using it as the basis for the plot of *Comus,* he alludes to it from his earliest writings to his last.

Moly, the magic herb that saved Odysseus, is the standard of morality that enables Milton to resist the temptations of London:

Yet, while the indulgent kindness of the blind lad permits, I am making ready to leave, with all suddenness, these walls, and, employing the aid of *moly,* plant divine, to evade in a place far distant the ill-famed halls of deceptive Circe.[171] *(Elegy I,* l, 175)

the cup of Circe is ignoble, sensual love: [172]

[I read] the divine volumes of *Plato,* and his equall *Xenephon.* Where if I should tell ye what I learnt, of chastity and love, I meane that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only vertue which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy. The rest are cheated with a thick in-

[169] The lines in *Comus* on which Osgood lays so much stress *(op. cit.,* xlix) must be largely discounted:

> 'tis not vain or fabulous,
> (Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance)
> What the Sage Poets taught by th' heav'nly Muse,
> Storied of old in high immortal vers
> Of dire *Chimera's* and inchanted lies,
> And rifted Rocks whose entrance leads to Hell,
> For such there be, but unbelief is blind. (l, 104)

Milton seems to regard *Comus* as seriously as a regular play. If Comus himself is about to walk onto the stage, the two Brothers and the audience must be made to suspend their disbelief in his existence. Hence the Brothers and the audience are assured that the myths, including that of Comus, are true. If Milton had literally meant what he has the Attendant Spirit say, we would find other examples of allegorized myth, at least in his early work.

[170] The allegorizing of the Circe myth is of frequent occurrence in the Renaissance commentators on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (D. P. Harding, *Milton and the Renaissance Ovid,* pp. 59-66). It was "a commonplace of the Christian classicizers; it was a medieval possession through Boethius; and it was popular in the Renaissance" (Tillyard, "The Action of Comus." *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association,* XXVIII, 28).

[171] Rest is more healing than moly *(Comus,* 11. 636-637).

[172] An earlier but not so specific allusion is in *Prolusion Vll,* XII, 281.

toxicating potion which a certaine Sorceresse the abuser of loves name carries about; and how the first and chiefest office of love, begins and ends in the soule, producing those happy twins of her divine generation knowledge and vertue ... it might be worth your listning.[173]

(*Apol.,* III, 305)

as well as servitude and deceit:

[The King is tyrannical] and yet so many sober Englishmen not sufficiently awake to consider this, like men inchanted with the *Circcean* cup of servitude, will not be held back from running thir own heads into the Yoke of Bondage; *(Eikon.,* V, 204)

[They are] intoxicated and moap'd [made dull] with these royal, and therfore so delicious because royal rudiments of bondage, the Cup of deception, spic'd and temperd to thir bane. *(Eikon.,* V, 290)

and finally seduction: Samson says to Dalila

Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
No more on me have power. *(S.A.,* I, 370)

The beasts of Circe are miserable men in the power of a woman:[174]

[Salmasius] you are not Eurylochus, but Elpenor, a miserable Circean beast, a filthy swine, accustomed to foulest slavery even under a woman.[175] *(First Def.,* VII, 511)

Less obvious in its allegory but no less widespread was the myth of Hercules. The son of Zeus, with purity equal to his strength, and made immortal after completing his twelve labors, Hercules was the symbol of Christ.[176] In particular,

[173] Bush, quoting Herford's *Dante and Milton,* points out that this interpretation alters the thought of Plato who "makes the passion even of the noble lover an intoxication, which is the very condition of his acquiring a reach of vision beyond that of cool reason" *(Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry ,* p. 266).

[174] In the innocence of Eden no degradation is implied. There was to be found

every Beast, more duteous at her [Eve's] call,
Then at *Circean* call the Herd disguis'd. *(P.L.,* II, 278-279)

[175] Eurylochus was the only one of Odysseus's men who was not transformed. Elpenor, after recovering his human shape, got drunk and was killed in a fall from the roof of Circe's palace.

[176] He symbolized also the power of human wisdom, virtue, philosophy, prudence, and fortitude (I. E. Rathborne, *The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland,*

his conquest of the giant Antaeus, whose strength was renewed whenever he touched the earth, was interpreted as the triumph of spirituality over sensuality. This view of Hercules appears both early and late in Milton. In *The Passion* the comparison is implicit: Christ is that

> Most perfect *Heroe,* try'd in heaviest plight
> Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight; (I, 23)

It is also implicit in the *Nativity Ode,* where

> Our Babe to shew his Godhead true,
> Can in his swadling bands controul the damned crew (I, 10)

of pagan gods, as the infant Hercules in his cradle strangled the serpents that Hera had sent to kill him. But the comparison is explicit at the climax of *Paradise Regained:*

> To whom thus Jesus: also it is written,
> Tempt not the Lord thy God, he said and stood.
> But Satan smitten with amazement fell
> As when Earths Son *Antaus* (to compare
> Small things with greatest) in *Irassa* strove
> With *Joves Alcides,* and oft foil'd still rose,
> Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
> Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joyn'd,
> Throttl'd at length in the Air, expir'd and fell;[177]
> So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
> Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
> Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall.
> And as that *Theban* Monster that proposed
> Her riddle, and him, who solv'd it not, devour'd;
> That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spight
> Cast her self headlong from th' *Ismenian* steep,
> So strook with dread and anguish fell the Fiend.[178] (II, 479)

(New York, 1937), pp. 100-102). All Milton's allusions are specifically to this Hercules. There were other heroes of the same name, notably the Lybian Hercules, an Egyptian ruler (the son of Osiris) who put down tyranny and established a kingdom of virtue *(ibid.,* 65 ff., especially p. 98).

[177] Compare: Error is "richer after defeats, vigorous after wounds. ... A circumstance of this kind antiquity has related concerning the Lybian Anteus" *(Prolusion IV,* XII, 173); You "will one while have me to be a dwarf, another while, an Antaeus" *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 77).

[178] The myth of the riddle of the Sphinx was interpreted as showing an insight into the nature of man and hence a mastery of it. Milton has other non-

Similarly, the fact that Hercules was also equated with Samson accounts for the image, already quoted,[179] of Samson's bearing the gates of Gaza.

The hold that the story of Hercules had on Milton's imagination is further illustrated by a number of other, non-allegorical, images referring directly to Hercules or merely to one of his exploits. Thus, the prevention of the publication of a book is like Juno's attempt to prevent the birth of Hercules.[180] The reading of the tomes of the Church Fathers[181] or the arguing with his low opponent[182] is a task as disgusting as Hercules's cleansing of the Augean stables.[183] The wild sports of the fallen angels are like the convulsions of Hercules when he put on the poisoned shirt of the centaur Nessus ignorantly brought to him by his friend Lichas:

> Others with vast *Typhcean* rage more fell
> Rend up both Rocks and Hills, and ride the Air
> In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wilde uproar.
> As when *AIrides* from *CEchalia* Crown'd
> With conquest, felt th' envenom'd robe, and tore
> Through pain up by the roots *Thessalian* Pines,
> And *Lichas* from the top of *Oeta* threw
> Into th' *Euboic* Sea.[184] *(P.L.,* II, 57)

allegorical references: Kings sometimes appeal to philosophy "So that what they presume to borrow from her sage and vertuous rules, like the Riddle of *Sphinx* not understood, breaks the neck of thir own Cause" *(Eikon.,* V, 133) ; Common people "will be able to instruct you [Salmasius], and to solve those stupid riddles of yours. . . . And when they have played Oedipus to you, you have my permission to be Sphinx to them, and go headlong to the devil" *(First Def.,* VII, 187). See below, note 266.

[179] See above. Another reference to Atlas, the permanent upholder of heaven, is found in a description of Beelzebub:

> he stood
> With *Ailantean* shoulders fit to bear
> The weight of mightiest Monarchies. *(P.L.,* II, 48)

[180] See Chapter i, note 92.

[181] *Prolusion III,* XII, 161.

[182] *Colast.,* IV, 271.

[183] Another reference to this exploit (Chapter 4, note 31) is based on its allegorical interpretation as the fertilizing of land (Hughes, *Milton Prose Selections,* pp. 37-38).

[184] Compare: "that curse . . . seems to stick as close to you as your shirt" *(First Def.,* VII, 421).

Metaphysics is a Lernian swamp, the abode of the hydra;[186] his opponent must repair the Acheloian horn of his dilemma, Achelous being a river god conquered in the form of a bull and deprived of one of his horns; [186] the vision of his wife appears like Alcestis brought back from the grave; [187] Morus is a Cacus of a herdsman, a giant who stole some of Geryon's oxen that Hercules had captured;[188] the Spaniards are the sons of Geryon, or Geryones, a three-headed giant.[189] Both these giants were slain by Hercules. Twice, therefore, in the cases of Circe and Hercules, Milton elevated myth almost to the Biblical level. A few lesser traces of allegory are also to be found: Typhon and the sphinx already noted; [190] Proteus,[191] "treated by Bacon in *The Wisdom of the Ancients* as a symbol of the basic substance in matter which he believed might be obtained by heating various materials in alembics, or air-tight vessels"; [192] the slaying of the python by Apollo that symbolized the dispelling of mist by the sun; [193] the love-making of Zeus and Hera on a bed of flowers surrounded by a golden cloud, which was interpreted as the mingling of the upper and lower air that produced the spring flowers: [194] Adam, looking at Eve,

> Smil'd with superior Love, as *Jupiter*
> **On** *Juno* smiles, when he impregns the Clouds
> That shed *May* Flowers; and press'd her Matron lip
> With kisses pure. *(P.L.,* II, 124)

This passage is also a good example of the way in which Milton refined the myths: [195] a smile and a few connubial kisses fall far short of the activities described by Homer.

[185] *Prolusion VII,* XII, 277. Bishops are hydras. See below, note 236.
[186] *Anim.,* III, 133. [187] "Methought I saw," II. 1-3.
[188] *Def. of Him.,* IX, 93. [189] *P.L.,* Bk. XI, I. 410.
[190] See above, notes 143, 178.
[191] *P.L.,* Bk. III, 11. 601-605. For a second reference see above, the personification of Truth: "For who knows not that Truth," etc.
[192] Hughes, *Paradise Lost,* p. 102.
[193] See Chapter 5, note 5; below notes 217, 231.
[194] *Iliad* XIV, 346-351; Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 49.
[195] This point is stressed by Osgood, *op, cit.,* pp. lxv-lxvi.

