
ANTHONY R. COLLINS
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PARADISE LOST AS A BAROQUE POEM

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
ANTHONY R. COLLINS
1969

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ABSTRACT

PARADISE LOST AS A BAROQUE POEM

By

Anthony R. Collins

John Milton's Paradise Lost stands as a monumental work in the field of literature. Eclectic though it may be, this work is so stamped by the genius of its author that it is usually regarded as something unique, inimitable and somewhat apart from the other works of this era. Without minimizing in the least the talent of its creator, John Milton, this study shows that Paradise Lost actually possesses most of the characteristics of the Seventeenth Century stylistic movement termed the Baroque.

The state of criticism in the field of Baroque literature is currently so confused and idiosyncratic interpretations of the movement so prevalent that it has been found most profitable to return to the original source of the definition of the Baroque--art history. Here the fundamental observations of Heinrich Wölfflin are employed and interpreted in an effort to evolve a viable set of criteria for the purpose of defining Baroque literature as exemplified by Paradise Lost. This has been attempted before. Indeed, Milton seems to be a favorite poet for critics undertaking

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such an enterprise, but previous efforts in this direction rarely offer substantive stylistic observations to support the case. Getting involved with Milton's mind, or the Zeitgeist of the Seventeenth Century may be interesting, but it rarely provides workable criteria for determining what is Baroque.

This thesis examines in detail the basic observations of Heinrich Wölfflin, and proceeding from there, applies them to Paradise Lost. The comparisons involve such aspects as the Baroque usage of Light, Movement and Unclarity as well as the projection of a sense of Grandeur in representative Baroque art. This study focuses on Paradise Lost and Baroque painting as the comparative materials. This was necessary because of the aforementioned confusion in the area of Baroque literary criticism as well as the fact that such a broad comparison will more firmly establish Milton as a poet deserving to be considered part, an important part, of the major artistic movement of the Seventeenth Century. From such a base, it can be argued that the Baroque was indeed a pan-European phenomenon and not limited to Catholic countries or Holland. Beyond that, the sad fact remains that England offers very little in the way of "native" Baroque art, save a few architectural examples.

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Although rejecting a Zeitgeist approach, it is the ultimate aim of this study to break down the barriers that exist between the various fields of artistic expression of the Seventeenth Century. A poem is not a painting, and this thesis tries never to forget the essential distinctions between the genres, but the fact remains that any effort to see the Seventeenth Century as a stylistic unity, varied yet coherent in its parts, cannot but aid in the appreciation of those respective parts. It enhances Paradise Lost to see it as part of the artistic mainstream of the Seventeenth Century rather than an isolated phenomenon proceeding from the Classicism and Puritanism of its author, John Milton.

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PARADISE LOST AS A BAROQUE POEM

By

Anthony R. Collins

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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Department of Comparative Literature

1969

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INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that there are several possible approaches to any question involving the arts. The premises as well as the purposes of the investigator are of primary importance in determining exactly which course to pursue. Ideally, the method of analysis selected will minimize the personal biases or wishful thinking of the investigator and place precedence on that which is most important: the art work itself. Criticism in the arts will never achieve that level of empirical certainty that is the proper attribute of the sciences, nor should it try. The fact does remain that more objective analytical methods in the arts would be an improvement.

Employing stylistic criteria as the basis for judgment would seem to offer one solution to this problem of "imprecision." Employing identifiable and traceable "concrete" attributes of an artist or movement would offer, it is to be hoped, more valid conclusions. Even such a stylistic approach will present serious problems, and it is advisable to enumerate them and indicate the manner in which I hope to circumvent such difficulties.

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When one has the broader goal, as I do, of developing stylistic measurements which will apply to the entire range of artistic expression of a particular era, consistency of criteria becomes the most serious issue to be resolved. Are there constants and attributes of style within any one movement that can be traced from author to author, from one country to another--and even more dangerous to consider--from one branch of art to another? Although the critic's dream of perfecting a set of criteria which do indeed break through all bonds of nationality, chronology, personality and genres is probably unattainable, this does not invalidate attempting it.

Another requisite of any theory is what I term "universal applicability." Can any competent scholar apply it to any work of art and arrive at an accurate judgment as to whether this art work in fact does possess the attributes of the period in question? Any theory must function in both the general and specific sense. Modern science provides an interesting object lesson in this respect. Although not generally known to the public, there is a great deal of concern among physicists concerning the behavior of certain sub-atomic particles. Their capricious actions are unexplainable on the basis of Einstein's celebrated relativity theory.

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If further research cannot reconcile the two then the "relativity theory would be in serious trouble."[1]

In addition to these fundamental requirements, any theory of art inherits difficulties produced by previous critical practices. Although undeniably valid in many eras and movements, there can be little doubt but that chronological periodization has been overused. I think this is one of the outstanding cases of uncritical acceptance of a convenient methodology. The reigns of national monarchs may provide handy anchors around which to place contemporary artists, but the question must always be raised: do these artists belong together for any other reason than that they lived at the same time?

The chronological approach also tends to emphasize certain dates, only sometimes justifiably, as signs of major stylistic alterations. The year 1660, to use a common example, has come to play a major role in any discussion of Seventeenth Century literature of England. Rudolf Stamm, a German critic of English literature, is of the opinion that 1660 has been overrated as a turning point.

> The stylistic and spiritual changes, which followed the end of the reign of Elizabeth, become as equally forgotten as the many unions between the literature of the early and late

[1]Martin Bardner, "Can Time Go Backward?" Scientific American, January, 1967, 100.

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> Seventeenth Century. Still, the concept remains of the extraordinarily deep division of the year 1660. It nurtures the deep-rooted and false presentation of "Merry Old England" that found itself halted in the Puritan Revolution and then revitalized everything following the Restoration.[2]

Stamm is not arguing that dates are unimportant. He simply contends that a political history, such as that of England of the Seventeenth Century, offers tempting milestones that may well lead critics astray.

The above example leads directly into the most dangerous, if intriguing, approach to artistic analysis. I refer to what is commonly called the Zeitgeist school of criticism. The premise of the scholars of this movement sounds quite plausible. Any critic attempting any but the most limited and narrow examination of an era cannot fail to be impressed by the inter-relations that exist on several levels of culture and society. The terms "Renaissance," or "Baroque," or "Medieval" can be used not only to identify a certain group of statues or a political or religious theory, but they can be employed to describe a non-particularized attitude or temper of the period. The art works of the period will reflect, to some degree, this methodology of thought. It is at this point that the Zeitgeist critic commits his greatest error; one that I term "the search for causal relationships."

[2]"English Baroque Literature," Die Kunstformen des Barockzeitalters, ed. Rudolf Stamm (Bern, 1956), p. 381.

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The Zeitgeist argument is that since all facets of a culture will be colored and shaped by this "spirit of the age," then influence relationships will be ascertainable between the various spheres of life. I certainly admit that the bourgeoise genre painting developed in the Seventeenth Century Netherlands because that culture had no need for the courtly and Catholic works of a Rubens. But what does this tell us about the style of the paintings? As a matter of fact, the existence of the "Baroque" style as a European phenomenon undermines any possibility of correlation existing between the style and specific social and religious attitudes.

A critic will then be obliged, as is Arnold Hauser in his Social History of Art, to explain away the exceptions to his personal theory. In the Baroque era, a period highly favored by the Zeitgeist critics, the theories are as endless as the exceptions. Baroque art is propaganda designed to serve the ends of the Jesuits. Or perhaps it's the expression of a neo-courtly tradition. Or it may be a reflection of political absolutism. In truth, the Baroque is all these things and a great deal more. As Lowry Nelson, Jr., says, to "identify Baroque poetic style with any one aspect of intellectual life is to limit it arbitrarily."[3] In this connection, I might add that the most intelligent, and

[3]Baroque Lyric Poetry (New Haven, 1961), p. 10.

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devastating, criticism of the causally oriented Zeitgeist critic is to be found in E. H. Gombrich's review of the already mentioned Social History of Art by Hauser.[4]

Another vital factor which tends to be neglected by the more general approaches I have mentioned is the artist himself. I grant that art does not exist in a vacuum and the artist is bound to be influenced by the age in which he lives. He may despise it, as did the early Romantics, but even negation is a reaction to an existing circumstance. The point often overlooked is that the reaction is a personal one. Human conditions are but the raw material of the artist. To contend that the finished product must relate in some discernibly causal manner to those conditions is like arguing that iron ore has to be turned into anvils.

Any analytical approach to art must begin with the work of art itself. The relationship between the art work and the "real" world is at best tenuous. Any painting, poem, play or novel is one man's re-presentation of reality. We are fortunate in the Twentieth Century in that the development of photography and the phonograph have finally freed art from the narrative/representational criteria of judgment. If one wishes an absolutely accurate recording of "objective" reality, the machine can do it much better than any artist.

[4]Meditations on a Hobby Horse (London, 1963), pp. 86-94.

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This works both ways. Just as I do not expect John Milton to present me with a detailed copy-book reflection of Protestant theology in his works, I do not feel I should expend any energy trying to discover how that theology may have influenced him in the composing of Paradise Lost. It surely was a vital influence on him, but so were his classical background, love of music, travel to Italy, government service and his eventual blindness. All of these conditions of his life merged with his genius to produce his poetry. To seize any one of these and try to establish a "causal relationship," to make it the key that solves the mystery and complexity of Paradise Lost is pointless.

I propose to examine Paradise Lost as a representative work of the general movement termed the Baroque. This will, first of all, insure that my attention is directed to the object of primary concern, Paradise Lost. Secondly, such an approach will provide me with valuable, already existing criteria to test whether the poem is indeed a Baroque work of art. If I am successful I feel the greatest advantage will arise from the establishment of Paradise Lost as stylistically belonging to the prevalent movement of the age. I hope to show that Milton's epic is stylistically comparable to works by Rubens, Cortona and other Baroque painters. I feel that such a cross-discipline study, if successful,

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will reinforce my contention that the Baroque style is far more than an ideology, a Weltanschaung.

I do not choose to compare Paradise Lost with those continental examples of Baroque literature because I think the critics are generally wrong in applying the term as they do. In the field of literary criticism the concept of what constitutes the Baroque style in poetry has had an unhappy development. Since the early years of this century, this task has been the favorite undertaking of German, primarily Zeitgeist inclined, critics. The result has been some of the most objectionable over-interpretations in the history of criticism. For all this energy expended, Germany seems to be the only country in Europe that has taken the ideas of Baroque literature "to its Heart," and elevated it above perjorative connotations. In the process, German critics have made it, the Baroque style in literature, their own particular province.

Paradoxically, this very acceptance has produced a critical disaster of the first magnitude. Lacking a solid theoretical grounding, such as exists in the art historian's concept of the Baroque, the literary application has been allowed to evolve without a genuine sense of direction. Individual critical interpretations abound. In addition to this, the recently advanced concept of Mannerism as a more accurate generic/period term to cover the Sixteenth Century has increased the

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confusion all the more. The distinction between Mannerism and the Baroque is absolutely crucial, but many literary critics fail to make it.

Baroque as a stylistic term in literary analysis also has had to face the resentment of many who feel it is an interloper from the visual arts where it should remain. It is true that it is impossible to simply transfer criteria from one discipline to another as some critics have attempted. Yet, if the criteria undergo too much "translation" in order to better accommodate the literary arts, there doesn't seem much point in the effort. If one is going to end up with a set of literary criteria, it is much more sensible to say so and not drag in painting or architecture.

I am going to attempt to avoid both of the previous errors. I will analyze John Milton's Paradise Lost as a Baroque epic poem and employ criteria derived from the visual arts. It has occurred to me, however, that the entire Baroque movement in all the visual arts is simply too vast an area to serve as source for a usable set of criteria. As will be demonstrated, there are sub-divisions of style within the major stream. To pick and choose from paintings, statues, palaces and cathedrals which were executed during the course of some hundred years in all the countries of Europe hardly seems the way in which to gather support for the thesis I am going to offer. It appears to me that many of the

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works that attempt to analyze the relationship of Baroque literature to Baroque visual arts suffer from this very lack of focus. Any comparative study is, from the outset, inclined to rely upon analogies and equivalents. Only the most rigid control will prevent it from degenerating into a mass of vague, essentially unsupported and highly conjectural connections.

I have selected Baroque painting as my visual comparative bases. I hope this will provide some of the necessary focus I have been talking about. I have eliminated architecture and sculpture because I do not believe they apply equally well in comparison to literature. Architecture is too obviously non-representational to be of any usage, although at first glance it would seem that a work of the scale of a Baroque cathedral and Paradise Lost would compare nicely. Sculpture possess an inherent plasticity that simply does not fit well into my observations. Beyond that, I quite frankly do not know enough about Baroque sculpture.

Painting does seem to work. Heinrich Wölfflin, my chief critical source, regards it as possessing all the characteristics of the Baroque movement. It can be thought of as a microcosm of the entire style.

To provide the necessary background for my analysis of Paradise Lost, I will begin with a brief account of the concept of the Baroque style as it exists in the visual arts and then offer a summary of the current state

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of its counterpart, Baroque criticism in literature. I will attempt to avoid the Mannerist/Baroque dispute and restrict myself to the simple argument that Milton, as demonstrated in Paradise Lost, is a Baroque artist. To prove this point, I will offer my own adaptations of Heinrich Wölfflin's criteria of the Baroque style as applied to literature. In this process, I will indicate the adaptations I feel are necessary to make visual judgments applicable to literature without abandoning the essence of what Wölfflin has to say.

I should, at this point, clarify my terminology. To me "art" means all the arts, and I will employ this word when speaking generally of the total aesthetic expression of any era. When I refer to painting, I will name it specifically. "Visual arts" will be employed to group painting, architecture and sculpture together in contrast to literature, although, even then, it is primarily painting that I will be referring to. I have adopted the policy of always capitalizing the period/genre terms, such as Renaissance, Baroque and Mannerism. Of course when I quote a critic who does not follow this procedure, I am bound to observe his practice.

Within the text of my dissertation I will refer to Paradise Lost by Book and line reference, e.g., (I, 251-36). The edition I use throughout is the 1961 edition of the Oxford University Press, edited by Helen Darbishire.

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I have attempted to keep to stylistic parallels as much as possible within this study, but the possibility of Baroque painting having had a direct influence on John Milton during his Italian journey cannot be discounted. Since such an influence study is alien to my approach to classifying Milton as a Baroque poet, I have collected the available evidence of direct influence and placed it in an appendix to the main dissertation. Reading it will, I hope, convince the reader of this dissertation as much as it has convinced me that there simply are not enough facts upon which to construct a viable influence hypothesis.

I also would like to mention two very important books that are essential reading for any person considering a definition of Baroque literature. These are Roy Daniells' Milton, Mannerism and Baroque (Toronto, 1963), and Wylie Sypher's Four Stages of Renaissance Style (New York, 1955). I have not quoted from these admittedly interesting works to any great extent. Both authors operate from different premises than I in the matter of deciding whether Milton is Baroque or not, and I found that extensive refutation of their methodology would detract from the clarity of my arguments. I must admit that I found Daniells' chapter, "Milton and Spenser," a parallel to my own thoughts in the matter. Both books are eminently worth reading. I differ with Daniells and Sypher on their methodology not their conclusions.

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CHAPTER I

BAROQUE AS A STYLISTIC TERM

As a Visual Style

Baroque as a stylistic term has, historically speaking, just recently become respectable. In contrast to "Renaissance," which implied for the art historian a high water mark of classicism, the "Baroque" came to be associated with lavish and emotional excesses. This prejudice is too well known and chronicled to require extensive discussion in this study. To try to explain the aesthetic theory and psychology behind such an idea creates the impression of being anti-classical and anti-Renaissance. That is as pointless as being anti-Baroque.

Because the Baroque movement started in Italy and then spread across Europe at varying rates of speed depending on the country, there are national, stylistic and chronological variations within it.[5] It is, in addition to this, a rather lengthy epoch running about

[5]Although primarily concerned with the characteristics of the movement rather than chronology or influence, I must say that the extreme time lags in the adoption of the Baroque style by some countries are

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a hundred years in most countries. As with most movements in the arts one can detect an early, high and late stage in its evolution. All of this will lead a critic like Michael Kitson to declare that ". . . the Renaissance was . . . far more homogeneous than the Baroque."[6] Most scholars tend to be somewhat more cautious with their generalizations; and if they are forced to grant the width of the concept of the Baroque movement, they have in turn narrowed the concept of the Renaissance.

> At the beginning of the sixteenth century a generation of artists grew up in Italy who were at one with themselves and apparently in complete harmony with the outside world. Because of its inner harmony and finality, we call their style, which lasted barely more than twenty years, classical par excellence.[7]

Other critics appear hesitant to abandon the traditional scope of the Renaissance and are forced to recognize deviations from classicism that existed within the broader concept.

rather irritating. The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture, for instance outlines the dates for the Baroque style in architecture: C17 in Italy, C17 and part of C18 in Spain, Germany and Austria. With limitations to C17 in France, C18 in Italy, and late C17 and early C18 in England. John Fleming, Hugh Honour and Nikolaus Pevsner (Middlesex, England, 1966), pp. 23-24.

[6]The Age of Baroque (New York, 1966), p. 10.

[7]Arnold Hauser, Mannerism (New York, 1965), p. 5.

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> It is abundantly clear that the Renaissance was not only an expression of balance, or reason, or serenity, but a movement which embraced an immense variety of styles. . . . The Renaissance was spiritually so rich that it gave an opportunity for the most diverse artists to express the whole gamut of human feeling.[8]

I offer these statements purely to indicate how much our traditional concept of the Renaissance is a synthesis. Disparagement of the Baroque on the grounds that it is not a uniform movement could just as well be applied to the Renaissance.

Yet, through it all, the concept of the Baroque as a stylistic term in the visual arts has managed to maintain its integrity. Much of this is due to the solid groundwork laid by one man, Heinrich Wölfflin. In a series of works dating from 1889, he sets forth just what it is that makes the Baroque unique.[9] Most importantly, he viewed the creations of this era as independent art works, above moral connotation. The paintings were paintings and the buildings were buildings and should be viewed in that light. Dating the work is important to him, as it is to any historian, but chronology is always used as a device for orientation and kept subservient to direct visual analysis. I might term it the Nineteenth Century scientific method

[8]Victor L. Tapié, The Age of Grandeur (New York, 1961), p. 8.

[9]The edition I am using is Renaissance and Baroque, trans. Katherine Simon (Ithica, New York, 1964).

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applied to art history except that this description would do violence to Wölfflin's gift for intuitive perception.

Wölfflin's theories are regarded as sound today, but there have been revisions made in them by more recent critics. Perhaps the most important of these is the definition within the past three decades of the concept of Mannerism. This style is thought to stand midway between the dissolution of the Renaissance and the emergence of the true Baroque.[10] It is dated in Italian art as running from 1520 to 1590. The dates will be different for other European countries, because the same disparity of chronology is here present as in the Baroque. Wölfflin tended to place Mannerism within his total concept of the Baroque, terming it Early Baroque, rather than recognizing that the main Sixteenth Century movement was something totally different than that which followed it.

Although Renaissance and Baroque revealed a new way of looking at visual art, perhaps the clearest statement of Wölfflin's ideas is to be found in his later Principles of Art History.[11] In this book he establishes five categories of evaluation which, to his mind, will

[10]Arnold Hauser, Mannerism. The most definitive book on the subject.

[11]Trans. M. D. Hottinger (New York, no date, originally published in German, 1915), pp. 14-16.

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serve in determining whether any given work of art is Baroque or not. These categories function on a bi-polar basis and as such have the inherent weaknesses one might expect. The gravest of these is that individual interpretative judgments are required as to just where to place a work of art on the spectrum between the two extremes.

I think it is advisable to set forth a summary of these five categories at this time. They can be thought of as moving <u>from</u> the Renaissance style <u>to</u> the Baroque.

1. <u>Linear to Painterly</u>

> Whereas, as a general rule, the Renaissance artist presented the outline of a figure and then filled in the color, the Baroque artist built up the figure with paint. Outlines become broken and blurred, and the figure seems to emerge from the background rather than being placed in sharp silhouette against it. Wölfflin feels this is a movement from a plastic, tactile manner of presentation to a mode that is much more concerned with the purely visual, the appearance of things. The Baroque artist relies heavily on light and color to define things and to establish relationships.

2. <u>Plane to Recession</u>

> The Renaissance tended to arrange its figures in definite horizontal planes. There might well be a background, but this usually was presented as something distinct from the foreground figures. The paintings of the Renaissance were meant to be "read" from side to side. No matter how many levels of objects were presented, they were usually set

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in distinguishable layers, one behind the other. The Baroque, in contrast, worked on the diagonal and recessional pattern. The foreground and background tended to blend and form one unit that draws the spectator back into the work.

3. Closed to Open Form

Sometimes referred to as tectonic versus a-tectonic. Whereas the Renaissance composition was usually self-enclosed, referred back onto itself, stood essentially apart; the Baroque had a way of bringing things in the painting into reference with the "outside" world. In sculpture, Bernini's David is about to sling his pebble against an adversary that shares the spectator's space. Tiled floor patterns, as with Vermeer, lead directly into the spectator's world.

These two divergent approaches also imply and demonstrate a difference in compositional elements. The closed (Renaissance) technique will tend to balance all the figures and objects in a painting (or a building for that matter) so that it possesses a sense of fullness and totality. Although the Baroque was, in its own way, just as balanced, the illusion is one of asymmetry.

4. Multiplicity to Unity

Contrary as it may sound from what has been said above, it is a fact that the Baroque painting appears more unified than the Renaissance painting. In the Baroque approach, the composition, the lighting, the shadows, even the coloration is subordinated to the total effect of the work. Perhaps that most dangerous of terms, "mood," might be applied here. It is only logical that the linear (Renaissance) artist, although providing compositional focus, would render each area of a painting with equal detail. To his mind, each area was to be clearly defined in much the same spirit as each

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color has its integrity. The Baroque artist, on the other hand, was striving for a total effect that could be achieved only by subordinating all elements in a work to the general theme or mood. It might be said that the Baroque artist was willing to sacrifice artistic independence of parts in the service of a more general unifying concept.

5. Absolute to Relative Clarity

This is the very logical outcome of what has gone before. Breaking the delineation of outline, treating colors in a ground tone manner, subordinating all elements of a work to a total conceptual gesture; all of this will lead to an impression that a Baroque painting is less "clear" in an absolute sense than a Renaissance painting.

The application of these categories to the realm of Baroque art leads Wölfflin to some interesting "general" conclusions, and this is where his more interpretative statements begin. One of the most important of these is the belief that the Baroque carries within it a sense of movement. This is thought to be one of its characteristic distinctions. To see beauty in movement rather than in repose and balance requires, as Wölfflin terms it, ". . . a new sense of beauty."[12]

Wölfflin is careful to point out that the choice of subject is not the chief determining factor in achieving this sense of movement. It is the result of the way in which the painter's eye perceives something, anything. If the subject matter naturally relates to

[12] Principles, p. 28.

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movement, so much the better. Even if the figure is "stationary," the rendering of it will project a sense of stylistic movement. Everything is perceived as "moving" and accordingly painted that way.

The elements of Baroque art combine to produce within the mind of the spectator a sense of the infinite (Unendlichkeit). The lack of precision, the open form, the recessional movement, all of these are supposed to echo the Seventeenth Century realization that the universe was much larger than man had ever dared imagine; and even more disturbingly, that man was now merely one facet in the total cosmos. As a later writer expresses it:

> The whole of the art of the Baroque is . . . full of the echo of the infinite spaces and the interrelatedness of all being. The work of art in its totality becomes the symbol of the universe as a uniform organism alive in all its parts. . . .The impetuous diagonals, the sudden foreshortenings, the exaggerated light and shade effects, everything is the expression of an overwhelming, unquenchable yearning for infinity.[13]

Now it should be made clear that Wölfflin himself never would have made such a metaphoric statement. He deals with the recessional phenomenon for what it is: a visual component of the Baroque style. It has remained for later critics, like Hauser, to translate these signs as more pregnant with meaning. I must confess that I

[13]Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, Vol. II (New York, 1959), p. 182.

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approach such exhuberant, metaphysical application with a great deal of reserve. For instance, does a sense of movement always imply a sense of life or infinitude?

An even stickier problem arises when one considers Wölfflin's remarks on the "picturesque" in art. He says, "We call the ragged beggar, with his weather-beaten hat and gaping shoes, a picturesque figure, while the boots and hats which have just come out of the shop are regarded as unpicturesque."[14] Is Wölfflin saying that there is a sense of time, of aging, of the transitory nature of all things in these objects? Fritz Strich seems to think so:

> It is observed in Rembrandt's figures that they have a past and a future; for they live in time. One sees, one notes that these people will one day die, must die, since death is immanent in their life. . . . The mood of the transitory surrounds them . . . and therein Rembrandt is brother to Shakespeare.[15]

Not too long ago I would have agreed with the above statement with its almost poignant implications. But cannot King Lear be seen simply as a play about the frailties of an old man? And King Lear reappears every time the play is done. Why should the age of Lear, of any object for that matter, carry a greater

[14] Principles, p. 24.

[15] "Barockbegriff und Literature," Die Kunstformen des Barockzeitalters, ed. Rudolf Stamm (Bern, 1956), p. 256.

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An even more valid complaint against Strich's view is that a work of art carries an aura of timelessness. A poem, a play, a painting exist in a world of aesthetic removal where they are immune from aging. Objects and events can be introduced into a work of art that do remind us of the temporal nature of man, but this functions on a connotative almost intellectual level. Volpone is going to live forever, and we know it.

