

Miltoni Inven.:
The 1688 *Paradise Lost* and Miltonic Aesthetic Philosophies

by
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Abstract

In 1688, Jacob Tonson published what can be considered the first commentary on John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*. Unlike Peter Hume's first annotated edition, which would come out seven years later, the first commentary on *Paradise Lost* was illustrative. Twelve frontispieces, one preceding each of the twelve books of the poem, provided cultural, political, and aesthetic discourse complimentary to the written originals. The illustrated book had become a lucrative success in the 1680s, and one wonders if Milton, had he survived to see this edition, would have considered its aesthetic topos comparable to his own. When we examine Milton's aesthetic philosophies throughout his prose career, we witness as Milton's vehement criticisms relating to the visual representation of Christian subjects before his blindness metamorphose into his gradual appreciation of the visual in the analogy of Christ as image of God. Inherent to the discussions of the relationship between Milton's ideals and the pragmatic applications thereof are discussions of the progenators of the 1688 edition: its conceptual designers, its artists, and its subscribers. This paper will then attempt to define more exhaustively the sources from which the 1688 illustrations originated, and thus we will explore the semantic applications therein. Finally, this examination will illuminate Milton's aesthetic discourse throughout his career with a careful textual investigation of his prose tracts and his *Paradise Lost*. A Milton, post-*De Doctrina Christiana*, would have not only appreciated his *Paradise Lost* represented in the visual arts, but he might have considered these particular representations as fluid with his theological and aesthetic philosophies.

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Short Titles

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DPPA: Milton, John. *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano*. In *the Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971.

DS: Milton, John. *Defensio Secunda*. In *the Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971.

EIK: Milton, John. *Eikonoklastes*. In *the Works of John Milton*. Volume V. New York: Columbia University Press, 1932.

GUST: McColley, Diane Kelsey. *A Gust for Paradise: Milton's Eden and the Visual Arts*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1993.

OE: Milton, John. *On Education*. In *the Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971.

OR: Milton, John. *Of Reformation*. In *the Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971.

PL: Milton, John. "Paradise Lost." In *the Riverside Milton*. Edited by Roy Flannagan. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

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Introduction

...thyasusque sacer

Orbi notus per immensos

Temporum lapsus reduente caelo

Celeberque futurus in aevum;

-John Milton, *Ad Johannem Rousium*

Me tabula sacer

Votiva paries indicat uvida

Suspendisse potenti

Vestimenta maris Deo.

-Horace, *Liber I, Ode V*

John Milton detested icon. There can be no doubt about this: he viciously berated those who purported to appear iconic in the eyes of the people, and he detested the pitiful masses who could not see beyond the shimmering and tantalizing opulence of superficial appearance. Not that Milton wasn't handsome in his life, for anyone looking to psychoanalyze the self-ordained defender of the Christian Faith; he was said to have been good looking in his youth. Milton insisted upon more, delving into theological and philosophical caves only to discover that his own blindness had gotten the best of him.

I ask the reader to consider a Milton, aged eighty, sitting in a chair with the fresh scent of a new book in his hands permeating his nostrils. One of his angels descends with a salve to awaken his slumbering eyesight so that he might see the

first illustrations ever published for his prized *Paradise Lost*. What would you see? Notwithstanding the ridiculous vision that the generous reader has conjured, the look on Milton's face would shed light on a phenomenon that would continue for hundreds of years after his death: the book illustration of his *Paradise Lost*. Would Milton have liked to have seen Satan, his greatest verbal achievement, towering above his fallen angels in the frontispiece for Book I? This investigation of the intertextual relationship between the first printed illustrations of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1688) will propose to answer such a question by assessing the frontispieces in relation to Miltonic aesthetic philosophies. For even though Milton detested icon, slandered those who would use it for any purpose other than spiritual devotion, he came to appreciate the visual arts for their aesthetic functions within theological bounds. Milton did not always deem the visual arts inferior to the written arts, even as he preferred scripture to devotional icons throughout most of his life. In order to understand the Miltonic philosophy of text/image relationships, the careful student must examine Milton's iconoclastic arguments within political and theological contexts; then the aesthetic relationship of the word to the image in Miltonic terms can be deduced. Upon this ordering of thought, separation of firmament from waters, we discover that Milton, after he has pondered the relationship of image and word for nearly two decades, arrives at the concept that the visual arts (*pictura*) and the written arts (*poesis*) are separate, but equal merit in their roles of constructing a human manifestation of God. The 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*, with its blend of secular and religious iconography and semantics, is the best available model for the

pragmatic application of Milton's aesthetic and religious philosophies because was created in political and theological contexts similar to those in which Milton authored his grand epic. Furthermore, the 1688 illustrations constitute the first published commentary on Milton's epic poem, seven years before Hume's edition would supply glosses to the text.

Political upheavals of the seventeenth century in England pervaded turbulent historical times. Milton's poetry and prose tracts testify to the widespread effects of political, theological, and civil unrest, wherein the incidents of repressed creative arts --the closings of the theaters, the censorship of books and political statements, the mass cultural destruction of devotional icons-- were legion. And the polemics took their toll upon the culture of illustrated books; until the seventeenth century, the majority of the illustrated books with "plates of some distinction [had been] books of travel, topography, architecture, portraiture, and natural history -- often, essentially, bound collections of prints."¹ Despite circumstances of censorship and economic adversity, well-illustrated editions "of English literature and translations of the classics" and emblem books became highly popular forms of consumer culture. In the seventeenth century, the illustrated book, in its affluence, would not only react to the political environment but participate in shaping it. The debacle over the regicide of Charles I would culminate in the posthumous disputation of *Eikon Basilike* and its famed anonymously-written antagonists *Eikon Althine*, *Eikon e Piste*, and Milton's own *Eikonoklastes*. Somehow, the literary and social circles of

¹ Edward Hodnett, *Five Centuries of English Illustration* (Aldershot: Scolar Press,

seventeenth-century England were receptive to a political battleground located in books, and the propagandistic device which represented for Milton and others the weapon of mass disillusionment of the people was an engraving, namely William Marshall's illustration of the King in prayer. *Eikon Basilike* had gone through thirty-five London editions in the year following its original publication, and even if the masses could not necessarily understand all the written words, they would have been able to understand the illustration.²

This fact and others point to the conclusion that the illustrated book was becoming a force of commercial, social, and political consequence. Publishers began to believe "that certain kinds of information are more quickly transmitted, more precisely understood, and better remembered if given with pictures rather than solely in words."³ It would seem inevitable that Milton, sensitive to any tremor in the geography of aesthetics, would have reacted to this amalgamation of the sister arts in one. Although Milton provided some discussion of the relationship between text and image both in the confines of the illustrated book and in the larger contexts of aesthetic studies in general, scholars have not yet ventured a comprehensive survey of Milton's aesthetic philosophies regarding the sister arts *pictura* and *poesis*. Diane McColley establishes the background context for Miltonic aesthetics:

1988), 45. Hereafter cited in the text as "Hodnett."

² Steven Zwicker, "The King's Head and the Politics of Literary Property: The *Eikon Basilike* and *Eikonoklastes*" in *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture 1649-1689* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 37.

³ Philip Hofer, *Baroque Book Illustration: A Short Survey From the Collection in the Department of Graphic Arts Harvard College Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 6.

The Edwardian Injunctions prohibited icon-worship but permitted images as aids to remembering the Scriptures. Although in Renaissance aesthetics “pictura and poesis were companionable sisters in the service of the poet’s art,” for zealous reformers not only images in the church but “the very imagining power of the mind was tainted by the pride and sensuality of fallen humanity and open to the perils of worship misdirected from the Creator to the creation.” Both in churches and in minds, “the word was the bulwark of the spirit against the carnal enticements of the image.”⁴

McColley’s historical narrative indirectly links aesthetics and religious practice, which is not so much a surprise when we consider the myriad of illustrated Bibles and Christian allegorical paintings of the seventeenth century in England. For many Protestant artists, illustrations of God the Father metamorphosed from humanoid representations to forms of the “Christ-Logos” or “the Tetragrammaton.”⁵ Certainly, Milton was acutely aware of the social practices of representing God the Father as an image; his *Eikonoklastes* and *De Doctrina Christiana* are littered with critiques of such approaches to devotion.

Along with Diane McColley, the only other literary critic to assess Milton’s philosophies of text/image relationship is Jean Hagstrum. In *The Sister Arts*, he remarks that “for Milton, as for Dante but not for poets standing in the central

⁴ Diane McColley, *Gust for Paradise* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 19. Hereafter cited in the text with the short title “GUST.”

⁵ GUST, 22.

tradition of antiquity and the Renaissance, the pictorial was the gate that opened not primarily upon the visible nature but upon transcendent and invisible reality.”⁶ Hagstrum argues that certain images from Milton’s poetry could have relationships with Italian art that the blossoming poet may have seen on his voyage to Italy of 1639.⁷ Assessing Miltonic poetics, Hagstrum declares that “the iconic and pictorialist conventions do appear, but they are soon absorbed in the intellectual conceits, musical resonances, or sublime epic movements.” He compares Milton to “the medieval philosopher or poet” and contends that “[Milton] has a conception of outer form as an expression of spirit - a form that sin can mar and ultimately destroy.”⁸ McColley modifies Hagstrum’s conclusion about Milton’s relationship with the pictorial and provides us with modifications of Hagstrum’s genre-related conclusions:

I agree with Hagstrum’s distinction between the “classic pictorialism” of antiquity and the Renaissance and the “sacramental pictorialism” of the Middle Ages revived by Milton and baroque art, but I would stress that visible and transcendent reality are numinously locked together in both Milton and the medieval and Reformation art to which his work is most comparable.⁹

These two critics have laid the groundwork for understanding Miltonic pictorial

⁶ Jean Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 128. Hereafter cited in the text with the prefix “SA.”