In the great majority of instances, however, Milton, had no need to elevate the subject matter of the myths. He could and did use it without change as a standard of beauty. In particular, his descriptions of nature are heightened by classic allusions.[196] Often they are merely personifications, suggesting a classic god or goddess, of dawn, evening, the sun, and the like.[197] Others, more elaborate, are embedded in the passage, in itself highly ornate, that directl(describes the Garden of Eden, a passage too long and too famous to warrant quotation in full. Rippling brooks wandered over beds of pearl and gold, feeding the flowers that bloomed profusely on hill and dale. In the variegated landscape were

> Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gumms and Balme,
> Others whose fruit burnisht with Golden Rinde
> Hung amiable, *Hesperian* Fables true,
> If true, here only, and of delicious taste.[198] (P.L., II, 115)

There were flowers of all hues, lawns, cool vine-covered grottos, lakes, singing birds, and sweet-scented air.

> Universal *Pan*[199]
> Knit with the *Graces* and the *Hours* in dance
> Led on th' Eternal Spring. 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;[200] nor that sweet Grove

[196] Osgood, *op. cit.,* pp. xxiii-xl. [197] See Chapter 4.

[198] Note Milton's depreciation of the myth. See above, note 158. The mythical tree is itself, in *Comus,* the symbol of beauty:

> But beauty like the fair Hesperian Tree
> Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
> Of dragon watch with uninchanted eye,
> To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit
> From the rash hand of bold Incontinence. (I, 99-100)

For a simile of the Hesperian gardens see *P.L.,* Bk. III, 11. 567-568; for a reference to the "Ladies of the Hesperides" see *P.R.,* Bk. II, 1. 357.

[199] Milton draws from the Orphic Hymns, where Pan is practically identified with nature. See Osgood, *op. cit.,* pp. 67-68.

[200] Ovid has an elaborate description of the everlasting spring of the flowery field. (Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 20). This myth made an early impression on Milton.

Of *Daphne* by *Orontes,* and th' inspired
Castalian Spring,[201] might with this Paradise
Of *Eden* strive; nor that *Nyseian* He
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;[202]
Nor where *Abassin* Kings thir issue Guard,
Mount *Amara,* though this by som suppos'd
True Paradise under the *Ethiop* Line
By *Nilus* head, enclosd with shining Rock,
A whole days journey high,[203] but wide remote
From this *Assyrian* Garden,[204] where the Fiend
Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
Of living Creatures new to sight and strange. *(P.L.,* Il, 116)

If Milton's readers recognize the passages, mythological and geographical, to which he alludes, their impression of the delights of Eden is intensified; otherwise they get an effect of vague, but sonorous and rich, suggestiveness that is hardly less pleasing. In like manner, Milton describes one

One reference in a letter to Diodati has already been given (above, note 152), another is in *Prolusion III* (XII, 167), comparing the labor of Ceres to the search of the reader for truth in church controversy.

[201] An erudite, composite reference (Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 9). "The gardens of Daphne at Antioch in Syria, on the river Orontes, had a temple of Apollo and a spring which was called after the Castalian spring on Mt. Parnassus, near Delphi, in Greece. Milton calls it 'inspired' because tradition says that the waters gave oracles by putting marks on the leaves dipped into them by enquirers" (Hughes, *Paradise Lost,* p. 120).

[202] Cham or Ham, Noah's second son, was identified with the Egyptian god Ammon (later Jupiter-Ammon). His wife was Rhea, or Cybele, the mother of the gods. Diodorus Siculus tells of the hiding of Dionysus, son of Ammon and Amalthea, on the island of Nysa. (Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 72; Hughes, *Paradise Lost,* p. 120.)

[203] Mt. Amara was in Abassynia. Milton's account "may have been drawn from the enthusiastic description in Purchases *Pilgrimage* (pp. 843-846) or from Peter Heylin's *Cosmographie* (iv, 64): 'The hill of Amara is a day's journey high, on the top whereof are thirty-four palaces in which the younger sons of the Emperor are continually enclosed to avoid sedition; . . . though not much distant from the Equator if not plainly under it, yet blessed with such a temperate air that some have taken it for the place of Paradise' " (Hughes, *Paradise Lost,* p. 121).

[204] Eden.

particular spot in the garden, the bower of Adam and Eve, that

> like *Pomona's* Arbour smil'd
> With flourets deck't and fragrant smells; *(P.L.,* II, 157)
>
> In shadie Bower
> More sacred and sequesterd, though but feignd
> *Pan* or *Silvanus* never slept, nor Nymph,
> Nor *Faunas* haunted. *(P.L.,* II, 131)

Milton does not stop with nature, but also uses the beauties of the myths in descriptions of persons and things.[205] The lot of the gods is enviable :

> [Why should a king] make himself a God, exalted above Law?
> *(Articles of Peace,* VI, 247)
>
> a king must be ador'd like a Demigod;
> *(Ready & Easy Way,* VI, 120)

[Members of Parliament] sit as gods among daily Petitions and publick thanks flowing in upon them. *(ApoL,* III, 339)

They have beauty and grace :[206]

> For that fair femal Troop thou sawst, that seemd
> Of Goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
> [Will seduce men] ; *(P.L.,* II, 367)
>
> With Goddess-like demeanour forth she [Eve] went;
> *(P.L.,* II, *237)*

as have nymphs, who are the symbols of freedom and chastity. All these qualities pertain to individual goddesses:

> [Eve was] more lovely fair
> Then Wood-Nymph, or the fairest Goddess feign'd
> Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove; *(P.L.,* II, 157)

Even more detailed is a second description of Eve :

[203] The fable of Eros and his brother Anteros, in *Doct. Dlv.,* III, 400-401, which Milton interprets as referring to marital love, seems to be direct quotation ("Thus mine author sung it to me"), but the source is unknown. The development of the Anteros myth from its beginning in Plato's *Phaedrus* is traced by R. V. Merrill *(Speculum,* XIX, 265-284). Milton apparently does not refer to any of the authors discussed in this article.

[206] As have their houses *(P.R.,* Bk. IV, 11. 55-56).

Thus saying, from her Husbands hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and like a Wood-Nymph light
Oread or *Dryad,* or of *Delia's* Traine,
Betook her to the Groves, but *Delia's* self
In gate surpass'd and Goddess-like deport,
Though not as shee with Bow and Quiver armd,
But with such Gardning Tools as Art yet rude,
Guiltless of fire had formd, or Angels brought.
To *Pales,* or *Pomona* thus adornd,
Likeliest she seemd, *Pomona* when she fled
Vertumnus, or to *Ceres* in her Prime,
Yet Virgin of *Proserpina* from *Jove. (P.L.,* II, 274)

Just before the catastrophe, when all will be lost, Milton summons up a vision of innocent beauty. Eve, having won her point in her argument with Adam, is as free as a mountain nymph or a wood nymph; she is light, fresh, youthful in her movement, yet she has maturity and essential majesty; she is a Christian goddess of flocks and agriculture, a goddess unstained by any act of celestial lust. The coloring for this picture is supplied by the myths, characteristically purged of their grosser elements.

Lesser figures than the gods are also utilized, again in a description of Eve:

More lovely then *Pandora,* whom the Gods
Endowd with all thir gifts, and O too like
In sad event, when to the unwiser Son
Of *Japhet* brought by *Hermes,* she ensnar'd
Mankind with her faire looks, to be aveng'd
On him who had stole Joves authentic fire;[207] *(P.L.,* II, 132)

A touch of allegorizing is found in an earlier use of this myth:[208]

[207] Prometheus and Epimetheus were the sons of Iapetus. In revenge for the theft of the fire of Zeus by Prometheus, Pandora was fashioned by the gods and given to the unwiser Epimetheus. From Pandora's box came all human ills. See below, note 267.

[208] Not so familiar is the legend that Prometheus created man out of earth and water, giving him a portion of all the qualities possessed by the other animals:

a consummat and most adorned *Pandora* was bestow'd upon *Adam* ... I mean his native innocence and perfection, which might have kept him from being our true *Eptrnetheus. (Doct. Div.,* Ill, 441)

Another myth furnishes a standard not of beauty but of dignity: Repentant Adam and Eve stood praying

> Yet thir port
> Not of mean suiters, nor important less
> Seem'd thir Petition, then when th' ancient Pair
> In Fables old, less ancient yet then those,
> *Deucalion* and chaste *Pyrrha* to restore
> The Race of Mankind drownd, before the Shrine
> Of *Themis* stood devout. *(P.L.,* II, 346)

Two images are applied to things—the path of learning:

so full of ... melodious sounds on every side, that the Harp of *Orpheus* was not more charming; *(Educ.,* IV, 280)

and the "cordial julep" that Comus offers the Lady:

> Not that *Nepenthes* which the wife of *Thone*
> In *Egypt* gave to *Jove-born Helena*
> Is of such power to stir up joy as this; [200] *(Comus,* I, 110)

and that she rejects:

> Were it a draft for *Juno* when she banquets,
> I would not taste thy treasonous offer. *(Comus,* 700-701)

(And a characteristic cluster of images drawn from mythology and history describes Satan in serpent form as he approaches Eve to tempt her:

> pleasing was his shape,
> And lovely, never since of Serpent kind
> Lovelier, not those that in *Illyria* chang'd

"The Magistrat hath only to deale with the outward part, I mean not of the body alone, but of the mind in all her outward acts, which in Scripture is call'd the outward man. So that it would be helpfull to us ... [to be able] with a kind of Promethean skill to shape and fashion this outward man into the similitude of a body, and set him visible before us; imagining the inner man only as the soul" *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 254).

[209] Helen's return from Troy by way of Egypt is recorded in Homer. This passage is from *Odyssey* IV, 219-230).