Wölfflin's synthesis is brilliant in that he avoids rigidity of criteria. His five bi-polar categories allow for enormous latitude within them. As I have suggested, this produces some looseness of judgment and interpretation, but at the same time, his method successfully manages to accommodate the manifold forms of expression that make up the total Baroque movement. Wölfflin is aware of this problem of scope and recognizes the "stylistic shadings" that may be encountered from one artist to another. He compares Gerard Terborch with Bernini, for instance, a pair whose styles appear to be rather unlike at first.

> And yet, if we were to lay drawings by the two masters side by side and compare the general features of the technique, we should have to admit that there is here a perfect kinship. In both there is that manner of seeing in

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> patches instead of lines, something which we call painterly.[16]

All through his writings Wölfflin employs such relative judgments as though he were aware that the definitive statement, much as we would welcome it, would do more harm than good. A movement as expansive and lengthy as the Baroque is bound to evolutionary in nature and cannot be described with the narrow limitations suitable to a brief, locally confined "school."

The now popular statement that Baroque art is more "emotional" than Renaissance art demonstrates the expansion Wölfflin's rather non-interpretative judgments have undergone in the minds of later critics. Michael Kitson offers such an opinion:

> Of course, all art appeals in varying proportions to both the emotions and the mind. But the Baroque makes use of an emotional appeal as a means of reaching the mind in a special way. It goes out to meet the spectator's emotional susceptibilities; it is 'spectator-orientated' to a greater extent than any other style. Unlike the diffuse, torturous style of some forms of Mannerism, it is visually easy to read.[17]

Other critics will take the issue even further. Werner Weisbach in his Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation contends that Baroque is best understood as Jesuit propaganda. Now I grant that Weisbach's approach is one way of looking at Baroque art, and one

[16] Wölfflin, Principles, p. 11.

[17] p. 15.

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can construct remarkable parallels between the edicts of the Council of Trent and Baroque subject matter. My objection is that such connections are true only of Catholic, religious painting of the time. I wonder how "susceptible," to use Kitson's term, the Puritans were to Rubens' painting on the Whitehall Banqueting Room ceiling which was devoted to the glorification of James I?

Wölfflin successfully remains above such causal tie-ins and thus gains the disapproval of a socially oriented scholar such as Arnold Hauser.[18] The issue finally settles on the impossible question of whether the emotive element is in the painting or in the mind of the spectator. In this light, the subject/content aspect of any work plays a disproportionately major role in forming opinions about the "emotional" content. A viewer whose religious, political or philosophical opinions parallel those of the painter will naturally find more "emotion" in the artist's presentation of a high point in the life of some jointly admired hero. An observer of a different persuasion may judge the identical work as excessive and sentimental. In such a case, stylistic considerations are placed in a secondary position.

[18]Social History, p. 179.

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I think that to appreciate what the Baroque artist was attempting it is necessary to introduce the term, "illusionism." This, in turn, demands a definition of its antithesis, "realism." The Renaissance painter, for instance, had mastered the task of accurately representing the details of reality, but as the Renaissance regarded art as an improvement on nature, he would most often channel his technical skills towards the presentation of an idealized view of that reality. Raphael's Galatea is a conceptualized beauty based on this world but exceeding it in perfection. Perhaps "imitation" or "idealized realism," would be the best term to describe what the Renaissance attempted to create in its art. In this process of idealization, nature was regularized as were the features of the human model employed. Human proportion, coherent and reasonable, becomes the module upon which buildings are designed. It was an ordered world, wars and famines notwithstanding, and the art of the period reflects this attitude in its repose, balance and symmetry. Renaissance painting always has a "sensible" and logical focus; it is "rational," and apprehendible by the cognitive faculty of the observer. In spite of all its idealization, or perhaps because of it, the Renaissance artist is urged to base his observations on nature. I will examine this issue in some detail later on, but it can be said, I think, that the

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Renaissance artist always had one foot firmly planted in this world. He used its substances and forms as raw materials for his artistic expression even as he, under the guidance of rational order, improved on nature.

With the Sixteenth Century the old world order begins to crumble, and this collapse finds its artistic expression in Mannerism. There is little objective, external order, few absolutes of reason to which one can appeal; hence Mannerism is a highly subjective style. The artist presents a universe that simply cannot be measured by any standard save that of the human imagination. Figure and space, light and color, irrational colors are so juxtaposed by the Mannerist painter that any reference to reality is slight.

Baroque art is located between the impossible visions of Mannerism and the rational ordering of the Renaissance. The Baroque possess the imagination and fantasy of the former but retains enough of the control of the latter to prevent disintegration. It will never project the poise and balance, the repose, of high Renaissance art; but Baroque art will be far more coherent than what Mannerism produced. Using the painterly/optical techniques described by Wölfflin, the Baroque painter conjures up visions that, for all their impossibility, radiate substance, an actual sense of presence and life-like movement. The remarkable and

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incredible are invested with an illusion of solidarity or truth. This technique of making the incredible into the believable I call "illusionism."

This brief survey of the concept of the Baroque style in the visual arts is intended for background information. My purpose was to establish the generally agreed upon characteristics of this movement as a foundation for what is to follow. It is obvious that there are omissions and very rough generalizations as there will be in any such account, but to get involved with fine distinctions which would properly occupy a student of art history seems profitless in this dissertation.

I am also aware that this section has raised questions which will have to be dealt with later in this study. Just how completely do I rely upon the judgments of Wölfflin, for instance? Beyond that, which of his five categories do I find useful for analysing literature? Are my personal ideas about Baroque illusionism supportable by evidence from painting and Paradise Lost?

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Baroque as a Literary Style

In the area of literary history and criticism, the concept of the Baroque has had a difficult and sometimes strange course. The recentness of the adoption of Baroque as a stylistic term is understandable when it is recalled that Wölfflin's pioneering works date from the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century. Even so great a critic as Wölfflin found most of his energies occupied defining the stylistic criteria which could overcome the prejudices that had developed against the Baroque during the Neo-Classic revival of the Eighteenth Century. His creation of concrete categories that served to distinguish between Renaissance art and the subsequent Baroque movement is a monumental achievement in its own right.

Yet, Wölfflin possessed that almost Biblical ability to suggest vast implications in brief and ostensibly stylistic observations. Those few times he ventures outside the realm of visual art he provides those eagerly siezed upon hints which have been so greatly expanded by later critics.

> It is interesting to observe how the new style also took hold of poetry. The difference of language between Ariosto's Orlando Furioso (1516) and Tasso's Gerusalemme

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Liberata (1584) reveal the change of mood. How simple, how cheerful and lively are the first few lines of Orlando:

> Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,
> Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto,
> Che furo al tempo, che passaro i Mori
> D'Africa il mare, e in Francia nocquer tanto;...

How very different Tasso's opening lines:

> Canto l'armi pietose, e il Capitano
> Che il gran sepolcro libero di Cristo:
> Molto egli opro col senno e con la mano;
> Molto soffrì nel glorioso acquisto:
> E invan l'inferno a lui s'oppose, e invano
> S'armo d'Asia e di Libia il popol misto;
> Che il Ciel gli die favore . . .

Note everywhere the lofty adjectives, the resounding line-endings, the measured repetitions (molto --, molto --, e invano -- e invano); the weighty sentence construction, and the slower general rhythm. But the grandeur is not only in the expression; the verbal images also become larger. How significant, for instance, is Tasso's transformation of the Muses. He lifts them into a vague heavenly zone and crowns them, not with a laurel wreath, but with 'a golden crown of everlasting stars'. The adjective 'gran' is liberally used, and visions of grandeur must be conjured up everywhere.

* * * *

We might conclude in general terms that in the Renaissance every detail was given loving attention for its own sake, that it was impossible to lavish too much care on invention in variety or on the execution of the particular. Now, however, we step further back and survey the general effect; we do not require grandeur in the individual part, but only a general impression; there is less perception and more atmosphere.[19]

[19] Wölfflin, Renaissance and Baroque, pp. 84-85.

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The above is essentially all that Wölfflin says directly about parallel phenomena in literature, but it is enough to set things in motion. I have stated that I feel we hardly can expect Wölfflin to have accomplished more than he did in one lifetime. Fritz Strich, a German critic of the Baroque movement, argues that Wölfflin expected others, meaning his students and followers, to carry on the work in the field of literature. Strich studied under Wölfflin and says the master approved his efforts, "unconditionally," to apply the Baroque criteria to literature.[20] Such accounts might lead one to fear that Wölfflin is moving dangerously near surrendering his cherished insistence upon the independence of the visual arts. Strich answers this implied question by stating that Wölfflin felt a critic could be aware of the possibility of a total expressive mode for an era without being confined by this idea. I get the impression that Wölfflin would indeed be delighted by evidence that the other art forms of the Baroque period did reflect the same sort of technique he described in the visual field.

Wölfflin was more concerned with the <u>result</u> of such a general mood as expressed in the arts rather than labelling and identifying the causative factors. He is more interested in <u>how</u> the eye of the artist shifts to a

[20] p. 246.

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more visual and less plastic manner of apprehending reality than the why such a thing ever occurred. As I have suggested earlier, the followers of Wölfflin, for the most part, were not content to merely identify and record the how's in the various fields of art. Identifying the Baroque impulse, lying behind the stylistic manifestations of it, usually occupies as much time and energy as the descriptive analyses.

René Wellek has given an excellent historical account to these advancements beyond Wölfflin in his Concepts of Criticism. Wellek dates the beginning of the application of Wölfflin's suggestions to literature as around 1914.[21] This appears to be correct as many of the critics I have quoted or will quote (Strich, Stamm) were the founders of this movement and in Die Kunstformen des Barockzeitalters date their initial efforts from World War I. In most respects Wellek's chronology of the term Baroque seems valid. It must be recognized, however, that in such an expansive undertaking Wellek is reduced to giving capsule summaries of what the critics had done as well as his own very personal interpretations of those efforts.

Wellek himself reveals a very honest confusion that has plagued the concept of the Baroque from the

[21]"The Concept of Baroque" (New Haven, 1963), p. 73.

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start. If, in literature as well as in the visual arts, the end of the Renaissance is seen, as Wölfflin saw it, as the beginning of the Baroque, then some almost diametrically opposed impulses are going to have to be reconciled. I am afraid that Wellek fails to recognize the full importance of the intervention of Mannerism. It is something entirely different from the Renaissance or the Baroque.

> The rehabilitation of a misunderstood or neglected style does not take place without good reason, and there was nothing haphazard or arbitrary about the rehabilitation of mannerism, the latest artistic period to have been rediscovered and fundamentally reappraised in our time. Its language in the visual arts and in literature had been largely forgotten and had to be relearnt, and the way to a better understanding did not lie open until we had learnt to take a more unbiased view of baroque. The first step towards this was taken by impressionism, the formal relationship of which to the baroque brought the latter back into favour, thereby undermining the authority of the whole system of classical aesthetics which had hitherto barred the way. Impressionism, however, still bore deep traces of the rationalism and realism of classical art, for it remained within the broad lines of the development that had begun with the Renaissance; and, as the baroque was directly connected with the Renaissance, it was perfectly possible for its rediscovery and reappraisal to take place partly on the basis of a system of aesthetics derived from ancient and Renaissance models, though full appreciation of this fundamentally anti-classical style implied a certain relaxation of the rules of classical aesthetics. But mannerism was a much more radical departure from the classical ideal, . . .[22]

[22]Hauser, Mannerism, p. 3.

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In this way Arnold Hauser sets forth the crucial distinction in the very opening of his work on Mannerism. He is aware of the fatal error of failing to set apart this movement which ran, in Italy, from 1525 to 1590. The important point is his insistence that the Baroque is much more allied with the Renaissance than is Mannerism even though the latter intervenes between the Renaissance and the Baroque movements.

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to analyze Hauser's thesis which is, by the way, treated with great sensitivity and independence of the "causal relation syndrome" found in his earlier work. It is interesting to note that he places the Metaphysical poets and the Elizabethan dramatists, especially Shakespeare, firmly within the Mannerist group.[23]

It is distressing to see the critical accounts that lump the Metaphysical poets in with the Baroque movement. The paradox and tension present in the Metaphysicals would surely exclude them from the Baroque category once the critic became aware of the ideological and stylistic differences between the two. I am not suggesting that such a useful stylistic designation as "Metaphysical" should be eliminated from our vocabulary, but rather that we recognize that this movement is a subdivision of Mannerism and not of the Baroque.

[23]Mannerism, p. 339.

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This is a case where England's peripheral position to Europe, especially to Italy, causes a severe chronological lag. By 1600 Italy is into the Baroque. England, on the other hand, is in the Metaphysical (Mannerist) style in poetry as well as the Palladian (Mannerist) style of architecture under the Italian inspired creations of Inigo Jones.

Likewise, if we date the Italian Baroque as starting around 1590, why did it take until about 1650 to reach Germany, where, once introduced, it flourished for over a hundred years? I think this is a case where one may cite an "external" cause for artistic evolution without risking the excesses of the Zeitgeist approach. Germany was, in the early Seventeenth Century (1618-1648), in the grip of the Thirty Years War, perhaps one of the most vicious ever waged over religious differences. Many parts of Germany were quite literally decimated. Hardly the environment for the reception of a new movement of the arts; one that is exhuberant and essentially positive at that. To be realistic, had one imported Italian artisans and built a Baroque structure, the enemy, either Protestant or Catholic as the case might be, would surely have burned it down.

We cannot, however, excuse critics who place chronology above stylistic analysis. If we discover a 50 year lag between developments in Italy and England,

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then we simply must confess it exists. Naturally enough, Wölfflin's original lack of discernment had forced critics espousing the cause of Mannerism in literature to wage an uphill struggle. I am drawn to the uncomfortable conclusion that literary critics, at least in this instance, are somewhat behind the times. To overextend the concept of the Baroque does it as great a disservice as ignoring it altogether.

As an excuse we can offer the fact that the idea of Mannerism in literature is even more recent than it is in the visual arts. Seeing that Hauser's major work on Mannerism is as recent as 1965, it is not surprising that even Wellek's 1962 Postscript fails to take it into account. Wellek does mention Wylie Sypher's attempt in this direction, Four Stages of Renaissance Style, 1400-1700, and offers some very pertinent comments on Sypher's failings as a critic.[24] Sypher will be mentioned later, but generally speaking, his chief weakness is that he has attempted in a brief book, 296 pages in the paperback edition, to settle issues covering three hundred years and ranging from architecture to literature.

Another attempt to use Mannerism as a stylistic designation is Roy Daniells' Milton, Mannerism and Baroque. The chief mistake that Daniells commits is the familiar one of trying to cart a group of inapplicable

[24]pp. 125-26.

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criteria from one discipline to another. He also tends to rely on tenuous comparative interpretation too much. Although Daniells is not mentioned in Wellek's survey, Concepts of Criticism, a somewhat similar attempt by Max Deutschbein, who parallels the favored elliptical floor plan of Baroque architecture with the focal points in Macbeth, is given scoffing consideration.[25]

When stylistic/generic usage of the term, as opposed to a simply chronological employment is desired, the issue gets more complex. Because of the greater formal similarity that exists between the Renaissance and the Baroque movements, E. R. Curtius argues that the most useful general stylistic distinction can be constructed on a Classic (Renaissance and Baroque are subspecies) versus Mannerist base (with Mannerism being a constant in many eras, not just the Sixteenth Century).

> This is not the place to discuss whether the word "Mannerism" is a good choice as the designation of a period in art history and to what extent it is justified. We may borrow it because it is well adapted to fill a gap in the terminology of literary science. For that purpose, to be sure, we must free the word from all art-historical connotations and broaden its meaning until it represents simply the common denominator for all literary tendencies which are opposed to Classicism, whether they be pre-classical, post-classical, or contemporary with any Classicism. . . . The polarity of Classicism and Mannerism is far more useful as a

[25]p. 96.

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> conceptual instrument and can illuminate connections which it is easy to overlook. Much of what we shall call Mannerism is today set down as "Baroque." But this word has caused such confusion that it is better to eliminate it.[26]

Curtius is perfectly justified in his distaste for the usage of "Baroque" to describe that which is properly "Mannerism," but it appears that casting out the former term would do harm in itself. If we were to follow Curtius' suggestion, we would have no word to describe that style which is neither so tense and paradoxical as Mannerism nor so reposed and formalized as the Classical. Curtius' purpose in his work is to trace practically every tradition of literary art back to the ancients. Much of what he has to say is enlightening, but such an approach may also explain his willingness to dispense with a relatively modern term.

At the conclusion of this brief historical survey of the fortunes of the term Baroque in the area of literary criticism, one question presents itself to the mind. Is there actually such a thing as Baroque style in literature? If there is, can it be described and illustrated in stylistic terms that will rise above vague generalizations and felt impressions?

[26]European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages, trans., Willard R. Trask (New York, 1953), p. 273.

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I believe all this is possible, but it was first necessary to show, in this section, how clouded the issue of simple definition has become. Now I must construct the approach I propose to employ with the knowledge that I must avoid the errors I have been describing.

I wish to make it clear from the beginning that I am not going to attempt to settle the Mannerism versus Baroque issue. It is fruitless, if tempting, to embark on a process of identifying the Baroque by showing in which ways it is not Manneristic. Contrasts and comparisons will be inevitable and valuable, but the Baroque must be viewed in a positive light. Its independent and original values must be emphasized. In the final analysis, every movement in art is directly dependent upon what went before it. Discovering points of similarity to previous styles would in no way demean the Baroque style. On the contrary, such proof of the continuity of style would provide a worthwhile addition to the area of literary history and criticism.

The most sensible approach would seem to be to return to Wölfflin's five categories and examine them in detail. I will regard them as analytical descriptions of phenomena in the visual arts and attempt to transfer some of them to the field of literature. In doing this, I would prefer to err on the side of caution, if I must err. And error is present and incipient everywhere in such an undertaking. Odette de Mourgues correctly

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estimates the problem when she states that some of the criteria of Wölfflin cannot be used in literary analysis.[27] It is hopeless to demand that literature be examined by the identical criteria that has proven so useful in the visual arts. I will determine, therefore, which of Wölfflin's criteria are suitable for my analysis of Paradise Lost. Some "translation" will be both necessary and obvious.

[27]Metaphysical, Baroque and Precieux Poetry (Oxford, 1953), p. 68.

Baroque Criteria

Wölfflin essentially deals with formal, stylistic analysis. As he is my primary source and inspiration, it naturally follows that the basic premise of my dissertation is that any similarity between Baroque visual and literary art must be founded on stylistic comparisons. Eventually I hope to formulate some more expansive conclusions about the Baroque "impulse" lying behind all the art of this period, but this will be the result rather than the starting point of this inquiry. The chief benefit of my stylistic approach is that if it proves valid it will accommodate the expression of almost any cultural or ideological stimuli. As Helmut Hatzfield argues, ". . . literary science dealing primarily with literary art is bound to aim at a formal category not a psychology, philosophy or theology of history of the Baroque."[28]

I believe that my decision to limit my comparisons to painting and Paradise Lost has improved my chances of arriving at more general stylistic judgments. In the execution of these comparisons, however, I have come to the decision that some of Wölfflin's categories

[28]"Baroque Literature," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XIV, 2 (1955), 156.

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simply will not serve my purpose. There are inherent characteristics in the medium that an artist employs, and these will inevitably determine the means by which one can analyze his work.

There is then, first of all, the simple question of which of Wölfflin's categories will apply to literature. If one so alters the art historical basis of his judgments that they easily fit a poem, it is likely that one has left Wölfflin far behind. On the other hand, as I have suggested, a plain, across the board transference will not work. I think it is much better to exclude, in toto, some of Wölfflin's criteria rather than to subject them to so much alteration and distortion that it is an insult to invoke his name in connection with them. To admit that some of his categories do not work for literature in no way negates those that can. In his own writings, Wölfflin admits that some of his categories work best when architecture is being considered; others function best in relation to painting or sculpture.

Without hesitation I exclude the linear-painterly category from the ranks of literary criteria. It may be true, as Frank Warnke suggests, that some poets of the Seventeenth Century seem to be attempting "painterly or sculptural effects,"[29] but this category can, I feel,

[29] European Metaphysical Poetry (New Haven, 1961), p. 3.

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be employed only in the most general sense in dealing with poetry. Such ambiguity of meaning is precisely what I hope to eliminate in this dissertation. The most obvious point of comparison in this category might well be in the narrative content of a poem. A "linear" poet might be more concerned with the relation of events, straight narrative, whereas the "painterly" poet would, perhaps as Wölfflin suggests, be more devoted to the creation of atmosphere--the presentation of mood through sensory images. Possibly, but such a tenuous distinction is too loose to be a truly formal stylistic category.

Nor do I feel that Planar-recessive is a suitable category for literary criticism. Wölfflin employs it as an almost strictly compositional element in a painting; the question is whether a painting organizes itself into planes or is experienced as a "homogeneous recessional movement."[30] How can a poem be organized into planes? Or possess a homogeneous recessional movement? In Paradise Lost, for instance, could the argument be supported that God's eternal presence represents a recessional element in that his will extends from the throne of Heaven to the very depths of Hell itself? Such a viewpoint is theologically valid but structurally irrelevant. For one thing, the Baroque recessional line was, especially in the later Baroque, diagonal. In a painting,

[30] Principles, p. 82.

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such compositional elements are relatively easy to apprehend. This is not the case in a poem of the length of Paradise Lost.

It is intriguing to attempt to equate the planar-recessive to what might be called "implication" in literature, but is an equally fruitless attempt. Merely because a figure, let us say God, is off somewhere beyond the boundary of the poem doesn't mean that the line we draw from the active agent to Him is diagonal, or even recessive. It is simply cognitive. The tendency to draw such lines is not merely intriguing, it is seductive. Consider how easily an over-zealous critic might seize upon a comparison offered by that consummate scholar, Eric Auerbach. Auerbach is analyzing the difference between the Homeric epic and the Old Testament. "But Homer . . knows no background. What he narrates is for the time being the only present, and fills both the stage and the reader's mind completely."[31] In contract, Auerbach discusses the Biblical account of Abraham and Isaac. In it God speaks. From where? Abraham's answer to God's inquiry is that he is "present." Auerbach sees this not so much as an actual statement of location as an affirmation of Abraham's moral position in relation to God. God is on an entirely different level than

[31]Mimesis, The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans., Willard Trask (Garden City, 1957), pp. 2-3.

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Now Auerbach is not so concerned with planar-recessive judgments as he is with the task of describing the depiction of reality, but I feel that his statement could easily lead the Baroque critic astray. Yet even Auerbach's own words preclude such a possibility. God is in an undetermined place. This surely is not comparable to the visual usage of diagonals and recessive patterns.

The closed-open category also appears to me to be unusable. In fact of all Wölfflin's categories, this is the one that I have the greatest personal difficulty in employing even when examining the visual arts. Wölfflin lists several distinctions between the Renaissance and the Baroque mode of "structuring" a painting.

1. Classic art is an art of definite horizontals and verticals. The Baroque conceals the opposition of these elements.

2. In classic art, symmetry was generally present in a stable balance. The Baroque completely overcomes stable, symmetrical balance.

3. In the tectonic (Renaissance) style, the filling relates to the given space. With the Baroque, the filling of the aesthetic space is apparently adventitious, even in painting.[32]

[32]Principles, pp. 126-36.

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I feel that in literature only the second criterion, relative to symmetry and balance, is possibly applicable; but even there a close reading of Wölfflin reveals that he is not dealing with balance, stability and the like as it can be perceived in literature. In point three, Wölfflin is saying that in Renaissance painting there appears to be an inevitable and logical relationship between the figure represented and the spatial framework within which the painter places it. The Baroque seems to offer a less posed, apparently more spontaneous rendering of a moment of action. To make this comparison valid in examining Paradise Lost, we would have to assume that the twelve books correspond to tectonic, symmetrical units.

The structure of a poem such as Paradise Lost is, to my mind, totally subordinate to its meaning. Milton states that he is going to ". . . justifie the wayes of God to men," and everything in the book moves towards that end. In fact, I am of the opinion that a "total," structural overview, such as that available to the painter and his viewer, is precluded by the very nature of the artistic form utilized by the epic poet. Most structural analyses of Paradise Lost are after-the-fact reconstructions. Even Isabel MacCaffrey's imaginative and accurate depiction of the progress of the poem in the form of an inverted V shape is not

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analogous to the same shape discerned in a painting. I am not dismissing structural analysis of Paradise Lost. I simply contend that to see it as the basic unifying force of the work is erroneous. Milton's "construction" cannot be considered equivalent to composition in painting. I am convinced, for instance, that Milton's revision of his great work from the original ten to the final twelve books was done for the sake of meaning.

There remain then the two categories of clear-unclear and multiplicity-unity. Although I think there are elements of these criteria that can be applied to Paradise Lost with more validity than those I have discounted, there still remain many problems in their application. These will become apparent as I proceed in my analysis.

As a matter of fact, I have found the most profitable material in Wölfflin's "general" stylistic remarks. These can be divided into two categories. The first of these is what I would term the "sense of something" group. The visual art of the Baroque period possesses a heightened sense of movement, a sense of the picturesque, a sense of the infinite and so forth. In spite of the fact that the last of these, the infinite, has appealed greatly to many critics, especially the Germans, I hesitate to examine Paradise Lost from such

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The second group of general comments encompasses more "technical" observations. The chief among these are Wölfflin's observations on light, shadow and color. It is impossible to offer here the sort of capsule summary I presented describing the five major categories. The reason is simply that Wölfflin does not treat these basic elements of art as separable concepts. His work is far more predicated on the assumption that the five categories will exert their influence on these more generalized elements. They appear, or rather comments pertaining to them appear, in each of the five categories.