⁷SA, 124.

⁸SA, 127-8.

theory. Their commentary establishes a base from which we must construct our own ladder of Jacob to reach Milton's aesthetic acumen. And as the threads of historical narrative are sewn together, we must attempt to unravel them again for the purpose of understanding Milton's philosophies as they changed over time.

⁹ GUST, 65.

History of the 1688 *Paradise Lost*

The 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost* stands as the first “popular” edition of Milton’s epic poem. Certainly, the list of over 500 subscribers in the back of the book includes individuals who would figure prominently in the study and creation of both this particular edition and seventeenth-century aesthetics; listed among Bishops, Lords, and other important aristocrats are the names “John Dryden, Esq., Thomas Hobbs, Esq., Mr. Peter Hume, Dr. Henry Aldrich, Mr. Francis Atterbury, Mr. Brabyzon Aylmer, Mr. Richard Bainbridge, Mr. Michael Burghers, Mr. Thomas Creech, Mr. Medina,” and “The Honorable Sir Robert Howard.”¹⁰ *Paradise Lost* had been originally distributed in its ten-book form in 1667 by the publisher Samuel Simmons. According to a letter of 31 February 1731, from Jacob Tonson to nephew Jacob Jr., Milton may have chosen Simmons to publish his *Paradise Lost* because Simmons lived “pretty near him” and Milton “did not [en]trust wholly [his *Paradise Lost*] to the Printer.”¹¹ It follows that Milton was able to oversee the publication and sale of his epic poem. In 1671, Milton revised this text and created the twelve-book Virgilian form commonly used in most contemporary editions. Simmons sold the copyright to Brabazon Aylmer, who in turn sold half the copyright to a young Jacob Tonson for twenty-five pounds on 17 April 1683. Aylmer supposedly sold the other half on 24 March 1690.¹² While Aylmer did not print *Paradise Lost* during his

¹⁰PL, last 4 unnumbered pages of the 1688 Edition.

¹¹G.F. Papali, *Jacob Tonson, Publisher: His Life and Work (1656-1736)*, (Auckland, 1968), 87.

¹²William Roberts, *The Earlier History of English Bookselling* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1889), 166. Hereafter cited in the text as

tenure as owner, Simmons published three editions of 1300 copies each which “did not receive proper typographical attention” until the folio edition of 1688.

Tonson and Bentley chose to print important works by John Dryden and others before moving to construct a luxurious edition of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, which like the anti-royalist poet’s other works was “still looked upon with hostility or indifference by a large part of the reading public,” for “the reaction of the Restoration years had not entirely passed away.”¹³ According to his biographer, John Somers “urged Jacob Tonson to bring out the Folio edition of ‘Paradise Lost’ in 1688” and “deserves the principal credit for promoting the undertaking.”¹⁴ Tonson’s second edition boasts that “[Somers’] opinion and encouragement occasioned the first appearance of Milton, in the folio edition.”¹⁵ Whether this statement is true, or whether Tonson only commented thus in order to placate a newly designated lord chancellor under William and Mary, is open to conjecture.¹⁶ Certainly, Tonson --ever so practical-- was looking to make a significant profit from his illustrated *Paradise Lost*, and two previous illustrated “classics” had been financial successes; the fifth imprint of John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1680) included thirteen “simple, unskilled” copper plates and became a profitable

“Roberts.” There are some discrepancies concerning the sale of the copyright of *Paradise Lost* among differing literary historians. I choose Roberts’ version due to his depth of investigation into the actual terms of sale.

¹³ Roberts, 166.

¹⁴ Henry Maddock, *Account of the Life and Writing of Lord Chancellor Somers*. (London, 1812), 198.

¹⁵ John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London, 1695), fourth folio leaf.

¹⁶ In a conversation on the evening of 23 October 1999 at the Conference on John Milton in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, John T. Shawcross contested Somers’

enterprise for publisher Nathaniel Ponder.¹⁷ Possibly more influential for Tonson was the illustrated *Don Quixote* (1687) with its sixteen “amusing illustrations.”¹⁸

Tonson turned his eyes to the flourishing printing program at Oxford and, specifically, to Christ Church College. There a young scholar Francis Atterbury, future Dean of Christ Church and recent recipient of his Master’s degree, became involved in the 1688 Edition, possibly as a consequence of his relationship with Dr. Henry Aldrich. Mary Ravenhall, in her extremely informative “Francis Atterbury and the First Illustrated Edition of *Paradise Lost*,” argues that Atterbury not only suggested to Tonson that he publish a lavish illustrated *Paradise Lost* but that he act as the intellectual “translator” for the artists Bernard Lens and John Baptiste de Medina. While it is uncontested that Atterbury was mostly responsible for the sale of subscription of the edition, I shall argue later that Atterbury was probably less involved in the conception of the edition than was Dr. Aldrich.¹⁹

Once Tonson and Bentley had decided to publish the epic, it is more probable that they sought Dr. Henry Aldrich, subdean of Christ Church at Oxford, to oversee the conception of the edition. Aldrich, who had been active as the principal figure in the publication of the *Oxford Almanacks* since 1676 and who had been responsible for publication at Oxford University, undertook co-designing and acting as intellectual superintendent for the twelve engraved frontispieces of the

involvement as the principal promoter for the 1688 edition.

¹⁷ Hodnett, 49.

¹⁸ Hodnett, 50.

¹⁹ Mary D. Ravenhall, “Francis Atterbury and the First Illustrated Edition of *Paradise Lost*,” in *Milton Quarterly* 16 (1982), 29-35. Hereafter cited in the text as

1688 edition. With Aldrich at its helm, “Oxford book illustration with its greater depth of tone, became more forceful, more dogmatic, and a vast improvement on a weak etching of the Loggan period.”²⁰ According to personal accounts, Aldrich was “a man of exemplary piety, who received the sacrament every week and throughout the year rose at five o’clock for his prayers” and “a most universal scholar.” He was, according to E.G.W. Bill, a “sound theologian” who was “well versed in Anglican doctrine.”²¹ Even though Aldrich was a High Church Tory, he and student Francis Atterbury worked together to oppose the Catholic agenda of James II, newly ascended to the throne.²² W.G. Hiscock maintains that Aldrich dealt silently with the complexities of church and court politics in 1687 through the choice of a “non-political stage” in his illustration for the 1687 *Oxford Almanack*.²³ However, Aldrich presented his political and religious views in *A Reply to Two Discourses Lately Printed at Oxford Concerning the Adoration of Our Blessed Savior in the Holy Eucharist* in 1687, a text that locates Aldrich within the discussions of Eucharistic substantiation, a subject Milton had tackled in his unpublished *De Doctrina Christiana* two decades earlier. For if Aldrich was to interpret Milton’s epic through visual illustrations, then we should understand exactly what doctrine Aldrich practiced.

Aldrich’s argument superficially considers liturgical conduct, but its

“Ravenhall.”

²⁰W.G. Hiscock, *Henry Aldrich of Christ Church 1648-1710* (Oxford: Holywell Press, 1960), 12. Hereafter cited in the text as “Hiscock.”

²¹E.G.W. Bill, *Education at Christ Church Oxford 1660-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 37-8.

²²Ravenhall, 30.

²³Hiscock, 9.

theological philosophies reveal a discussion of the visual versus the spiritual.

Among the theological musings of Aldrich's *Reply* is the subject of the adoration of the image, especially the ways in which the understanding of the Eucharist as the "corporeal" representation of Christ functions as "Idolatry." Aldrich, in his *Reply* to pamphlets recently printed in Oxford, asserts that the adoration of the Eucharist is a form of idolatry:

That as the Church ever heald a real, so she ever deny'd a corporeal
i.e. local preference; and for that reason forbid the adoration of the
Symbols. For, to say no more at present, the same arguments that will
justifie our adoring them upon the score of any, but a local presence
of Christ's natural body, will excuse not only Popish, but even the
grossest Heathen Idolatry.²⁴

Aldrich asserts the doctrine "of the Church of England" concerning the Eucharist: "That the Clergy do profess and teach, that the natural body and blood of Christ, are not corporeally i.e. locally present in the Eucharist." Furthermore, the "Presence of Christs body in Sacrament" is "indeed real but spirituall, and therefore the Elements are not to be ador'd...."²⁵ Certainly, Aldrich did not condone the adoration of physical "Elements" that relate to the church in the Communal practices. Supporting these and other arguments is "natural reason" which "by Scripture can further discover that the Doctrine of the Trinity is true, and

²⁴Henry Aldrich, *A Reply to Two Discourses Lately Printed at Oxford Concerning the Adoration of Our Blessed Savior in the Holy Eucharist* (Oxford, 1687), 3. Hereafter cited in the text as "Aldrich."

Transubstantiation utterly false.”²⁶

De Doctrina Christiana is the culmination of decades of theological study for Milton. It provides his most comprehensive arguments of theology, and this study shall use it as a cornerstone marker for Miltonic aesthetic and theological philosophies. Written at the same time he was writing his *Paradise Lost*, *De Doctrina Christiana* is most probably the most useful contextual piece for understanding the aesthetic bases for Milton’s grand epic. Milton discusses the Eucharist in Book II, Chapter IV of *De Doctrina Christiana*. Milton’s philosophies concerning the adoration of “external forms” agree with those of Aldrich: “Also opposed to true religion is hypocritical worship, where the external forms are duly observed, but without any internal or spiritual involvement.”²⁷ His approach to transubstantiation corresponds to that of Aldrich as well:

Consubstantiation and particularly transubstantiation and papal
 ἀνθρωποφαγία or cannibalism are utterly alien to reason,
 common sense, and human behavior. What is more, they are
 irreconcilable with sacred doctrine, with the nature and the fruit of the
 sacrament, with the analogy of baptism, with the normal use of words,
 with the human nature of Christ and with the heavenly state of glory
 in which he is to remain until the day of judgment.