Hermione and *Cadmus*™ or the God
In *Epidaurus;* [211] nor to which transformd
Ammonian Jove, [212] or *Capitollne* [213] was seen,
Hee with *Olympias,* this with her who bore
Scipio the highth of *Rome. (P.L.,* II, 278)

Conversely, the myths also supply Milton with images of ugliness or horror.[214] Satan, at his moment of triumph struck down by God, is no longer seductively lovely, nor are his followers:

dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the Hall, thick swarming now
With complicated monsters head and taile,
Scorpion and Asp, and *Amphisbtena* dire,
Cerastes hornd, *Hydrus,* and *Ellops* drear,
And *Dipsas* (not so thick swarm'd once the Soil
Bedropt with blood of *Gorgon*[215] or the Isle
Ophiusa) [216] but still greatest hee the midst,
Now Dragon grown, larger then whom the Sun
Ingenderd in the *Pythian* Vale on slime,
Huge *Python,*[217] and his Power no less he seem'd
Above the rest still to retain; they all
Him follow'd issuing forth to th' open Field,
Where all yet left of that revolted Rout

[210] Cadmus and Harmonia, or Hermione, reigned in Thebes. Retiring to Illyria, they were at their own request, transformed into serpents (Osgood, *op. cit.,* pp. 17-18).

[211] In his temple at Epidaurus, Aesculapius, assuming the form of a serpent, answered the prayers of a Roman embassy (Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 32).

[212] The tradition stated that Jupiter Ammon, as a serpent, was the father of Alexander the Great by Olympias (Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 7).

[213] There was a similar tradition concerning Capitoline Jupiter and Sempronia, the mother of Scipio Africanus. (Livy, XXVI, 19; Gellius, VI, I)

[214] Or difficulty: Satan journeying across Chaos is harder beset than Argo passing between the "justling rocks," *P.L.,* Bk. II, ll. 1017-1018.

[215] Libya, over which Perseus carried the Gorgon's head (Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 38). For a reference to the power of the Gorgons to turn men to stone see *P.L.,* Bk. X, 11. 296-297.

[216] One of the Balearic Islands.

[217] See Chapter 5, note 5; above, note 193; below, note 231. Also *Elegy VII,* I, 217; *Prolusion I,* XII, 147. A less specific allusion is: [The desire of the clergy for money brings forth] "a baseborn issue of Divinity like that of those imperfect, and putrid creatures that receive a crawling life from two most unlike procreants the Sun, and mudde" *(Anim.,* III, 162).

Heav'n-fall'n, in station stood or just array . . .
[They too were turned to snakes. They saw a
grove of trees like the Tree of Knowledge]
Yet parcht with scalding thurst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,
But on they rould in heaps, and up the Trees
Climbing, sat thicker then the snakie locks
That curld *Megara:* [218] greedily they pluck'd
The Frutage fair to sight, like that which grew
Neer that bituminous Lake where *Sodo?n* flam'd;[219]
This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceav'd ; they fondly thinking to allay
Thir appetite with gust, instead of Fruit
Chewd bitter Ashes, which th' offended taste
With spattering noise rejected. *(P.L.,* II, 323-324)

The hell-hounds, the progeny of Sin, are horrible:

Far less abhorrd than these
Vex'd *Scylla* bathing in the Sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarce *Trinacrian* shore.[220] (P.L., II, 61)

Other horrid uproars were the loud criticisms of Milton's divorce pamphlets:

When strait a barbarous noise environs me ...
As when those Hinds that were transform'd to Froggs
Raild at *Latona's* twin-born progenie
Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee.[221]
("I did but prompt" I, 62)

and the wild celebrations in the streets of London after the Restoration:

[218] One of the Furies. For a reference to another Fury, Tisiphone, see *Def. of Him.,* IX, 119; to the Furies in general, *Anim.,* III, 172; *P.L.,* Bk. II, 1. 671, Bk. X, 1. 620; to the "blind Fury with the abhorred shears," really the Fate Atropos, *Lycidas,* 11. 75-76.

[219] The Apples of Asphaltis, or Sodom, grew near the Dead Sea. Appearing ripe, they turned to ashes when touched. Milton derives his account from Josephus, *Wars,* IV, viii (Hughes, *Paradise Lost,* p. 334). For another reference see *Eikon.,* V, 263, note 255 below.

[220] In the Sicilian Strait, Scylla was beset with barking dogs and transformed to a rock by Circe (Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 75). For other references to Scylla see *Comus,* 11. 256-258, *Anim.,* III, 141, and *P.L.,* Bk. II, 11. 1019-1020.

[221] For refusing water to Leto, or Latona, and Apollo and Artemis (Osgood, *op. cit.,* pp. 8-9).

> But drive farr off the barbarous dissonance
> Of *Bacchus* and his revellers, the Race
> Of that wilde Rout that tore the *Thracian* Bard
> In *Rhodope*[222] *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 212)

Finally, the eating of the apple by Adam and Eve was an unendurable sight:

> At that tasted Fruit
> The Sun, as from *Thyestean* Banquet turn'd
> His course intended.[223] *(P.L.,* Ⅱ, 329))

Nor have we yet exhausted Milton's use of mythology. There remains invective, and we must now, for the last time, consider a large group of controversial images,[224] drawn not only from myths but also from classical history and from literature in general. The familiar charges are repeated in different terms.[225] The Church Fathers and councils are:

> [A] labyrinth of controversall antiquity; *(Anim.,* Ⅲ, 108)

> [They are] the offalls, and sweepings of antiquity that met as accidentally and absurdly, as *Epicurus* his atoms to patch up a Leucippean *Ignatius.*[226] *(Prelat. Epis.,* Ⅲ, 103)

The Church of England has no legitimate basis: Bishop Hall calls the Church of England our mother. We might adopt St. Paul's trope and call the Catholic Church our mother. If we did so,

> let all Genealogie tell us if it can, what we must call the Church of *England,* unlesse we shall make every English Protestant a kind of poeticall *Bacchus*$_f$ to have two Mothers[227] . . . [Bishops impress

[222] Orpheus was killed by the Maenads (Osgood, *op. cit.,* p. 66).

[223] When Atreus slew the children of his brother Thyestes and served them to him at a banquet, the sun turned his course for a day from west to east (Osgood, *op. cit.,* pp. 68-69).

[224] These do not affect Osgood's conclusion *(op. cit.,* p. xlii) that Milton's chief sources were Homer, Hesiod, Vergil, and Ovid.

[225] See above.

[226] Leucippus founded the atomic theory of philosophy which was followed by Epicurus. Hence, the volumes of Ignatius are mere patchwork.

[227] Bacchus was the son of Semele. When she was consumed by Zeus's lightning, he rescued the unborn child from the ashes and placed him in his thigh, from which in due time he was born.

weak minds with the awful notion of a mother, but keep her invisible and make themselves her go-betweens, so that] while we think to be obedient sonnes . . . [we] make ourselves rather the Bastards, or the Centaurs of their spirituall fornications.[228] *(Anim.,* III, 171-172)

and the nation is well rid of it:

[To say that no country ever before objected to episcopacy is an old and weak argument] If you require a further answer, it will not misbecome a Christian to bee either more magnanimous, or more devout then *Scipio* was, who in stead of other answer to the frivolous accusations of *Petilius* the *Tribune; This day Romans* (saith he) / *fought with* Hanibal *prosperously; let us all goe and thank the gods that gave us so great a victory:* in like manner will we now say, not caring otherwise to answer this un-Protestant-like Objection: in this Age *Brittains* God hath reformed his Church . . . Let us all goe . . . and render thanks to God.[229] *(Anim.,111,* 144-145)

Bishops are greedy: they and their dependents[230] gorge themselves on preferments like ravenous harpies; they lack, to their regret, the golden touch of Midas; in their desire for money they are like the crawling creatures of the slime; [231] they

whine to the *Parliamant* for their Flesh-pots of *Egypt,* making sad Orations at the Funerall of your deare *Prelacie,* like that doubtie Centurion *Afranius* in *Lucian,* who to imitate the noble *Pericles* in his *Epitaphian* speech, stepping up after the battell to bewaile the slaine *Severianus,* falls into a pittifull condolement, to think of those costly suppers, and drinking banquets, which he must now taste of no more; and by then he had done, lack't but little to lament the deare-loved memory, and calamitous losse of his Capon, and whitebroth.[232]

(Anim., III, 141)

Tithes are an apple of discord in the church. Very different from the Apostles, who, like the heroic patricians of

[228] The Centaurs were the offspring of Ixion and a cloud shaped in the image of Hera. See above, note 155.

[229] Livy, XXXVIII, 51; Gellius, IV, 18.

[230] a *parochiall* Minister, who ... is at his *Hercules* pillars in a warm benefice" *(Areo.,* IV, 335).

[231] See Chapter 5, note 5; above, notes 193, 217.

[232] Lucian, *Quomodo Historia Conscribenda sit, 26.*

Rome, were glad to lay down their dictatorship, bishops are as proud as Pompey the Great, even before the King:

you shall see him [a bishop] a Woolfe, a Lyon, lifting his paw against his raiser [a king], as *Petrarch* exprest it.[233] *(Ref.f* III, 43)

Indeed, they assert that the right of kings rs inseparable from the right of bishops:

as if the right of Kings, like *Meleager* in the *Metamorphosis* were no longer liv'd then the firebrand of Prelaty.[234] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 202)

Full of deceit,

they abuse the people, like poor Indians with beads and glasses.[235] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 230)

They are as two-faced as Janus. In addition to having these faults with which we are by this time well acquainted, they are also troublemakers. Claiming to be a bulwark, like Hadrian's wall, against a flood of sects, they constantly stir up new dissensions; they are hydras of mischief,[236] and will never voluntarily make a sacrifice for the common good:

[The rule of bishops will cause] such a wide gulph of distraction in this land as will never close her dismall gap, untill ye be forc't (for of your selvs ye wil never do as that Roman *Curtius* nobly did) for the Churches peace & your countries, to leap into the midst, and be no more seen.[237] *(R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 220)

Skilled in the wars waged to defend their Sparta, a city where culture was held in low esteem, they are plotting

[233] ***Sonnetti,*** **No. 138, "Fontana di dolore albergo d'ira." Milton refers to this sonnet as No. 108 and translates lines 9-14 in *Ref.,* III, 26-27.**

[234] **When Meleager was an infant, the Fates decreed his death when a brand burning on the hearth should be consumed. His mother extinguished and concealed the brand. In his manhood, she became enraged at his killing her brothers, and threw the brand into the fire, causing his death. Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* VIII, 451 ff.**

[235] **After the fall, Adam and Eve covered themselves with leaves:**

> **Such of late**
> ***Columbus* found th' *American* so girt**
> **With featherd Cincture, naked else and wilde**
> **Among the Trees on lies and woodie Shores. *(P.L.,* II, 300)**