For my purposes I have found it more profitable to elevate light in Baroque art and movement in Baroque art to the level of separate considerations. I will employ the categories of clear-unclear and multiplicity-unity primarily for illustrative purposes of supporting my general contentions. I am making my approach clear at this time as I recognize that such organization may appear somewhat arbitrary.

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CHAPTER II

SOURCES OF LIGHT IN BAROQUE PAINTING

Any element of art can be removed from its interdependent position within a poem or painting and scrutinized as though it were a separate entity. A precise stylistic analysis must employ an approach that tends in this direction, but the investigator must always be aware of the inherent dangers of such a procedure. Such an elevation of any artistic component can produce the illusion that it is free-standing and unique. This sort of near-sightedness will fail to recognize the inevitable antecedents that have heavily contributed to the technique at hand. Only too rarely do works like E. R. Curtius' monumental European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages appear as correctives and demonstrate how truly continuous is the course of stylistic evolution.

Light, and the technique of its rendering, is a subject that all too easily lends itself to the exclusively analytical approach. Seventeenth Century painting especially seems to offer such dramatic departures from what had gone before that the unsuspecting may

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well imagine that here is a sudden and altogether new direction in style. Without attempting to minimize in any way that which is truly unique and separable in the Baroque technique, I feel it necessary to emphasize the point that "Baroque" lighting is located on a stylistic and chronological continuum. To fully understand what the Baroque painter was attempting in the matter of representing light it is necessary to devote a great deal of attention to what had gone before. As a matter of fact, the really "epoch making" changes in the rendering of light in painting occurred well before the Seventeenth Century.

The very term "light" is subject to confusion. There is, for instance, light to be examined from the standpoint of its source. And once light is provided by a source, how will its behavior (reflection and diffusion) be handled by the artist? The inevitable consideration of color must enter into any discussion for light is invisible unless it has an object against which to impinge and reflect. Every object has color. I prefer to leave the question of color to a later section of this dissertation and here devote my attention to the matter of light as an illuminant. My chief concern will be with the sources of light. Where does it come from? Is the source natural or supernatural? Or do such distinctions lose their meaning when examining a work of art?

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In spite of the fact that light, as I have indicated, so easily lends itself to the isolated method of analysis, it appears that few art critics or historians have done so. Other elements of style or a frankly biographical/historical approach seems to be the standard pattern, and light, although given from fair to reasonable attention, seems to end up in a subordinate position. The best work I have yet discovered that reverses the technique and makes light in painting its central topic is Uber das Licht in der Malerie (Concerning Light in Painting) by Wolfgang Schöne.[33]

Schöne's analysis is clear because he simply avoids qualitative considerations of any other sort and deals exclusively with the manner in which various artists and eras represent light in painting. Since such a "pure" approach is rare in a scholarly work, I will be forced to draw upon Schöne very heavily for what is to follow.

In Schöne's opinion, the great change in the rendering of light occurs with the Renaissance. To fully appreciate what happened then, however, it is necessary to go back and examine how the representation of illumination, was managed by the artists of the Middle

[33](Berlin, 1954). Schöne's work is exhaustive and I find to offer specific page references for my synthesis very difficult. I ask my readers to trust that I am being true to Schöne's meaning in my synopsis of his lengthy book.

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Ages. Prior to the Fifteenth Century, the figures in a painting possess what Schöne terms Eigenlicht (self-light or inherent luminosity). It is what Leonardo da Vinci in the Renaissance will term luce. It is an intrinsic aspect of the figure itself and will occur in the representation of natural light sources, such as the moon or a torch. Lume can be considered "applied" light, or relfected light. It is by the second method, the lume, naturally anough, that most objects are made visible in real life as in painting.

For the Middle Ages, this was not a crucial issue. With marvelous honesty, the artists of that period realized that figures must be illuminated to be visible. Whether the technique of rendering lume, applied light, was beyond the abilities of the Medieval painter or whether this more "naturalistic" rendition was not missed by the viewers is unimportant for my purpose. The facts are that the Middle Ages employed the Eigenlicht or luce technique almost exclusively. This means that the figures in a Medieval painting will possess their own, internal light source. They do not actually "glow" for the simple reason that everything else in the painting is represented in the same manner; hence no real contrast is present. The lighting tends to be quite even and Schöne even remarks that it is well nigh impossible to imagine the figures in a Medieval

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painting in "natural" darkness as there is no directional light source, such as the moon or torches, to be extinguished. With this in mind, it should be no surprize to discover that the painter of the Middle Ages was equally indifferent to highlight and its opposite, shadow.[34]

To indicate divine radiance, that one form of Eigenlicht that is founded on solid theoretical and theological grounds, the Medieval artist invented his own highly successful convention, the halo. It is important to note that the means of indicating divinity most employed by later ages, a heightened luminosity inherent in the sacred figure itself, was not used by the artists of the Middle Ages.

With the advent of the Renaissance came an increasing naturalness in painting. The mastery of perspective and the dissemination of its technique spared the viewer those strange slanting tables and jumbled cityscapes of the previous era. In lighting the parallel is a shift from the concept of luminosity to that of illumination. The figures are now illuminated by an external light source which determines for the artist where the highlights and shadows will fall.

[34]The Fall quarter, 1968, Medieval show at Michigan State University's Kresge Art Center bore out Schöne's contention. Rudimentary shadowing appeared only for the purposes of modelling the figures.

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On the other hand, one must not overemphasize the "realism" of the Renaissance artist. The techniques of that artist are rooted in nature, but a great deal of idealization was present all the same. Organizing an ordered world was as much a task to him as was the faithful rendering of reality. It is because of this that the lighting in a Renaissance painting, although obeying the laws of nature, will nonetheless contribute towards that general impression of balance and repose that is so characteristic of that period.

Such a splendid and rational attitude could not persist long, and whether it was simply that the artist began to seek new ways of seeing things (Wölfflin) or whether reality itself precludes such a vision of the world being sustained more than a few decades (Hauser), the fact remains that the Sixteenth Century brought it to a close. Mannerism appears, or reappears according to one's theoretical bias, and the carefully nurtured and idealized naturalism of the Renaissance is cast aside.

This is especially clear in the topic I am now examining, light. Critics tend to emphasize the tortured figures and "unnatural" composition in a Mannerist painting, but the bizarre handling of light in such works contributes every bit as much to the vague feeling of discomfort such creations prompt. Mannerist

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lighting tends to fall into two general types. Some of the painters employ a strangely reflected light. It is difficult to locate the source, or sources, as the illumination that finally strikes the figures appears to have been greatly affected by the environment through which it passed. This lighting tends to flatten out the composition and figures and produces the most bizarre coloration, especially with the flesh tones. The eveness of Renaissance lighting produces a totally different effect. It is "wholesome" as well as rooted in reality.

If Pontormo and Fiorentino represent the "flat" Mannerist approach to lighting, then Tintoretto is perhaps the best example of the high contrast lighting technique. A rather murky atmosphere is pierced by sharp, even harsh, areas of light. In some paintings of his the central figure is not the most brightly illuminated. I find reproductions of Tintoretto's work very disquieting in this respect.

Before proceeding on to the Baroque era, it is advisable to summarize briefly the fundamental theories of light and its behavior that had been discovered by the Renaissance and often violated by the Mannerists. There are four essential sources:

1. The natural illuminant: Sun, Moon and daylight.
2. The artificial illuminant: torch, candle, fire.

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3. The sacred illuminant: a glory and the like, usually around a figure.

4. The indifferent illuminant: that which cannot be identified as one of the above three. The term itself has no bearing on the character of the light.

It can be said that the "indifferent" light is additional light added when the "natural" source is not logically adequate to the task of illumination. The decision as to when and where to add the "indifferent" light is in the hands of the artist. It is light added to advance the artistic effectiveness of the work and is thereby accountable only on the basis of whether it succeeds in the task.

It is important to note that the "sacred" category is as important and "natural" as any of the others. In other words, the Medieval concept of Eigenlicht is maintained with the essential difference that since the rest of the painting will employ shadow and highlight, the inherent luminosity will now be noticeable. Very often this divine luminosity will be supplemented by a "natural" source or by the ubiquitous "indifferent" source. This concept of sacred light is going to be of great importance once the Baroque era begins in the Seventeenth Century.

Schöne feels that the painter who was most influential on what were going to be the Seventeenth Century approaches to lighting was Caravaggio. Although he did not directly influence all the painters who were

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to follow his apparent lead, he does nevertheless offer one of the clearest examples of the transition from the styles of the Sixteenth Century into the following Baroque. Not all critics cede him this role as trend setter and some deal with him in an actually perjorative manner. Ellis Waterhouse, for instance, says he "turned to dark backgrounds and a system of irrational lighting which has a misleading air of realism but is exploited with the greatest poetic license."[35]

What did Caravaggio do that makes him so important to this survey? The essence of it lies in the words of the just-quoted Waterhouse--"a misleading air of realism." I absolutely disagree with the disapproving tone Waterhouse bestows on this otherwise very pertinent comment. It is obvious that this critic is applying the criteria of realism. I believe that what Waterhouse deems "irrational" regarding Caravaggio's technique of illumination corresponds directly to what Schöne has called the "indifferent." Of course earlier painters had used the "indifferent" source, but Caravaggio carried it to its "logical" extreme. His works are usually illuminated with a powerful ray of light, directed into the composition from the side, or above, or both, that strongly accentuates the human figures placed

[35]Italian Baroque Painting (Greenwich, Connecticut, 1962), p. 26.

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as they are against a very dark, tenebroso background. It is extremely dramatic and effective, but upon thinking about it the viewer begins to wonder where the light comes from and what causes it? One of the best illustrations of this is his Calling of St. Matthew (Plate I). Although critics may have decided that this is an exterior setting in order to account for the light source on a more natural base, I feel the question is still up in the air. All of this is actually beside the point, however, as the technique works in an artistic sense.

Caravaggio is perhaps the clearest example of this "irrational" approach to lighting, although it must be kept in mind that even he painted works that do not conform to this style. Painters following Caravaggio were greatly impressed by the dramatic value of what he had accomplished but hesitated to continue in an identical direction. His inheritors might use his technique and they did, yet they felt obligated to make it all somewhat more reasonable. Schöne feels they accomplished this by "concretizing" the technique by more or less amalgamating the artistically essential "indifferent" light with the other three light sources.[36] Considering the theoretical attitudes the Baroque movement was going to evolve, it is clear that the arbitrary technique of a Caravaggio would not fit in easily. The

[36]Schöne, p. 153.





PLATE I. THE CALLING OF SAINT MATTHEW

by Caravaggio

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Baroque is going to evolve an internal logic and control of its own.

There are some important points concerning this Baroque logic of light which need to be emphasized as they are going to relate directly to what I later will have to say about Milton's usage of light in Paradise Lost.

In the first place, light appears to be at the disposal of the Baroque artist. By this I mean that we sense that it is not a purely natural illuminant, but rather participates in controlling our responses to the painting. The light is "tightened up" and usually enters the picture with a high contrast value implicit within it. One expects a dazzling ray of light to cast a shadow. This heightens the dramatic value of the figures within the painting and perhaps helps explain the reputation for "emotion" the Baroque has recieved.

In the second place, light will more and more apparently obey the laws of optical logic. I underline "apparently" as this very qualifier is of the greatest importance. It can be said, very generally I admit, that the Seventeenth Century, striving for this "natural" feeling, had more in common with the Renaissance than did the intervening Mannerist period. Whereas the latter era would give birth to works of art in which all logic was deliberately flaunted to

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conforms, at least superficially, to the rules of "naturalistic" theory.

As in almost everything, the Baroque artist felt free to combine techniques to achieve what he considered to be the desired artistic effect even when he supposedly was operating under the demands of nature. A painting such as Rubens' Flight into Egypt (Plate II) reveals under close examination that he has indeed combined several possible sources for maximum effect and drama. There is the moon as a natural light source, but it is obviously not only in the wrong position to illuminate the Holy Family, it isn't even strong enough. The Holy Infant could, under the category of "sacred," be thought of as supplying the necessary source, but it can be seen that the Infant himself casts a shadow on His mother's breast. A torch held at the head of the donkey would resolve the issue, but there is no torch. We may conclude, therefore, that this is a case where the "indifferent" source is employed. The most important aspect of all is that we will tend to accept as logical the Infant as the source of the necessary additional illumination. This is precisely what Rubens wanted us to do.

Murillo's The Immaculate Conception (Plate III) reveals again the prevalence of the "indifferent" source and the conceptual "sacred" under which it is often disguised. In this work, the Virgin is lighted from the





PLATE II. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT by Rubens



PLATE III. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

by Murillo

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front with no source visible, yet compositionally the background immediately behind her is the brightest area in the painting and suffused with an ethereal liminosity. Once again the point must be made that for all its concern with concretizing the source, the Baroque movement was more liberal in its interpretation of lighting than might at first be deduced. I believe this is because of the "apparent realism" with which it is handled.

An even better example of this solution, of the blending of the "indifferent" with the "natural, artificial or sacred" source is Guido Reni's St. John the Baptist (Plate IV). The center subject is highlighted against a dim, if not darkish, background by light that could be thought of as subdued, natural illumination suddenly breaking through a cloud. It is not a bright ray of sunlight (St. John casts no shadow), yet the body itself is rendered in decreasing tones to indicate that this could not be the "sacred" category functioning. Placing this painting next to Caravaggio's David with the Head of Goliath shows how Reni, by mixing the "indifferent" with the ostensibly "natural" makes his painting more believable than does Caravaggio. The illumination in the latter is completely arbitrary.

It can be seen from these few examples that the much mentioned Baroque "naturalism" doesn't tend to be so naturalistic after all. The Baroque artist retained





PLATE IV. SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

by Guido Reni

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as much arbitrariness in his treatment of light as did artists of previous eras. The great difference lies in the fact that the Baroque artist made it all look probable and nautral.

I feel it best to summarize what I have offered so far rather than go into the analogous question of color in Baroque painting. This very important subject will be dealt with later in the section on Unclarity. Even more essential, I wish to examine Paradise Lost relative to Milton's handling of light in Paradise Lost and employ the basic fund of stylistic contentions I have so far set forth.

I have some general observations regarding the "working practices" of the Baroque artists that I wish to present here. These are a summation of points already presented:

1. As with all things Baroque, there will be great latitude within any one statement concerning it. Various artists will employ slightly different techniques. One artist may vary his solution from time to time.

2. Light is of primary importance to the Baroque era. Wölfflin has shown that it is no longer slavishly bound to the delineation of form. It is an almost independent element capable of being manipulated far beyond the point required for simple illumination.

3. In spite of all the "freedom" thus achieved, the Baroque painter will usually try to make the light in his

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> creations behave at least apparently realistically. I would term an awareness of this fact as one of the essentials in understanding Baroque illusionism.

It is this third point which accounts for what I term the "interior" logic of Baroque art. Granted that any form of art has its own logic in this sense, the crucial issue is how closely this artistic logic coincides with "exterior" logic. This is precisely what realism is all about. And although it usually does violence to a work of art to apply "real world" standards of believability to it, there still exists the troublesome fact that artists themselves often appear to be guided by an awareness of the connection between the two spheres.

Just as the Bibienas carried stage perspective far beyond the rendering of actual reality in their theatrical vistas and avenues, so the Baroque painters carried light and its behavior far beyond the attempt to portray more accurately the highlights and shadows of the real world. In both examples, however, there was an apparent adherence to the rules of possibility. The perspective of a Bibiena never quite violated the rules of optics even though such palaces were never seen by the eye of man.

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CHAPTER III

LIGHT IN PARADISE LOST

If my assumptions are correct, a close examination of the employment of light in Paradise Lost should yield parallel patterns to those I have found in Baroque painting. The issue of light source is of first concern in such a comparison. Following that, the eclecticism of usage and the sense of movement, in Wölfflin's terms, should be pointed out. Such a many faceted approach should in no way discourage the attempt, for as C. J. Friedrich points out, to attempt to eliminate contradiction "engenders the danger that the stylistic phenomenon is deprived of its full vitality and living richness."[37]

The matter of the source of light in painting, which was dealt with in my previous chapter, is especially relevant to Milton's techniques. I believe it can be shown that Milton, much like a Baroque Painter, will employ several different kinds of light sources for the artistic and dramatic purposes of his work. It must be

[37]"Style and Historical Interpretation," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XIV, 2, (1955), 145.

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made clear that I will not necessarily argue that what Milton does is unique to him alone. As with my exposition of the evolution of the techniques of rendering light in painting, I believe all art, including poetry, must be placed on a continuum that runs from the earliest time to the present day. Doing an influence study is not my purpose, however.

Going beyond the initial concept of source, there is even more ground for analysis if the artistic deployment of light, once it has been introduced into the poem, is examined as a second major aspect. It is precisely within this stylistic area that most of what follows will be developed. What does Milton do with light once its source has been established? Will his stylistic treatment of light be similar in most respects to that of a Baroque painter?

A valuable analysis of certain aspects of the function of light in Milton's Paradise Lost already exists; Isabel MacCaffrey's Paradise Lost as Myth. This fine example of the analysis of literature as myth yields some excellent observations related to light; perhaps the greatest being the establishment of the concept of "mythic truth" somewhat akin to poetic truth, but transcending any possible complaint that its assertions are unverifiable by objective methodology. This idea has been expressed in other terms, such as, the

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true or genuine is not "opposed to the figurative, but the false."[38] The most relevant point for my inquiry is that the establishment of the mythic universe almost inevitably depends upon the employment of light and light symbolism.

> The light of Paradise Lost, in mythical fashion, sums up many such ideas; it is the source of life, of purity, of truth, and in itself contains them all. It is an actor in the drama, a substantial quality that participates as ruler of the upper region, life-bringer, truth revealer, the purger of mists from inner and outer sight.[39]

Note that this mythic attitude expresses only the positive qualities of light. Traditionally, light was thought of as a sensuous and physical manifestation of goodness and/or God. In its simplest form, light equals divinity.

Such a concept was given allegorical expression as early as Plato,[40] and tracing the enlargement and application of this belief is helpful at arriving at a better understanding of Schöne's "sacred" light source. Especially important is the Medieval Neo-Platonism of St. Augustine in which Christ is called "light" in the true sense of the word and not merely in some figurative

[38]Roland M. Frye, God, Man and Satan (Princeton, 1960), p. 15.

[39]Isabel G. MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as Myth (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 170.

[40]Plato The Republic 508 B, C. 509 B.

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sense.[41] In Medieval painting, stained glass and illuminated manuscripts, we see that the artist resolved the dilemma of presenting this divine luce, inherent light, by the device of halo and rays. If, as Schöne contends, the rendering of light in the Middle Ages tended to treat all figures as self-illuminated, then this creation of the halo and glory was an inspired solution.

Such a naive and unified concept could not withstand the speculation of later theorists, and indeed we find that St. Thomas takes issue with it. Granting that light is the most divine of the physical elements in the universe, he still contends that it is not spiritual. There may well be an "intellectual" or "spiritual" light existing in an allegorical sense, but nothing spiritual or alligorical can be an object of physical sensation.[42] The obvious solution, and one that Aquinas by no means excludes, is to see the one, the physical, as a parallel to the other, the spiritual or intellectual. But precisely because of the dualism, the physically brighter object will be more illustrative of the spiritually brighter.

[41]Joseph A. Mazzeo, "Light Metaphysics, Dante's 'Convivio' and the letter to Can Grande Della Scala," Traditio (1958), 192-93.

[42]Ibid., p. 196.

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The troublesome theological implications of all this needn't be an obstacle in this study. From an artistic standpoint, the essential fact is that such dualism, or allegorical interpretation, is perfectly suited to the human sensorium. ". . . God's reality is typologically deduced from incomprehensibility and expressed in terms 'accommodated to human understanding."[43] This Doctrine of Accommodation then is perfectly traditional and well accepted prior to the Seventeenth Century. To express the inexpressible, if it related to God, was a worthwhile endeavor for any artist. The Council of Trent, for instance, felt that this allegorical representation of God was one of the best means available for reinforcement of the true belief of the flock. The Renaissance's shift towards naturalism, if I may use the term in an admittedly broad sense, could not undermine such a solid and traditional concept. And Milton, speaking through Raphael, will invoke it to justify the various accounts and descriptions that will be presented in Paradise Lost.

> . . ., and what surmounts the reach
> Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
> By lik'ning spiritual to corporeal forms,
> As may express them best, though what if Earth
> Be but the shaddow of Heav'n, and things therein
> Each to other like, more then on earth is thought?
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> (V, 571-76)

[43]Frye, p. 9.

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I contend, therefore, that Milton's employment of a scale of luminosity in the poem to indicate spiritual elevation is directly parallel to the same practice involving "sacred" light in painting for the same effect. Both techniques are founded upon the same theological-metaphysical concept. But just as the Baroque painter often combined the "sacred" and the "natural," so indeed will Milton. Additionally, the "sacred" and the "indifferent" source will be mixed in much the same manner by both.

I will begin with the proem to Book III as this is one of the clearest examples of the "sacred" light course. It comes at the very outset of the Book and, from position alone, has great visibility.

> Hail holy Light, ofspring of Heav'n first-born,
> Or of th'Eternal Coeternal beam
> May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,
> And never but in unapproached light
> Dwelt from Eternitie; dwelt then in thee,
> Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
>
> (III, 1-6)

Here in this formal, horatory and conventional invocation which calls for support for the traditionally insufficient powers of the poet, the argument is put as clearly as is possible: "God is light."

Yet one must always guard against using valuable analytic terms in too concrete a manner. The great Ernst Cassirer shows that a "myth" which accounts for the universe, although always true in and of itself

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independent of external tests of validity,[44] does in fact proceed through several different stages of "mythic consciousness." Without suggesting that the "mythic school" of literary criticism has overstated its case, I do wish to advance one idea. Paradise Lost is a work of art created by one man, and as such is going to possess individualistic elements that are his interpretations of traditional views. Indeed, the brief analysis I have given of the concept of divine light should make it evident that once Plato has spoken the chain of conceptual overtones has begun and the purely mythic meaning has ended. The speculative mind of man touched the issue, and as the philosophers will employ their techniques to an end other than merely accounting for the sunrise, so will the artists utilize the concept to further a particular view of reality.

Myth arises inevitably in a culture. The same cannot be said of Paradise Lost or any other work of art. Milton wrote it to "justify the ways of God to man," and we must always bear in mind both his conscious artistic choices as well as his chosen theological attitudes. How much of the feeling of mythic certainty that Paradise Lost possesses is due to a genuine archetypal remembrance and how much to the stylistic abilities of the author, it

[44]Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven, 1957), p. 73.

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With this in mind, I would like to return to the opening lines of Book III. Milton continues the proem and is preparing us for a rapid descent into darkness. He manages this with a reference to the pre-creation universe.

> . . . before the Sun,
> Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice
> Of God, as with a Mantle didst invest
> The rising world of waters dark and deep,
> Won from the void and formless infinite.
>
> (III, 8-12)

Milton, whether granted at this point that his intent is similar to that of the Baroque painter, nevertheless employs much the same approach. Note the creation of a "high-contrast" tenebrose atmosphere immediately after the opening lines of light and glory.

> Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing,
> Escap't the Stygian Pool, though long detain'd
> In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight
> Through utter and through middle darkness borne
> With other notes then to th' Orphean Lyre
> I sung of Chaos and Eternal Night,
> Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down
> The dark descent, and up to reascend,
> Though Hard and rare: . . .
>
> (III, 13-21)

Referring to the first two books of the epic, he clearly establishes, or rather recalls, the nature of Chaos and Hell. This is done primarily in terms of the absence of light. Coupled with this is an implicit directionality

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in that the intensity of light varies with the height. Milton appears to rely heavily upon the connotative powers of the words themselves, "darknes . . . Eternal Night." Drawing on the conventional responses of the language is the stock in trade of any poet.

I think the most important element here that helps to classify Milton as a Baroque poet is the sense of movement he conveys and how this stimulates imagination without the details of normal description. It is motion above and beyond active narrative; it is a sheer sensory evocation of conditions existing in the various realms of the universe. Consider the actual sparseness, perhaps economy is a better word, of the descriptive adjectives. It is a "Stygian" pool that he escaped from with the suggestion of an energetic struggle in the process. It was an "obscure sojurn" in contrast to the luminosity of his present efforts.

Milton's approach is simple and direct, but that is by no means a criticism of him. Dante was driven to something of the same simplistic approach in the last canto of Paradiso where he too is conjuring up a sense of the divine light.

> With extraordinary insistence, Dante repeats some form of the verb veder (to see) or a derivation thereof every few lines. The transition . . . makes all the more sophisticated resources of language inadequate, and one must revert to a childlike form of emphasis, mere repititions. This simplest

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> of rhetorical devices is, by some miracle of art, adequate for the expression of the most unimaginable of possible experiences.[45]

We have then one place-name adjective, Stygian, used by Milton which carries enormous implications from classical antiquity. In addition to serving as locale designations, "Utter" and "Eternal Night" can be paired as absolute terms; "obscure" (referring to Hell) and "middle" (referring to Chaos) as less absolute. "Dark" is more generalized and takes its precise meaning from either descriptive modifiers or the context. In this case, I feel it is to be thought of as a spectrum growing more dense as the depths are plumbed and moderating as the reascent begins. Regardless of the figurative or evocative elements present, the mind sees Milton in motion. Although not defined in the traditional descriptive sense, the spatial realms through which this movement occurs are defined by light or its absence.

This juxtaposition of light and dark also serves to establish the Baroque sense of paradox.[46] It is impossible to think about light without also being aware of the possibility of its opposite darkness. Other

[45]Mazzeo, p. 191.