²⁵Aldrich, 10.

²⁶Aldrich, 22.

²⁷John Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana*, in *the Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971), 667. Cited hereafter in the following paragraphs. Hereafter cited with the short

Milton considers the consumption of the physical, or the corporeal, body of Christ as absurd: “Whereas if we eat his flesh it will not remain in us, but, to speak candidly, after being digested in the stomach, it will be at length exuded.”²⁸ But rather than argue just the details of the sacraments, Milton’s theology discounts their indispensability for salvation because “many have achieved salvation without them” such as “women without circumcision” and “the crucified thief without baptism.”²⁹

While Milton’s and Aldrich’s views concerning the Eucharist fall along similar lines, and their beliefs that the eating of the flesh is a spiritual consumption coincide, Aldrich’s *Reply* does not challenge the doctrine of the English Church with as much implicit critique as Milton’s *De Doctrina Christiana*. Milton’s antitrinitarian stance borders on heretical in the mid-to-late seventeenth-century and, had *De Doctrina Christiana* been printed, Milton could have found himself yet again approaching the gallows.³⁰ And even though Aldrich’s *Reply* defends *status quo* Anglican doctrine of the 1680s against the influence of the Church of Rome, it does not silently ignore the theological disagreements that permeated James’ court and the Church of England in 1687. His views on the “adoration” of the physical corpus of Christ in the Eucharist must be considered in light of the publication of the 1688 *Paradise Lost*, which he would in a few months organize, illustrate, and distribute

title “DDC.”

²⁸DDC, 554.

²⁹DDC, 556.

³⁰See DDC Bk. I, Ch. 5-6 for a full commentary on the Trinity.

amid tumult in the court and Church of England.³¹

Aldrich would most probably have overseen the choice of passages and the materials of pictorial reference for the 1688 Edition. Two, possibly three other artists were called upon for the designs of the twelve frontispieces of the edition, and at least two engravers set the designs to copper plates. Flemish-born John Baptiste de Medina undoubtedly illustrated Plates III (Fig. 1) and V-XI (Figs. 2-8), as the original drawings exist in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.³² Bernard Lens delineated the Plate for Book IV (Fig. 9), and it has been argued convincingly that Canon Aldrich was at least partly responsible for the Plates of Books I, II, and XII (Figs. 10-12). No original drawings for Books I, II, or XII exist. I will contend, with reference to sourcing in the *Oxford Almanacks*, that engraver Michael Burghers should also be considered partly responsible for the delineation of these three Plates.

Rosalind Marshall has suggested that Bernard Lens, also of Flemish origin, was the second artist commissioned by Tonson to illustrate Book IV of *Paradise Lost*, and that “when his involvement in the project for some reason ceased with eight of the drawings not yet done, the work was passed on to his young compatriot,” a twenty-nine year-old John Baptiste de Medina. Implicit in Marshall’s comment is the proposal that someone, presumably Aldrich, had already completed

³¹Ravenhall sites an advertisement for this edition in the *London Gazette*, No. 2300, December 1-5, 1687 as proof that the book was ready for publication before 1688. See Ravenhall, 33.

³²See Suzanne Boorsch, “The 1688 *Paradise Lost* and Dr. Aldrich.” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 6 (1972) for a discussion of the original Medina drawings.

the illustrations to the other three plates, for Books I, II, and XII. Very little is known about Lens other than his involvement in this edition. But when Tonson published his fourth illustrated edition (1705), he assigned Heinrich Eland the task of copying all the original plates except for that of Book IV. J. Gweree sketched a “bower scene as a single-incident design that resembles those by Medina” to replace the busy Lens illustration.³³

John Baptiste de Medina, the illustrator of eight of the plates *for Paradise Lost*, grew up in Brussels and “had a gift for drawing.”³⁴ He studied at a young age with the Flemish portraitist Francois Duchatel, and in 1686 he traveled to London where, under the patronage of the Earl of Leven, he moved to Scotland in 1688.³⁵ Little more is known about Medina’s early professional career, and he may not have been capable of reading Milton’s *Paradise Lost* in English; it had not yet been translated into any language other than German.³⁶ Ravenhall has argued that Medina received help from the younger Francis Atterbury, rather than from John Somers or Henry Aldrich, in the composition and selection of scenes for the frontispieces. She maintains that “Aldrich’s compositions are all heavily dependent on the work of other artists, while the compositions used by Medina have no easily identifiable visual sources, with the exception of Book VII.”³⁷ In actuality, Medina’s illustrations at the very least owe their compositional layout to books and engravings

³³ Hodnett, 64.

³⁴ Rosalind K. Marshall, *John De Medina*, in *Scottish Masters Vol. 7* (Scottish Post Office Board, 1988), 2. Hereafter cited in the text as “Marshall.”

³⁵ Marshall, 5-6. Ravenhall, 33.

³⁶ Ravenhall, 33.

that were in Aldrich's possession, a fact Ravenhall overlooked. I will argue that Aldrich probably helped to select the episodes of illustration.

But it was Michael Burghers who may be responsible for the physical creation of the 1688 Edition more than any other single figure. Burghers is to be credited with engraving both Aldrich's and Medina's designs. He is listed as having sculpted the copper plates for Books I-III, V-VII, and IX-XII. P.P. Bouche engraved Bernard Lens's illustration for Book IV, further suggesting the lack of relationship between Aldrich's Oxford Publishing (which relied mostly on sculpting from Burghers) and the illustration for Book IV. Judging from the style of engraving, we can almost surely attribute the sculpting of Book VIII to Burghers as well.

Burghers' work constituted a large part of Oxford's sculpting, especially under Aldrich. Born in 1652 in Amsterdam, Burghers worked as a journeyman under Oxford University engraver David Loggan in his youth. When Loggan died, engraver Robert White took over the job of engraving the 1674 *Oxford Almanack*, which "could have hardly been popular" at its height of over three feet.³⁸ John Fell, then Dean of Christ Church College at Oxford, asked Burghers to submit two drawings for the 1675 *Almanack*; whether it was due to Burghers' immature illustrations or to the expensive nature of printing so large an *Almanack* with four copper plates, no 1675 *Oxford Almanack* exists.³⁹ Burghers would then engrave all

³⁷Ravenhall, 34.

³⁸Hiscock, 8.

³⁹Hiscock, 8. Helen Petter, *The Oxford Almanacks* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974),

the *Oxford Almanacks* from 1676 to 1719, and he was at least responsible for illustrating the almanacks from 1706-1719; he may have also designed the plate for the 1688 *Oxford Almanack*, especially important to this discussion for its formal similarity to Plate II of the 1688 *Paradise Lost*.⁴⁰ Burghers and Dr. Henry Aldrich would form an artistic bond that would last until Aldrich's death in 1710, and can scarcely be ignored in discussions of the 1688 *Paradise Lost*. It is precisely the nature of that bond which has not been examined thoroughly enough in previous scholarship.

3. Hereafter cited in the text as "Petter."

Sources and Meanings of the Illustrations

The 1688 Edition of *Paradise Lost* possesses twelve frontispieces, one for each book of the epic. The seventeenth century was a period of intense interest in the illustrated book, and Renaissance aesthetics of intertextuality -- incorporation, allusion, and commentary -- compelled artists to look at previous sources for their own creations. Originality was not necessarily a positive attribute of an artist, especially an illustrator of books. Diane McColley asserts that two forms were readily available to poets (and thus to visual artists as well) in the forms of "church decoration and other public monuments (prints of which may have come to poets who did not travel to them) and numerous engravings, especially book and Bible illustrations but also separate prints or series."⁴¹ The histories of the twelve frontispieces for the 1688 *Paradise Lost* are intertwined with the sources that constitute their thematic, stylistic, and formal characteristics.

John T. Shawcross points us in the general direction of assessing the content, sourcing, and context of the twelve frontispieces. Building upon Helen Gardner's work on this very topic in the 1950s, Shawcross asserts the general program for Medina's eight illustrations: "A more accurate description of Medina's work in the illustrations that bear his name is that he attempts to epitomize the narrative sense of the whole book by focus on major events, by suggestion of their significance, and by iconographic detail."⁴² Ravenhall claims that the Medina illustrations "have no

⁴⁰Petter, 9, 35.

⁴¹GUST, 26.

⁴²John T. Shawcross, "The First Illustrations of *Paradise Lost*," in *Milton Quarterly* 9

easily identifiable visual sources, with the exception of that for Book VII," and that Medina "placed a major scene in the foreground, but left sufficient room for amplification by the inclusion of additional incidents."⁴³ In fact, Medina's style should be considered a medieval style of book illustration, especially related to the illustration of *Genesis* in the illustrated book of the tenth through twelfth centuries. The eclecticism of Renaissance England, with its interest in the amalgamation of past styles of both continental and English artistic expression, brought forth the next generation of multi-scene book illustration, best exemplified by George Sandys' *Ovid's Metamorphoses Englished by G.S.*, a book which Henry Aldrich owned and undoubtedly consulted for the figure of Sin in the illustration for Book II.⁴⁴ Identifying the specific sources for Medina's work has not been an easy task for Milton scholars in general. While his work is not as directly referential as the Plates for Books I, II, and XII, his forms often resemble works of Italian Renaissance painters, and the belief that Medina does not have any "easily identifiable sources" promotes a misunderstanding of Medina's illustrations and the scope of their meanings.⁴⁵

The illustration for Book VII (fig. 7), labeled "Medina delin." rather than the

(1975), 45. Hereafter cited in the text as "Shawcross."