[236] **The hydra, with its continually renewed heads, was slain by Hercules. See above, note 185.**

[237] **Livy, VII, 6, and others.**

that when they fall they may fall in a generall mine, just as cruell *Tyberius* would wish,

When I dye, let the earth be roul'd in flames.[238]

(R. Ch. Gov., III, 202)

Bishop Hall is attacked only once for his character, when he is accused of conceit because of stupidly using a theatrical metaphor in which

his owne Remonstrant whether in Buskin or Sock must of all right be counted the chiefe Player, be it boasting *Thraso,* or *Davus that troubles all thin?.*[239] *(ApoL,* III, 293)

The rest of the time he is attacked for his literary style. He wrote a book of wretched foolery, *Mundus alter et idem,* in which, in unseemly fashion, he spoke of himself as being ravished like Cephalus[240] or Hylas.[241] After such a performance, even his sober writing is as drunk as Silenus.[242] He misquotes Milton, whose words are mangled

worse then the ghost of *Deiphobus* appeared to his friend *JEneas?*** *(Apol.,* III, 307)

His language becomes so violent that he urges his readers to stone Milton to death. Milton asks whether, on second thought, Hall likes to have

such words as these . . . come out of his shop, out of his Trojan horse ? to give the watch word like *a Gulsian of Paris*[244] to a mutiny or massacre; to proclame a *Crusada* against his fellow Christian now in this troublous and divided time of the kingdome? *(Apol.,* III, 309)

The anonymous writer whom he attacks in *Colastcrion* is a despicable opponent:

[238] Dio, LVIII, 23, 4; Suetonius, *Nero,* 38.
[239] Thraso: Terence, *The Eunuch;* Davus: Terence, *Andria.*
[240] Loved by Aurora, who stole him for a time from his wife.
[241] Beloved of Hercules and stolen by the Naiads during the Argonautic expedition.
[242] A satyr who was the constant companion of Dionysus.
[243] At the fall of Troy slain and mangled by Menelaus; appeared to Aeneas in the underworld *(Aeneid,* VI, 494-497).
[244] Henry, Duke of Guise, was one of the Catholic leaders responsible for the Massacre of St. Bartholemew.

your [licencer's] *Atturney* since no worthier an adversary makes his appearance … I must accept him; and in a better temper then *Ajax,* doe mean to scourge this *Ramme*[245] for yee, till I meet with *Ulysses.* *(Colast.,* IV, 240)

Aspiring to authorship, he is a fool; if Milton knew his name he would

endorse him on the backside of posterity, not a *golden,* but a brazen Asse.[248] Since my fate extorts from me a talent of sport, which I had thought to hide in a napkin, hee shall bee my *Batrachomuomachia*[247] my *Bavius?*[248] my *Calandrino*[249] the common adagy of ignorance and over-weening. *(Colast.,* IV, 272)

Again King Charles escapes lightly. Those monarchs who claim absolute power are prouder than the pagan Caesars who deified themselves. To subject men to them is to throw men to the beasts of the amphitheatre. Justice is not under their control

Though wicked Kings and Tyrants counterfet her Sword, as som did that Buckler, fabl'd to fall from Heav'n into the Capitol.[250] *(Eikon.,* V, 292-293)

A king, for all his pretensions, is only human,

For what can hee more then another man? who even in the expression of a late court-poet, sits only like a great cypher set to no purpose before a long row of other significant figures.[251] Nay it is well and happy for the people if thir king be but a cypher being oft times a ... scourge of the nation. *(Ready & Easy Way,* VI, 121)

Charles, forgetting this fact, has been too presumptuous.[252]

[245] Sophocles, *Ajax.* For another allusion see *First Def.,* VII, 41. See below, note 299.

[246] Apuleius, *The Golden Ass.*

[247] *The Battle of the Frogs and Mice,* a mock-epic wrongly attributed to Homer.

[248] A Roman poet satirized by Horace and Vergil.

[249] A simpleton in Boccaccio's *Decameron,* the constant butt of his two companions *(Day* 8, *novels* 3 and 6; *Day* 9, *novels* 3 and 5).

[250] Ovid, *Fasti,* III, 361-384; Plutarch, *Numa,* 13.

[251] The court poet has not been identified.

[252] His followers, the royalists, are savage—the tigers of Bacchus—and selfish, mourning not his fall but the loss of their own hopes, like the captive women at the death of Patroclus *(Iliad,* XIX, 282-307). Their calling Crom-

He resembles Phaeton more than Phoebus. In priding himself on the fact that even in captivity he still has the full use of his reasoning powers, he is blindly credulous:

> He adores Reason as *Domitian* did *Minerva.*[253] *(Eikon.,* V, 257)

In addition to reason, he has also the use of the wings of faith, but one

> may easily mistake the Wings of Faith for the Wings of presumption, and so fall headlong.[254] *(Eikon.,* V, 169)

Pious phrases such as these are specious, like the apples of asphaltis.[255] He should certainly not be given the power to veto acts of Parliament:

> Grant him this, and the Parlament hath no more freedom then if it sate in his Noose, which when he pleases to draw together with one twitch of his Negative, shall throttle a whole Nation, to the wish of *Caligula* in one neck.[256] *(Eikon.*, V, 288)

Again Salmasius and Morus are showered with insult. Salmasius is a slave dealer, and a Cappadocian slave; earlier in his career he was, in his sermons, quite the tyrant-queller —Helvidius [257] or Thraseas [258]—but he sold himself to the royalists, a turncoat like Damasippus,[259] a swine like Elpenor; [260] his Stoic worship of the zones of heaven has procured for him the zone of a money belt; [261] when he wrote his defence of the King's cause, he thought only of quantity:

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well's parliament a military despotism is like the talk of the profligate crew of Antony, who called the Roman Senate "Pompey's Camp" (Cicero, *Philippic XIII*, n, 26). So too the Londoners who protested against Cromwell's purge of Parliament are like the rabble that appeared for Clodius (when Clodius drove Cicero into exile. Plutarch, *Cicero,* 31).

[253] Suetonius, *Domitian,* 15.

[254] The reference is presumably to Icarus, who flew too high on the wings fashioned by his father Daedalus.

[255] See above, note 219. [256] Suetonius, *Caligula,* 30; Dio, LIX, 13.

[257] Helvidius Priscus, distinguished for virtue, killed by Vespasian (chief sources probably Tacitus and Suetonius).

[258] Thraseas, equally distinguished, killed by Nero (chief source probably Tacitus).

[259] Ridiculed by Horace, *Satires,* II, 3. [260] See above, note 175.

[261] In addition to the ether, the Stoic cosmogony included the zones of fire, air. water, and earth.

like a second Crispinus, or Tzetzes that decadent Greek—so you write much, [you] care not how well you write.[262] *(First Def.$_f$* VII, 39)

outdoing Batus[263] in prolixity. This has been of some advantage to him because Milton would have exposed his errors

did he not shield himself behind the enormous ill-composed disordered bulk of his book, like Terence's soldier skulking behind the front ranks . . . [so that] even the most energetic might weary of marking all the details, and die of boredom before he could refute them.[264]

(First Def.$_f$ VII, 23-25)

He is repetitious :

What follows is but turning the same stone over and over again—a sport at which I believe you able to tire out Sisyphus himself.[265]

(First Def.$_f$ VII, 479)

He is so shallow in his reasoning that the ignorant common people could solve his sphinx's riddles;[266] such a counterfeit Plutarch that his parallels are absurd; so stupid that he steals arguments from Aristotle that destroy his own case, as Prometheus was destroyed because of the fire he stole from Zeus.[267] Therefore all this immense labor is in vain:

This man twists conclusions as Ocnus does ropes in Hell.[268]

(First Def.$_t$ VII, 475)

He is a mere grammarian; since he has been granted a more foolish wish than Midas's, whatever he touches is grammar;

[262] **Crispinus ridiculed by Horace, *Satires,* I, i. Tzetzes, a Greek grammarian of Constantinople, prolific and conceited.**

[263] **A shepherd turned to stone for revealing a secret of Hermes.**

[264] **Terence, *The Eunuch,* 772 ff.**

[265] **Whose punishment was to roll a stone perpetually to the top of a hill.**

[266] **See above, note 178.** [267] **See above, note 207.**

[268] **Also: [It is impossible to couple hatred in marriage] "And that sluggish feind in hell *Ocnus,* whom the Poems tell of, brought his idle cordage to as good effect, which never serv'd to bind with, but to feed the Asse that stood at his elbow. And that restrictive Law against divorce, attains as little to bind any thing truly in a disjoynted mariage, or to keep it bound, but servs only to feed the ignorance, and definitive impertinence of a doltish Canon, were no absurd allusion" *(Doct. Div.,* III, 500). The source is Propertius, IV, 3, 21; also Pliny, XXXV, 40. For a non-figurative reference see *Prolusion III,* XII, 169.**

he is an Olus;[269] splitting hairs over a matter of definition, he is a mountain bringing forth a mouse.[270] He deserves a bad end:

> As Dionysius of old from a tyrant became a schoolmaster,[271] so you from a grammarian deserve to become a tyrant; that you may have—not that royal right to live an evil life, but that other—to die an evil death; whereby, like Tiberius shut up in Capri—yourself the author of your own ruin—you shall feel yourself perish daily.[272] *(First Def.,* VII, 75)

Perhaps this fate has already befallen him; Milton has made a fool of him. After the *First Defence* he became

> more known than the pack-horse Andremon.[273]
>
> *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 113)

Again his relations with his wife are ridiculed; she rules him like the notorious Fulvia in the obscene epigram;[274] she is a barking Lycisca.[275] Salmasius, more contemptible than the master of vipers mentioned by Martial,[276] has become effeminate—no longer Salmasius but Salmacis.[277]

Morus is equally silly, an Orbillius[278] who should be flogged by his own pupils; his interpretation of Milton's re-

[269] Gellius Aulus, a 2d century Roman grammarian noted for his bad style. There is a second reference to another Olus that has not been identified *(First Def.,* VII, 401).

[270] Aesop, *The Mountain in Labor.*

[271] Dionysius the Younger, Tyrant of Syracuse. Finally expelled B.C. 343, he lived the rest of his life in Corinth. According to tradition he kept a school. Cicero: *Letters to His Friends,* IX, 18, i; *Tusculan Disputations,* III, 12, 27; Justinus, XXI, 5; Valerius Maximus, VI, 9, 6; Lucian, *Somnium seu Callus,* 23.