[46]To my mind, paradox is a confession that Aristotelean logic is inadequate for dealing with much of the world. Things are not merely A or non-A, but are potentially either. In Paradise Lost only God is eternally and totally luminous. Lucifer and the fallen host are proof that even the brightest seraphim have the potentiality within them to be creatures of darkness.

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contrasts exist, of course, such as time-eternity, good-evil, boundedness-infinity. Each theme implies its opposite. I do not wish to give the impression that the Baroque era was the only one in which such a balance of contrasts existed, but there is no doubt in my mind that the Baroque era heightened the awareness that paradox is the normal condition of the world and more importantly had the technical means to represent it. I will deal with this issue of paradox more fully in a later chapter.

Milton even employs his personal affliction, blindness, to artistic effect in the proem to Book III. Traditionally, the divine gift of poetry or prophecy often demanded the loss of physical vision; another case of paradox I might add. And as Tieresias in Oedipus Rex, though blind, can see what those with eyesight cannot and makes reference to the fact, so Milton refers to his own disability. In this case, however, it is more than a mere reference to the persona of the blind poet. Milton will, with the greatest sensitivity, employ his loss to heighten the imagery of light and darkness.

> . . . thee I revisit safe,
> And feel thy sovran vital Lamp; but thou
> Revisit'st not these eyes, that rowle in vain
> To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
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> (III, 21-24)

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Once again light and vision are coupled with a sense of action to convey the imagistic, visual concept. It is highly dependent on the verbs for its sense of movement. Milton feels the rays of "thy sovran vital Lamp," his eyes "rowle in vain . . ." yet can ". . . find no dawn." The sense of loss that his implies is clearly stated in the following lines which rank among the most poignant in literature.

> Thus with the Year
> Seasons return, but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summers Rose,
> Or flocks, or heards, or human face divine;
> But cloud in stead, and ever-during dark
> Surrounds me, from the chearful wayes of men
> Cut off, and for the Book of knowledg fair
> Presented with a Universal blanc . . .
>
> (III, 40-48)

Yet the relationship between the darkness of Milton's blindness and the darkness of the nether regions, although apparently obvious, is in actuality indirect. Although the poet has suffered the extinction of physical sight and thus must tolerate his own "during dark," he is granted a compensation that is forever denied the fallen.

> 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, . . .
>
> (III, 51-54)

This is what MacCaffrey terms the "mythic light" serving in its capacity as the "purger of mists from inner and

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outer sight."[47] Yet Milton has been denied "outer" sight by his blindness. We also can reasonably assume that, since he did not go totally blind until middle age, he retained vivid recollections of the earthly scenes he had witnessed and could draw upon them as he wished. To my mind, the thing that makes Milton especially Baroque in this respect is that he doesn't distinguish between the realms of vision. It is a Baroque reconciliation of concept and sensorium.

The "Celestial light" could have been treated in a highly symbolic way within the poem, could have been expressed in an analogous manner. Rather, beyond its source and the ends it may serve, he treats it as though it were physical light. The mythic/mystical and the material are united by technique and style. The intellectual difference may be maintained but the presentment of both is identical. This is another manifestation of what I call Baroque "illusionism," in which the most substantial means are employed for the depiction of the miraculous.

With such stylistic freedom available to him, Milton proceeds to picture things "invisible to mortal sight" very much as a Baroque painter might do. The very next sequence of lines is a description of the

[47]MacCaffrey, p. 170.

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Almighty on his throne, surely something never seen by mortal man, although Milton very likely believed he was presenting as accurate a vision of the celestial court as possible. I believe that a Baroque artist, such as Milton, felt the necessity to make his "visions" as real and imaginatively vivid as possible to persuade, convince and overwhelm us. And the Baroque usage of light and dark contribute a great deal to this effect of palpable presence. What is even more important, perhaps, is that this establishment of clearly delineated areas of illumination permits that rapid alternation between light and dark that produces the characteristically Baroque sense of movement.

It may appear overly precise to do a line count in support of my argument, but it is interesting and revealing from a stylistic standpoint to see just how skillfully Milton manages this impression of action. Lines 1-10 deal in luminous terminology, including the "Bright effluence of bright essence increate," which conveys the intended impression of dazzling, overwhelming radiance. Then the various degrees of darkness he has experienced in his voyage upwards are presented in lines 11 to the middle of 21. These ten lines are an example of Cassirer's mythic "rite of passage," as one does not travel from one sacred precinct to another without effort. ". . . Thee I revisit safe, and feel thy

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sovran vital Lamp" flickers briefly in 21-22 as he proceeds to ". . . but thou/ Revisit'st not these eyes that rowle in vain." Immediately we are in darkness again. Not the conceptual or mythic darkness of Hell, but rather the personal darkness of Milton. As Cassirer says, "The distant merges with what is close at hand, since the one can in some way be copied in the other."[48]

There is also a great similarity in the way in which Paradise Lost defines spatial regions through moral values attached to them as well as by their luminosity. Certain areas are the domains of certain forces, whether good or bad. Heaven and Hell have definitely assigned values of course. Chaos, although "neutral," is not a realm of positive good because it lacks form. Paradise is the only region that, although inherently good, has the possibility of change. And, of course, the change occurs.

> For mythical thinking, the relation between what a thing "is" and the place in which it is situated is never purely external and accidental; the place is itself a part of the thing's being, and the place confers very specific inner ties upon the thing.[49]

Need we recall, "my self am Hell" from Book IV to see that Satan is Satan because he has been condemned to

[48]p. 91.

[49]Cassirer, p. 92.

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Hell at the same time he serves to define Hell itself. Thus it is with him wherever he goes.

This definition of spatial regions by moral values is greatly reinforced by the correlative amounts of luminance they possess, their sheer visibility. "The alternation of day and night, light and darkness is essential to the development of the mythic feeling for space."[50] Milton's usage of light and moral values to establish the boundaries of his cosmos were remarked upon, I am sure, long before Cassirer's works became generally known to literary critics. It would be erroneous to suggest that there is any element of novelty in applying what he says to Paradise Lost. My contention is that Cassirer's more universally-based theories lift other similar critical observations above the realm of Christian symbolism. These techniques of forming a cosmos and defining a diety orginate in conceptual patterns common to all humanity.

The uniquely Baroque aspect of Milton's technique lies in the fact that he uses the more fluid elements of light and dark to define these regions. In the Renaissance this would have been done through line and clearly delineated areas of color. Of the Baroque painter's efforts in the same direction, Wölfflin says, " . . .not

[50]Cassirer, p. 96.

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only individual figures but the entire compositon are made up of areas of light and dark; a single tone serves to hold together whole groups of objects and contrasts them with other groups."[51] The relationship of such an observation to the remarks of MacCaffrey and Cassirer is obvious.

All this may begin to sound like a credo of, if the paraphrase may be forgiven, "light for light's sake." This is precisely what the Baroque artists did not do. There are artists and specific works in which light and dark do seem to be the main means of expression. This is consistent with Wölfflin's observation that the Baroque era elevated light to a position equal to figure delineation and mastery of color. To discover that precise point at which concentration on light ceases to be an integral, organic part of the total work and instead assumes the position of a technical display, of virtuosity, is a difficult task. Eventually the critic will be driven into the blind alley of impressionistic response. In such a case, whether the artist is endorsing a concept near to the viewer's beliefs will be a crucial factor. A Protestant critic would be more likely to judge a Baroque religious painting excessive than would a Catholic.

[51] Wölfflin, Renaissance and Baroque, p. 31.

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The contrary approach of "expressionistic" criticism is equally unsatisfactory. I believe Milton was sincere in his relationship to his God in the same way I know that Bach loved and revered his God. In either case it is possible for a person not sharing such devotion to wonder if the artist hasn't allowed the expression of the belief to get out of hand. Yet we cannot ignore the purpose, the end, the artist had in mind when he undertook his task. Wölfflin goes so far as to say that all the devices of the painterly style are, "only means to an end."[52] It is the interpretation of that "end" that has produced so much difficulty in Baroque criticism.

On the other hand, the awareness that the Baroque artist is always aiming at something, has an end in mind, is, in fact, a benefit even to a stylistic analysis. It is not necessary to get involved in precise details of the artist's theology or philosophy to grant the fact that it is possible for the creative act to be seen as a means to an end. I get the feeling in reading Paradise Lost that the world of literature was blessed in having an artist whose means were up to the monumental task he had set himself.

In the area of light imagery, for instance, Milton had set himself the goal of making the reader

[52] Principles, p. 28.

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understand how dazzling, how brilliant, how luminous beyond belief was God in His splendor.

> Fountain of Light, thy self invisible
> Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st
> Thron'd inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
> The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
> Drawn round about thee like a radiant Shrine,
> Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appeer,
> Yet dazle Heav'n, that brightest Seraphim
> Approach not, but with both wings veil thir eyes.
>
> (III, 375-82)

This is, of course, the traditional, "sacred" light imagery, but notice how Milton opposes certain words to achieve a more powerful, cumulative image: "Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appeer." Such a presence can be perceived only as a concept, which, to do God justice, must be expressed through approximations of almost excessive, paradoxical images.

Christ also is radiant, but serves an intermediary function:

> Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
> In whose conspicuous count'nance, without cloud
> Made visible, th' Almighty Father shines,
> Whom else no Creature can behold; on thee
> Impresst the effulgence of his Glorie abides,
> Transfus'd on thee his ample Spirit rests.
>
> (III, 384-89)

We are here dealing with the divinity who will become the familiar saviour of mankind, assuming human form in the process. The scaling down of the glory is obvious for it is through Christ we can see God.

The concept of the overwhelming glory of heaven found expression in religious painting of the Seventeenth

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Century also. Painted about 1674-79, Baciccia's ceiling in the Gesu, The Adoration of the Name of Jesus, utilizes generally similar techniques. (Plate V) There is a choir of angels arranged more or less circularly around the central focus, the radiant I H S. To make the relation between the celestial light and moral worth all the clearer, Baciccia has a host of damned souls being cast out of Heaven, out of the scene, actually out of the frame of the painting. It appears as though the luminous glory of the Saviour's name possesses physical power. The condemned figures are rendered darker than the blessed. This darkness, physically expressed as a parallel to the moral condition of the souls of the fallen, is coupled with expressions and gestures of extreme anguish and overwhelming remorse. This ceiling is an example of high Baroque, and the more one studies it the more one is struck by the parallels with Paradise Lost. In connection with my earlier discussion of the possible excesses of the Baroque techniques, especially in relation to light, I would make this remark: if one will grant and believe in his heart that Jesus Christ drove the rebellious angels out of Heaven, then how else in the world, in this world of limited artistic means, do you represent it? This painting is not an intellectual allegory. It is an imaginal illustration of a



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PLATE V. THE ADORATION OF THE NAME OF JESUS

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Milton has the benefit of the narrative sequence in creating his sense of movement and contrast, and in Book III he plunges us, along with Satan, once more into desolation and darkness after the scene of glory in Heaven. Satan is walking on the "dark Celestial sphere."

> . . . a Globe farr off
> It seem'd, now seems a boundless Continent
> Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
> Starless expos'd, and ever-threatning storms
> Of Chaos blustring round, inclement skie;
> Save on that side which from the wall of Heav'n
> Though distant farr som small reflection gaines
> Of glimmering air less vext with tempest loud:
>
> * * * *
>
> Alone, for other Creature in this place
> Living or liveless to be found was none,
>
> (III, 422-29 and 442-43)

Note the sense of movement imparted by the first lines. That which seemed a "Globe farr off" becomes on closer proximity more akin to a "boundless Continent." We have made the journey with Satan and are with him on this "dark, waste and wild" expanse. After this establishment of locale in which "Night" becomes an active personage in the work, a glimmer of light strikes down from Heaven. This is the tightly bound, Baroque shaft of light entering into the scene from above, made all the more luminous by the dimness of the scene it

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pierces. And Satan is alone, absolutely so, on the vast expanse of desolation. He is the monumental Caravaggesque figure, illuminated by a combination of "sacred" light--"his form had not yet lost/ All her Original brightness," (I, 591-92)--and exterior natural light, for in this setting Heaven cannot be considered anything but a natural source.

Satan then sees the portal of Heaven as well as the opening below it which leads down to Paradise. This creates one of the most memorable visual scenes in all the poem. Satan occupies a medial band of gloom and desolation, dark and along. Above glows the portal, "inimitable on Earth/ By Model, or shading Pencil drawn." (III, 508-09) Milton is true to his word and although there are comments about the "bright Sea" which flowed underneath and was "Of Jasper, or of liquid Pearle" (III, 519), it is primarily in terms of light and action that it is described, or should I say, evoked.

Below Satan is the opening which allows him a view of our universe and Paradise. He enters this realm of the known stars and planets, and alights on the sun. The surface of this familiar star is "beyond expression bright" (III, 591), but Milton proceeds to employ parallels from earth to allow the reader some concept of it. "The distant merges with what is close at hand, since

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the one can in some way be copied in the other."[53] Here, in the midst of "metaphor," the reality, the physical image of the sun is emphasized.

> What wonder then if fields and regions here
> Breathe forth Elixer pure, and Rivers run
> Potable Gold, . . .
>
> (III, 606-08)

The connection between the sun and the earth is made all the clearer by the assertion that the sun is responsible for ". . . so many precious things/ Of colour glorious and effect so rare?" (III, 611-12)

The exact manipulation of light levels and sources becomes rather subtle in this section. We find, for instance, that Satan will appear on the surface of the star as ". . . a spot like which perhaps/ Astronomer in the Sun's lucent Orbe/ Through his glaz'd Optic Tube yet never saw." (III, 588-90) Satan, then, is dimmer than the sun which is the primary source of natural light in the earthly cosmos. In lines 615-23, Milton reinforces the idea of dazzling brilliance preparatory to the discovery by Satan of the angel Uriel, who, by implication, is brighter than the sun.

> Of beaming sunnie Raies, a golden tiar
> Circl'd his Head, nor less his Locks behind
> Illustrious on his Shoulders fledge with wings
> Lay waving round; . . .
>
> (III, 625-28)

[53]Cassirer, p. 91.

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Again the "sacred" light source, but notice how consummately the author manages the three levels of illumination, Satan dimmer than the sun, the sun itself as a base measurement, and Uriel brighter than the sun.

Milton has the advantage over the Baroque painter here in that he can, through language, allow us to imagine levels of brilliance that would be intolerable if rendered visually. It must be admitted that the Transparente in Toledo and Bernini's Cathedra Petre in St. Peter's probably come very near accomplishing this as they use natural light sources to dazzle the spectator. Yet it is obvious that, although such effects may be approximated in visual works, they can never be truly accomplished for the very success of them would prohibit the spectator's viewing them.

Milton also is aware of the sheer limitations of human sight and utilizes varying scales of reference in Paradise Lost. In the scene I have been discussing, all the participants are superhuman figures. We might interject here that Milton's control of light imagery is integrated from beginning to end. Uriel and Satan conversing on the sun, a situation beyond the tolerance of human vision, should cast the reader's mind back to lines 381-82 where it is established that God is so far brighter that ". . . brightest Seraphim/ Approach not, but with both wings veil thir eyes."

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It is doubtful that Raphael is inferior to Uriel in glory and radiance and when he arrives in Paradise in Book V he is described as "another morn." Yet he is not so dazzling but that Adam and Eve can sit and converse with him in comfort for half a day. Evidently the angels can alter their luminosity. The key point is that they will be pictured as required by the immediate events of the narrative of the poem.

Representation of light, blinding yet observable, is part of the Baroque application of the illusory. In the Gesu ceiling, already mentioned, we, the spectators, are able to view the glory of I H S that has driven out the fallen angels. In Caravaggio's Conversion of St. Paul, St. Paul is blinded by the intensity of the heavenly light, but we are not. We are on the sun with Satan and Uriel and although Milton goes to lengths to convey the impression of the fantastic brightness there, we are perfectly able to discern, as though we also were supernatural, the encounter between the two angels. The Baroque artist never quite blinds us although he may come close.

It may be even more important to note that a major shift in emphasis is underway at this point. At the end of Book III Uriel has identified Paradise for Satan, who is pretending to be an inquisitive, lesser spirit. Satan departs, "Throws his steep flight in

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many an Aerie wheele," and finally lands on Mt. Niphates. (III, 741-42) It is from here that he addresses his apostrophe to the sun.

> O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
> That bring to my remembrance from what state
> I fell, how glorious once above thy Spheare;
> Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down
> Warring in Heav'n against Heav'ns matchless King:
>
> (IV, 37-41)

Here Milton is employing the sun, once again as in Book III, as the natural reference to levels of illumination. It was the sin of Satan that caused him to lose his brilliance. From this point on, light imagery, although it will continue to play a crucial role, will no longer be as prevelant as it has been. We are some 2500 lines into the epic, and by now the fallen chieftain has been identified as the "Prince of Darkness." His character and place of dwelling have been vividly impressed upon our aesthetic recollection. It is as though we are shifting from external depiction of events towards a more internal, psychological and moral representation. The level of luminosity is scaled down.

To see how skillfully this is managed, we should note such lines as:

> Thus while he spake, each passion dimm'd his face
>
> (IV, 114)

Thus, this "dimming" of the countenance by the passions enables Uriel to detect Satan in the Proximity of Paradise:

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(IV, 127-28)

Thus, the "sacred" illuminant is still functioning, but it must be tempered and moderated for the more "realistic" framework of Paradise, and Satan's loss of brilliance is moreover, part of his total, progressive degredation.

In evoking the image of Eden, Milton relies more on the other sense values, such as smell and taste. Here we will find cooling water, verdant yet controlled bowers. There will be trees of "noblest kind for sight, smell, taste; . . ." Chief of these is the Tree of Life, "High eminent, blooming Ambrosial Fruit/ Of vegetable Gold; . . ." (IV, 217 and 219-20)

Thus was this place,
A happy rural seat of various view;

(IV, 246-47)

It is an earthly reference. We are home. The dazzling and overwhelming glories of the Celestial regions would be as inappropriate here as the "utter" darkness of Hell. We get the sense of Baroque movement in Paradise through the alternation of open fields and shady bowers. This variation may be dictated by practical human considerations, as continued and unbroken sunlight would be quite uncomfortable. Yet it is not so much contrast as it is complement. The shade of Paradise is not the

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> Both where the morning Sun first warmly smote
> The open field, and where the unpierc't shade
> Imbround the noontide Bowrs: . . .
>
> (IV, 244-46)

It is in the description of Adam and Eve that we discover a remnant, or perhaps analogy, of "sacred" light.

> . . . for in thir looks Divine
> The image of thir glorious Maker shon,
>
> (IV, 291-92)

Akin to Christ's reflecting God's unbearable radiance, the pair possess a simile of beatitude, such as a saint might. But this aura of divinity is conveyed primarily in terms of virtues "Truth, wisdome, Sanctitude severe and pure," (IV, 293) rather than in any physical expression of light.

Even in uncorrupted Paradise, however, the absence of light still carries some negative connotation. It is true that Adam and Eve will rest "Under a tuft of shade that on a green/ Stood whispering soft . . ." (IV, 325-26) and here "shade" will convey the positive values of rest, coolness and repose, but as with the Night in Heaven wherein Satan hatches his schemes, it appears that even modest shadows carry a greater potential for evil. To be away from the light is to be that much further from God. Satan assumes the form of a

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cormorant for his daylight observations, but I get the feeling that he is much more at ease in the shape of the toad he takes on to whisper insinuations into Eve's ear at night. The fiend plans to discover more about the blessed couple from some Spirit of Heaven, " . . . by Fountain side/ Or in thick shade retir'd, . . ." (IV, 531-32) Even the farseeing Uriel loses sight of Satan "under shade." (IV, 572)

Night has not lost all its potential for evil, even in Paradise. Stillness reigns and wholesome rest is available, yet the birds and beasts "slink" to their nests (IV, 602). When Eve asks the all-knowing Adam why the splendors of the night-time heavens have been provided as all things are asleep, he answers:

> Least total darkness should by Night regaine
> Her old possession, and extinguish life
> In Nature and all things, which these soft fires
> Not only enlighten, but with kindly heate
> Of various influence foment and warme,
> Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
> Thir stellar vertue on all kinds that grow
> On Earth, made hereby apter to receive
> Perfection from the Suns more potent Ray.
>
> (IV, 665-73)

The "Night" referred to is the Eternal Night which ruled over all before God made his luminous presence known. To protect against it, the stellar bodies of Heaven are provided as an adjunct to the far more vital rays of the sun. This is another example of God's wisdom.

> Thou also mad'st the Night
> Maker Omnipotent, and thou the Day,
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> (IV, 724-25)

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When the bright and flaming angels appear to guard the gate of Paradise against Satanic intrusion, the Celestial light scale is once again introduced. Satan is discovered and driven off.

. . . with him fled the shades of night.

(IV, 1015)

I opened this chapter with an analysis of the Proem to Book III as that is one of the clearest examples of light imagery in the entire poem. A sequential narrative then led me into Book IV, but I would now like to turn by attention to an earlier, although vitally important, use of light and darkness. This is, of course, Milton's vision of Hell. Logically enough, we will here find that the negative counterpart of "sacred" light sources is employed. That is, if light equals divinity, then darkness equals evil. This basic idea has been shown to exist in the highly qualified nature of shade and night in pre-lapsarian Paradise.

One of the most outstanding characteristic of Book I is, I think, the manner in which Milton employs Baroque illusion. It is, for instance, clearly established that Hell is utterly dark. Even the flames are paradoxes which yield no illumination.

. . . yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd onely to discover sights of woe,

(I, 62-64)

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(I, 71-72)

Especially in lines 62-64 we are confronted with the dilemma. There is no light from these flames, yet they "discover sights of woe" through the possession of the fantastic quality, "darkness visible." It is perfectly reasonable, from a theological standpoint, to assume that the omnipotent God could separate the qualities of fire, light and heat, and provide the agony of the one without the comfort of the other. The absence of light in Hell-fire is an accepted tradition long before the Seventeenth Century.

The theological validity of this phenomenon is not my concern, however. The simple fact is that from an artistic standpoint, neither the inhabitants of Hell, nor we, the spectators, are going to be able to do anything unless some sort of vision is permitted. This is accomplished a mere six lines later.

There the companions of his fall, o'rewhelm'd
With Floods and Whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns, . . .

(I, 76-78)

Although "darkness visible" has prepared us to a certain degree for this event, it remains a plain and simple

[54]John M. Steadman, "Milton and the Patristic Tradition: The Quality of Hell-Fire," Anglia, Band 76 (1958), 116-18.

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contradiction that Satan is able to discern his fallen comrades. There is no excuse offered; it happens and we accept it. If we had been told that angels, even fallen ones, have special powers in this respect, then we, the readers, would be excluded to a subtle degree from partaking in the immediacy of the scene. To my mind, this is an early example of the same illusionism that permits us to witness the events on the surface of the sun in Book III.

I consider this an excellent example of the Baroque capacity for the reconciliation of the opposed and paradoxical. Both utter darkness in Hell and the power of vision are artistic necessities here. Neither can be sacrificed without doing serious damage to the effect of the poem. I do not feel that Milton is creating a "surreal" situation for us either. I disagree with Odette de Mourgues who feels that since the Baroque poet works on our imagination and emotions, he creates sharp contrasts which never are resolved.[55] I much perfer Rudolf Wittkower's evaluation of the like phenomenon in the visual arts.

> What distinguishes the Baroque from earlier periods . . . is that the beholder is stimulated to participate actively in the supranatural manifestations of the mystic act rather than to look at it 'from outside.'[56]

[55] pp. 74-75.

[56] Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750 (Baltimore, 1958), p. 92.

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It is ironic that so many critics who accurately note the dramatic-theatrical element in Baroque art are yet so unfamiliar with one of the basic tenets of theatre: Will it work? Or will it sell? They are one and the same thing and emphasize how totally theatre depends on the spectator's acceptance of its illusions, of the suspension of disbelief. The law of gravity makes Peter Pan impossible. No one cares.

I believe that the Baroque artist never completely abandons the "natural" feeling in the illusions he creates, even when they are so obviously contrary to "earthly" logic. The harsh, clear division between the unreal and the real is weakened and obscured. The "sacred," and I use the term here in the broader sense of anything miraculous, and the "natural" are placed side by side and treated as spheres whose events have equal validity.

Morning comes again to Paradise in Book V, and in the prayer offered by Adam and Eve, the two lights, the divine and the natural, are going to intersect. The heavens are seen as reflective of the glories of God.

> These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
> Almightie, thine this universal Frame,
> Thus wondrous fair; thy self how wondrous then!
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> (V, 153-55)

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Yet even this is inadequate to do justice to God. He is "Unspeakable" in the sense that earthly adoration is insufficient. (V, 156) The angels are called upon:

> Speak yee who best can tell, ye Sons of light,
> Angels, for yee behold him, and with songs
> And choral symphonies, Day without Night,
> Circle his Throne rejoycing, yee in Heav'n,
>
> (V, 160-63)

The "natural" heavenly bodies must assist, both Venus and the sun:

> 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, praise him in thy Spheare
> While day arises, that sweet hour of Prime.
> Thou sun, of this great World both Eye and Soule,
> Acknowledge him thy Greater, . . .
>
> (V, 166-72)

In this way the celebration spreads throughout the universe, demanding that both classes of heavenly inhabitants, angels and stars, equally add their praise. The first through song; the second through their very natural movements which also produce music. The sun, as always, occupies a key position.

Some 130 lines later Raphael approaches Paradise and Adam makes the sacred-natural conjunction even clearer.