⁴³Ravenhall, 34.

⁴⁴See Mary D. Ravenhall, "Sources and Meaning in Dr. Aldrich's 1688 Illustrations of *Paradise Lost*," in *English Language Notes* 19 (1982), 215. Hereafter cited in the text as "Ravenhall (ELN)."

⁴⁵Ravenhall asserts that this distinction is one reason that Aldrich could not have been overseeing the process of illustration: "The compositions of Books I, II, and XII are all heavily dependent on the work of other artists, while the compositions of Medina have no easily identifiable sources, with the exception of that for Book VII."

more common “inven.,” contains four roundels spreading across the top of the illustration. The four roundels are illustrations of Genesis from one of the collections of Raphael’s engravings of the creation of the world called by different names, among them *La Sacra Genesi* (in a 1626 collection by Francesco Villamena). Medina has based his roundels on four engravings from this or a similar collection: *Confusam corporeum molem Deus ex nibilio* (fig.13); *Aquae fines constituit ac terrae educendarum stirpium vim invertit* (fig.15); *Solem, ac Lunam in caelo procreat* (fig.14), and *Brutas cuius generis animantes creat* (fig.16). In the Villamena engravings of the 1626 collection, a figure clothed in a toga, presumably “Deus,” opens the clouds to reveal light, creates the sun and the moon, and separates the firmament from the waters. Medina’s four roundels use these engravings as their literal sources, and it is in keeping with the creation story of Book VII that we see Raphael’s creation. The original drawing of Book VII, which exists in the Victoria and Albert Museum, shows almost exact copies of these four engravings. But Burghers, the engraver for the Medina illustrations, has added wings to the “Deus” character and completely replaced any Roman “Deus” with a caring angel in the fourth roundel, implying that the angels, not God, were responsible for the physical creation of light, the moon, sun, and animals, and the separation of the firmament. Why would Burghers modify the roundels in his engraving to give angels the role of God? Certainly, it is possible that Aldrich, who was closely connected to his engraving partner from 1676 until his death, decided that a change was necessary to

illustrate the text more closely. The biblical story does not mention the presence of angels, but Milton's creation story relates how "numberless / Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones, / and Vertues, and winged Spirits, and Chariots wing'd" accompanied The Son in these acts of creation.⁴⁶ These same angels sang each day in praise of the creation.⁴⁷ Still, Milton relates that God the Father's "Word" carries out His orders.⁴⁸ And although we cannot be sure why Burghers changed the illustration, surely he had a specific reason for adding angel wings to the "Deus" figure of Raphael's creation sequence.⁴⁹ It is possible that considering the breaches of social mores in literally illustrating the bodily form of God the Father, Burghers chose to modify the figures into angels in order to pacify zealous iconoclasts.

Medina further draws the form of Eve in the frontispiece for Book V (Fig. 5) from another engraving after Raphael from this same set of the creation. The frontal register of Medina's illustration shows Adam and Eve presumably singing their morning hymn to God (5.153-208). Eve sits with her arms crossed and Adam attends, in the process of genuflecting. The scene looks remarkably similar to the engraving after Raphael of the presentation of Eve to Adam labeled *Hominem*

⁴⁶PL, 7.197-200.

⁴⁷See PL, 7.257, 274.

⁴⁸PL 7.216-217. "Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou Deep, peace, / Said then th' Omnific Word, your discord end." The "Word" takes its physical form in The Son in *Paradise Lost*, originating in John I.14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...."

⁴⁹Burghers notably changed two other areas of Medina's original watercolor illustrations. In Book IX (Fig. 6), the form of the standing snake from Medina's original has been altered from a straight stick-like form to that of a coiling form. Similarly, in the illustration for Book VI (Fig. 3), Burghers has removed a book (presumably the *Bible*, a symbol for the "Word" which is the Son) from the front of

procreat; mulierem ex Adami costa educit (fig. 17). In both engravings, Eve sits with her arms crossed and Adam attends, looking down. A close examination of their faces reveals the similarity in Eve's hair and facial structure in both the Raphael original and Medina's illustration. Even more striking is the face of Adam, which in the two engravings creates mirror reflection with same angle and facial features, including hair length. Medina was almost certainly looking at this engraving when he drew the illustration of Book V, an engraving that he would have found in Aldrich's collection.

Certainly, the set of engravings that was source material for the frontispieces of Books V and VII is the same set that was used for his illustration of Book XII (Fig. 12). Aldrich undoubtedly owned an engraved copy of Raphael's expulsion scene that is part of this set of creation illustrations. In the Chapron engraving, Adam and Eve are led down a staircase and out into the world by an angel. Aldrich's drawing for Book XII does not exist, possibly burned with all of Aldrich's papers at his death. The engraving, however, does depart in significant ways from its source. The angel's sword has become curved, snakelike, and Aldrich (or Burghers) has placed discreet leaves over the genitals of Adam and Eve, much like the leaves that were posthumously painted over Masaccio's *Expulsion from Paradise* in the Brancacci Chapel, Florence, undeniably the source for Raphael's *Expulsion*. But why would Aldrich (or Burghers) cover the two forsaken first parents with leaves unless the knowledge of the Masaccio's existence, or a copy thereof, prompted it? Is

it possible that Aldrich or Burghers possessed enough knowledge of Renaissance Italian art to mirror the earlier Masaccio? When Italian artists covered Masaccio's Adam and Eve with leaves, it was part of an attempt at censorship for the purposes of deferring embarrassment to the church. Could this be a sublime critique of James II's regime along the same lines as Aldrich's *Reply*?

There is little evidence that Medina knew specifically about Italian art outside of the collection that Aldrich possessed. It is true that Aldrich's style is much more derivative than is Medina's, but it is a misconception to argue that Medina did not consider earlier sources for the form and construction of his drawings. In the illustration for Book III, Medina's general program of Satan standing upon the earth addressing the Son and attendant angels is, most probably, taken from an engraving of Annibale Carracci's *Pan and Diana (Luna)* (fig. 18), where Pan receives the descending Diana (Luna) in a similar form along diagonals. Note specifically the upper torso areas of both Pan and Satan, which are comparable, where Satan and Pan both hold their arms forth. I am not sure, at present, whether or not Aldrich owned an engraving after Carracci of *Pan and Diana (Luna)*; Aldrich owned many Carracci prints, such as genre portraits of the working classes.⁵⁰ In the Carracci original, Pan encounters Luna, in the guise of Diana. Pan holds aloft the wool of the goat, with reeds upon the tree in the form of

⁵⁰In August of 1999, I visited the Christ Church Picture gallery in Oxford, where Dr. Christopher Baker allowed me to view a tiny portion of Aldrich's collection. In this collection was a book of engravings after Carracci of street peddlers, entertainers, *et cetera*. The collection is now undergoing measures of conservation, and as a consequence I was not able to see much of it.

pipes. In the story of Pan and Luna from Virgil's *Eclogues*, Pan metamorphoses into a ram with beautiful white fleece in order to lure the Moon into his woods for wooing. The narrator reminds us of Pan's deceptive guise, for "the ram, however white be his fleece, if he have but a black tongue under his moist palate, cast out, lest with dusky spots he tarnish the coats of the newborn lambs."⁵¹ Pan's guise could lead Luna into temptation, and the narrator warns us that one should be wary of the Ram with the white fleece and black tongue, lest he tarnish the newborn lambs. Certainly, Medina (and Aldrich) might have thought this a perfect story to relate the Son and Satan, and the sourcing for this scene adds semantic meanings to the engraving and to the poem. We have seen earlier that Medina's use of older Italian sources in his art is not arbitrary; rather Medina calls upon the subject material of his sources and appropriates it to buttress the illustration's semantics. Medina has also allocated the theme of music from the Carracci, specifically music given by the godly figure, as the angels to the Son's left play their harps in Book III:

Then Crown'd again thir gold'n Harps they took,
 Harps ever tun'd, that glittering by thir side
 Like Quivers hung, and with Preamble sweet
 Of charming symphonie they introduce
 Thir sacred Song, and waken raptures high.⁵²

While the angels play their celestial song, Satan walks "upon the firm opacious

⁵¹ Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid 1-6*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), *Eclogues* III.387-390.

⁵²PL, 3.365-369.

Globe / Of this round World.”⁵³ Medina has literalized these sections in his illustration, and he has provided three further scenes of action in the illustration: The angel Uriel meets with Satan disguised as an angel of lower order; Satan watches Adam and Eve from afar; and seven stars fall underneath a reversed zodiac arc. Ravenhall concedes that Aldrich probably influenced the inclusion of the two astrological elements.⁵⁴ Shawcross provides an enlightened view of the deliberate appropriation of these astrological elements and a systematic analysis of their meanings.⁵⁵ One question remains from Shawcross’ elucidation: is the celestial figure who occupies much of the upper left register a figure of God or of the Son? The identification of this character as God is, I believe, a mistake. In the Raphaelesque figures in the roundels of Book VII, the figure of God has been replaced with angels. In addition, the gesture of the figure’s right hand is traditional for Christ displaying the stigmata; a close examination of the right hand yields the arguable presence of the nail mark. Moreover, the juxtaposition of this gesture to the cross suggests that the figure is indeed Christ.⁵⁶ Furthermore, no other figure of God appears in this illustrated book. It is possible that Medina, probably at the behest of the Anglican Adrich, illustrated the Son rather than the Father for theological reasons. The English Church in the latter half of the Century did not

⁵³PL 3.418-419.

⁵⁴Ravenhall, 34.

⁵⁵ See Shawcross, 45, where John T. Shawcross discusses the semantics of the deliberate disruption of the zodiac present in this illustration.