[272] Tiberius retired to Capri A.D. 27, where he indulged in great sensuality. He was finally murdered by the praetorian guard. Milton echoes a letter of Tiberius to the Senate: "May all the gods and goddesses destroy me more miserably than I feel myself to be daily perishing, if I know at this moment what to write to you Senators, how to write it, or what in short not to write/' Suetonius, *Tiberius, 67;* Tacitus, VI, 6.

[273] Martial, *Epigrams,* X, 9.

[274] Not identified.

[275] One of Actaeon's hounds, who tore him to pieces after he had been transformed to a stag.

[276] *Epigrams, 1,41.*

[277] A fountain in which Hermaphroditus bathed, whose nymph prayed that she might be indissolubly joined with him. See also *Sec. Def.,* VIII, 39.

[278] Orbilius Pupillus, grammarian and schoolmaster, teacher of Horace, who condemns him for flogging his pupils.

marks is so beside the point that he must be Momus[279] rather than Morus; he is as loud-mouthed as Stentor;[280] in his wild charges against Milton he is like a corybant.[281] Milton accuses him in a far different manner:

> Lucius Crassus called to the bar of the senate . . . Caius Carbo as a profligate citizen: I, More, deliver you over to the bar of posterity . . . as one blacker far than that Carbo.[282] *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 163)

Milton's accusation is the same as that brought against Morus previously by his church in Geneva—sexual immorality with Pontia, the maid servant of Salmasius. At first

> like that infamous Sicilian scoundrel, you began to bethink yourself . . . how you should contrive not to answer at all.[283]
>
> ***(Def. of Him.,* IX, 13?)**

Later, he fled, hiding as though he had Hermes' helmet of invisibility.[284] There is, of course, no doubt whatever about his guilt; the fact that it is well known torments him like Argus.[285] He is lewder than any faun or naked satyr; he is Priapus, or the Bishop of Lampsacus, the city in which Priapus was especially worshipped;[286] his religious ceremonies are those of Isis, Cotytto,[287] or Laverna;[288] his conduct was that of a wanton Fescennine game;[289] the account of it

[279] The god of mockery.

280 The Greek herald at Troy with a voice as loud as that of fifty men.

[281] A priest of Cybele worshipping by wild dances.

[282] Probably an echo of Cicero, *II Against Verres,* III, i. Crassus is mentioned elsewhere by Cicero. As a young man he won a great reputation by his speech against Carbo, an adherent of the party of Marius and an opponent of Sulla. Carbo was put to death by Pompey.

[288] Probably a reference to Cicero's *I Against Verres,* which makes much of Verres' attempts to have the trial postponed.

[284] Also ascribed to Hades (Pluto). In *Sec. Def.* (VIII, 29) Morus's anonymity is his Pluto's helmet.

[285] See above, in the passages showing the untruth of classic myths.

[286] Son of Dionysus and Aphrodite, the god of fruitfulness in general, whose rites became highly lascivious.

[287] The Thracian goddess of lewdness.

[288] The Roman goddess of gain or fraud; hence, of rogues and thieves.

[289] From Fescennium in Etruria, whose reputation was low.

is a sort of Milesian,[290] or Baian tale.[291] (Sec. Def., VIII, 31)

And so the sluice gates are closed and the flood of vituperation ceases. It has, however, been so extensive that we must pause here to ask what effect it has had on our opinion of Milton. We might well feel a certain amount of disgust and a considerable amount of boredom. Milton, we might declare, as do various editors and critics, should have kept his temper, he should have held himself above such methods of argument even though they were all but universal in his day. We admit that he could on occasion be effectively, if harshly, witty, but we are compelled to point out that billingsgate is not funny. What is to be said against this point of view? There is, first of all the disconcerting fact that Milton thought that he *was* being funny. In a passage already quoted[292] he says that his answer to the idiot who had attacked his divorce pamphlets called forth a talent for sport which he had never expected to use. This statement about *Colasterion* he would doubtless have been ready to make about all his controversial works. Depressing as the thought may be, he probably smiled many more times as he composed them than we do as we read them.[293]

Furthermore, Milton believed that in such writing, laughter, that is satirical laughter, was not an end in itself but a means to an end. In the preface to *Animadversions* he undertakes, for "the satisfaction of tender and mild consciences," to defend rough speaking, in important public questions, as a method of moral instruction, pointing to the "precept of

200 Miletus was notorious for wantonness.

[291] Baiae was the site of favorite baths. Milesian tales were the kind that were likely to be told in such places.

[292] See above. Again: his opponent was not worthy of his earnest efforts, but only of his jest *(Colast.,* IV, 267).

[293] We *do* smile sometimes at various sarcastic or contemptuous passages. Milton could also employ an anecdote effectively: The attempt to curb evil by licencing is vain "And he who were pleasantly dispos'd, could not well avoid to lik'n it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by shutting his Parkgate" *(Areo.,* IV, 314).

Solomon" and the "example of Christ." If, therefore, in his book, which confutes a subtle and persistent enemy of the common good, there should be found

> without all private and personall spleene, and without any thought of earthly reward . . . such a grim laughter, as may appeare at the same time in an austere visage, it cannot be taxt of levity or insolence: for even this veine of laughing (as I could produce out of grave Authors) hath oft-times a strong and sinewy force in teaching and confuting . . . [In a matter of such importance] if it be harmfull to be angry, and withall to cast a lowring smile, when the properest object calls for both, it will be long enough ere any be able to say why those two most rationall faculties of humane intellect anger and laughter were first seated in the brest of man. *(Anim.,* III, 107)

Here we observe a typically Miltonic position. Reason rules the emotions. Laughter is rational and serves a purpose; it is not gay and irresponsible. Milton returns to the point in one of the later pamphlets in his controversy with Bishop Hall. In *A Modest Confutation* the bishop, quoting Bacon, had objected to laughter in a discussion of dignified matters, whereupon Milton elaborates what he has said in the preface to *Animadversions:* laughter instructs the person against whom it is directed (he is, naturally, of low intelligence), since when one is answering a fool according to his folly, mockery teaches him not to imagine himself wise; mockery also instructs the simple readers, who, seeing the author scorned, are thereby made wise themselves. With a similar pedagogical end in view, Elijah ridiculed the priests of Baal, and the Christian martyrs derided their persecutors. Even the pagans realized the force of such a procedure, as may be shown from the pages of Horace—a witty and moral author—Cicero, and Seneca, among many others. This moral aim is found not only in occasional satirical passages but in satire considered as a separate type of literature.[294] Again, Bishop Hall has made himself absurd in his attempt to be the "first English Satyr" because he wrote

[294] *Apol.,* III, 317-318.

on trivial or vulgar subjects. He ought to have known better:

> For a Satyr as it was borne out of a *Tragedy,* so ought to resemble his parentage, to strike high, and adventure dangerously at the most eminent vices among the greatest persons. *(ApoL,* Ill, 329)

These passages make evident the fact that for Milton laughter was no laughing matter. It was to be indulged in, like everything else, only in the fear of God.[295]

Such being the case, the conclnsion would seem to follow that in heaping abuse upon his adversaries Milton did *not* lose his temper, nor did he write with a "savage joy."[296] On the contrary, he wrote coolly and objectively (that is, as far as his employment of satire is concerned; he was of course strongly stirred by the subject he was attacking or defending). He saw no reason to rise above the argumentative methods of his time. Satire, personal abuse, and scurrility had been, from Aristophanes down, offensive weapons, and he used them with all the rhetorical skill at his command.[297] He realized, however, that certain "tender consciences" might be offended and was at pains to justify his course by citing illustrious precedents.[298] His villification is

[295] This is not to deny the point made by J. M. French ("Milton as Satirist," *PMLA,* LI, 1936, 414-429) of Milton's cheerfulness and general amiability. But if his conversation was "cheerful" and "engaging," it was also "instructive" (p. 415).

[296] Hanford, *A Milton Handbook* (4th ed.), p. 71.

[297] Milton knew the satiric tradition. He has allusions to "Aristophanes, Attic comedy in general, Plautus, Terence, Martial, Juvenal, Horace, Latin and Italian satirists in general, Ariosto, Tiers Plowman,' Erasmus, and Joseph Hall." He took advantage of the opportunities of the tradition: "Without personalities the satirist is lost. Provided he insults by rule, he may insult whom and how he will. Subtract the personalities, the jibing allusions, and the home thrusts from 'Macflecknoe,' from the *Dunciad,' from 'Gulliver's Travels,' and the life of the work has fled. . . . [Satires'] business being less to confute reasonably than to overwhelm with ridicule and abuse, they must have their own choice of weapons" (French, *op. cit.,* pp. 417, 428).

[298] The grave orators of old, Piso, Sallust, Herodotus, Seneca, Suetonius, Plutarch, Erasmus, Thomas More, Clemens Alexandrinus, Arnobius, Lactantius, Eusebius, Moses, Job, Solomon, Plautus, the ancient Attic comedy, Socratic philosophers *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 107-113), Cicero, and Plato *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 175-177). Furthermore, Hall has been contemptuous of Smectymnuus, and Milton has the authority of Gregory Nyssen to speak sharply in another's

simply an effort to discredit the opposition, and it proceeds, as he assures his readers again and again, from no unworthy motives. He writes in a better temper than Ajax;[299] with no private or personal spleen;[300] not from malice or desire to speak evil or vainglory;[301] not from stomach, virulence, or ill-nature,[302] not from envy or gall,[303] not from indiscretion, bitterness, or choler,[304] not from displeasure at being contradicted,[305] but only because his conscience compelled him to,[306] since he felt the

meere necessity, to vindicate the spotlesse *Truth* from an ignominious bondage. *(Ref.,* III, 10)

When he was attacked he realized that his adversaries were playing the same game:

[HalFs] intent was not so much to smite at me, as through me to render odious the truth which I had written; *(Apol.,* III, 284)

Salmasius and the rest were attacking not Milton but Cromwell's England:

Indeed, as I have no private malice or enmity against any man, nor, as far as I know, has any man against me, I am the less concerned at the torrent of abuse which is cast upon me, at the numberless reproaches which are hurled against me, as I bear all this not for myself, but for the sake of the commonwealth. *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 85)

In answer to these attacks he felt it necessary to vindicate his character, because unless he did so the cause of truth would suffer.[307] His position was no different from that of another formidable antagonist, Dr. Johnson, and Milton would certainly have endorsed the doctor's statement of the

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cause *(Apol.,* III, 285-286), and the authority of Scripture, in withstanding the perverters of the Gospel, "with the froward to be froward, and to throw scorn upon the scorner" *(Apol,,* III, 288).