> Haste hither Eve, and worth thy sight behold
> Eastward among those Trees, what glorious shape
> Comes this way moving; seems another Morn
> Ris'n on mid-noon; som great behest from Heav'n
> To us perhaps he brings, . . .
>
> (V, 308-12)

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A sense of immediacy is evoked not only by an indication of direction, "Eastward," but particularization, " . . . among those Trees." Now Adam indulges in a conscious simile; " . . . seems another Morn/ Ris'n mid-noon." Just as in the earlier prayer, Adam had compared the natural lights of heaven to angels, so now the divine messenger is compared to a natural phenomenon.

This sort of open-ended reference is employed in other places in the poem. The preparation for the War in Heaven receives examination in a later chapter, so I don't wish to undertake a detailed analysis at this time, but I would like to point out some important uses of light imagery.

In the first place, night and day alternate in Heaven, much as on earth, a natural phenomenon in a sacred setting. The order of reference isn't important, but the parallelism is. Darkness, in the guise of heavenly twilight, is the time for evil in the celestial regions as it is on earth. "Soon as midnight brought on the duskie hour" is when Satan acts. The idea of heaven having a night-time does not strike me as very reasonable, since Adam himself has stated that the angels sing there, "Day without Night." (V, 162) I have not explored the possible theological basis for the light cycle in heaven, and don't really consider it important at this point. Milton makes it seem organic,

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natural, and, most importantly, functional to the sequence of events there. Later on in Book VI the famous Grateful Vicissitude" account of Raphael will explain this heavenly alternation of light and dusk. The idea that Heaven has a night so that Satan can plot his machinations may appear somewhat convenient, but Milton resolves such problems with his poetry. ". . . now ere Night,/ Now ere him Night had disincumberd Heav'n." (V, 699-700) The simple repetition prepares us for the "midnight march" (V, 778) of Satan and his horde.

Once the War in Heaven is actually at hand, color also will begin to play a major role in defining events and establishing atmosphere. The Celestial host will retain that pure, golden light which illuminates Heaven, and, indeed, even the recently disaffected angels are quite splendid. Satan enters the battle "towring, armd in Adamant and Gold." (VI, 110) During the battle, however, the color tone shifts subtilely.

> . . . and the madding Wheeles
> Of brazen Chariots rag'd; dire was the noise
> Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss
> Of fiery Darts in flaming volies flew,
> And flying vaulted either Host with fire.
>
> (VI, 210-14)

The color is now brazen, copper, fiery. "Dreadful combustion warring." (VI, 225)

The second heavenly night interposes. One might say that night is what one makes of it. For the angelic host it is a "grateful truce impos'd." (VI, 407)

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Satan, on the other hand, meets "Far in the dark dislodg'd, and void of rest,/ His Potentates to Councel call'd by night." (VI, 415-16) This variation in the employment of natural or quasi-natural elements is dependent upon the moral nature of the user. This then is made clear during the scene in which the devilish forces invent cannons.

> Deep under ground, materials dark and crude,
> Of spiritous and fierie spume, till toucht
> With Heav'ns ray, and temperd they shoot forth
> So beauteous, op'ning to the ambient light.
>
> (VI, 478-81)

The pattern is clear. This is corruption of nature in the clearest sense of the word. It is all the more appropriate that the Hell-fire with which the demons will be punished will be an "unnatural flame" that yields no light.

I feel that the usage of light through the balance of the poem falls pretty much into the categories I have so far described. Although Milton does not depend on light and dark to accomplish his effects in the latter half of the epic nearly so much as in the earlier part, this by no means implies that it is neglected. At the very conclusion of the poem, light imagery is once more called upon to carry the dramatic point. Adam has been shown the future history of mankind, full of travail and suffering yet exhilarated because of the possibility of Redemption.

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> Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,
> Whether I should repent me now of sin
> By mee done and occasiond, or rejoyce
> Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
> To God more glory, more good will to Men
> From God, . . .
>
> (XII, 473-78)

This is, of course, a merely rhetorical question. There can be no doubt for the true believer that ". . .the final state of the redeemed, the consummation of human history, would far surpass . . . the pristine happiness and innocence of the first pair in Eden . . ."[57] The "Paradox of the Fortunate Fall" is no paradox at all. It may be posed as such, but its essential dilemma is resolved through belief. These last words of Adam are the theological conclusion of the work and it is significant that Milton draws upon light, the light of Genesis, the light of inner illumination, to make his point. Adam, fallen yet full of hope for salvation, is the true progenitor of the race of man.

In the last few lines of the poem Milton creates a Baroque recessional composition. Adam and Eve are expelled from Paradise, and as they depart they look back and see the angelic lights that prevent their return to that realm of innocence.

[57]Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Milton and Paradox of the Fortunate Fall," Essays in the History of Ideas (Baltimore, 1948), p. 278.

They looking back, all th' Eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late thir happie seat,
Wav'd over by that flaming Brand, the Gate
With dreadful Faces throng'd and fierie Armes:

(XII, 641-44)

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CHAPTER IV

BAROQUE VITALITY

Introduction

The first point to be made clear in the introduction to this chapter is that I am very painfully aware of the inadequacy of the title I have given it. I am not going to employ the familiar dodge of saying that the English language is not sufficient for the purpose of conveying the sense of what I want to say. There is, I am sure, a word lurking somewhere in the dictionary that would serve, but, as yet, I have been unable to find it.

It is entirely possible that I am trying to combine under one heading such diverse characteristics of the Baroque style that the problem is of my own making. As this chapter unfolds, I hope the logic of my connections becomes apparent. The chapter will be subdivided into three major headings; Movement, Unclarity and Complexity (including variety). To make each of these into separate chapters would eliminate my problem altogether, but would, I feel, sacrifice relatedness for organization. In this case, I believe it

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would be a false appearance of organization. Even though Movement, Unclarity and Complexity are separable, identifiable stylistic phenomena, they go "hand in hand," and each one contributes to the effectiveness of the other two.

Just what do I mean by "Baroque Vitality?" The art of every epoch has assumed the task of presenting reality of life as it saw it. In essence then, each succeeding style seriously and consciously strives to project a sense of vitality as it is conceived by the artists who are, in turn, conditioned by the outlook of their age. I am concentrating on the root of the work "vital" rather than the values of liviliness and action implicit in current usage. What mode of presentation best projects the sense of the way things are? This seems to be the eternal question facing the artists.

Some eras in art reflect a universe that is solid and justly proportioned, possessing eternal values, apprehensible to the mind of man. The Renaissance is one such era. Other periods, such as the Mannerist of the Sixteenth Century, see only flux and change; insubstantiability and paradox seem to be the only values the human mind can detect in the world. Stylistically speaking, the former outlook will tend to offer art which is serene and plastic, something a

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viewer can get hold of and pursue to its logical conclusion. The latter, the unsettled and uncertain, presents, by contrast, conundrums and dilemmas; it poses riddles rather than offers any coherent vision of life. Then there is the Baroque.

It is probably apparent by now that I feel the Baroque period in art offers something unique. Rather than presenting one view or the other, it combines both. It offers a world view that is both solid and active, eternal and ever-changing, infinite yet humanly oriented. It squarely confronts the paradoxes of the Sixteenth Century and confesses that they are the indispensable ingredients of the human condition, and what is more, positively asserts that they can be lived with.

The Baroque style then is one of affirmation. It reveals a joy in the materials of this life at the same time it is striving to convey the ecstasy of the next one. Kings, as well as God and the angels, are splendid creatures. They are evidence of the glory of man. A street scene in Holland is treated with the same "spirituality" as a heavenly vision. Man, even when reduced to beggary, is a sublime creature. And all things; man, his accoutrements, the houses he inhabits are dedicated to one ideal--<u>life</u>, meaning activity or to use my term, vitality, is the standard by which all things are measured.

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It is this projection of the Baroque sense of life that I am examining in this chapter. More specifically, I intend to analyze the primary stylistic means by which this is accomplished. As Wölfflin has stated so many times, this "new" goal and its means of expression required a new "way of seeing." Artistic expectation as well as presentment are quite different from what existed in the Renaissance. Girolamo Massirini is quoted as saying:

> These painters did not expect the spectator to examine minutely the details of their pictures; in fact, to prevent them from doing that, they set before them a splendid, harmonious and lively general effect which would provoke marvel and surprise.[58]

I will deal with the splendid and harmonious in the next chapter, but it is the lively and general that I propose to examine at this time.

I believe it is through the means of Movement, Unclarity and Complexity that the Baroque artist expressed the sense of life as he saw it. I believe that Paradise Lost will demonstrate the same stylistic characteristics that can be found in Baroque painting, indicating that Milton's stylistic purpose was one with that of the Baroque painter.

[58]Waterhouse, p. 58.

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Movement in *Paradise Lost*

Several levels of movement exist in *Paradise Lost*, and it is necessary to distinguish these at the outset. Some are obvious and need little comment, but some levels of movement, stylistically speaking the most important, are far more subtle. These latter are, I feel, more directly equivalent to Wölfflin's stylistic observations relative to painting and will require a closer reading.

To begin with the most fundamental consideration of all, I would say that an examination of the "total" movement of *Paradise Lost* might well reveal Wölfflin's shift from the Linear to the Painterly. Without going into this consideration in any detail, it is perfectly obvious that Milton has not constructed the poem as a "straight-line" narrative. Everything in the poem proceeds towards the author's stated goal of justifying the "wayes of God to Men," but this progress is, I think, very much akin to Baroque Unity. We sense that all the digressions, stops and starts, references to Biblical and classical events, extreme shifts in locale and chronology do indeed, in the last analysis, contribute to the ultimate conclusion of the work. But these events can not easily be outlined or charted. The total

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effect of movement within the work is far more "atmospheric," I prefer "cumulative," than it is linear or sequential.

It is true that the general action of the poem can be divided up into areas of action as well as agents of action, but Milton's narration of both of these defies any simplistic account. Yet, like a Baroque painter, Milton provides the necessary points of focus within his work which prevent it from disintegrating. Everything in the poem moves towards the lines in Book IX:

> . . . her rash hand in evil hour
> Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck'd, she eat:
>
> (IX, 780-81)

This is the climax and from this point onwards everything declines towards

> They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,
> Through Eden took thir solitarie way.
>
> (XII, 648-49)

The machinations of the Fallen which occupy the first three Books have come to fruition; the good efforts of the angels have come to nothing; the victory of the forces of God over the Rebellious angels which occupied Books V and VI have been partially negated; the purpose of the Creation which filled Book VII has been corrupted; the visions of the unhappy history of mankind presented in Books XI and XII; all of these revolve about two lines in Book IX, " . . . she pluck'd, she eat."

It is this movement from one state of grace to another that guides the entire poem. This is entirely in keeping with the techniques of the Baroque visual artist. This comparison, as always, must be tempered by the awareness that the two media have their essential differences, although, as I will show later, these are not as extreme as might be imagined at first. For instance, Wölfflin speaking of the difference between Dürer's Adam and Eve and Rembrandt's treatment of the same subject remarks that for the latter the event of the Fall is more interesting than the representation of the nude.[59] This is quite obviously a major shift in focus. Milton and Rembrandt are contemporaries and both share the Baroque taste for action.

The most obvious level of movement within Paradise Lost and the first I will discuss is the physical action of the figures within the work. This category of physical movement can further be divided into "cosmic," that performed by the divine or supernatural personages, and the "terrestrial," that which takes place on earth. As will be specifically illustrated, the figures in Paradise Lost are almost always doing something. This, in itself, contributes a great deal to the sense of action that the work projects.

[59]Principles, p. 215.

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A. Cosmic Movement

Movement on the "grand scale," from Heaven to Earth, from Heaven to Hell and back, is, of course, the prerogative of the divine, or at least formerly divine, characters. The most obvious examples of this, which recur throughout the entire poem, are the angelic messengers.

> Th' Arch-Angel Uriel, one of the seav'n
> Who in God's presence, neerest to his Throne
> Stand ready at command, and are his Eyes
> That run through all the Heav'ns, or down to th' Earth
> Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,
>
> (III, 648-52)

This is the same Uriel who comes

> . . . gliding through the Eeven
> On a Sun beam, swift as a shooting Starr
> In Autumn thwarts the night, . . .
>
> (IV, 555-57)

It is Satan, of course, who makes the most extensive and remarkable journey of all; from Hell to the doors of Heaven, to the earthly cosmos, to Earth and back to Hell. If we include his travels within the account of the War in Heaven as given by Raphael in Book VI, we also see the chief demon in Heaven and his casting out down to Hell. Such movement is possible, and indeed he is the most ambulatory figure in the epic, because he retains the angelic power of flight even in his fallen state.

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On the stylistic level, Milton evokes a remarkable sense of actual movement when dealing with Satan's travels. It is worthwhile to examine the escape from Hell.

> At last his Sail-broad Vannes
> He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoak
> Uplifted spurns the ground, thence many a League
> As in a cloudy Chair ascending rides
> Audacious, but that seat soon failing, meets
> A vast vacuitie: all unawares
> Fluttring his pennons vain plumb down he drops
> Ten thousand fadom deep, and to this hour
> Down had been falling, had not by ill chance
> The strong rebuff of som tumultuous cloud
> Instinct with Fire and Nitre hurried him
> As many miles aloft: . . .
>
> (II, 927-38)

A close reading of the passage reveals the number of verbs of movement or change that contribute to the illusion of actual progression. "Spreads for flight . . . surging smoak . . . Uplifted spurns the ground . . . many a league . . . ascending rides . . . soon failing . . . meets . . . Fluttring . . . vain plumb down he drops . . . Ten thousand fadoms deep . . ." Indeed there is very little "substance" in this passage. "Sail-broad Vannes . . . ground . . . Chair . . . seat . . . pennons . . . Fire and Nitre . . ." is the total out of 12 lines. The focus of this passage is on Satanic movement.

This is colossal action, but there are more modest examples of Satan's travels within the poem. At the end of Book III, he departs the Sun after conversing

with Uriel, and, as if to make clear the ease with which Satan can maneuver in the mundane universe in contrast to the mighty effort required to escape Hell, he

> Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,
> Down from th' Ecliptic, sped with hop'd success,
> Throws his steep flight in many an Aerie wheele,
> Nor staid, till on Niphates top he lights.
>
> (III, 739-42)

These four lines are worthy of close examination as they demonstrate the Miltonic technique of evoking a sense of movement with modest expenditure of energy. There is no need to "itemize" the various stages of this journey, vast as it is by mortal standards. It simply required "many an Aerie wheele," something of an open-ended description which permits us to imagine all sorts of aerial gymnastics. From this we gain primarily a sense of the ease, even casualness, with which Satan performs this action. On line 740 the ever-present moral import is projected--"with hop'd success." Events prove that Satan is right in his elation. Here is the first breath of corruption descending upon the "coast of Earth." With the last line we are upon the solid and familiar earth (Milton has even named the mountain for us) and the drama of the human Fall has begun.

In connection with this "cosmic" movement, it is important to note that, by contrast, movement is contrary to the nature of God. His eternal presence is

reinforced by the frequent references to the "unshakeable Throne of the Almighty." Everything radiates from God. He sees all and causes all to happen, but all activity is delegated to the Son. It is Christ who finally leads the armies of Heaven in victory against the rebellious angels. It is the Son who executes the wishes of his Father and performs the Creation. It is Christ who descends to Eden, a possible foreshadowing of his eventual assumption of mortality, to sentence and comfort Adam and Eve after their transgression.

Save for Satan's troublesome escape from Hell, one is primarily impressed by the ease with which the divine and supernatural figures move about. This is very much like the facility for levitation displayed by divine figures in Baroque paintings. They defy gravity and seemingly hang suspended by their will. Sometimes wings are needed, although they seem to be a more common requisite with cherubim and lesser divinities. Others may recline on a "cloudy seat," which offers an illusory substantiability. A glance at the accompanying plates (III, V, VI, VII) will indicate that this is the convention employed by various artists. I might add that levitation was one of the favorite spectacular effects of the Baroque theatre. It seems to me that Milton is using the same technique.

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Beyond the matter of describing this cosmic movement in Paradise Lost, there is the question of what it means. What is Milton's universe like if we use these celestial travels as a means of constructing a total image? This is a difficult question to answer. The sheer size of the work, as well as Milton's shifts in locale, makes any precise judgment rather questionable. Milton is far more concerned with what Ernst Cassirer has termed "moral areas" and conveying a sense of immensity than he is with providing us with a road map of the heavens.

It is a mistake, however, to see this lack of precise definition in Milton's spatial treatment as a pure example of the striving for the infinite which was a characteristic of the Baroque era. It is true that the Seventeenth Century, after the New Science had shattered the Renaissance world view, turned towards a new perception of the universe, and often reflected the change in its art. " . . . Endless space . . . came into being to oppose the tightly controlled and clearly limited space of Renaissance art."[60] By contrast, all of the regions of Paradise Lost, save Chaos, have boundaries. Milton's uniquely Baroque achievement is that, through these celestial journeys I have been examining, he manages to project a sense of colossal distances within his

[60] Encyclopedia, Col. 256.

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universe. They are so vast that they may appear "infinite" to a mere mortal. It is as though Milton maintains Renaissance boundaries, but in keeping with Baroque practice, so enlarges the "module," the basic unit of proportion, that the final creation is overwhelming. It is Marjorie Hope Nicholson who points out that Milton, employing the old Ptolemaic concepts, nevertheless best conveys the immensity of the "infinite" universe that had been revealed by the New Science.[61]

B. Terrestrial Movement

As with the level of light, Milton changes the scale of movement when we approach Paradise. The events that occur in this region of the universe are to be taken literally, and even if Adam and Eve are seen as far superior to post-Lapsarian man, there still must be a believability established which is based upon the familiar. If pre-Lapsarian Paradise was not superior in kind to our present world, it far surpassed it in degree. Milton must establish the close relationship between the first mortals and the divine agents of Heaven.

There is a stylistic consideration also that makes the transition from the cosmic to the terrestrial necessary. If too great a disparity exists between the two realms, then the reader will have difficulty in

[61] The Breaking of the Circle (Evanston, Ill., 1950), pp. 164-65.

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making the moral connections which are so important. Milton already has prepared us for the shift in scene by the simple device of using earthly comparisons and images early in the poem when dealing with supernatural figures. He is always careful that we do not take the metaphors too literally. In Book II the demonic host sets out to occupy itself during Satan's absence.

> Part on the Plain, or in the Air sublime
> Upon the wing, or in swift Race contend,
> As at th' Olympian Games or Pythian fields;
> Part curb thir fierie Steeds, or shun the Goal
> With rapid wheels, or fronted Brigads form.
>
> (II, 528-32)

> Another part in Squadrons and gross Bands,
> On bold adventure to discover wide
> That dismal world, if any Clime perhaps
> Might yield them easier habitation, bend
> Four ways thir flying March, along the Banks
>
> (II, 570-74)

As befitting superior, though fallen, creatures, they seem able to maneuver in the air, the proper abode of spirits, or on the ground of Hell, as they desire. That these quasi-terrestrial descriptions are not to be taken too literally is made clear in Book VI when Raphael describes the march of the righteous angels in pursuit of Satan's band.

> On they move
> Indissolubly firm; nor obvious Hill,
> Nor streit'ning Vale, nor Wood, nor Stream divides
> Thir perfet ranks; for high above the ground
> Thir march was, . . .
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> (VI, 68-72)

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I think the finest example of a supernatural figure engaging in terrestrial movement is found in a passage I drew upon for my discussion of Light in Paradise Lost. I refer to Satan's walk on the shell of the world in Book III. Milton offers several digressions dealing with the Portal of Heaven, the placement of heretics in Limbo, and yet there is a prevailing sense of terrestrial movement.

> Satan alighted walks: a Globe farr off
> It seem'd now seems a boundless Continent
>
> (III, 422-23)

> So on this windie Sea of Land, the Fiend
> Walk'd up and down alone bent on his prey,
>
> (III, 440-41)

> All this dark Globe the Fiend found as he pass'd,
> And long he wanderd, till at last a gleame
> Of dawning light turnd thither-ward in haste
> His travell'd steps; . . .
>
> (III, 498-501)

We must remember that we are approaching Book IV at which point the events will occur, for the most part, on a truly terrestrial level. Early in Book IV Milton offers an especially effective comparison which serves to reinforce the shift in scene. Satan approached Paradise and sees the wall and gate.

> . . . and in contempt,
> At one slight bound high over leap'd all bound
> Of Hill or highest Wall, and sheer within
> Lights on his feet. . . .
>
> (IV, 180-83)

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This is the same Satan who had such difficulty in even discovering the boundaries of Hell, even though they existed and he did find them; the same Satan who fell ten thousands "fadoms" and would still be falling had not a fortuitous gust of air carried him upward. To leap the walls of Paradise requires only a "slight bound."

Naturally enough, it is within Paradise itself and with Adam and Eve that we get genuine, mortal movement. The original pair are first seen by Satan while he is sitting in a tree, disguised as a cormorant. Adam and Eve first appear on line 288, and although it is not until 319 that it is established they are moving, "So passd they naked on," there is a sense of movement from the outset of the passage. I would like to quote the lines as I think there are some important observations to be made here.

> Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
> Godlike erect, with native Honour clad
> In naked Majestie seemd Lords of all,
> And worthie seemd, for in thir looks Divine
> The image of thir glorious Maker shon,
> Truth, wisdome, Sanctitude severe and pure,
> Severe but in true filial freedom plac't;
> Whence true autoritie in men; though both
> Not equal, as thir sex not equal seemd;
> For contemplation hee and valour formd,
> For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
> Hee for God only, shee for God in him:
> His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd
> Absolute rule; and Hyacinthin Locks
> Round from his parted forelock manly hung
> Clustring, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
> Shee as a vail down to the slender waste

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Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dissheveld, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
As the Vine curles her tendrils, . . .

(IV, 288-307)

This is a view through the eyes of Satan and is preparatory to his speech, "what doe mine eyes with grief behold," which will come 45 lines later. The important point is that we gain a sense of Adam and Eve moving past the observer at the same time the viewer's eye is scanning the figures. Milton makes the twosome's splendid exterior appearance indicative of moral and mental qualities, but this does not detract from the effect I am describing. In the first four lines quoted above we have a general estimation of the total effect their appearance makes; then beginning with the eighth line, Satan's glance flickers between them as he mentally makes comparisons. Next his eye travels in a descending movement from Adam's "fair large Front," to his "shoulders broad" and picks up Eve's tresses descending to her waist like a "vail."

It is very profitable to compare such a passage with something equivalent from a Renaissance poet. No better source exists than the other great English epic, The Faerie Queene.[62] In Book II, Canto I, Archimago, the representative of evil encounters Sir Guyon.

[62]Oxford University Press Edition (London, 1965).

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His carriage was full comely and vpright,
His countenaunce demure and temperate,
But yet so sterne and terrible in sight,
That cheard his friends, and did his foes amate:
He was an Elfin borne of noble state,
And mickle worship in his natiue land;
Well could he tourney and in lists debate,
And knighthood tooke of good Sir Huons hand,
When with king Oberon he came to Faerie land.

(F. Q., II, Canto I, 6)

Notice how Spenser produces a statuesque image here. Sir Guyon has posed for the description, so to speak. He is stationary. The very next stanza is a description of a Palmer who accompanied Sir Guyon.

Him als accompayd vpon the way
A comely Palmer, clad in blacke attire,
Of ripest yeares, and haires all hoarie gray,
That with a staffe his feeble steps did stire,
Least his long way his aged limbes should tire:
And if by lookes one may the mind aread,
He seemd to be a sage and sober sire,
And euer with slow pace the knight did lead,
Who taught his trampling steed with equall steps to tread.

In spite of the fact that this last stanza is describing an actual movement, it fails to convey the kinetic power that Milton's passage concerning Adam and Eve does. Spenser's stanza is divided in small, quasi-independent units. Each stanza, in turn, has its own point of interest and is illustrative of Renaissance multiplicity. As a result the flow from one idea to another is retarded. I offer this brief digression as illustrative of the shift from Renaissance to Baroque style which had occurred in less than a hundred years in English literature.

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To Milton, as to any person trained in the heritage of the incredibly energetic Renaissance, action was symbolic of life. Even Satan gains a grudging admiration for the determination with which he sets out to improve his condition in Hell. Milton reveals his own feelings when he characterizes the suggestion of Belial in the debate in Book II as "ignoble ease, and peaceful sloath." It is not surprising then that Adam and Eve are not placed in Eden to while away the hours in useless pastimes. They are constantly doing something; be it tending the garden, praying, or entertaining guests from Heaven. It is this constant activity that produces much of the sense of movement within Paradise. In one of his first speeches, Adam urges Eve not to think much on the divine prohibition against eating of the Tree of Knowledge; instead

> . . . let us ever praise him, and extoll
> His bountie, following our delightful task
> To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flours,
> Which were it toilsom, yet with thee were sweet.
>
> (IV, 436-39)

There is a sense of movement, of deeds accomplished and tasks to be done, even in what could so easily be a static speech.

After his encounter with Adam and Eve, Satan embarks on a tour of Eden to see what further trouble he can manage.

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So saying, his proud step he scornful turn'd,
But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o're hill, o're dale
his roam.

(IV, 536-38)

It is clear that while in Paradise even the supernatural figures will move about with something at least resembling the normal tread of Adam and Eve. This in no way denies the possibility of the immortals assuming their special powers when the need arises. I do not feel it is necessary to continue in this discussion of cosmic and terrestrial physical movement in Paradise Lost. It does exist and it is a simple matter to find the various purposes to which these techniques are put within the work.

C. Stylistic Movement

The third and final general type of Movement within Paradise Lost is without question the most difficult to discuss. I am referring to what I would term "stylistic" movement; that is, a sense of movement conveyed by the very images Milton uses as well as the grammatical form in which they are expressed. Wölfflin deals with the equivalent issue in Baroque painting when he discusses the necessity of having a "picturesque" subject in order to project a sense of movement in the style.