⁵⁶ My thanks to R. Ward Bissell whose commentary on a rough draft yielded these arguments concerning the traditional formal representation of Christ in Renaissance art.

readily accept literal illustrations of God, as scripture prohibited the visualization of God. The details about the commanding figure also follow more closely a description of the Son in Milton's text. First of all, the angels, and consequently we, can see the Son's countenance, while the angels cannot see the Father. Milton goes to pains to state that the Son is the visual representation of God's glory:

Beyond this compare the Son of God was seen
 Most glorious, in him all his Father shon
 Substantially express'd, and in his face
 Divine compassion visibly appeerd⁵⁷

The excess of visual lexicon here is contrasted with the lack of visual definition of the Father in the Angels' song, where the Father appears only as a shadow "invisible / Amidst the glorious brightness where [He] sit'st / Thron'd inaccessible."⁵⁸

Possibly, Medina's illustration of Book III more closely follows the text than has been considered to this point. Shawcross is correct to point out the importance of the extraneous elements of the illustrations, but we must also consider how closely this and other illustrations of the 1688 *Paradise Lost* echo the text as illustration, not just as improvisation.

The nature of the illustration of the war in Heaven from Book VI (Fig. 6) accounts for its relative popularity amongst Milton scholars and, especially, those who have written on the 1688 *Paradise Lost*. The illustration depicts the Son's vanquishing of the evil angels on the third day of the War in Heaven (6.824-892). In

⁵⁷PL 3.138-141.

the text, Christ comes forth riding upon his “fierce Chariot” wielding, in his right hand, “ten thousand Thunders, which he sent / Before him.”⁵⁹ Shawcross has considered the semantics of the iconography, and Michael Lieb has mapped out the balance of formal structures in relation to “counterbalance” theories.⁶⁰ Assessing the illustration in formal terms of balance and counterbalance, Lieb points out that these techniques are “in keeping with the sense of architectonics that pervades Milton’s poem.”⁶¹ A problematic feature of this argument is the question of the allegiance of the angel set to the right hand of the Son. As Lieb points out, various scholars have argued that the angels are either good, or bad, or that Medina fails in indicating their allegiance. In total, four separate groups of angels can be seen in the illustration for Book VI: the angels to the direct left and right of the Son (those who accompany Him), and the angels below and to the left and right of the Son. If Medina has been keeping to the text, the angels below and to the right hand of the Son (who are not apparently falling into perdition below) are good. The angels accompanying Him to the left and right, bearing banners, probably represent the “ten thousand Saints” who attend the Son in the text.⁶² Certainly the Son appears on day three of the battle in Heaven to speak to the alternate armies at each hand:

⁵⁸PL, 3.375-377.

⁵⁹ PL, 6. 829, 835-837.

⁶⁰Michael Lieb, “‘The Chariot of Paternal Deitie’: Some Visual Renderings” in *Milton’s Legacy in the Arts*, ed. Labriola and Sichi (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press), 21-58. Hereafter cited in the text as “Lieb.” See also Shawcross, 45.

⁶¹Lieb, 25.

⁶² PL, 6.767.

“when the great Son of God / To all his Host on either hand he thus spake.”⁶³ By mentioning His host “on either hand,” Milton refers to the idea that the Son himself is on the right hand side of the Father, and thus the allocation of celestial right and left is to be considered here as well. In the illustration, the angels who tumble into perdition are at the Son’s left and below. It follows, then, that the angels to His right and below are the good angels. Supporting this conclusion is the source from which this illustration may have come, namely Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment* (Fig. 19). In the Michelangelo, Jesus Christ comes forth with his right hand raised to cast down the sinners into Hell; undeniably, His pose is replicated in the illustration for Book VI. In addition, the figures to the immediate right and left are all good as well; to Christ’s immediate left, the figures of St. Peter, St. Bartholomew, and St. James the Less attend.⁶⁴ These good figures attend just as the accompanying angels bring forth the Son’s radiant glory in the illustration to Book VI. Medina has provided the Son with Roman military garb, echoing the text’s description of the Son as “all armd” in “Celestial Panoplie...Of radiant Urim.”⁶⁵ As we ponder the question of the allegiance of the good angels, it helps to consider that the forgiven sinners of Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment* are at Christ’s right hand and below; as we consider the illustration for Book VI to be a type of the Michelangelo, it naturally follows that the angels to the Son’s right and below are good. And many seventeenth-century viewers of a certain class or level of education, such as many of

⁶³PL, 6.800.

⁶⁴ This information was generously bestowed by R. Ward Bissell in commentary to an early draft.

the educated and elite who purchased the 1688 edition, would have both connected this illustration with the extremely famous Michelangelo and identified the angels to the right of the Son, underneath the *angus dei*, as good.

While we have been able to consider some of Medina's illustrations in light of their sources, the task is far from completed. His illustrations draw upon formal styles that mimic Carracci, Raphael, and Michelangelo. Medina probably found other models for mimetic design in other forms that he "invenit" in the 1688 *Paradise Lost*, as any young artist who had just concluded his training would have. It is truly unfortunate that Medina did not go on to illustrate books further; he is reputed to have done illustrations for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but these illustrations are presumed lost.⁶⁶ Medina moved to Scotland, however, and discovered success as that country's most famous portraitist at the turn of the century.

Medina's illustrations should not be considered without sourcing, contrary to what at least one critic has argued. Surely, it cannot be denied that the engravings for Books I, II, and XII are based almost completely on other sources, albeit a selection of sources that are less canonical or famous than those from which Medina's illustrations came. Suzanne Boorsch, John Shawcross, Mary Ravenhall, and Estelle Schoenberg, among others, have all agreed that Dr. Henry Aldrich illustrated and conceived of the engravings for Books I, II, and XII. Without any original drawings for the engravings, we will never be able to identify positively the illustrator or illustrators for these frontispieces. Each of the three engravings is

⁶⁵PL, 6.760-761.

listed as “MBurgesse Sculp.”, and thus we can be sure that Michael Burghers engraved the illustrations. I would like to put forward a new theory as to the conception of these illustrations: it is possible that Michael Burghers had much more to do with the illustrations than just sculpting them.

We have seen a few instances where Burghers has exercised artistic license to modify Medina’s drawings of the Books of *Paradise Lost*. There is very little evidence that Aldrich would have been the sole illustrator of these other three books.⁶⁷ Certainly, Aldrich’s illustrations for the *Oxford Almanacks* yield a vast knowledge of classical form and architecture. A comparison of *the Oxford Almanacks* and the illustrations for Books I, II, and XII reveals many instances of similarities.

Ravenhall and Boorsch have argued convincingly that the illustration for Book II is largely based on Mantegna’s *Descent into Limbo*, which exists in the Aldrich collection of engravings. Thematically, the placement of Satan at the doors of Hell is comparable and intriguing.⁶⁸ Estelle Schoenberg has argued that the form of Satan in Book II is based on a sculpture of James II, which Aldrich, in his High Church position, would have seen. Howard Hanley has noted the similarity in form of Satan and a male figure in *Death with an Arrow about to Strike a Man Down* by

⁶⁶Ravenhall, 33.

⁶⁷Hiscock writes: “No letters from [Aldrich] of any biographical interest survive. Hearnese says he ordered by his will that all letters and Papers of his own writing were to be burnt...Letters of any biographical interest to Aldrich are also non-existent.” Hiscock, 2.

⁶⁸See Ravenhall (ELN), 214 for a discussion of the relationship between the plate for Book II and the Mantegna engraving.

William van Swanenburg, after Maarten van Heemskerck(Fig. 20).⁶⁹ Plate II's Scylla is remarkably similar in pose and placement to Scylla in *Ovid's Metamorphoses English'd by G.S.*⁷⁰, owned by Aldrich. The figure of Death is undeniably taken from an engraving like van Heemskerck's *Death with an Arrow About to Strike a Man Down*. And while these scholars have all elucidated the many sources for the illustration to Book II, none have examined the relationship of the plate to the *Oxford Almanacks*, a specific source that must be considered contextually with the 1688 engravings to a further extent.

Estelle Schoenberg, Mary Ravenhall, Howard Hanley, and John T. Shawcross have all provided source material for Plate I, showing Satan rousing his fallen angels from the liquid fire. The figure of Satan most closely resembles a figure of Charon from another engraving by Maarten van Heemskerck, *Money is no avail on the Dying Hour*(Fig.21). Seen crossing the Styx, Charon stands commandant over the scene, barking orders to his skeletal demons. The construction of Pandemonium in Plate I lies behind Satan and is derived from Stefano della Bella's *Scena Quinta d' Inferno in Le Nozze degli dei* (1637). Francis Atterbury owned a copy of the playbook (Fig. 22).⁷¹ The foreground figures, burning angels castigated to doom in Hell, are probably the artist's own inventions, as the quality of perspective and shading is diminished. Curiously, no one yet has addressed the

⁶⁹Howard J.M. Hanley, "Satan, Sin and Death: A Source for Milton's First Illustrator, and for Hogarth," in *Apollo: The International Magazine of the Arts* (London: August 1998), 37.

⁷⁰Ravenhall (ELN), 215.

⁷¹Ravenhall (ELN), 213.

curvaceous bolts of lightning occupying the top register of the frontispiece. As we compare these lightning bolts, the remains of “[Christ’s] arrows” as “Glar’d lightning” from the War in Heaven,⁷² to Medina’s lightning bolts of Plate IX, we see discrepant styles. Medina’s lightning is stiff and linear in Plate IX, but the lightning for the illustration to Book I is loose and sinusoidal. In fact, it most resembles the lightning at the upper left-hand side of Michael Burghers’ drawing for the 1675 *Oxford Almanack* (Fig. 23). Certainly, it is possible that Burghers was once again exercising artistic license in his sculpting of the plate for Book I. The question, though, remains: how much?