[299] **Ajax was in an insane fury; hence, Milton is not angry at all, though certainly contemptuous. See above, note 245.**

[300] **See above: "without all private and personal! spleene," etc,**

[301] *Ref.,* III, 10. [302] *Ch. Gov.,* III, 231.

[303] *R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 234. [304] *Apol.,* III, 281.

[305] *Colast.,* IV, 273. [306] *R. Ch. Gov.,* III, 234.

[307] *Apol.,* III, 296-297; *Sec. Def.,* VIII, 119.

principles of controversy. Speaking of Beattie's *Essay on Truth,* an attack on Hume, Johnson said: "Sir, he has written like a man conscious of the truth and feeling his own strength. Treating your adversary with respect is giving him an advantage to which he is not entitled. The greatest part of men cannot judge of reasoning, and are impressed by character; so that if you allow your adversary a respectable character, they will think that though you differ from him, you may be in the wrong. Sir, treating your adversary with respect is striking soft in a battle."[308] We may disagree with Milton's (and Johnson's) premises, we may deplore his methods, but we cannot doubt his motives. What he specifically says about himself may be trusted.[309]

This discussion of Milton as a controversialist[310] has led

[308] Pottle and Bennett, *Boswcll's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,* New York, 1936, pp. 16-17. These principles did not die with Johnson, Jeffrey had no personal quarrel with the poets whom he bludgeoned in his attack on the "Lake School," nor did Macaulay hate Robert Montgomery when he demolished his poetry. Even today men may be political enemies and private friends.

[309] See J. S. Diekhoff, *Milton on Himself,* New York, 1939, pp. xiv ff.

[310] In the SalmaMus-Morus controversy the converse of Milton's attacks on them is his praise of the leaders of the Commonwealth and of himself. Cromwell is Camillus (a great military hero of the Roman Republic), Fairfax in retirement is Scipio Africanus at Liternum; Bradshaw is a consul though not of a single year only; Milton dares assert that with God's assistance he has defended the English people "as that famous Roman Consul [Plutarch, *Cicero,* 23] upon retiring from office, swore in the popular assembly that the state and the city owed their safety to his single efforts" *(First Def.,* VII, 557).

This *First Defence* has become known throughout Europe so that "I am bringing . . . home to every nation, liberty … so long an exile; and as is recorded of Triptolemus of old [the son of Celeus who befriended Ceres. In return she taught him the use of the plough, sowing etc. and took him with her when she taught agriculture over the earth] … I am importing fruits for the nations, from my own city, but of a far nobler kind than those fruits of Ceres" *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 15).

Because of his services the state still treats him, in spite of his blindness, "with the same honor, as if, like the Athenians in ancient times, they had decreed a maintenance for me in the Prytaneum"—a dining hall maintained at public expense in Athens where distinguished citizens were entertained. *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 75).

His final pamphlet makes Morus a public show: "I show you to the people of England, for a beast, as the most agreeable spectacle I could exhibit to them,

us away from his use of classical images, and it is to these that we must now return. His treatment of mythology has been dealt with; there remain classical history and literature.[311] His mastery not merely of Greek and Roman but of European history in general, evident in nearly all his writing, needs no demonstration. It prepares us for the wide range of his historical images drawn from Greek and Roman historians and other writers. Allusions to Plutarch, Lucian, Livy, Dio, Suetonius, Tacitus, Justinus, and Cicero have already been noted,[312] and there are others to Polybius, Herodotus, Dionysius (perhaps Philostratus), Florus, and Pliny.[313] We may pass quickly over a miscellaneous group based on classical customs, such as holding a triumph, lighting a nuptial torch, and the like, only one of which need detain us. Vlaccus, intending to praise Morus, had cited what were in reality vices. He now proceeds to other qualities of Morus:

> He has hitherto reckoned with a black pebble; he now reckons with one of divers colours.[314] *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 67)

More significant are those images of notable events or persons, most of which refer to Roman history. A few are adverse comments on Roman pride: one already quoted[316] made use of Scipio's contemptuous answer to his opponent; another is based on the high-handed treatment of the King of Syria:

> The method of … [Mosaic law is] with more noble and gracefull seventy then *Popilius* the Roman *legat* us'd with *Antiocus,* to limit and level out the direct way from vice to vertu.[318] *(Doct. Div.,* Ill, 474)

not as their aedile [Roman official in charge of games among other things; see also *Prolusion VI,* XII, 207], but as their defender" *(Def. of Him.,* IX, 117).

[311] Partially discussed in the controversial images above.

[312] See above.

[313] See below.

[314] The Thracians, and other peoples, dropped into a quiver a stone for every day of an individual's life, white for the good and black for the bad; when life was over, the stones were counted and an estimate made. Pliny, VII, 40, **131.**

[315] See above, note 229.

[316] Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) was stopped in his invasion of Egypt by Caius Pnnilius. who handed the king a copy of the Roman terms forbidding the war

Most of them, however, reflect Milton's admiration of the Romans' struggle for liberty,[317] their courage under defeat:

[The Londoners' morale is so high that] I doubt not, if some . . . worthy stranger should come among us ... but that he would cry out as *Pirrhus* did, admiring the Roman docility and courage, if such were my *Epirots,* I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a Church or Kingdom happy.[318]

(Areo, IV, 342)

and their unshakable morale at a time of even greater crisis:

[When London is in danger we have complete confidence in Parliament] as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who when Rome was nigh besieg'd by *Hanibal,* being in the City, bought that peece of ground at no cheap rate, whereon *Hanibal* himself encampt his own regiment.[319] *(Areo.f* IV, 344)

Naturally, Milton sympathizes with the Republic. The Senate is the symbol of liberty and security:

> Tis most true
> That musing meditation most affects
> The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
> Far from the cheerfull haunt of men, and herds,
> And sits as safe as in a Senat house. *(Comus,* l, 99)

The heroes—Scipio Africanus, Curtius, Camillus, Cato, Curius, the Brutuses, Cicero—are heroes of the Republic, The villains are the dissolute Emperors Tiberius, Domitian, and Caligula, or the rabble-rouser Clodius. Many images, especially in *Eikonoklastcs* and the *Defences,* are drawn from the last days of the Republic, during the civil wars that preceded the Empire, clearly because of the analogy with Milton's own time. The most conspicuous defender of the ancient liberty was Cicero, and it is not surprising, therefore, that no less than six images are drawn from his life

against Ptolemy, drew a circle round him, and forbad him to step out of it until he had given his decision. Not unnaturally, the king yielded. Polybius, XXIX, 27.

[317] See Hughes, *Milton Prose Selections,* p. civ.

[318] Pyrrhus's tribute to the Romans after defeating them at Heraclea. Florus, I, 13.

[319] Livy, XXVI, ii.

or writings,[320] and that in over twenty non-figurative passages Cicero's arguments on the limitations of the rights of kings, on the supremacy of law, on the killing of tyrants, on the authority of the senate, and on the ultimate authority of the people as a whole are cited in defence of Milton's position. It is true that Milton cites many other authorities also and that to isolate one of them is to distort the perspective. Nevertheless, the possibility is strong that Milton felt particularly attracted to Cicero. That he knew the whole body of Cicero's writing is clear, since he refers to over fifty individual works. He speaks many times of Cicero's greatness as an orator and stylist, and quotes from him over eighty times in the *Art of Logic.* But he must also have been drawn to Cicero as a man, whom he calls "so great a father of the Commonwealth" [321] and "an excellent man and publicly entitled the father of his country." [322] If we ignore Cicero's weaknesses—physical timidity and gross vanity—Milton must have found much to admire and much that was strikingly like his own character and career: Cicero's youthful precocity; the purity and moderation of his private life; his sarcastic wit; his entrance into public life as the defender of an obscure young man, Roscius, against the dictator Sulla; and above all, his almost complete abstention from actual fighting because of his conviction that the arts of peace were superior to the arts of war, a conviction embodied in a hexameter describing himself, *cedant arma togae concedat laurea linguae*[323] This statement is not far from Milton's feeling that

> peace hath her victories
> No less renownd then warr;
> ("Cromwell Our Chief of Men," I, 65)

[320] **See above, notes 252, 282, 283, 310. One is from *Arcopagitica,* IV, 330: "he whom an honest *quaestorship* had indear'd to the *Sicilians,* was not more by them importun'd against *Verres,* then [I was to appeal to Parliament]."**
[321] ***Area.,* IV, 301.** [322] ***First Def.,* Vii, 327.**
[323] **Arms give place to the toga, and the (military) laurel yields to the tongue.**

from his praise of Abdiel in *Paradise Lost* as being mightier in word than Satan and his angels were in arms, and from his attitude in the *Second Defence:*

He alone deserves the appelation of great, who either achieves great things himself, or teaches how they may be achieved; or who describes with suitable dignity the great achievements of others;

(Sec. Def., VIII, 95)

[The Parliamentary party] drove out slavery in their glorious warfare. Of this glory, though I claim no share for myself, it is easy for me to defend myself against the charge, if any such be brought against me, either of timidity or of cowardice. For, if I avoided the toils and the perils of war, it was only that 1 might earnestly toil for my fellow-citizens in another way, with much greater utility, and with no less peril. In doubtful postures of our affairs, my mind never betrayed any symptom of despondence, nor was I more afraid than became me of malice, or even of death. Devoted even from a child to the more humanizing studies, and always stronger in mind than in body,[324] I set an inferior value upon the service of the camp, in which I might have been easily surpassed by any ordinary man of a more robust make, and betook myself to those occupations, where my services could be of more avail … to the designs of my country, and to this transcendent cause. I thought, therefore, that if it were the will of God those men should perform such gallant exploits, it must be likewise his will, that when performed, there should be others to set them forth with becoming dignity and ornament . . . Hence it is, that … I complain not of the part allotted to myself; nay, I may rather congratulate myself . . . that such a lot has fallen to me … when I turn my mind to that cause, of all others the most noble and most renowned, and to this splendid office of defending even the defenders ... it is with difficulty I restrain myself from soaring to a more daring height than is suitable to the purpose of an exordium . . . for, to whatever degree I am surpassed … by the ancient, illustrious orators, not only as an orator, but also as a linguist ... I shall surpass no less the orators of all ages in the nobleness and in the instructiveness of my subject. This it is, which has imparted such expectation, such celebrity to this theme, that I now feel myself not in the form or on the rostrum, surrounded by a single people only, whether Roman or Athenian, but, as it were, by listening Europe, attending, and passing judgment.[325] *(Sec. Def.,* VIII, 9-13)

[324] Cicero had, all his life, a very weak digestion.
[325] Certainly Milton has in mind Cicero and Demosthenes.