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> Firstly, so much is clear, that common speech denotes every total form as picturesque which, even when it is at rest, yields an impression of movement. The notion of movement, however, belongs too to the essence of painterly vision: the painterly eye perceives everything as vibrating, and suffers nothing to settle into definite lines and surfaces. . . . The stiff costumes of the princesses whom Velasquez had to paint, with their linear patterns, are by no means what we call picturesque in the popular sense, but Velasquez saw them with so painterly an eye that they excel the ragged beggar of the young Rembrandt, although Rembrandt, it would appear at first, had the better of it as regards subject matter.[63]

In other words, the sense of movement should be projected in the work of art whether it is inherent in the subject matter or not. In the general sense, of course, Paradise Lost deals with a movement or action, the loss of innocence and the expulsion from Paradise. What about those sections that are not intrinsically action-oriented?

There is probably no better place to start such an inquiry than at the beginning.

> Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
> Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
> Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
> Sing Heav'nly Muse, . . .
>
> (I, 1-6)

From the grammatical and sensibile standpoint, these six lines represent a model of the Baroque style. The

[63] Principles, p. 26.

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initial prepositional construction denies the reader any sort of resolution. We are forced to proceed line 6 where all the parts are magnificently resolved with "Sing Heav'nly Muse." Not a single line begins with a noun, or even an article modifying a noun. Conversely, every line ends with a noun. Yet the terminal nouns do not really stop the flow of language for most of them depend upon the verb or prepositional construction heading the following line to complete the meaning. Notice how "First Disobedience" implies a repetition of that action to follow. The "Fruit of that Forbidden Tree" is less important than the action man performed in tasting it.

As one preceeds into Book I, it is not very remarkable that much of the description of the Fallen is in terms of action and movement. The devils are held in a boiling inferno, and they must exert themselves or lie there for eternity. It is far more indicative to examine those passages, in some cases single lines, where Milton is not describing physical action and, thus, has a broad range of images to draw from. I think an excellent example of the choice Milton usually makes is found in the first vision of the defeated angels.

> . . . Angel Forms, who lay intrans't
> Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks
> In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
> High overarch't imbowr; or scatterd sedge

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> Afloat, when with fierce Winds Orion arm'd
> Hath vext the Red-Sea Coast, whose waves orethrew
> Busiris and his Memphian Chivalry,
> While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd
> The Sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
> From the safe shore thir floating Carkases
> And broken Chariot Wheels, . . .
>
> (I, 301-11)

We can begin by asking, why "Autumnal" leaves? Here Milton is paralleling the descended leaves to the rebellious angels who have fallen so far. The source of the leaves, the trees of Vallombrosa, do not merely stand; they "imbowr." Indeed, the term used by Milton is not "trees," but rather "Shades," which conveys a sense of activity, the casting of a shadow, in contrast to the more neutral botanical term.

The second comparison, "or scatterd sedge/ Afloat," is equally evocative of action and movement. There is found here the same Miltonic device of so modifying the nouns of comparison that their identity is dependent upon what has happened to them. The Jews of the Egyptian captivity became the "Sojourners of Goshen," not because the latter expression is more involved or artistic, but because it ties in better with the pursuit by the Egyptian cavalry. It also suggests the temporary nature of the enslavement of the Jews. "Sojourners of Goshen" implies arrival and departure. The word "Afloat" serves to tie together the last seven lines in the quotation above. It itself, "Afloat" suggests an

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undulation, a riding upon waves. All the rest is an explanation, evocation, of the manner in which the "sedge" reached this condition of suspension and from whence it came. As such, the entire metaphor is organic and illustrative and offers an easily visualized comparison. The "who beheld," on line 309 includes the reader as much as it does the "Sojourners of Goshen." Once again a somewhat mechanical counting of verbs and modifiers proves the prevalence of words of motion and condition; "scatterd . . . Afloat . . . fierce . . . arm'd . . . vext . . . orethrew . . . pursu'd . . . beheld . . ." The "Carkases" of the Memphian Chivalry are "floating." The Chariot Wheels are "broken." Further analysis on this basis would become redundant, but any individual can make the same close examination and, I think, reach the same total conclusion.

The clearest proof in support of my contention that Milton uses metaphors of motion to describe subjects and figures that are not inherently active can be found by examining passages in which the subject matter is either indifferently active or actually opposed to action and movement. Then his technique will be all the more obvious. Milton follows the inclination of the Baroque artist and sees things as moving in his own mind and communicates that sense of movement in his artistic presentation.

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Consider the description of Moloch that occurs beginning at line 392 of Book I. Moloch is what I would term an "indifferent figure," yet a close reading of the passage reveals how Milton pictures him in terms of what he has done, or caused to be done. Since this passage abounds with Biblical references, I will quote it at some length to indicate how even these unlikely sources can project a sense of movement under the pen of Milton.

> First Moloch, horrid King besmear'd with blood
> Of human sacrifice, and parents tears,
> Though for the noyse of Drums and Timbrels loud
> Thir childrens cries unheard, that past through fire
> To his grim Idol. Him the Ammonite
> Worshipt in Rabba and her watry Plain,
> In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
> Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
> Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
> Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
> His Temple right against the Temple of God
> On that opprobrious Hill, and made his Grove
> The pleasant Vally of Hinnom, Tophet thence
> The black Gehenna call'd, the Type of Hell.
>
> (I, 392-405)

"First Moloch" establishes a sense of progression even though he is the first to appear. We know there will be several more in the series. Moloch is "besmear'd with blood . . . and parents tears," although the cries of the sacrificed children are unheard for the "noyse of Drums and Timbrels loud." The Ammonite worshipped Moloch in Rabba's plain, yet even farther: we are carried to a stream of fartherest Arnon. Once his geographical range has been established, Milton then endows him with one of

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We are embarked on one of Milton's famous Biblical lists and demon after demon is going to pass in review before us. This series will run from line 330 to 590, and the vast number of names and events described can border on the overwhelming. Many of the references will be obscure to the modern reader, and we must ask what purpose this technique serves in the total effect of the poem? I think Milton is trying to convey some idea of the vast numbers, powers and resources available to the forces of evil as well as discrediting pagan dieties. It is Satan, of course, who is the chief representative of the powers of darkness, but this list proves how vast and varied are his followers and how directly threatened is the soul of man if he relaxes his guard.

Milton succeeds in the creation of this sense of numbers and demonic powers, but it is accomplished primarily through movement. Within each descriptive segment, all of which are leading up to Satan's great speech, everything is dependent on deeds, action and temptations.

> Next Chemos, th' obscene dread of Moabs Sons
> From Aroar to Nebo, and the wild
> Of Southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
> And Horonaim, Seons Realm, beyond

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The flowry Dale of Sibma clad with Vines,
And Eleale to th' Asphaltick Pool.

(I, 406-11)

The "obscene dread of Moabs Sons," is not as important as the failures of Solomon and is given appropriately less space. The place names, as always, give us a Miltonic overview of the Biblical landscape, the names being invoked because of the events that occurred there. We gain a sense of the speed and range of the spread of the ministers of evil. This technique is consistently maintained throughout this passage. The last to appear, Belial, is described in the same active terms.

. . . then whom a Spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for it self: . . .

* * * *

. . . he also Reigns
And in luxurious Cities, where the noyse
Of riot ascends above thir loftiest Towrs,
And injury and outrage: And when Night
Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons
Of Belial, . . .

(I, 490-92 and
497-502)

Near the end of Book I we have the description of Pandaemonium. Here is a structure, a solid object, to be reproduced in our mind's eye. Even here Milton prefers to create a sense of movement and action.

Anon out of the earth a Fabrick huge
Rose like an Exhalation, . . .

(I, 710-11)

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The features of the actual structure are revealed by the same sort of Baroque scanning that characterized Satan's first view of Adam and Eve.

> Built like a Temple, where Pilasters round
> Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
> With Golden Architrave; nor did there want
> Cornice or Freeze, with bossy Sculptures grav'n
> The Roof was fretted Gold. . . .
>
> (I, 713-17)

Everything is conjured up through movement. Satan walks on the "burning Marle," rather than solid soil. A hill in Hell will belch "fire and rowling smoak." This technique is used throughout the poem. Adam and Eve's place of repose is thus described:

> . . . it was a place
> Chos'n by the sovran Planter, when he fram'd
> All things to mans delightful use; the roofe
> Of thickest covert was inwoven shade
> Laurel and Mirtle, and what higher grew
> Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
> Acanthus, and each odorous bushie shrub
> Fenc'd up the verdant wall; . . .
>
> (IV, 690-97)

As the defeated demons are expelled from Heaven:

> Hell heard th' unsufferable noise, Hell saw
> Heav'n ruining from Heav'n and would have fled
> Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
> Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
>
> (VI, 867-70)

How different the feeling in Spenser. Just as the above random samples from Paradise Lost reveal a consistency of stylistic means, so will almost any example from The Faerie Queene do the same for the Renaissance characteristic of repose.

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There in a gloomy hollow glen she found
A little cottage, built of stickes and reedes
In homely wize, and wald with sods around,
In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weedes,
And wilfull want, all carelesse of her needes;

(F. Q., III, Canto VII, 6)

Or:

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In trauell to and froe: a little wyde
There was an holy Chappell edifyde,
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy things each morne and euentyde:
Thereby a Christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth
alway.

(F. Q., I, Canto I, 34)

Spenser creates a scene very much like that found in a Renaissance painting. Our attention is directed from one aspect of the total presentment to another, in a related but far more independent manner than is present in Baroque art. The "little lowly Hermitage" happens to be "Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side," but there is not the inevitable relatedness of all the parts that one finds in the descriptive sections of Paradise Lost. It is unnecessary to point our how the Spenserian rhyme structure itself adds to the separateness of the units, but it is in such a comparison that the on-going power and flow of Milton's blank verse becomes apparent. This, along with the other elements of Milton's style which I have been examining in this chapter, produces an overwhelming sense of action and movement that must be termed Baroque.

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Unclarity in *Paradise Lost*

Unclarity contributes the second facet of the sense of Vitality projected by Baroque art. Its relationship to Movement exists in the simple physical truth that a moving eye is unable to discern the detail that a fixed gaze reveals. If the focus is on action, as I have attempted to show, then the revelation of individual forms is going to be less important. I do not, however, wish to give the impression that I am arguing for a causal connection in the sense that Movement produces Unclarity. It is rather that they tend to occur simultaneously within a style, in this case the Baroque.

The very obvious question is, why should Unclarity assist in producing a sense of "life," my *vitality* as used in this chapter heading? It appears to be one of the artistic means chosen by the period as most communicative of "reality." It is, in a word, convention which determines if Clarity or Unclarity is going to be the most "effective" in producing that sense of reality in the eye of the beholder.

> Every age has required of its art that it should be clear, and to call a representation unclear has always implied a criticism. . . . For classic art, all beauty meant

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> exhaustive revelation of form; in baroque art, absolute clearness is obscured even where a perfect rendering of the facts is aimed at.[64]

Clarity of form then ceases to be the highest artistic goal; it is no longer the absolute requirement in the task of representing reality. How profound is the shift from the Renaissance ideal can best be demonstrated by quoting Leonardo in the matter of accuracy.

> Secondly, the painter does not rely wholly on the eye but checks its judgment by actual measurement.[65]

Here is a demand for precision and specification to delight the "classicist." Such clarity usually goes hand in hand with transparent form, balanced structuring and repose. If one attempts to analyze a Baroque work of art utilizing the standards of the Renaissance, then one surely is in trouble. To appreciate the Baroque requires a "new way of seeing."

The parallel between Milton's descriptive techniques and these observations from the world of art history is obvious. Milton is more concerned with what the figures in his poem do than with what they are or look like. Milton's focus on action produced an obscuring of the detailed description. No element of Baroque art can be permitted to interfere with the sense of

[64]Wölfflin, Principles, p. 196.

[65]Anthony Blunt, Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600, (London, 1966), p. 26.

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movement that projects Vitality and life. In the visual arts, Unclarity is accomplished by the painterly techniques. In literature the corresponding phenomenon is discovered in the generic description Milton employs.

> The naif reader thinks Milton is going to describe Paradise as Milton imagines it; in reality the poet knows (or behaves as if he knew) that this is useless. His own private image of the happy garden, like yours and mine, is full of irrelevant particularities.[66]

This elimination of "irrelevant particularities" gives Milton enormous latitude in conjuring up his effects. In dealing with Hell, for instance, Douglas Bush says Milton gives us an "idea," not a "map," just as the poet provides the "idea of an earthly paradise, not a recognizable description of a spot in Mesopotamia."[67] We are called upon to complete the picture, and if we lack the specific experience and knowledge to actually "localize" the settings, we simply imagine what it must have been like. I think it is clear how such a technique, relying upon these "generic" guidelines rather than precise description produces the Baroque effect of Unclarity. This is Massirini's "lively and general effect."

[66]C. S. Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost, (London, 1942), p. 48.

[67]"Paradise Lost: The Poetical Texture," Milton's Epic Poetry (Middlesex, England, 1967), p. 37.

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Yet Baroque Unclarity does not imply removing one's viewpoint to such a distance that the details would be blurred even if present. The Baroque era, on the contrary, took delight in the technique, the materials as it were, with which this Unclarity was projected. It is not a "long-range style in the sense that the technical execution is intended to become invisible."[68] We miss the best of the Baroque painters if we miss their brushwork. The same is true of Milton. His generalized descriptions never fail to impress us all the more when viewed at close range. It is then we can appreciate the splendid economy with which he achieves these effects.

Illustrations of this generic, yet close-up technique, are so plentiful that it is best to concentrate on "minor" examples. In these we cannot attribute the power of the expression to the "subject matter" or other connotative values. There is a line in Book IV that serves this purpose well. It concerns Paradise.

A happy rural seat of various view

(IV, 247)

In seven very common words, Milton has succeeded in creating the very atmosphere of the place. The more closely we examine what he has done, the more we are forced to admire this technique. This "rural seat" is intrinsically productive of happiness as well as

[68] Wölfflin, Principles, p. 29.

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suggesting pastoral poetry to the Seventeenth Century reader. "Of various view" offers a multitude of possibilities, and we are given a series of scenes to select from. Although more specific than the initial line, the various vistas presented are hardly models of precision.

> 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:
>
> (IV, 248-51)

Which "Gumms and Balme" we are not told. It is assumed that the reader is able to supply the specific names. Milton's chief goal here is conveying some idea of the plenitude and wealth that Paradise possessed. This natural bounty is in sharp contrast to the controlled and sometimes sparse regularity of formal, man-made gardens. How more appropriate that the eye is led from grove to grove and called upon to absorb so much wealth of fruit that precise accounting is impossible. And what a marvelous touch in "Hesperian Fables true." Drawing upon a mythological tale familiar to everyone, Milton uses it to make clear that only in pre-Lapsarian Paradise would such a thing, "golden apples," be not a fable. It is necessary to add a note of definition to "Golden Rinde," for otherwise we could not be sure which golden hued fruit was being mentioned.

As part of the larger pattern of movement, it should be noted that this passage is merely part of the

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description of Eden that culminates in line 288, the appearance of Adam and Eve. With our primal parents making their appearance in the poem, attention, naturally enough, focuses on them. It is worthwhile to examine Milton's technique in characterizing them. Consider Eve's initial address to her husband.

> O thou for whom
> And from whom I was formd flesh of thy flesh,
> And without whom am to no end, my Guide
> And Head, . . .
>
> (IV, 440-43)

This is a direct reinforcement of Satan's estimation of the respective powers of the two and which occurred a hundred lines earlier.

> Not equal, as thir sex not equal seemd;
> For contemplation hee and valour formd,
> For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
> Hee for God only, shee for God in him:
>
> (IV, 296-99)

Milton is not merely presenting us with evocative and emotional speech; he is providing us with a guide for our responses. Eve's loveliness is a compound of all the Seventeenth Century reactions to the idea of feminine virtues. Paramount among these virtues is her recognition of her role and position in Paradise. The point that Adam is "Godlike" is reinforced throughout the poem. It is Adam's failure to exert his godlike "right reason," his abdication of the proper role of command and responsibility, that produces the catastrophe within the poem.

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It is with the descriptions of Eve that Milton frequently achieves an impression of powerful sensuousness, while dealing in very generic terms. A good example of this is the lead-in to the temptation itself. It occurs in Book IX and Satan spies Eve and she is, "beyond his hope," alone working in a flower garden.

> Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round
> About her glowd, oft stooping to support
> Each Flour of slender stalk, whose head though gay
> Carnation, Purple, Azure, or spect with Gold,
> Hung drooping unsustaind, them she upstaies
> Gently with Mirtle band, mindless the while,
> Her self, though fairest unsupported Flour,
> From her best prop so farr, and storm so nigh.
>
> (IX, 426-33)

Milton here creates an atmosphere of opulence with a great economy of means. As always in a Baroque work, the emphasis is upon the action being performed by the central figure; here it is Eve tending the flowers. The parallel between her own lovely head which is unable to support itself without Adam is obvious but not overdone. Indeed, within the context of this floral setting, it seems the most natural and appropriate comparison possible. There is no Mannerist straining for a far-fetched metaphor. The entire passage is generic in a very subtle way. Roses are the only flowers mentioned by name. "Carnation, Purple, Azure, or spect with Gold," refers to coloration not species. But unless one looks back over the passage, it is quite likely that the reader will think that Milton has named several flowers. The

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"close-range" viewing that this Baroque Unclarity almost demands is illustrated by lines such as, "so thick the Roses bushing round/ About her glowd," and "them she upstaies/ Gently with Mirtle band." In this passage the very line breaks subtly emphasize a rather "softened" continuation which begins the following line. The words themselves, "thick . . . bushing . . . glowd . . . stooping . . . drooping. . . Gently," aid in creating an atmosphere of warmth and lassitude. This is exactly what Milton intends, for Eve is "mindless the while." It is, however, possible for a critic to misinterpret this ease and luxuriance and read voluptuousness into it. This is all the more possible when we recall that Adam and Eve conduct the business of tending the garden in the nude. Now the nakedness of Adam and Eve is as spontaneous and natural as that we encounter in Baroque painting.

Wylie Sypher in Four Stages of Renaissance Style is unwilling to accept this innocent nudity.

> By creating Eve through his "delight in the material," Milton commits, as Puritan, a primal offense more evil than Satan's rebellion. Eve is hazardous--not theologically, but as the most seductive baroque icon, more irresistible than any of the images sanctioned by the Fathers at Trent.[69]

This is directly contrary to what Milton intends.

[69](Garden City, New York, 1955), p. 200.

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So passd they naked on, nor shund the sight
Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:

(IV, 319-20)

Milton is continually making the comparison between the state of man before and after the Fall. This is one of the main moral points of the poem.

Nor those mysterious parts were then conceald,
Then was not guiltie shame, dishonest shame
Of natures works, honor dishonorable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubl'd all mankind
With shews instead,

(IV, 321-16)

It is only after the eating of the apple that guilt enters into the picture. Most importantly, Adam voluntarily joins Eve in her transgression while he has all his original powers about him. He does not choose to live without her, " . . . and from thy State/ Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe." (IX, 915-16) This is Adam's judgment. And Milton's?

. . . he scrupl'd not to eat
Against his better knowledge, not deceav'd,
But fondly overcome with Femal charm.

(IX, 997-99)

Milton makes it clear that Adam is not deceived by the desire for Eve's body. The point is made that God would provide another mate for Adam were he to refraim from joining Eve in the transgression. "Overcome" can be read in its earlier meaning of to gain superiority by spreading over, rather than the modern sense of total triumph or reduction to helplessness. Adam decides to

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join Eve after weighing the consequences of living again "in these wilde Woods forlorn." Eve has taken her place in his heart and he does not choose to live without her.

This digression on the relationship of Adam and Eve has been intended to refute Sypher's untenable critical interpretation. Unless one is willing to put oneself in the hands of the Baroque artist, trusting that he will provide the necessary guides to a correct interpretation, then one is likely to misread and misinterpret what is given. This will occur especially when a reader approaches Paradise Lost with strong notions of his own. A totally objective response is, naturally enough, impossible, but we must follow, as much as possible, the signs given us by the author.

Another prime example of mis-interpretation is the role played by Satan in the mind of some readers. Milton obviously admires the energy with which the Fiend pursues his goals, but that is as far as it goes. Milton never forgets, nor should we, what those goals are; petty revenge and the corruption of mankind. Consider Satan's return to Hell after his successful mission.

> Down a while
> He sate, and round about him saw unseen:
> At last as from a Cloud his fulgent head
> And shape Starr bright Appeer'd, or brighter, . . .
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> (X, 447-50)

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The last two lines compare Satan to a star. Yet, Milton does not allow us to pause and admire the splendor of the lost angel. The lines continue:

> . . . clad
> With what permissive glory since his fall
> Was left him, or false glitter:
>
> (X, 450-52)

In its entirety it is nearly impossible to read these six lines and break the meaning as I have done here for the sake of illustration. Milton's qualifying of Satan's true glory is an integral part of the total description. This is a device that the author has used again and again.

Opening to almost any page of Paradise Lost will offer examples of Baroque Unclarity in description. There are certain passages, however, in which this technique is even more visible. The entire description of Paradise in Book IV belongs in this category. The waters of Eden, for instance

> . . . thence united fell
> Down the steep glade, and met the neather Flood,
> Which from his darksom passage now appeers,
> And now divided into four main Streams,
> Runs divers, wandring many a famous Realme
> And Country whereof here needs no account,
> But rather to tell how, if Art could tell,
> How from that Saphire Fount the crisped Brooks,
> Rowling on Orient Pearl and sands of Gold,
> With mazie error under pendant shades
> Ran Nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
> Flours worthy of Paradise which not nice Art
> In Beds and Curious Knots, but Nature boon
> Powrd forth profuse on Hill and Dale and Plaine,

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> Both where the morning Sun first warmly smote
> The open field, and where the unpierc't shade
> Imbround the noontide Bowrs: . . .
>
> (IV, 230-46)

This is also a prime example of Baroque Movement. There is not a stop, not even a semicolon, for 16 lines. The water travels from place to place, providing the necessary moisture for the "Flours worthy of Paradise." As always, Milton is making the pre- and post-Lapsarian comparison. It is not "nice art," (formal landscaping) but rather "Nature boon" that has provided the pattern for Paradise. Lines 234-45 tell us that these waters visited "many a famous Realme," but that "here needs no account." It is remarkable because the breadth of the flow is impressed in our minds, yet the author doesn't have to stop the passage to give us an itemized account.

The Creation is another example of Baroque Unclarity.

> And God said, let the Waters generate
> Reptil with Spawn abundant, living Soule:
> And let Fowle flie above the Earth, with wings
> Displayd on the op'n Firmament of Heav'n
> And God created the great Whales, and each
> Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
> The waters generated by thir kindes,
> And every Bird of wing after his kinde;
>
> (VII, 387-94)

Analysis of this passage demonstrates the same stylistic characteristics as found in the previous example. Whales are the only creatures mentioned by name. It is

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rather with types, Reptiles, fowl, birds, creeping animals, that the author is concerned. His point here is propagation of all life, the "Spawn abundant," rather than with individual or specific animals. It is a veritable explosion of life and generation. But, as always, those wonderful Miltonic touches: "with wings/ Displayd on the op'n Firmament of Heav'n."

Complexity and Variety in Paradise Lost

My final characteristic of Baroque Vitality, or projection of life, evolves from Wölfflin's remarks on Unity. I interpret his remarks as especially concerning the inter-relatedness of all the parts. This concept is especially useful in literary analysis. The task of examining this Baroque Complexity and Variety is made difficult by the fact, obvious by now I hope, that the stylstic criteria of this era are not easily separated from the art work in which they occur. Movement and Unclarity, for instance, contribute directly to Complexity as I stated in my introduction to this chapter.

Wölfflin has said, " . . . baroque enriched the form. . . . it becomes increasingly difficult for the individual parts to assert their validity . . ."[70] Is this really so different from MacCaffrey's observation that, "Every incident . . . almost every phrase of Paradise Lost casts light back and ahead . . . so that we are made more aware of the entire myth at once."[71] Of course Wölfflin is speaking of a compositional value in

[70] Principles, p. 65.

[71] p. 87.

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visual art, and MacCaffrey is dealing with a somewhat more cognitive function in the mind of the reader, but it is perhaps the fundamental difference in the media that makes such qualification necessary. The parallel is present nevertheless in the foregoing observations.

A specific example of this inter-relatedness, Baroque Complexity if you will, is the manner in which Milton makes the varied locales and objects within the poem partake of a moral connotation. It is a powerful unifying device; for anything, including such natural objects as trees, streams and mountains, can participate in the unfolding of man's great failing.

> The characteristic of the sacred is consequently not limited from the very outset to specific objects of groups of objects; on the contrary, any content, however indifferent, can suddenly participate in it.[72]

The danger in an artistic context of such proliferation of power and attention is obvious. It could lead to a detrimental lack of focus. With Milton, or any other great painter or poet, it does not. Complexity need not provoke diffuseness.

> Yet on the other hand the contents of the mythical consciousness do not disperse into mere disconnected particulars; they too are governed by a universal principle--which, however, is of an entirely different kind and origin from the universal principle of the logical concept.[73]

[72]Cassirer, p. 75

[73]Ibid., p. 74.

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I think that this quotation from Cassirer parallels C. S. Lewis' statement in A Preface to Paradise Lost that the surface complexity allows the underlying simplicity to influence us all the more.[74]

This technique of "surface complexity" is not the natural mode of expression of the modern, factually-oriented world. Fashions in art, as well as clothing, change. Both the mode of expression and apprehension have altered considerably since the Seventeenth Century.