The 1688 *Oxford Almanack* (Fig. 24), contemporaneous with the illustrations of *Paradise Lost*, contains a figure of Saturn holding a snake biting its tail, quite similar in pose to the figure of Death in Plate II. On both illustrations, the legs of the characters are positioned similarly, and it is certainly possible that these illustrations were conceived and created at similar times. Petter’s note that Burghers may have been the illustrator of the 1688 *Almanack* is not unrelated to the discussion at hand; as we are not in possession of any original illustrations for Plates I, II, and XII of *Paradise Lost*, attribution of authorship to these three plates is still contentious. If Burghers had invented the subject of the 1688 *Oxford Almanack*, and had he been responsible for the appropriation of scenes from Cartari’s *Le Imagini dei de gli antichi* (1592) and Agostini’s *Le Gemme antiche figurate* (1657) therein, it is possible that Burghers’ influence on the illustration of Book II --which is not

⁷²PL, VI, 845, 849.

necessarily stylistically cadent with Plates I and XII-- is greater than scholars generally believe it to be. And since Aldrich signed none of the plates he is presumed to have invented in either the *Oxford Almanacks* or the 1688 *Paradise Lost*, we cannot be sure where Aldrich started and Burghers took over.

As noted, Aldrich has been considered responsible for the majority of the illustrating of Plates I, II, and XII. Aldrich's artistic style is consistent throughout his career with the *Oxford Almanacks*, and his illustrations --published before and after the 1688 *Paradise Lost*-- are testament to his interest in deriving figures from previous engravings. The dog whose head burrows out from Sin's womb in Frontispiece II looks remarkably similar to a sleeping dog from 1706 *Oxford Almanack* which is listed as "delin.MBurg sculpt Univ. Oxon" (Fig. 25). Burghers is listed as having delineated this *Almanack*, and thus it is further probable that he may have drawn at least part of the illustration of Book II. When we arrive at the last frontispiece without certain authorship, Plate XII, we see an illustration derived from Raphael's *Expulsion*, the *Oxford Almanacks*, and yet-unidentified sources. Six angels occupy the upper register of the Plate; of the six, two can be identified as referring to previous engravings. The second angel from the left is derived from the 1677 *Oxford Almanack* (Fig.26) after an engraving *Paradigmata graphices variorum artificium Pl. 9* by Jan de Bisschop.⁷³ The largest angel, fifth from the left, has its upper body derived from a putto from the 1678 *Oxford Almanack* (Fig. 27), after

⁷³Petter, 30.

Raphael's *Holy Family* engraved by Cherubino Alberti.⁷⁴ Both originating engravings are in Aldrich's collection and thus are signals of Aldrich's presence in the conception of these two *Almanacks*. But they do not necessarily denote Aldrich's presence as illustrator of Plate XII of the 1688 *Paradise Lost*. It is certainly possible that Burghers copied these engravings, modified their clothing and body positions slightly, and gave us the frontispiece of Book XII.

Stylistically speaking, the illustrations of Books I, II, and XII are so filled with complications that it is difficult to say anything confidently about them. Undeniably, they are highly derivative, more derivative even than Medina's illustrations (which have been incorrectly identified as original). The sources and relationships between Plates I, II, and XII and the *Oxford Almanacks* disturb accepted notions of authorship for these illustrations. While most scholars have accepted Aldrich as delineator of these frontispieces, their reasoning is conjectural and based on the notion that Aldrich knew many forms of visual art and that he was the sole illustrator of books in this period of Oxford book illustration. More likely, Aldrich conceived of the illustrations, providing Burghers with engravings to copy and modify to constitute the formal matter of the frontispieces. Regardless, the system of illustration of Plates I, II, and XII involved the cooperative work of two artists, one who was a connoisseur of the arts of the continental Renaissance, and one whose hand scripted those loftily-conceived plots.

⁷⁴Petter, 31.

Miltonic Philosophy of Text and Image Relationship

Promise was that I / Should Israel from Philistian voke deliver: Before Blindness

Contemporary scholars often criticize, rightly, the attribution of a singular aesthetic “meaning” to a work that outlasts time and cultural mores. One would only need to ask any Milton scholar if Stanley Fish’s *Surprised By Sin* is an important book for understanding *Paradise Lost*. Fish’s psychoanalytic-reader response critique is most influential for contemporary Milton studies, thus testifying to the concept that any investigation into the semantic meanings of a work is understood within the bounds of theoretical critique. Not only must literary critics deal with their own theoretical biases, but we must remember that our authors lived and changed throughout their lives as well. For this reason, we must see the attempt to define any single, circumscribed Miltonic philosophy as a futile effort unfair to the integrity of the author’s probable changing views. Critics of Miltonic aesthetic philosophy have generally considered Milton to have approached the visual or pictorial in the same fundamental way for the whole of his life. McColley explains that for Milton “the concinnity of the sensible with the intelligible extends to ways of seeing, because the mind itself is designed to be a receptor of the meaning that the visible world is designed to signify, and of the truth it only imperfectly represents.”⁷⁵ To construct Miltonic aesthetic theory in a less minimizing framework, I will assess

⁷⁵GUST, 79.

Milton's philosophies of text and image over time. Certainly, Milton is not infallible, nor would Milton wish anyone to consider him so. Over time, his views on certain subjects changed dramatically. He wished to grow as a poet and as a Christian, considering his works of youth (especially his Latin poetry and his elegies) to be misguided in their emphasis on sensual and sexual themes. Thus, I ask the reader to consider the importance of constructing a narrative of thought in the analysis of Milton's prose works in order to understand his philosophies and how they changed over time. Implicit in my argument is the concept that for Milton, and for a Renaissance audience, the "visual" and the "physical," and thus the "word" and the "spiritual," would have been considered synonymous in theological contexts.

Produced early in his career as a pamphleteer, Milton's *Of Reformation* (1641) provides us with his first critique of idolatry. Milton saw idolatry as a subordination of the inward sentiment of adoration to the adoration of the outward physical image, and he would tease out this philosophical strain for the rest of his life in his political and theological tracts. Milton attacks those people who would remove the inward acts of spiritual adoration from their proper place and exteriorize them as they "stumble forward another way into the new-vomited Paganisme, of sensuall Idolatry." Milton argues that these Idolaters demean the inward spiritualism "as if they could make God earthly, and fleshly, because they could not make themselves heavenly and Spirituall." Critical of the visual representation of God, Milton attacks those who would make physical the transcendent: "they began to draw downe all the Divine intercoures, betwixt God,

and the Soule, yea, the very shape of God himselfe, into an exterior, and bodily forme...."⁷⁶ Milton's first published commentary on the visual is a critique of the representation of physical form of God in visual arts.

And if visual representation is to be seen as flawed in any way, the defect is in the human eye. Milton's assertion that the eye needs to receive heavenly guidance prefigures Michael's gift of clarity to Adam in *Paradise Lost*:

If we will but purge with sovrain eyesalve that intellectual ray which
God hath planted in us, then we would beleieve the Scriptures
protesting their own plainnes, and perspecuity, calling to them to be
instructed....⁷⁷

The "intellectual ray" must be "purge[d] with sovrain eyesalve" in order to allow man to "[discern] that which is good." That the eye necessitates an "eyesalve" to achieve moral clarity implies that the eye is naturally imperfect. Milton continues to build upon this narrative thread in his prose works, and in *Of Education* (1644), he states the importance of teaching in inward terms: "But because our understanding cannot in this body be found it selfe but on sensible things, nor arrive so clearly to the knowledge of God and things invisible, as by orderly conning over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is to be follow'd in all discreet teaching."⁷⁸ For

⁷⁶John Milton, *Of Reformation*, in the *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971), 876. Hereafter cited in the text with the short title "OR."

⁷⁷OR, 886.

⁷⁸John Milton, *Of Education*, in the *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971), 876. Hereafter cited in the text with the short title "OE." 980.

Milton, education is to be considered tied to theological growth in order for the body to achieve knowledge of the “invisible” and defeat the “visible and inferior creature.” Even though Milton implicitly identifies that humans are confined to studying “sensible things,” it is with “orderly conning” that we uncover the “invisible.”

Milton’s discussion of the “visual” before the onset of his blindness continues in 1650 with *Eikonoklastes* and concludes a year later with the publication of his *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano*. Milton wrote both texts to vindicate the execution of Charles I and to refute the posthumous publication of *Eikon Basilike*. In his argument against King Charles I’s presumed self-defense in *Eikon Basilike*, Milton provides his most comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the written text and visual image: he argues that the visual image, like the written text, can be used for the purposes of evil, and thus implicitly equates these two “sister arts.” Milton’s knowledge of Greek history provides him with a name for his book, “Iconoclastes,” which is “the famous Surname of Many Greek Emperors, who in thir zeal to the command of God, after a long tradition of idolatry in the Church, took courage, and broke all superstitious Images to peecees.” And while Milton’s *Eikonoklastes* is concordant with the civil practice in England to destroy religious art, Milton makes clear that his attack is directed at the fabrications --both visual and literary-- that *Eikon Basilike* places in the hands of the common people: “But the People, exorbitant and excessive in all thir motions, are prone oftentimes not to

religious onely, but to a civil kinde of Idolatry in idolizing thir King....”⁷⁹

Fundamentally, Milton berates the author of *Eikon Basilike* for presenting Charles I in a false light. For Milton, the falsification of the King’s character in both image and textual defense insults the integrity of those people Milton claims to represent, the “staid and well-princl’d men” of the Commonwealth. Immediately, Milton levels the accusation of popish decorum at “the Author,” asserting that *Eikon Basilike* contains “little els but the common grounds of tyranny and popery, drest up, the better to deceiv, in a new Protestant guise, and trimmly garnish’d over....”⁸⁰ Milton denounces the book for its visual trickery, its “Protestant guise,” which will deceive the people into believing that Charles had been a benevolent monarch. He lays siege to the portrait of the King, drawn and engraved by William Marshall, for its distortion of the King’s true character:

[Charles’ posthumous revenge] appears both by the conceited portraiture before his Book, drawn out to the full measure of a Masking Scene, and sett there to catch fools and silly gazers, and by those Latin words after the end, *Vota dabunt quae Bella negarunt*; intimating, That what hee could not compass by Warr, he should achieve by his Meditations.⁸¹

Milton carefully pairs Marshall’s visual representation of Charles as a saint with the

⁷⁹John Milton, *Eikonoklastes*, in *the Works of John Milton*, Volume V (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 68. Hereafter cited in the text with the short title “EIK.”