Is it not possible, therefore, that Milton thought of himself as doing for England with his pamphlets what Cicero had done for Rome with his orations? He certainly felt something of Cicero's pride in his own accomplishment, having lost his eyesight

> In libertyes defence, my noble task,
> **Of** which all Europe talks from side to side.
> ("Cyriak, This Three Years Day," I, 68)

The use that Milton makes of Greek history is much less extensive. There are brief images of Athens, of the Olympic and Delphic games, and of the Gordian knot. There are two images of important military episodes:

> [Sin and Death built a causeway across chaos]
> So, if great things to small may be compared,
> *Xerxes,* the Libertie of *Greece* to yoke,
> From *Susa* his *Memnonian* Palace high
> Came to the Sea, and over *Hellespont*
> Bridging his way, *Europe* with *Asia* joyn'd,
> And scourg'd with many a stroak th* indignant waves.[326]
> *(P.L.,* Ll, 315)

> the sad breaking of that Parlament
> Broke him, as that dishonest victory
> At *Chæronea,* fatal to liberty,
> Killed with report that Old man eloquent.[327]
> ("Daughter to That Good Earl," I, 61)

and one of Alexander:

> For, as the great Alexander himself, when carrying on war in the remotest parts of the earth, declared that he had undergone such great labours for the sake of the good opinion of the Athenians, why should not I congratulate myself [on your praise, an Athenian].[328]
> *(Familiar Letters,* XII, 57)

[326] Herodotus, VII, 33-36.

[327] Lady Margaret Ley's father, the Earl of Marlborough, died shortly after the dissolution of Parliament in 1629. After the victory of Philip of Macedon over the Thebans and Athenians, Isocrates the orator, aged ninety-eight, was said to have starved himself to death. Dionysius, *De Isocrate Judicium,* i; Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum,* I, 17.

[328] The source has not been identified. It may be somewhere in the Alexander Romance.

The remaining figures are all allusions to philosophers or scientists: Diodati is Theodotus;[329] a serious poet should live as sparingly as the Samian teacher, Pythagoras; we need the advice of someone as wise as Epimenides;[330] a priest has no greater sanctity than Apollonius Tyanaeus;[331] and Salmasius is (Milton is here ironical) both a Stoic editor of Epictitus, with the commentary of Simplicius,[332] and Archimedes.

When we turn from classical history to classical literature—to the poets, playwrights, and philosophers—we find that there is little to be said. Obviously Milton was complete master of this field, and obviously the images embody only a small part of his knowledge. We have already noted references to Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Aesop, Vergil, Horace, Martial, Propertius, and Terence,[333] and to numerous Greek philosophers.[334] With these we may put other echoes of these authors: of Homer, in the spear of Achilles that wounds and heals, Ulysses steering between Scylla and Charybdis, Eurybates (the herald of Ulysses), the bow of Ulysses, and the Cyclops; of Euripides, in the frenzy of Pentheus in the *Bacchae;* of Aesop, in the *Fable of the Cock;* of Vergil, in the spirits waiting beside Lethe, the winds confined in the cave of Aeolus, the figures of the Britons woven into the tapestry;[335] of Horace, phrases from his *Odes* and *Satires,* and the monster composed of various animals from the *Art of Poetry;* of Terence, the slave Syrus from *The Brothers* and *The Self-Tormentor.* There are also images from other authors: Theocritus and the poets in the pastoral tradition; Plato, the poets exiled from his city; Aristophanes, the noise of the frogs; Sophocles, the darkness of Oedepian night. These allusions are for the most part even now familiar, and in any case they need no comment. A few re-

[329] A philosopher of Chios. [330] A poet and prophet of Crete.
[331] A Pythagorean philosopher of Cappadocia.
[332] A philosopher of Cilicia. [333] See above.
[334] See above. [335] *Georgia,* III, 25.

maining ones are more obscure. Two refer to the pigmies: Satan's army was immense,

> For never since created man,
> Met such imbodied force, as nam'd with these
> Could merit more then that small infantry
> Warr'd on by Cranes; [336] *(P.L.,* II, 28-29)

> [At Pandaemonium] they but now who seemd
> In bigness to surpass Earths Giant Sons
> Now less then smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room
> Throng numberless, like that Pigmean Race
> Beyond the *Indian* Mount.[337] *(P.L.,* II, 36)

one to a Greek proverb that Milton evidently expected his academic audience to recognize—ignorant fellows, once they have exhausted their stock of ready made phrases, are

> as speechless as the little Seriphian frogs—[338] *(Prolusion If* XII, 121)

one probably to Plato:

> not even that wisest Athenian . . . can I think more graced by the testimony of the Pythian himself, than me by her [Queen Christina's] opinion.[339] *(Sec. Def..* VIII, 193)

and one to an anecdote about Socrates:

> What do men see in the heart? We have need here of a Delian diver.[340]
> (def of Him., IX, 295)

[336] Homer, *Iliad,* III, 1-5. The cranes fly bearing slaughter and fate to the pigmy men. Milton probably also had Pliny in mind. See next note.

[337] Pliny and the early maps locate the pigmies near the source of the Ganges in the Himalayas, and Pliny describes their annual attack on the nests of the cranes. Pliny, VII, 2, 26. See also G. W. Whiting, *Milton's Literary Milieu,* p. 81; and M. Y. Hughes, *Paradise Lost,* p. 30.

[338] Seriphian frogs: said of those who are speechless, because the frogs of Seriphus do not peep when brought to Scyrus. Gaisford, *Paroemiographi Graeci,* p. 25. See Aelian III, 37; Pliny, VIII, 227. Also referred to in Juvenal, *Satires,* VI, 564; X, 170, etc. Hughes, *Milton Prose Selections,* p, 2.

[339] Probably Plato, *Apology.*

[340] Diogenes Laertius, *Socrates,* 22: "They relate that Euripides gave him the treatise of Heraclitus and asked his opinion upon it, and that his reply was, 'The part I understand is excellent, and so too, is, I dare say, the part I do not understand, but it needs a Delian diver to get to the bottom of it.'" See also his *Heraclitus,* 12: "The said work of Heraclitus was first brought into Greece by one Crates who further said it required a Delian diver not to be drowned in it."

Yet if these images are entirely inadequate to reveal the depth and solidity of his knowledge of the classics, they do give some idea of its extent and a vivid idea of how much he assumed that his readers knew.[341]

This same statement must be made concerning the only images that remain for consideration, those of history and literature other than classical. The historical figures include three from the East. The first is an ancient Byzantine custom[342]—in speaking of marriage Christ did not mean to

> hale and dash together irreconcilable aversations of nature, nor to tie up a faultlesse person like a parricide, as it were into one sack with an enemy, to be his causelesse tormenter and executioner the length of a long life; *(Tetra.,* IV, 185)

the second relates to sixteenth century warfare between the Tartars and Russians and between the Persians and the Turks:

> As when the *Tartar* from his *Russian* Foe
> By *Astracan* over the Snowie Plaines
> Retires, or *Bactrian* Sophi from the homes
> Of Turkish Crescent, leaves all waste beyond
> The Realm of *Aladule,* in his retreate
> To *Tauris* or *Casbeen.* So these the late
> Heav'n-banisht Host, left desert utmost Hell
> Many a dark League.[343] *(P.L.,* II, 320)

and the third relates to contemporary commerce of Persia and India:

> High on a Throne of Royal State, which far
> Outshon the wealth of *Ormus* and of *Ind,*

[341] If the allusions were not understood, the passages would in some cases, for example the description of Eden (see above), still have great even if different literary value; but in other cases, for example the Seriphian frogs or the Delian diver, their value would be entirely lost.

[342] Cf. Cowley, *Of Solitude:* For a man to be alone with his passions " 'Tis like the punishment of parricides among the Romans, to be sewn into a bag with an ape, a dog, and a serpent."

[343] Astrakan: on the Volga near the Caspian Sea ; Aladule: part of Armenia; Tauris (Tabriz) in north Persia ; Casbeen (Kazvin) north of Teheran, Persia. Milton's sources were probably Hakluyt, I, 351; Purchas, *Pilgrimage,* p. 75; Hexham's English edition (1636) of *Mercator's Atlas.*

> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Showrs on her Kings *Barbaric* Pearl and Gold,
> Satan exalted sat.[344] *(P.L.,* II, 38)

Of two from French history, one is from the Middle Ages—a scholarly bishop asserting his rights against the crown,

> having predispos'd his conditions with the *Pope* ... or some *Pepin* of his owne creating, it were . . . likely for him to aspire to the *Monarchy* among us;[346] *(Ref.,* III, 58-59)

and one, already noted,[346] from the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. A number are from English history ranging from facts that must have been familiar—the plight of the ancient Britons driven back and forth by the Picts and the sea, the compilation of the Doomsday Book, the Gunpowder Plot, the 1627 attack on the French island of Re, and contemporary incidents of the Civil War[347]—through the possibly less well known imposture of Perkin Warbeck,[348] to two decidedly minor episodes of the twelfth and fifteenth centuries : Hall wrote anonymously,

> And finding him thus in disguise ... it were no sinne to serve him as *Longchamp* Bishop of *Elie* was serv'd in his disguise at Dover.[349] *(Jpol.,111,* 310)

When in the reign of Edward VI Lord Sudley was,falsely accused of treason,

[344] In 1622 the English helped the Persians retake Ormus from the Portuguese. Situated at the mouth of the Persian gulf, it was famous chiefly as a market for jewels brought from India. The first settlements of the East India Company were also making known to England the wealth of India.