> Of the continuity of a long narrative poem, the subordination of the line to the paragraph and the paragraph to the Book and even of the Book to the whole, of the grand sweeping effects that take a quarter of an hour to develop themselves, he [the modern reader] has no conception.[75]

Kenneth Burke, speaking of drama, contrasts the perceptive equipment of the modern audience with the demands made upon it by authors of past eras who placed a much higher premium on what Burke terms "eloquence."

> The distinction is one of intensity rather than kind. The contemporary audience hears the lines of a play or novel with the same equipment as it brings to reading the lines of its daily paper. It is content to have facts placed before it in some more or less adequate sequence. Eloquence is the minimizing of this interest in facts, per se, so that the "more or less adequate sequence" of their presentation must be relied on to a much greater extent. Thus, those elements of surprise and suspense are subtilized, carried down into the writing of a line or

[74] p. 45.

[75] Ibid., p. 2.

> a sentence, until in all its smallest details the work bristles with disclosures, contrasts, restatements with a difference, ellipses, images, aphorism, volume, sound values . . .[76]

It is the utilization of well-known themes, thus minimizing the interest in the projection of pure information, that permits authors such as Milton, Sophocles or Shakespeare to concentrate their energies on the manner of presentation. This "enrichment of form," to use Wölfflin's term, actually heightens the unity of the work. Indeed, all of the Baroque characteristics enhance the focus on the major theme or motif. Paradise Lost, for instance, is undeniably complex yet the reader never really loses sight of what Milton is aiming at. The narrative focal point of the work is always Adam and Eve. Almost every action and thought is directed towards them. This is philosophically and theologically balanced by the fact that all power and good radiate from God. These focal points, one primarily stylistic, the other cognitive, are strengthened by Milton throughout the work. The influence exerted by them is often subtle, but it is there. That is why I believe that there is very little in Paradise Lost that is "neutral."

With the fundamental orientation of the work so tightly controlled, and, in fact, being so essentially simple, the author is free to pour forth an almost

[76]Kenneth Burke, "Psychology and Form," Perspectives on Drama (New York, 1968), p. 97.

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overwhelming, inexhaustable stream of images. The diction can be convoluted for poetic effect. Extensive comparisons and metaphors can be employed. There never is any danger that the reader will get "lost." The freedom to move us along a pre-determined path at an often breathtaking rate of speed is an essential for the Baroque usage of Movement and Complexity.

This same sureness of purpose on the part of the author allows the development of another aspect of Baroque Complexity that is of great importance. This is variety. It is not an inevitable adjunct to Complexity. Plain repetition of identical or limited forms can produce an impression of complexity. The Baroque method, however, is to offer as many variations of the major theme or idea as possible. The reason for this is simple. To the Seventeenth Century mind, variety implied life. The well-ordered, limited and humanly proportioned world of the Renaissance had given way to a new concept of the infinity of nature. Since the previous bases for measurement were no longer adequate to the task, the Baroque mind had no alternative but to assimilate and make positive those very elements of fecundity and proliferation, of infinitude, that had so disturbed the Sixteenth Century outlook.

To examine Complexity and variety together, really the only way to approach these elements, it can be said

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that variety is the material of the stylistic process and Complexity is the form. An artist could project a sense of variety in a linear, Renaissance manner just as I have said he could produce a sense of Complexity using identical patterns. It is the Baroque poet, such as Milton, who sees Complexity and variety as necessarily related. Satan's approach to Eden in Book IV illustrates the accuracy of this statement.

> . . . and over head up grew
> Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,
> Cedar, and Pine, and Firr, and branching Palm,
> A Silvan Scene, and as the ranks ascend
> Shade above shade, a woodie Theatre
> Of stateliest view. Yet higher then thir tops
> The verdurous wall of paradise up sprung:
> Which to our general Sire gave prospect large
> Into his neather Empire neighbouring round.
> And higher then that Wall a circling row
> Of goodliest Trees loaden with fairest Fruit,
> Blossoms and Fruit at once of golden hue
> Appeerd, with gay enameld colours mixt:
>
> (IV, 137-49)

This passage could easily serve as a perfect example of the Baroque technique as it possesses most of the characteristics of that style. The descriptions are general, there is Movement and it projects variety and Complexity. Satan looks up; "over head" there is "loftiest shade." There is no break as the generalized types, "Cedar, and Pine, and Firr, and branching Palm," are observed. It is a "Silvan Scene," that is intertwined to produce a "woodie Theatre." Milton has given us only a minimal list of specific types in

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naming the trees, but it works. The complexity of this presentment is increased as we realize that this is but the first rank of trees. There is an even higher "circling row" beyond that and we proceed from the first to this without a pause. It is nearly impossible to see these individual elements of the wall around Paradise as separate entities. These latter "goodliest Trees" are bearing "fairest Fruit," yet a second glance reveals it is "Blossoms and Fruit at once of golden hue." Both are "golden," and it requires this second look to distinguish between them, so intertwined and luxuriant are they. The fruit is not exclusively golden, but appears with "gay enameld colours mixt." When reading this passage we get the impression of variety in proliferation, yet we also get a sense of the overwhelming luxuriance Satan must have felt upon encountering it. This is the total, unified picture that Milton strives for.

The variety in Paradise Lost does not produce diffusion because Milton never lets it get out of control. In the previous passage, and indeed in all sections dealing with Paradise, there is a unified impression of golden-green, verdant foliage; something akin to the "homogeneous ground tone color" employed by a Baroque painter. The spectrum is shifted, just as the level of light intensity is shifted, for other areas of the poem. In Heaven, everything tends to take on a

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brilliant, crystalline aspect. Hell is brazen and fiery. Chaos tends to be a greyish, darkish region perfectly suiting its nature as the realm of undifferentiated matter. I realize that distinguishing between the large spatial areas of Paradise Lost is not a strict stylistic observation. The point is that within the broad descriptive tones employed to define these general areas, Milton makes the interior variety coherent.

The examples of Complexity and variety within the poem are endless. An almost random selection will illustrate these characteristics as well as demonstrating the "control" to which I have referred and which is so essential in producing the feeling of unity that the work has. In Book VIII, Adam recounts for Raphael the first awareness of himself after being created.

> As new wak't from soundest sleep
> Soft on the flourie herb I found me laid
> In Balmie Sweat, which with his Beames the Sun
> Soon dri'd, and on the reaking moisture fed.
> Strait toward Heav'n my wondring Eyes I turnd,
> And gaz'd a while the ample Skie, till rais'd
> By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,
> As thitherward endevoring, and upright
> Stook on my feet; . . .
>
> (VIII, 253-61)

As always, there is Baroque Movement present, but I wish to emphasize here the manner in which the Movement is used to produce a complex, interwoven scene. The focus is at first, as it should be, on Adam who is relating the story, but notice how the middle four lines

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above are devoted to the sun and the sky. This upward orientation is echoed in Adam's instinctive up-raising of himself. By the last line above we are back to his terrestrial surroundings. Adam looks about him, and the infinite variety of life he observes is expressed in typically generic manner.

> . . . about me round I saw
> Hill, Dale, and shadie Woods, and sunnie Plaines,
> And liquid Lapse of murmuring Streams; by these,
> Creatures that livd, and movd, and walk'd, or flew,
> Birds on the branches warbling; all things smil'd,
> With fragrance and with joy my heart oreflow'd.
>
> (VIII, 261-66)

This section is related to the previous passage in that all of this surrounds Adam. Two lines describe the physical variety present. After a semicolon we are led directly into the account of the animal life which inhabited the hills and dales and streams. Employing a standard reference to the freshness of spring time, "Birds on the branches warbling," which is totally appropriate to this situation, Milton unites the entire vision, "all things smil'd." In six lines the senses of sight, smell and hearing have been employed. Our attention is once more shifted back to Adam.

> My self I then perus'd, and Limb by Limb
> Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
> With supple joints, as lively vigour led:
>
> (VIII, 267-69)

Milton is engaged on a far more important task than merely conjuring up the description of Adam's first

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moments on earth; as always man's relationship to God is of paramount importance. The next lines:

> But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
> Knew not; . . .
>
> (VIII, 270-71)

This appears to be a totally logical question to be asked in the somewhat mysterious circumstances. Adam's faculties, his surroundings in Paradise and this most fundamental question relating to the cause are perfectly blended together. So perfectly in fact, that it is quite easy to overlook the artistry with which the focus is shifted back and forth.

> . . . to speak I tri'd, and forthwith spake,
> My Tongue obey'd and readily could name
> What e're I saw. Thou Sun, said I, faire Light,
> And thou enlight'nd Earth, so fresh and gay,
> Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods, and Plaines,
> And ye that live and move, faire Creatures, tell,
> Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
>
> (VIII, 271-77)

These lines are an echo of the first account of Adam's initial experiences upon awakening which was presented some twelve lines earlier. Even the fact that he first addresses the sun reflects the sequencing of the earlier passage. Thus these duplicate presentments of the actions of Adam are slightly varied. In the first it is his perception that is recorded, in the latter it is the reasoning search for the cause of his being there. This makes even stronger the appearance of Adam's logical faculty. The first account is of an experience

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that any living creature might undergo upon its first awakening. The second establishes the uniqueness of man. But both are part of the same movement; Adam's first day on earth. Milton presents the events in such a manner that a powerful sense of spontaneity and even inevitability is created.

One of the clearest single examples of Complexity and variety to be found in the work is Michael's presentment of the future history of mankind, which begins in Book XI. At the very outset, the angel makes a very direct reference to the variety implicit in God's power.

> Adam, thou know'st Heav'n his, and all the Earth.
> Not this Rock onely; his Omnipresence fills
> Land, Sea, and Aire, and every kinde that lives,
>
> (XI, 335-37)

Had Adam not failed God, then Eden might have been his ". . . Capital Seate, from whence had spred/ All generations, . . ." (XI, 343-44) It would have been the focal point for the vast population of the earth to come.

Michael and Adam ascend the hill, and Milton then presents a vision of such magnitude that it is impossible to subject it to a close examination. Yet within each scene can be found the Complexity and variety I have been speaking of.

> He lookd and say side Territorie spred
> Before him, Towns, and rural works between,
> Cities of Men with lofty Gates and Towrs,
> Concours in Arms, fierce Faces threatning Warr,
> Giants of mightie Bone, and bould emprise;

Part wield thir Arms, part courb the foaming Steed,
Single or in Array of Battel rang'd
Both Horse and Foot, nor idely mustring stood;

(XI, 638-45)

The vision of licentious humanity just prior to the Deluge employs the same interwoven texture of persons, actions and adds the Baroque figure of Noah.

He look'd, and saw the face of things quite
chang'd,
The brazen Throat of Warr had ceast to roar,
All now was turn'd to jollitie and game,
To luxurie and riot, feast and dance,
Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
Rape or Adulterie, where passing faire
Allurd them; thence from Cups to civil Broiles.
At length a Reverend Sire among them came,
And of thir doings great dislike declar'd,
And testifi'd against thir wayes; . . .

(XI, 712-21)

The purpose of this vast sequence of vision after vision is made clear in three lines delivered by Adam at the conclusion of it in Book XII.

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; . . .

(XII, 469-71)

Our perception of the wisdom of God should be one with that of Adam: out of this infinity of adventure and action, of promise and failure comes the all-important total realization that God is indeed just and merciful in his decisions. Indeed far more so than we deserve, for he has made even evil itself an instrument of His divine good.

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Conclusion

I think it is worthwhile to insert a few remarks at the conclusion to this chapter to tie things together. Although I trust that the divisions I have employed in dealing with the Baroque projection of life, vitality for lack of a better term, have assisted in making by presentment clearer and more coherent, I wish to reassert that the phenomena I have discussed (Movement, Unclarity and Complexity) are very closely related. Something like the horses pulling a troika, each is identifiable and has its own distinguishing nature, but one cannot perform its proper function without the aid and support of the other two.

Even more importantly, I would like to make a comment as to the reasons Milton employed these Baroque techniques. In the text of this chapter, I have restricted myself to stylistic analysis. On this basis, I think Milton's reasons are obvious. The technique works and works well. Taking it a step beyond to the "final" purpose, I think Milton employs the techniques he does because his cosmos precludes any other manner of presentation. Paradise Lost is one long chronicle of change. At the opening of the poem, things are in

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a very brief state of balance. God has established a fixed universe, the rebellious angels are in Hell, Adam and Eve are in Paradise and peace reigns in Heaven.

The truth of the matter is just the opposite of this illusory repose. Vast potentialities for change exist in Milton's universe. So much has already happened that Chaos, the "Anarch old," complains to Satan as the latter is on his way to Earth:

> . . . if all I can will serve,
> That little which is left so to defend,
> Encroacht on still through our intestine broiles
> Weakning the Scepter of old Night: first Hell
> Your dungeon stretching far and wide beneath;
> Now lately Heaven and Earth, . . .
>
> (II, 999-1004)

In addition to this "geographical" change, the alteration in moral states is vast, even breath-taking. We must remember that millions upon millions of angels have lost their blessed status through rebellion and are now dedicated to evil. Adam and Eve, fragile and blessedly innocent creatures living in an equally susceptible Paradise, are about to experience a catastrophe.

But change cannot be inherently evil. If it were so, God would not allow it. Being a Baroque artist, Milton does not chose to present the changes that will occur in Paradise Lost in a sequential manner. Milton prefers to move back and forth, to refer to one state of condition while in the midst of another, as

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well as always reinforcing the awareness of potential change in any condition. It is a method of what might be termed "cross-references," which requires imaginative movement of the most dynamic sort.

> Milton's signature lies in the rapid and condensed movement from sight to invisibility, from the highest to the lowest, from conception to the inconceivable--and back again.[77]

This movement is apparent on the broadest as well as the most limited level. The Complexity, variety, and Movement within individual passages reflect the same characteristics which are apparent when one looks at the outline of the poem. This stylistic inter-weaving accounts in part for the sense of unity that one gains from reading Paradise Lost. Nothing in Paradise Lost ever is presented in total isolation. Everything in the poem is related to everything else within it. This change and movement will ultimately resolve itself in that final day when perfection once again reigns in the cosmos. The resolution, in fact, is implicit with the change.

> New Heav'ns, new Earth, Ages of endless date
> Founded in righteousness and peace and love
> To bring forth fruits Joy and eternal Bliss.
>
> (XII, 549-51)

[77]Joseph H. Summers, The Muse's Method (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 35.

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CHAPTER V

BAROQUE GRANDEUR

Introduction

The Baroque was not a style to do things in a modest way. Even when the physical setting was limited by necessity, the Baroque architect, for instance, would endow his creation with a massiveness and force adequate for a cathedral. A good example of this, I think, is Borromini's San Carlino in Rome which occupies an actually quite limited plot, but which, with its undulating front, projects a sense of power, of brio, that would have served for an edifice many times larger. Yet it all seems right and appropriate. San Carlino is spared that striving for effect and ostentation that is so apparent in something like the East Front of the Louvre. But when Baroque architecture is mentioned, our thoughts often turn to the Louvre, Versailles, Saint Peter's Colonnade, Melk, the Upper Belvedere and other such enormous structures. In short, we think of large buildings. In such a context, San Carlino can be viewed as an illusionistic, almost sleight-of-hand, performance by a great virtuouso. The proper scale for the Baroque

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is the enormous. How appropriate that ceiling paintings, which by nature tend to be vast, should be one of the finest expressions of this style.

Commenting on the incorporated "realism" of the Baroque, Helmut Hatzfield states that the utilization of this artistic element "is bound to take a sublime and stylized (rather than naturalistic) bend to the grandiose."[78] Perhaps one of the reasons that this style suffered neglect for so many centuries is that the breath of reality, the concreteness of this world, should be directed towards the diction of the superhuman and divine.

As with Movement, Unclarity and the other Baroque characteristics, this Grandeur demands a "new way of seeing" before we can fully appreciate what the artist has produced. A judgment on Paradise Lost by Joseph Summers is so fitting at this point that I cannot resist inserting it.

> If we have previously determined that the only fundtion of literature is to reflect directly and realistically the human condition as we know it . . . we may as well abandon this poem at the end of the fourth line.[79]

Summers' remark applies to all Baroque art, visual as well as literary. It is meant to be bigger than life.

[78] p. 160.

[79] p. 12.

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The why of this preference on the part of the Seventeenth Century is one of the favorite topics of discussion among the Zeitgeist critics. The Counter-Reformation, the rise of absolutism and centralized government, the "New Science," all of these are held accountable for this new, expansionistic approach to art.

Whatever the cause, there can be little doubt as to the effect. Baroque art, like a juggernaut, simply crushes all logical objection before it, a point I have dealt with previously. Wylie Sypher makes an interesting connection between the Baroque style and the techniques of the Council of Trent.

> . . . Trent announced its decrees with majestic voice; it overwhelmed heresy by splendor; it did not argue, but proclaimed; . . . The Baroque style reaches its decisions through spectacle.[80]

According to Ernst Cassirer, the "mythic" presentment produces the same response.

> The consciousness lives in the immediate impression, which it accepts without measuring it by something else. For the mythical consciousness the impression is not merely relative but absolute; the impression is not through something else and does not depend on something else . . . on the contrary it manifests and confirms itself by the simple intensity of its presence, by the irresistible force with which it impresses itself on the consciousness.[81]

[80] p. 181.

[81] p. 73.

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Now Cassirer is not dealing with scale or size in his comment, but I think the connection I have made is valid. Mythic presentment, the sublime, awe-inspiring, whatever we wish to call these effects, the fact remains that they occur when we encounter something that is affective yet beyond our cognitive faculties. One of the commonest ways to overwhelm our cognitive faculties is simply to present something too vast for our usual mode of apprehension. Other elements, especially beauty of one sort or another, must be combined with the colossal to induce the sense of grandeur. It is interesting to note that Aristotle has no interest in grandeur and the sublime. His concerns are with nobility, form and just proportion, all intellectually comprehensible qualities. And just as we must wait for Longinus before we have a critic who deals with the question of the sublime in a serious manner, so we must wait until the Seventeenth Century had displaced the humanist module of the Renaissance before awe-inspiring art works are offered. The "awe" induced by viewing the works of a Renaissance artist is of a different order and primarily dependent on form and beauty alone.

Up to this point, I have been speaking of the "response" of the percipient to works of art which employ scale and grandeur to achieve that effect commonly called "sublimity." From the stylistic standpoint,

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however, it is the means by which this response is elicited that is of primary concern. How does an artist, such as Milton, induce this sense of the splendid and overwhelming within his work? What are the devices he employs to this end?

I believe Milton's techniques for developing the sense of Baroque Grandeur can be divided into three general categories for purposes of analysis. The first of these can be termed "Subject and Style." This section will consist of a brief examination of the relationship between what Milton is dealing with in Paradise Lost, and the suitability of the artistic means he employs. I believe there is a close relationship between the two, and that the very nature of the Fall of Man dictated the style in which this event should be described.

The second division of the means by which Milton achieves Baroque Grandeur in Paradise Lost consists of an analysis of the Public/Official aspect of Baroque art. Every artist addresses himself to his public, but I believe that in the Baroque era this orientation was more emphasized than ever before or since. I will show how Milton evokes predictable responses by employing stock devices to make his epic as comprehensible as possible. Beyond that, however, through his stylistic amplification, he very clearly guides his public's response to these stock images. Stylistically speaking, he

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effects an artistic amplification of each of the images he uses. As sub-divisions under this heading of Public/Official, I will briefly deal with the fact that practically all the speeches in Paradise Lost sound as though they were, and indeed were meant to be, public utterances. This is true whether the speeches are calls to arms and proclamations or more private expressions.

The third division of the chapter will be in the nature of a summary wherein I attempt to pull together my observations. Especially important is the conclusion that all of the devices I have discussed in this section contribute very directly to that inherent sense of Unity that Paradise Lost possesses. I believe that an analysis of "decorum" is especially valid in relationship to this sense of Unity.

Subject and Style

The subject matter itself, the initial choice or commission of the artist, can be considered the first step towards generating the sense of grandeur. It should be a large, a very large undertaking. Milton, in the first five lines of Paradise Lost, states his subject, and it is the most expansive ever undertaken by a poet, save Dante perhaps. A few lines later, as he calls on the Heavenly Muse, he reveals that he is aware of the scale of what he is attempting.

> . . . I thence
> Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,
> That with no middle flight intends to soar
> Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
> Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.
>
> * * * *
>
> . . . What in me is dark
> Illumin, what is low raise and support;
> That to the highth of this great Argument
> I may assert Eternal Providence,
> And justifie the wayes of God to men.
>
> (I, 12-16 and 22-26)

The invocation at the beginning to Book III may appear, to be a very conventional device in which Milton briefly suggests comparison to famed poets and prophets of the past. He also asks the Celestial light to "Shine inward," so "that I may see and tell/ Of things invisible

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to mortal sight." (III, 52 and 54-55) The impression here is of an almost proto-Romantic self-awareness. He does not expect us to take his disclaimers literally. He is creating something magnificent and he knows it.

Milton's clearest statement about both the selection of his subject and the style it demands comes in the Proem to Book IX.

> If answerable style I can obtaine
> Of my Celestial Patroness, who deignes
> Her nightly visitation unimplor'd
> And dictates to me slumbring, or inspires
> Easie my unpremeditated Verse:
> Since first this Subject for Heroic Song
> Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late;
> Not sedulous by Nature to indite
> Warrs, hitherto the onely Argument
> Heroic deem'd, chief maistrie to dissect
> With Long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights
> In Battels feign'd; . . .
>
> (IX, 20-31)

After several lines in which he lists the features of the chivalric epic in a manner that, by the way, is a splendid example of Baroque Movement and Unclarity he continues:

> . . . Mee of these
> Nor skilld nor studious, higher Argument
> Remaines, sufficient of it self to raise
> That name, unless an age too late, or cold
> Climat, or Years damp my intended wing
> Deprest, and much they may, if all be mine,
> Not Hers who brings it nightly to my Ear.
>
> (IX, 41-47)

The Biblical subject had long been regarded as the highest an artist or author could attempt. The new touch offered by Milton in these "direct" comments is

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p. 201

his opinion that his subject, the Fall, is more "heroic" than the standard courtly concern for knights and their conquests. The "higher Argument," in itself, is sufficient to make him long remembered if he is only up to the task of doing it justice. He expresses the conviction in the last few lines above that he is unequal to the task "on his own" and must depend on divine inspiration.

Milton is aware that the very nature of this account of the history of man will demand a particular quality, his "answerable style," to do it justice. The tone of the work, the sense of grandeur with which he imbues the whole work is, so far as I am concerned, the greatest unifying device to be found in Paradise Lost. Milton may vary his language to a certain degree to suit the locale and personages involved, but the familiar ring is present and we have no difficulty in recognizing it. It is, so to speak, the author's signature in this poem.

Yet Milton's elevated style has produced some very serious critical problems through the years. Assuming, for instance, that this "grand style" is suited only for "grand subjects" throws one back into the judgments of the Eighteenth Century. Merritt Hughes has noted that the War in Heaven elicited praise from the critics of two hundred years ago because it was "sublime."[82] Yet the

[82] Ten Perspectives on Milton (New Haven, 1965), p. 201.

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substance given the allegorical figures of Sin and Death is censured by Dr. Johnson who feels they should have remained purely figurative.[83] Need I point out that the Baroque era was always giving flesh and substance to the imaginary and mythical? On a purely stylistic level, I might point out that the War in Heaven has some very solid images of its own. Mountains are uprooted and cast about and, most incredibly, the demons invent cannons and gunpowder to assault the faithful angels. I accept both the bridge of Sin and Death and the events occurring during the war. I will not blame Milton for being consistent in his style throughout the poem.

Another passage that is often attacked for lacking suitability of content is Eve's preparation of the feast for Adam and Raphael. It is slightly over 300 lines into Book V and Eve is preparing "For dinner savourie fruits" when Adam sees Raphael approaching. Of course the Heavenly guest is asked to join the repast and Eve sets about the preparation of the meal.

> . . . with dispatchful looks in haste
> She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
> What choice to chuse for delicacie best,
> What order, so contriv'd as not to mix
> Tastes, not well joynd, inelegant, but bring
> Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change,
> Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
> Whatever Earth all-bearing Mother yields
> In India East or West, or middle shoare
> In Pontus or the Punic Coast, or where
> Alcinous reign'd, fruit of all kindes, in coate,

[83] Lives of the Poets (London, 1888), pp. 76-77.

Rough, or smooth rin'd, or bearded husk, or shell
She gathers, Tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand; for drink the Grape
She crushes, inoffensive moust, and meathes
From many a berrie, and from sweet kernels prest
She tempers dulcet creams, nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure, then strews the ground
With Rose and Odours from the shrub unfum'd.

(V, 331-49)

This is one of the few times that I must disagree with Isabel MacCaffrey who feels that this passage, along with other minor examples, deals with subjects that, " . . . are extraneous to the main themes and out of key with the rest of the poem because they are ethically neutral."[84] The passage is not ethically neutral because we are once again dealing with God's bounty and plentitude. Eden abounds with every form of animal and plant life, and Milton has devoted a good portion of Book IV in creating the image for us. Here is an opportunity to make the innocent pleasures of Paradise all the clearer. Hunger and its satisfaction may not be within the realm of high aesthetics, but it is universal. It is as Eve says a few lines before Raphael arrives:

. . . as hee
Beholding shall confess that here on Earth
God hath dispenst his bounties as in Heav'n.

(V, 328-30)

Incidentally, the whole preparation scene, which I have quoted, is another example of Baroque Movement. We are not supposed to linger too long over any specific

[84]p. 107.

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description. Evidence of this is to be found in the accompanying Unclarity. "Grape" and "Rose" are the only two actual botanical titles given in the passage.