⁸⁰EIK, 64.

⁸¹EIK, 67.

Latin statement to show the inconsistency of political propaganda; without mentioning his name Milton debunks Marshall for his “loose and negligent curiosity”: “for though the Picture sett in Front would Martyr him and Saint him to befool the people, yet the Latin Motto in the end, which they understand not, leaves him, as it were, a politic contriver....” Milton dismisses the illustration as nonessential: “But quaint Emblems and devices begg’d from the old Pageantry of some Twelf-nights entertainment at Whitehall, will do but ill to make a Saint or Martyr.”⁸² And while Milton and his political allies are more than capable to “choose that interpretation which may best minde us of what our restless enemies endeavour,” Milton acknowledges the danger of such illustrations to the “Image-doting rabble,” who are not capable of exercising as educated an opinion:

... that like a credulous and hapless herd, begott’n to servility, and enchanted with these popular institutes of Tyranny, subscrib’d with a new device of the Kings Picture at his prairs, hold out bothe thir eares with such delight and ravishment to be stigmatiz’d and board through in witness of thir own voluntary and beloved baseness.⁸³

Milton’s imagery moves from the visual, the Marshall engraving of the praying King, to the aural, as he invokes the image of the People holding out their ears to be “stigmatiz’d” as a result of their “baseness.” Milton chastises the author for borrowing more from pastoral poetry than from books of spiritual or inward devotion and for a falsifying sense of decorum: “And if in likelihood he’d have

⁸²EIK, 68.

borrowed much more out of Prayer-books than out of Pastorals, then are these painted feathers, that set him off so gay among the people, to be thought few or none of them his own."⁸⁴ Pastoral poetry, which to Milton is subordinate to spiritual writing, is the medium of "painted feathers" that the author employs to discuss the "saintly" King, and once again Milton uses language of visual distinction to criticize the King's false decorum. Even so, Milton equates the visual topos with the textual, as the author of *Eikon Basilike* is guilty of fabrication of language and of distortion of visual image.

⁸³EIK, 308-9.

⁸⁴EIK, 88.

The way to know were not to see but taste: After Blindness

Milton does not, however, condemn all visual arts before the onset of his blindness. His battle is against the arts of false representation, whether visual or textual; and while the eye may deceive, the proper study of the spiritual will elucidate the "good." The eye requires the spiritual "eye-salve" in order to be able to discern the truth. Certainly, Milton criticizes the King for his interest in physical display: "His glory, in the gaudy Copes, and Painted Windows, Miters, Rochets, Altars, and the chanted Service-Book shall be dearer to him then establishing his Crowne in right-cousners, and the spiritual power of Religion."⁸⁵ Milton employs language of decadence and of the Roman Catholic Church in describing Charles I. And Milton is wholly critical of those "popish" designs: "I believe not that a Romish guilded Portraiture gives better Oracle then a Babylonish gold'n Image could doe...."⁸⁶ Milton does not necessarily indirectly attack all the visual arts because he is critical of those arts that would concentrate upon visual rather than spiritual devotion, or because he berates the king for Marshall's falsifying image. He attacks the beguiling image used improperly, to promote a false vision of its subject, whether that subject be a corrupt popish King or a religion inherently concerned with the invisible.

Milton follows up this attack with his further thoughts on the matter in *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano*, which is a bridge from his earlier discussions of the visual and the internal to his post-blindness sentiments. Battering comparisons

⁸⁵EIK, 268.

made between Charles I and Solomon in *Eikon Basilike*, Milton berates Charles for laws he declared concerning devotion to icons in the Church: "Charles not only lured others by the richest rewards of a corrupt church, but also compelled them by edicts and ecclesiastical regulations to erect those altars which are abhorred by all Protestants, and to worship crucifixes painted on the walls and hanging over those altars."⁸⁷ Milton's attack on Charles' Catholic doctrine moves back into the discussion of the visual as contrasted to the spiritual; he sarcastically pounces upon an argument from *Eikon Basilike* in which the speaker is amazed that " 'those who have beheld the King in Parliament seated on his throne under the canopy of silk and gold could have doubted whether majesty belonged to the King or to the Parliament.'"⁸⁸ Milton identifies the material interest of the speaker and denounces it for its misguided theology:

The men you speak of must have been doubters indeed not to be moved by so brilliant an argument drawn from the canopy of heaven, or even better 'the canopy of silk and gold.' A stoic like you gazed on this golden Heaven with such rapt religious awe that you seem to have forgotten what Moses and Aristotle meant by heaven.⁸⁸

Certainly, Milton speaks similarly of Mammon, who will lead the fallen angels in Hell up the Hill whose "griesly top / Belch'd fire and rowling smoke," in Book I of

⁸⁶EIK, 215.

⁸⁷John Milton, *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano*, in *the Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971), 373. Hereafter cited in the text with the short title "DPPA."

⁸⁸DPPA, 506.

Paradise Lost.⁸⁹ Mammon is identified as the “least erected Spirit that fell” because

...ev’n in heav’n his looks and thoughts

Were always downward bent, admiring more

The riches of Heav’ns pavement, trod’n Gold

Then aught divine or holy else enjoy’d

In vision beautiful.⁹⁰

R.M. Frye concludes from this passage that “Mammon’s fault was that he concentrated on the beautiful symbol itself, rather than allowing it to inspire him to raise his eyes to the divine reality it was intended to suggest.”⁹¹ Milton in his *Paradise Lost* could be recalling imagery from *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano* to characterize Mammon, and the association between Charles I with a soon-to-be fallen angel is not irrelevant. Both Charles I and Mammon suffer from a lack of spiritual devotion, as neither chooses to see beyond the visual beauty of gold and understand it as a symbol for the Lord’s power and divine beauty. In *Defensio* and in the later *Paradise Lost*, visual beauty has come to stand as a symbol for spiritual beauty and divinity. Diane McColley probably provides the best interpretation of this relationship between the visual and the spiritual as Milton understood it just previous to his blindness: “And the concinnity of the sensible with the intelligible extends to ways of seeing, because the mind itself is designed to be a receptor of the meaning that the

⁸⁹PL, 1.670-1.

⁹⁰PL, 1. 679-684.

⁹¹Roland Frye, *Milton’s Imagery and the Visual Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), 35-36. Hereafter cited in the text as “Frye.”

visible world is designed to signify, and the truth it only imperfectly represents."⁹² Milton has moved from considering the visual/physical to be inferior to the spiritual in *Of Reformation* to believing the visual to be an imperfect sign of the perfection of divinity in *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano*. And as if Milton's newer philosophies did not vary enough from his earlier comments on the visual, his discussion of text/image relationship begins to solidify into a measure of equality. Milton assesses poetry and painting to be an expression of the same type of power, a power of a higher order than that which Charles possessed: "Look at your Augustinian derivation of that wondrous right of Kings to dare what they will; now this power is one and the same as that of thieves, not of painters or poets."⁹³

Milton's discussion of the visual as related to the invisible becomes more personal and less political after the onset of his blindness. Milton's "official quarters were hung with art works, for which Mylius went to meet 'the great Milton' at Whitehall on October 20, 1651; he reported that he passed through anterooms hung with splendid wallpaper and tapestries."⁹⁴ Whether or not Milton is responsible for placing these works of visual art in his office, he certainly would not have been able to see them. Regardless of the loss of his vision, Milton has not exorcised all political demons from the regicide of Charles I five years afterward, when he publishes *Defensio Secunda* (1654). In response to attacks leveled against him, Milton berates Alexander More, presumed author of *Regii Sanguinis Clamor*

⁹²GUST, 79.

⁹³DPPA, 419.

⁹⁴Frye, 36.

(1652), for defending Charles:

But I clearly see that you have determined to foist off on the ignorant a perfect Charles, if not this Stuart, at least some hyperborean and mythical one, painted with whatever false dyes you choose. Hence your disgusting invention of this fable, like some painted backdrop prettily embellished with bits of dialogue and little mottoes.⁹⁵

Milton contrasts the “false dyes” and “embellished” background of the King’s defense in *Clamor* with his own ability to “clearly see” even though he is blind. Here, Milton configures the language of painting as dangerous only as it is “false;” painting is a medium of political rhetoric that can deceive the eye of the ignorant, comparable to the falsifying reductiveness of “bits of dialogue and little mottoes,” decidedly literary tools. The visual, like the literary, becomes an internal gift that can be used properly or improperly. Milton no longer attacks the visual elements of the world, manifest in the visual arts, for being superficial in nature; in his blindness, he considers the visual to be an inner faculty that is removed from the act of seeing:

Finally, as to my blindness, I would rather have mine, if it be necessary, than either theirs, More, or yours. Your blindness, deeply implanted in the innermost faculties, obscures the mind, so that you may see nothing whole or real. Mine, which you make a reproach, merely deprives things of color and superficial appearance. What is

⁹⁵ John Milton, *Defensio Secunda*, in *the Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Volumes IV (1 and 2), V, and VII (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966-1971), 646. Hereafter cited in the text with the short title “DS.”

true and essential in them is not lost to my intellectual vision.⁹⁶

Milton's conception of the truth turns inward, away from the superficialities of falsehood, and towards the metaphysical reality. Milton states that he does not wish to be like Achilles, to "seek to bear before me heaven painted on a shield, for others, not myself, to see in battle, while I carry on my shoulders a burden, not painted, but real, for myself, and not for others to perceive."⁹⁷ He rejects the weapons of a superficial decorum designed to lead enemies astray from the real "burden" of inner weakness. Now that Milton has become the object of personal and political degradation at the hands of the author(s) of *Clamor*, and he is not the gallivanting knight defending the English Faith, his comments turn inward and away from such global declarations as those written in *Of Education* and *Of Reformation*.