[345] In 751, Pippin III was put on the throne of France in place of Childeric III by Pope Zacharias.

[346] See above, note 244.

[347] See Chapter 3.

[348] Milton says that much of the work of Ignatius is spurious; he is a Perkin Warbeck. This was the impostor who gave himself out for Richard Duke of York, son of Edward IV. He landed in Cornwall in 1497 proclaiming himself King Richard IV. lie was taken prisoner, confessed his imposture, and was hanged.

[349] William Longchamp, d. 1197, was Chancellor of England under Richard I. During Richard's absence he became highly unpopular and was finally forced in 1191 to surrender his offices, turn over all the castles in his custody, and leave England. He twice attempted to escape in disguise from Dover but was caught and detained until all the castles were surrendered.

no man could be found fitter then Bishop *Latimer* (like another Doctor *Shaw)* to divulge in his Sermon the forged Accusations laid to his charge.[350] *(Ref.,* Ill, 9)

Of the literary figures of speech—our final category—a few are from the Italian Renaissance and the rest are from English literature. We have already noted echoes of Boccaccio's *Decameron* [351] and Petrarch's *Sonnets.*[352] To these we must add an anecdote about Tasso:

And as *Tasso* gave to a Prince of *Italy* his chois whether he would command him to write of *Godfreys* expedition against the infidels, or *Belisarius* against the Gothes, or *Charlemain* against the Lombards . . . it haply would be no rashnesse from an equal diligence and inclination to present the like offer in our own ancient stories;[353]

(R. Ch. Gov., Ill, 237)

and an elaborate comparison derived from Boiardo: Satan shows Christ the Parthian armies—

> Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
> When *Agrican* with all his Northern powers
> Besieged *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 *Charlemane.*
> Such and so numerous was thir Chivalrie.[354] *(P.R.,* II, 454)

A considerably larger number of images are based on Milton's English predecessors, among whom the "sage and serious" Spenser is by far the most conspicuous. One allusion

[350] Ralph Shaw, d. 1484, was chosen by the Protector (later Richard III) to preach a sermon impugning the validity of Edward IV's marriage with Elizabeth Woodville, and asserting that Edward IV and his brother Clarence were bastards.

[351] See above, note 249.

[352] See above, note 233.

[353] The Prince of Italy was Cardinal Luigi D'Este. Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* told of Godfrey of Boulogne's conquest of the Holy Land in the First Crusade. The alternative subjects were the reconquest of Italy from the Ostrogoths by Belisarius in 538-540, and Charlemagne's victory over the Lombards in northern Italy in 774. See Hughes, *Milton Prose Selections,* p. 105.

[354] Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato,* I, x-xiv. Agrican, the King of Tartary, besieged Albracca, capital city of Gallaphrone, the King of Cathay. Roland and others were involved. See Hughes, *Milton Paradise Regained,* p. 503.

has already been noted [355] to the great dragon slain by the Red Cross knight at the conclusion of his quest, and there are seven additional Spenserian references, five of them to the *Faerie Queene.* There is the House of Pride: the catchword of the bishops is "No bishop, no king,"

But what greater debasement can there be to Royall Dignity, whose towring, and stedfast heighth rests upon the unmovable foundations of Justice, and Heroick vertue, then to chaine it in a dependance of subsisting, or ruining to the painted Battlements, and gaudy rottennesse of Prelatrie, which want but one puffe of the Kings to blow them down like a past-bord House built of *Court-Cards; (Ref.*$_f$ Ill, 47)

King Charles previously admitted that his act was wrong,

Yet heer like a rott'n building newly trimm'd over he represents it speciously and fraudulently to impose upon the simple Reader.[356]

(Eikon.,. V, 98-99)

There is also the shield of Prince Arthur: The bishops rely on the Church Fathers and tradition; why, then, should not the reformers

urge only the Gospel, and hold it ever in their [bishops'] faces like a mirror of Diamond, till it dazle, and pierce their misty ey balls? [357]

(Rcf., Ill, 35)

and the stripping of Duessa :

Accordingly, it will now be our task to return Error to its natal deformity, bare and stripped of its borrowed plumage.[358]

(Prolusion V, XII, 195)

Talus, the assistant of Artegall: King Charles cites a number of acts of his opponents, the purge of Parliament, etc.—

If there were a man of iron, such as *Talus,* by our Poet *Spencer,* is fain'd to be the page of Justice, who with his iron flaile could doe all this, and expeditiously ... I say God send it don, whether by one *Talus,* or by a thousand.[359] *(Eikon.,* V, 110)

[355] See Chapter 5, note 4. [356] *Faerie Queens,* I, iv, 4-5.

[357] *faerie Queene,* I, vii, 33-36. Milton may also have had in mind the various passages noted as possible sources for Spenser, such as Ariosto, *Orlando Furtòso,* Il, 55-56.

[358] *Faerie Queene,* I, viii, 45-50. Perhaps also Aesop's fable of the daw.

[359] *Faerie Queene,* V, passim.

Palinode, and the Fox, both in the May Eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender:*

[The ministry is a high calling] Let the novice learne first to renounce the world, and so give himselfe to God, and not therefore give himselfe to God, that hee may close the better with the World, like that false Shepheard *Palinode* in the Eclogue of *May,* under whom the Poet lively personates our Prelates . . . Those our admired *Spencer* inveighs against, not without some presage of these reforming times.[360]
(Anim., III, 165-166)

[A sermon written in medical terms is] a pretty fantastic dos of Divinity from a Pulpit-Mountibanck, not unlike the Fox, that turning Pedler, opend his pack of ware before the Kid.[361] (*Brief Notes,* VI, 151)

These passages are clear evidence of the kind of appeal that Spenser had for Milton, since all the figures, incidents, or objects have their places in the fabric of the moral allegory.

Doubtless it is the lack of this element in Shakespeare that accounts for the fact that Milton has, at most, only two images from him. One may be an echo of Prosperous soliloquy: at Christ's coming, the Mosaic law

fades away of it selfe, and passes into aire like a transitory vision.[362]
(R. Ch. Gov., III, 203)

the other probably refers to *Julius Caesar,* but possibly to Josephus or some other undiscovered source: the fallen angels hold games and military exercises

As when to warn proud Cities war appears
Wag'd in the troubled 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.[363] *(P.L.,* II, 57)

[360] Milton then quotes the May Eclogue, 11. 103-131.
[361] The Fable of the Goat, Kid, and Fox, Spenser's variation of Aesop.
[362] *The Tempest,* IV, i, 148-156.
[363] Just before Caesar's murder various prodigies were seen; among them
Fierce warriors fought upon the clouds
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.

His two figures from the Arthurian legends illustrate both his lifelong interest in them and his attitude toward them. His undergraduate reference is playful: to enter the hall the audience had passed the college porter, Sparks,

> nor did those valiant knights of King Arthur overpower and rout more easily the enchantments of a burning and blazing stronghold.[364]
>
> *(Prolusion VI,* XII, 231)

His late reference severely emphasizes the fabulous quality of the legends, like that of the classic myths,[365] but betrays the potency of their charm. At the banquet offered Christ by Satan were attendants like nymphs

> And Ladies of th' *Hesperides,* that seem'd
> Fairer then 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. (P.R.,* II, 437)

The remaining allusions are all scattered and most of them are uncertain. There is Barclay:

> [I have been asked to do something foolish] as if there were not already quite enough fools, as if that famous ship of fools, celebrated not less than the Argo, had met with shipwreck.[366] *(Prolusion VI,* XII, 205)

There is Lyly, or perhaps contemporary pamphleteers:

> [King Charles] would work the people to a perswasion, that if he *be miserable they cannot be happy.* What should hinder them? Were they all born Twins of *Hippocrates* with him and his fortune, one birth one burial?[367] *(Eikon.,* V, 254)

The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan. *Julius Caesar,* II, ii, 19-23. This parallel was noted by Hanford, *The Poems of John Milton,* p. 214. Similar prodigies were seen before the fall of Jerusalem, among them "chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour running about among the clouds" (Josephus, *Wars,* VI, v; see Hughes, *Milton Paradise Lost,* p. 58.

[364] This reference has not been identified. It is probably in Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur.*

[365] See above.

[366] *The Ship of Fools,* 1508, a version of Brandt's *Narrenschiff,* 1494.

[367] *Euphues and his England (Works,* ed. R. W. Bond, Oxford, 1902, II, 5, 77). The classical source, which Milton may well have had in mind, is unknown. Whiting *(Milton's Literary Milieu,* pp. 351-352) gives references to

There is probably Donne:

> [To God] wisdom is as a high towr of pleasure, but to us a steep hill, and we toyling ever about the bottom.[368] *(Tetra.,* IV, 85)

And finally, there is Quarles or some other emblem writer:

> I was all ear,
> And took in strains that might create a soul
> Under the ribs of Death.[369] *(Cotnus,* I, 106)

If to us these figures from English literature seem somewhat meager, if, for instance, we are surprised that Shakespeare is barely represented and that the other dramatists do not appear at all, we must remember—luckily for the last time—that the images do not tell the whole story. It may be safely assumed that Milton had read the body of literature produced in his country. But his roots went deeper into the past, into Rome and Greece, and above all into the Bible; and from such roots, far more than most writers, he drew his chief nourishment. He himself puts the case clearly:

> [I began to feel] 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 ... [this is] a work not to be rays'd from the heat of youth . . . but by devout prayer to that eternall Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge ... to this must be added industrious and select reading, steddy observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affaires, till which in some measure be compost, at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loath to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them. *(R. Ch. Gov.,* Ill, 236-241)

Henry Parker, *The Contra-Replicant,* and William Beech, *More Sulphure for Basing.* For Milton's similes of twins, see Chapter 2, note 59.

[368] On a huge hill,
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will
Reach her, about must and about must go,
And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so. *Satire III,* 79-82.

[369] Allegorical pictures of skeletons were very familiar in books like Quarles's *Emblems,* where (Book V, No. viii) Milton may have seen such a figure with a pendant poem morbidly preaching chastity" (Hughes, *Milton The Minor Poems,* p. 248).

Milton came within measurable distance of making himself master of the learning of his time. Yet this learning was not a weight but an enrichment. Reading gave him a knowledge of the past that led to an intelligent observation of the present; his devout religious spirit ripened his observation and quickened it into an insight into that eternal realm where past and present are one.

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