Milton's aesthetic philosophies are not constrained to his prose works. While many of his poetical works assess his position on the relationship between the visual and the spiritual, the inward and the outward, his *Paradise Lost* is most revealing in terms of the gradual change in Milton's philosophies. It is no wonder that the poet would, in his state of blindness, call for illumination from the first: "What in me is dark / Illumin, what is low raise and support."⁹⁸ Speaking later about his blindness, the narrator tells us that he has been "Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down / The dark descent, and up to reascend" like Dante in the *Inferno*.⁹⁹ The narrator's descent into the internal darkness provides his ability to discern the inward truths

⁹⁶ DS, 588.

⁹⁷ DS, 595-6.

⁹⁸ PL, I.22-24.

and, in an ironic turn, he mentions that a drop of thick liquid is accountable for his blindness: "So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs, / Or dim suffusion veild."¹⁰⁰ Flannagan notes that "Milton refers to his blindness by its contemporary medical name, 'gutta serena,' or 'clear drop,' or, in Milton's very literal translation, 'drop serene.'" We are reminded of Michael bestowing clarity upon Adam in Book 10 with three drops from the "Well of Life."¹⁰¹ In both cases, Milton makes physical the ability to grasp the inward, as both the "drop serene" and the "three drops instill'd" enable the narrator and Adam, respectively, to see into the invisible. When the narrator begs the Heavenly Muse to reveal the "things invisible," he believes this insight to be a replacement for the physical ability to see, a sowing of the seeds of inner knowledge:

So much the rather thou Celestial light
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.¹⁰²

Selections of Milton's *Paradise Lost* suggest his unwillingness to conclude any philosophical discourse on the relationship between the visual and the spiritual. We are reminded that spiritual enlightenment is the goal of a good Christian, but we cannot discount the fact that Milton's negative commentary on physical decadence is

⁹⁹ PL, III.21-22.

¹⁰⁰ PL, III. 25-6.

¹⁰¹ See PL, X.411-421.

offset by his praise of heavenly decoration and physical acts of devotion, however unfallen. It is only later, with his *De Doctrina Christiana*, that we see Milton's theological concept of the relationship between the visual and the spiritual balance.

Milton would get his chance to assert the divine voice again in his unpublished treatise *De Doctrina Christiana*. Assuming that Milton is the sole author of this work, we finally see Milton come to terms with *pictura* and *poesis*, with the visual and the spiritual, the image of God and the Word of God, the aesthetic and the religious. There is now a way to see God, as long as we see him in the visual palette of our minds as outlined by scripture:

It is safest for us to form an image of God in our minds which corresponds to his representation and description of himself in the sacred writings. Admittedly, God is described or outlined not as he really is but in such a way as will make him conceivable to us.

Nevertheless, we ought to form just such a mental image of him as he, in bringing himself within the limits of our understanding, wishes us to form.¹⁰³

Milton has finally been able to compromise his passion for the visual aesthetic with his devotion to scripture. He has come to this placid conclusion through a philosophical expansion of the idea that the eye is fallible. Now, the concept of understanding has become a faculty tainted by imperfection, and true humility reveals that God, in his omnipotence, "wishes us to form" a vision of His image

¹⁰² PL, III.51-55.

“within the limits of our understanding.”¹⁰⁴ Truth is not lost in the visual vocabulary of the mind, and Milton also concedes that visual form was created to promote aesthetic beauty: “The addition of forms (which, incidentally, are themselves material) did not make [matter] more perfect but only more beautiful.”¹⁰⁵ Visual icon still troubles the blind philosopher, as he lists “IDOLATRY” and “the INVOCATION OF ANGELS or SAINTS” as “Opposed to the invocation or adoration of God.” He defines idolatry as “making or owning an idol for religious purposes, or worshipping it, whether it be a representation of the true God or of some false God.”¹⁰⁶ But Milton is not averse to the visual representations of angels:

The images of cherubim ought not to be called idols because they were placed over the ark as representations not of gods but of God’s ministers, so no one worshipped them, and they were manufactured at God’s express command.¹⁰⁷

The visual image becomes, for Milton, a trope that can represent the essential truth about God. As he unites the aesthetic beauty of image and form with the spiritual reality represented only through devotional meditation upon scripture, he pulls the sister arts together as driving forces for fulfilling God’s wishes. The sister arts of *poesis* and *pictura* have truly come together when Milton declares that through the Word and the image God is manifest to humankind:

¹⁰¹ DDC, 133.

¹⁰⁴ DDC, 133.

¹⁰⁵ DDC, 297.

¹⁰⁶ DDC, 690.

¹⁰⁷ DDC, 690.

For the Word is both Son and Christ, which means, as I say, anointed, and as he is the image, as it were, by which God becomes visible, so he is the word by which God is audible. Since this is what he is like he cannot be in essence with an invisible and inaudible God.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ DDC, 297.

Conclusions

Writing to Leonard Philaras in 1654, John Milton remarked that “as often as [he] looked at a lamp, a sort of rainbow seemed to obscure it.”¹⁰⁹ Burdened by a reality consisting of darkness, Milton came to believe that the image of God is best understood in the mind, best visualized and heard in the Son and the Word which is Christ. Milton’s visions of Hell and Heaven, characterizations of Satan and God, are constructions of words. He could not even read the words he had written, and, as a consequence, Milton began to live in his own mind. This mind produced descriptions of some of the most influential characters still alive in Western narratives today. Indeed, Albert Labriola comments that “Milton and his illustrators were responsible for the post-medieval portraiture of Satan, humanoid in form.”¹¹⁰ What terrible and beautiful images birthed from the left side of Milton’s imagination? We would imagine Katherine Woodcock Milton as Alcestis coming towards us “from the grave,” and then return with Milton into the waking darkness once again when we reached out to embrace her ghost. We would envision the sword of Michael “from the Armorie of God” driven through Satan’s right side “with discontinuous wound” and spewing forth “a stream of Nectareous humor.”¹¹¹ And three illustrators, with interest in forwarding their professional and political

¹⁰⁹ From a letter dated September 28, 1654, from John Milton to Leonard Philaras. *The Riverside Milton*, 1055.

¹¹⁰ Lieb, ix.

careers, would envision twelve scenes of the great epic. Michael Burghers and Henry Aldrich would perceive Satan as Charon, a Scyllian Sin, and a Raphaelesque Michael leading smitten Adam and Eve out of the invisible doorway to Eden. A young Belgian history-painter John Baptiste de Medina would see the battle in Heaven as Michelangelo saw the Day of Judgment and a Satan gesturing like Carracci's Pan. Bernard Lens would see angels with pointed spear approaching the toad that hides Satan.

What would the old painter of words have seen?

The question is moot. Certainly, John Milton would have liked to have seen anything. And he would have been pleased with the work that these four artists had done with his *Paradise Lost*, for he would have seen the aesthetic importance of representing his imagination to those who would otherwise be too ignorant to understand it. Milton had come to the conclusion that the essence of God was born through the Word and the Image, manifest in the Son who is Christ. He had come to understand that material forms, including visual arts, were not a sign of perfection but a sign of beauty; thus, as long as these forms were not idolatrous, they were acceptable aesthetic representations. Since the illustrators of the 1688 *Paradise Lost* went to great lengths never to represent God in any physical form, they did not commit idolatry. Instead, they represented angels, acceptable for Milton's visual lexicon, and the Son, accompanied by His Host, in place of God. Further represented are the Fallen, the Servants, and the First Parents, all of which are

¹¹¹ PL, VI.329, 333.

creations of God. Without any Miltonic laws to break, we only have the question of Milton's preferences for aesthetics.

The baroque 1688 frontispieces make use of intertextual practice -- incorporation, allusion, and commentary on other works-- in much the same way that Milton amalgamates continental sources with English sources, sources of the recent past and of the narrative histories of western literature in his poetry. The 1688 illustrators and Milton approach creation from similar theoretical positions. Thus, we can envision a Milton, aged eighty, quite contented with the newest edition of his *Paradise Lost*. We can be most thankful that William Marshall had nothing to do with the 1688 *Paradise Lost*, for Milton would have detested it without doubt. Instead, his *Paradise Lost* provided the lyrics for some of the most influential theological book illustrations of history, illustrations that would influence generations of artists for the next three hundred years. And seven years from the publication of the 1688 *Paradise Lost*, a subscriber "Mr. Peter Hume" would author the first published written commentary on the great English epic, *Annotations on Milton's Paradise Lost*, and initiate the conversation.

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12. *Un homme se jette en l'air. 1765. 2/2. R.*



13. *Un homme se jette en l'air. 1765. 2/2. R.*

13.

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14. *Un homme se jette en l'air. 1765. 2/2. R.*



15. *Un homme se jette en l'air. 1765. 2/2. R.*

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16. *Un homme se jette en l'air. 1765. 2/2. R.*

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Alto: Piero da Siena della
Bella: Sella: P.

SCENA QUINTA D' INFERNO

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