In addition, this passage is designed to heighten the ever-present contrast between the pre and post-Lapsarian condition. For instance, Eve's activities parallel the preparation for a Seventeenth Century banquet, an age famous for its indulgences at the table. We note that our hostess gives thought as to the menu and which flavors are to be presented in which order. Milton's ethical point is made by the pure simplicity with which all this is managed in Eden. No steaming kitchens, hordes of servants or running back and forth. Adam, as host, walks forth "with his own compleat/ Perfections" (V, 352-53) grander by far than anything the contemporary world could offer. This feast must be grand in its own innocent manner to compete in the mind with the lavish displays of the Seventeenth Century, or the Twentieth for that matter. The perfection of Paradise is brought out in such a minor touch as "A while discourse they hold;/ No fear lest Dinner coole." (V, 395-96) This line may prompt a smile in the reader. But rather than seeing it as a clumsy attempt at humor, I suggest we recall the eating arrangements of the Seventeenth Century. To remove the kitchen heat and odors, the place of preparation was often nearly a quarter of

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a mile from the dining hall proper. It has been said that Louis XIV never had a hot meal in his life. All this is eliminated in Eden by having meal consist of natural fruits and foodstuffs.

If we chose to regard this scene as a picnic, or the humble repast of a couple of peasants, then the style is overdone. The bucolic interpretation is certainly wrong. Milton has consistently striven to convey some idea of the majesty and the native nobility possessed by Adam and Eve. Their "home life" must possess the same impressive dignity as their expressions of mutual devotion or their prayers of adoration to God. This dignity and grandeur is theirs spontaneously; it derives from their perfect human nature. It is effortless with the sense of grace implied by the Renaissance Italian expression "grazie." Milton's point is that it is this, as well as the bounty of Paradise, that we have lost. Illustrative of the latter point, Raphael says:

> . . . yet God hath here
> Varied his bounty so with new delights,
> As may compare with Heaven; and to taste
> Think not I shall be nice. . . .
>
> (V, 430-33)

The fruit of Paradise will compare with that of Heaven. Milton will never let us forget, for a moment, what it was we lost when we lost Paradise.

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The Public/Official Pose

When an author strives for and achieves the sublime and grand in his work, something else must be sacrificed. It is true that Homer, for instance, can deal with an epic subject, the Fall of Troy, yet often interjects the most intimate and personal touches in his work. Within getting involved in the distinction between Schiller's "Naive" and "Sentimental" poet, I think the cause of this difference between Homer and Milton lies in the fact that the former is simply describing events as they occurred. By contrast, Milton assigns moral value to every single incident in Paradise Lost. This is another aspect of the Baroque artist's utilizing his means to a predetermined end. It is an end that is always present in Milton's mind, and every facet of Paradise Lost is going to be directed towards the reinforcement of that end. Homer is telling a story; Milton is making a point.

There are highly desireable artistic qualities, certainly as attractive as the sublime and the grand, that simply find no place in the "secondary epic" form. If one places a premium on characterization and individuality, for instance, the "dinner" scene I have just discussed may be seen as pompous and over elaborate.

Further, it can be argued that Adam and Eve are not very particularized at any point in the poem. We know that they are splendid, almost perfect, embodiments of the human ideal, yet their delineation is perhaps deficient in those intimate touches that truly "round out" a characterization. Yet Milton's creations do not lack anything necessary for the purpose they are to serve. Milton, like most Baroque artists, is dealing with Man rather than a man. It is the generic nature rather than the peculiar or idiosyncratic that interests Milton. Satan, for instance, is merely the most outstanding of the Fallen, rather than a particularized novelty. The Debate in Hell gives the idea that were Milton to concern himself with Belial or Moloch, who serve as character types in Paradise Lost, to the extent that he concerns himself with Satan, they would be as interesting as the latter. These two lesser villains are certainly characterized enough to make them individuals, but that is not Milton's chief concern with them. The important point is not how uniquely any of the Fallen react to anything so much as it is that they are Fallen. All their responses are dictated by their moral condition which precludes anything but evil and rancour on their part.

I am leading up to the observation that the Baroque style, perhaps more than any other that has ever appeared, was a public and official style. That is why

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the art works of that era impress us with their open projection of power. Cathedrals and palaces, both public structures, are the finest architectural expressions of this style. The intricate, the convoluted, the "hard-to-read," the coterie elements are cast out in favor of a complex simplicity. Paradise Lost is aimed at the public. Milton is concerned with justifying the ways of God to men, all men of all ages. The Metaphysical style, by contrast, in its complexity and peculiarities reflects the fact that it was geared to an educated, selective audience. Paradise Lost was meant to be a "popular" poem.[85]

It is not surprising then, that it has the quality of a public ritual; that is to say, pomp and grandeur. It is meant to rouse the ritualistic and participatory nature in us. We are to assist at an important "festal" occasion.[86] And if Paradise Lost sometimes, especially to the more subdued modern ear, sounds a bit pretentious, we must recognize that our reaction is due to a shift in the style of expression that has occurred through the years. Yet some elements of our life retain this air of the splendid and grand. D. C. Allen correctly points out, in his observations on some other

[85]Bush, p. 48.

[86]Lewis, p. 17.

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works of Milton, that the horatory beginnings may be bombastic, but no more so than public prayer.[87]

A. Stock Responses

In the last few pages I have been discussing the effect of the Baroque technique of publicly evoking a sense of grandeur. What does this mean stylistically? I believe it will have very direct and discernible effects on the way in which an author composes his work. To begin with, if an artist is as much concerned with the effect his creation will have on the public as he is with expressing his innermost thoughts, then he will be more "considerate" of his audience. He will express his thoughts through the more easily recognized and comprehended rather than through the subtle or obscure.

One of the most obvious artistic ways to induce this public response to the easily understood is through stock phrases and responses. This element is often considered to be primarily discernible on the level of imagery, but I think it can be seen as a much broader phenomenon in Paradise Lost. So far as the total issue of the poem is concerned, we know what is going to happen. The end never is in doubt. The author cannot rely upon intrigue or novelty to hold his audience's attention.[88]

[87]Don Cameron Allen, The Harmonious Vision (Baltimore, 1954), p. 8.

[88]MacCaffery, p. 177.

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I might even so far as to say that our total reaction to the poem as a recognizable whole is a stock response, emotionally and intellectually.

This may appear to be wandering somewhat afar from stylistic concerns, but I assert that if there isn't at least a fundamental acceptance on the part of the reader of the general premises of the author, then the true effect and purpose of the poem will be weakened. To insist that Satan is, after all, the real hero of Paradise Lost means working against the author practically every step of the way. Baroque art, in general, is an expression of belief on the part of its creators[89] which, for its fullest effect, must strike a responsive chord in the recipient. And if, in the present decades of the Twentieth Century with its secular orientation, it is asking too much of some people to expect them to actively endorse Milton's unfailing devotion to a good and merciful God, then the least that must be demanded is a "neutrality," a willingness to let Milton present his case. To expect Milton to overcome an inherent personal bias on the part of the reader against the "establishment," to use a fashionable term, is to generate a world of tensions, which are, inevitably, assigned to the art work itself. I repeat my old theme that Baroque art does not possess the intellectual pose of

[89]Lewis, p. 71.

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uncertainty that characterizes a Metaphysical like Donne. Milton, in the Horatian tradition, believes in "instructing" as he "delights." One simply cannot instruct without believing in the subject matter.

For a stock response to function as it should in a work of art, it is necessary that the image or symbol employed be not only one to which the reader will respond sympathetically, but that it be, first of all, familiar. Such a characteristic is implicit in the term, stock response, itself. And it is here, of course, that many Twentieth Century readers are at a disadvantage in approaching Paradise Lost. Not only does the modern mind often tend to be more critical of the methods of God, it often is sadly ignorant of the vast wealth of signs and symbols that have been developed over the centuries in the area of Christian literature.

I suppose it is true that there are some "universal" stock responses that will function in any era and almost any culture, but I would prefer to emphasize the "public" rather than the "universal" aspect of the phenomenon. In the first place, even my own modest readings in history and literature have made me very wary of attaching the word "universal" to anything human. The most fundamental responses tend to be altered and colored by any specific era and system of belief.

In spite of the perverseness that seemingly appears cyclically in the course of history, during which

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times all the established "stock responses" are questioned, an author is usually safe in employing them. Dante did not have to tell his readers that sin is bad and sinners are evil[90] any more than we may doubt that Milton knew Satan was a bad angel.[91] What is more, Milton expected his readers to share his opinion. C. S. Lewis says that some stock responses, among which I would classify those just mentioned, perform a very worthwhile social function. Examples he offers are that honor is good and death is bad. Incorporated into popular works of art, they advance those patterns of behavior that are most advantageous to the preservation of society and civilization.[92]

We can see that Milton is quite dependent upon the various associations he could have reasonably expected as a "standard" response from his Seventeenth Century reader. Some of these are very generalized and come directly from the nomenclature of Christianity. In Paradise Lost God is referred to as the "Almighty" as often as He is called "God." This divine omnipotence is an article of faith with Milton and I am sure he would be quite surprised at the evolutionary theological process

[90]Robert Martin Adams, Milton and the Modern Critics (Ithaca, New York, 1955), p. 57.

[91]John S. Diekhoff, Milton's Paradise Lost (New York, 1946), p. 31.

[92]p. 57.

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that has produced people willing to question such an assertion, or to argue that "God is Dead." Milton also knew that his "allegorical" figures of Sin and Death will produce an initial reaction from the value of their names alone.

But an artist who limits himself to the "stock responses" of even so expansive a literature as that of Christianity is going to have to use these signs as he receives them. Milton is far too great an artist to merely adopt "ready made" devices, pertinent as they may be to his purpose. He will reinforce and enlarge their meanings with the most powerful artistic means he possesses as the poem progresses.

Yet here, as everywhere, diffusion is a very real artistic threat. For the stock response to function effectively in the way the artist wishes it to, there must be a tight focus upon it. It must be repeated again and again, sometimes in the most obvious way, so that it will gain the necessary connotative power.

> The relatively small vocabulary used in the poem means that there is necessarily a high frequency of repeated words and phrases which gather significance as they go along and reinforce, even while they borrow strength from, our familiarity with the story.[93]

This is, of course, in the tradition of what C. S. Lewis

[93]MacCaffrey, p. 87.

terms the "oral technique" of the epic. In fact, he says the continual use of stock words, phrases or even whole lines is the most obvious characteristic the epic possesses.[94] In a more specific sense, this can be seen as an especially Baroque technique, and recurrent motifs and metaphors are part of a ritual and not the inner expressions of a Metaphysical poet's inner experience.[95]

I do not mean to suggest that Milton neglects or distorts the traditional meanings of the Christian iconography he employs. He was probably as aware as any man in the Seventeenth Century of the wealth of associative and connotative meanings names like Sin and Death possessed in the mind of his reader. I am attempting to define Milton's usage of this material in an artistic sense. The poet will draw out and amplify those facets of the traditional images that best suit his narrative purposes within the poem. He must shade and model these meanings. He is not creating anything really "new." All of these associations, it must be emphasized, are pre-existent in the reader's mind. These images and repetitions assume, gradually, as MacCaffrey has suggested, an air of majesty and permanence, of grandeur. It is a process of magnification and

[94]Lewis, p. 20.

[95]de Mourgues, p. 81.

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enhancement. It is this "tight focus," this response controlled by the author, that makes Paradise Lost so wonderfully coherent. And it is Milton's choice of standard and easily understood images that helps make his work so typically Baroque.

A good example of one of the stock response images in Paradise Lost is Milton's Tree of Knowledge. It appears on the second line of the first Book as "that Forbidden Tree," an example of an object that possesses mana or divine power by designation. At this first mention, every Christian reader immediately reacts with a predictable emotional response. The story is too well known for anyone to be ignorant of the general implications of such a reference. From here on, however, Milton, through his usage of the Tree as a recurrent symbol, is going to shape and amplify its meaning to suit his own purposes.

The Tree of Knowledge is indirectly mentioned in Book III when God, predicting the eventual downfall of man says of Satan's projected success, "For man will hark'n to his glozing lyes,/ And easily transgress the sole Command,/ Sole pledge of his obedience." (III, 93-95) Here the connection is made with man's disobedient future action. The result of that transgression is underlined in Book IV, in the description of Eden where--

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> . . . next to life
> Our Death the Tree of knowledge grew fast by,
> Knowledge of Good bought dear by knowing ill.
>
> (IV, 220-22)

Here the paradoxical nature of the name itself, Knowledge producing ill, is established. The equivalence of Knowledge with death, is magnified 200 lines later when Adam speaks of the sole admonition laid on them.

> . . . not to taste that onely Tree
> Of knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life,
> So neer grows Death to Life, what ere Death is,
> Som dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou knowst
> God hath pronounc't it death to taste that Tree,
> The only sign of our obedience left
> Among so many signes of power and rule
>
> (IV, 423-29)

Note how Adam's explanation to Eve embroiders and illuminates the meaning of the Tree for the reader. But Milton is, as always, stressing future implications as well as present meaning. At this point in the narrative, the Tree is a symbol placed by God into Eden, yet Milton has already injected into our awareness the consequent punishment, Death, which is to be the supreme penalty man must pay for his disobedience.

The function of the Tree as the symbol of Eve's temptation and the device by which Satan triumphs is illuminated a hundred lines later.

> . . . all is not theirs is seems:
> One fatal Tree there stands of Knowledge call'd,
> Forbidden them to taste: . . .
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> (IV, 513-15)

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The reader's response to the words, "Tree of Knowledge," has now assumed the element of temptation, introduced by Satan. The author is constructing several related layers of meaning for one descriptive term. He will then be able to use that very term, in future locations within the poem, and be reasonably sure that all the meanings and connotations are present. "Every incident, every speech, almost every phrase of Paradise Lost casts back and ahead to illuminate past and future so that we are made aware of the entire myth at once."[96]

The temptation value of the Tree is further weighted at the beginning of Book V in Eve's account of her dream.

> And on, methought, alone I pass'd through ways
> That brought me on a sudden to the Tree
> Of interdicted Knowledge: fair it seem'd
> Much fairer to my Fancie then by day:
>
> (V, 50-53)

The rest of the dream is a description of Eve being successfully tempted and the wondrous delights she experiences after eating the fruit. Milton is giving the fateful significance to the Tree, a prefiguring of what is to come. When Eve does approach the Tree in Book IX both she and the reader will feel that she has been there before.

Repetition is essential in creating and controlling the response of the reader. Raphael interjects

[96]MacCaffrey, p. 87.

the admonition, once again, about the Tree of Knowledge in his account of the creation in Book VII. God reinforces it in his discourse with Adam upon his first being created in Book VIII. By the time Eve is led to the Tree of knowledge in Book IX, Milton has created such a many-faceted symbol of temptation and death, of transgression, of disobedience, that he is spared the need for any elaborate description. This is the tree that all events have been leading up to.

After the transgression of Adam and Eve, the Tree loses its meaning as a sign of filial obedience. The idea of retribution is now advanced. Christ seeks out Adam in Book X.

> . . . hast thou eaten of the Tree
> Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?
>
> (X, 122-23)

The final presentment of the Tree of Knowledge occurs in Book X, after the daemons have been given their serpentine forms. It is an illusion produced in Hell by God to further their punishment. Instead of the delicious fruit they thought they saw, they "Chewd bitter Ashes." (X,566)

Milton, in this one example of the Tree of Knowledge, has taken a common Biblical reference and enhanced and magnified its meaning. This is done through his structuring of references to it within the poem and the variety of roles it plays for the figures within the

work. It means several things at one and the same moment, and although a specific employment of the Tree in any one book may emphasize one of the meanings, the others are by no means excluded. In exactly the same way the prime symbol of the Christian faith, the cross, can represent both redemption and sacrifice, death and resurrection, all at the same moment.

There are other examples within Paradise Lost that illustrate this technique of enhancing a Christian symbol for the purpose of inducing an enriched response from the audience. There is little doubt that the Throne of God is another prime example of Milton's publicly oriented, emblematic technique. The Throne of God is again a Biblical image, and as such would prompt an initial response from the reader, but the author enlarges and magnifies its meaning and function within Paradise Lost.

First of all, the Throne is where God resides. As I have said earlier, the Almighty does not move, nor does He have any need to. For the Fallen, the Throne represents God's omnipotence. As Satan discovered, it is pointless to challenge this power.

> . . . and with ambitious aim
> Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
> Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel proud
> With vain attempt. . . .
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> (I, 42-44)

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The Throne of God must be splendid, and it is in those passages describing heaven that so much of the air of Grandeur that the poem possesses originates.

> Now had the Almighty Father from above,
> From the pure Empyrean where he sits
> High Thron'd above all highth, . . .
>
> (III, 56-58)

When Christ brings out his dread chariot to drive Satan and the rebels from Heaven

> The stedfast Empyrean shook throughout,
> All but the Throne it self of God. . . .
>
> (VI, 833-34)

The throne is made symbolic of God's power throughout the poem. It is the plan of Satan

> To win the Mount of God, and on his Throne
> To set the envier of his State, . . .
>
> (VI, 88-89)

It would be tedious and overwhelming at the same time for Milton to attempt to project all the significance of the Throne at one time in one passage. He prefers to build, part by part, a cumulative effect and an impression of grandeur, produced by enlarging the public response. As with all the Baroque techniques, the effect is greater than the sum of its parts. Ultimately, it is an impression formulated within the mind of the reader.

The Throne of God is important even before Milton addresses himself to the enrichment of this particular

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image. We are first introduced to the false throne of Satan. This occurs at the beginning of Book II.

> High on a Throne of Royal State, which far
> Outshon the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Showrs on her Kings Barbaric Pearl and Gold,
> Satan exalted sat, . . .
>
> (II, 1-5)

This throne of Satan is indeed more splendid than anything seen on earth, but the reader will soon discover that this will be a hollow attempt by the Fallen to equal the glories of Heaven. The glories of Heaven are inimitable, dependent as they are on the favor and love of God. Only the Fallen, or mortals deluded by the forces of wickedness, would erroneously suppose that mere show, external glitter, can equal the divine beauties, founded as they are on perfect love, truth and justice.

This made clearer some 200 lines later when Mammon offers his counsel to the assemblage in Hell.

> . . . This desart soile
> Wants not her hidden lustre, Gemms and Gold;
> Nor want we skill or Art, from whence to raise
> Magnificence; and what can Heav'n shew more?
> Our torments also may in length of time
> Become our Elements, these piercing Fires
> As soft as now severe, . . .
>
> (II, 270-76)

Mammon is serious and believes this is the best course of action, but Milton demonstrates the futility of this suggestion when he has Mammon argue that one can get

used to anything, even Hell-fire, given enough time. The Fallen are deluded. And just as we are to compare the false glories of Satan's throne against the soon to be revealed Throne of God, we can compare Mammon's, "What can Heav'n shew more," against the genuine delight of Raphael when the Archangel sees the genuine glories of uncorrupted Paradise.

> . . . yet God hath here
> Varied his bounty so with new delights,
> As may compare with Heaven; . . .
>
> (V, 430-32)

The uniquely Baroque element in Milton's magnification of the stock responses of Christianity is that we are present and participate in the process. Since we are witness to the actual events that add on the varied and expanded layers of meanings, how much more likely we are to accept the employment of them in the sense the author intends. Our reactions are guided and controlled. And this artistic control means that the author is not limited to the most obvious references, the "lowest common denomenator." The entire audience is elevated into the artist's realm of knowledge and sensitivities.

In this sense, the Baroque has an affinity to the Middle Ages. In the latter era sublime architectural works were created to the purpose of assisting man, in all his social categories, in the task of worshipping

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God. As I have said before, this openness, this straightforward presentment of a fundamental yet rich conviction, is usually not attractive to periods or coteries which place a premium on "intellectualizing." The latter hold to a viewpoint that anything so "obvious" cannot be worth serious attention. I do not wish to slight the virtues of an alert mind or of intellectual inquiry, but I would make the point that periods in which society tolerates the prying and investigation of each mind into the cherished common beliefs are rather rare. I am not speaking of the ideal, humanistic culture; I am making a descriptive statement of the way things are, and usually have been. Mankind always seeks solid, preferably uncomplicated answers. The Metaphysical/Mannerist stance of doubt and paradox is uncomfortable, even for those who maintain it. Even they who express this incertitude, such as John Donne, betray a wish for a definite answer. The open-minded stance I am convinced, is contrary to human nature. St. Paul, Luther and Calvin are better exemplars of Christian "tolerance" than is Erasmus.

The age of the Baroque was one of strong, definite beliefs. The Baroque artist then felt free to employ the most powerful artistic means at his disposal to the advancement of those beliefs. The Baroque era combined a strong religious feeling for virtue and sin,

moral--even moralistic--preoccupations, belief in heroism and grandeur. These were expressed in a sublime academic-rhetorical, yet unaffected style.[97]

B. Rhetorical Style in Paradise Lost

As a subsidiary consideration of the Public/Official style of Paradise Lost, I now turn my attention to the rhetorical air that the work projects. One simply cannot speak in public in the same style as one speaks in private. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that only in the Twentieth Century has it become fashionable to speak in public in a style more suited to private communications, which is to say that, with few exceptions, the Twentieth Century has no public speaking style. This is as serious a complaint as saying that a Baroque work, such as Paradise Lost, by contrast, doesn't have a private style.

I would like to examine some of the speeches in Paradise Lost to prove that they illustrate the Baroque style. The language is always intended for the world at large. It took a Bernini to carve the "Ecstacy of St. Theresa" and depict the most intimate mystical experience that a human can achieve just as it required an Ignatius Loyola to provide a general exercise book with which all devout persons could reach the same state. Baciccia's

[97]Hatzfield, p. 160.

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Death of St. Francis Xavier (Plate VI) is a perfect example of this public revelation of mystic and personal experience. This is also illustrative of a point I made previously; that the viewer's or reader's ideological bias will be crucial in deciding whether the art work in question is too emotional. All are examples of the Seventeenth Century urge to make public, official and ritualized the innermost experiences of humanity.

There are many speeches in Paradise Lost for which the rhetorical is the only style imaginable. They are obviously public pronouncements. Satan's exhortation to his followers is one of the earliest to occur.

> . . . ; Princes, Potentates,
> Warriers, the Flowr of Heav'n, once yours, now lost,
> If such astonishment as this can sieze
> Eternal spirits; or have ye chos'n this place
> After the toyl of Battel to repose
> Your wearied vertue, . . .
>
> (I, 315-20)

This is delivered in a voice "so loud, that all the hollow Deep/ Of Hell resounded." (I, 314-15) This is but one, the first, example of the sort of "public statement" that fills Paradise Lost. I don't feel it necessary to offer lengthy quotations from the rest of the poem to support this judgment. All one need do is open the poem to any one of them. This by no means suggests that these speeches are not worthy of attention in reading the work. They are models of their kind.

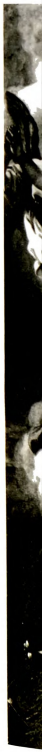

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PLATE VI. THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

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As with my discussion of Baroque Movement, I think the best way to discover the inherent Baroque rhetorical flavor is to analyze those speeches where the subject matter or circumstance argues against its presence. These examples would be where the setting and characters are more intimate and at ease. If the rhetorical air is present in these places, then we may be sure that it will be found in the "public" speeches. Immediately the exchanges of Adam and Eve come to mind. Adam's first speech occurs in Book IV as Satan is observing the original pair.

> Sole partner and sole part of all these joyes,
> Dearer thy self then all; needs must the power
> That made us, and for us this ample World
> Be infinitly good, and of his good
> As liberal and free as infinite,
> That rais'd us from the dust and plac't us here
> In all this happiness, who at his hand
> Have nothing merited, nor can performe
> Aught whereof hee hath need, hee who requires
> From us no other service then to keep
> This one, this easie charge, of all the Trees
> In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
> So various, not to taste that onely Tree
> Of knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life,
>
> (IV, 411-24)

This passage reveals the generally constant Miltonic style. It is elevated and impressive. Indeed, it may appear a little pompous when one considers that Adam is speaking privately to his beloved.

Adam, as is appropriate to his position, is instructing Eve. He is outlining for her, and for us, the situation as it exists in Paradise. Adam is occupying

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his "rightful," and God-given place as the superior member of the pair. All through the poem we are given the impression that Eve suffers a deficiency of the inherent wisdom that Adam possessed at his creation. It must be remembered that Milton is continually outlining what the "proper" relationship between man and woman should be. The exchanges between this first couple, then, serve a far more important purpose than demonstrating endearment and devotion. There are some intimate touches, such as Eve's concern that Adam will take a new mate after she is punished for having eaten of the apple, but most of the relationship is based upon the respectively proper roles and duties of the two. She replies immediately after Adam's speech:

> . . . O thou for whom
> And from whom I was formd flesh of thy flesh,
> And without whom am to no end, my Guide
> And Head, what thou hast said is just and right.

She continues with an account of her first recollections and concludes:

> . . . with that thy gentle hand
> Seisd mine, I yielded, and from that time see
> How beauty is excelld by manly grace
> And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.
>
> (IV, 440-43 and 488-91)

When they embrace a few lines later, Adam is as pleased with her "Submissive Charms" as with her "Beauty." Milton is engaged in a far more important task than merely presenting his readers with the intimate

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murmurings of any pair of lovers. There can be no doubt of the author's purpose if we go a hundred lines on to the point where Adam and Eve retire for the evening.

> . . . and eas'd the putting off
> These troublesom disguises which wee wear,
> Strait side by side were laid, nor turnd I weene
> Adam from his fair Spouse, nor Eve the Rites
> Mysterious of connubial Love refus'd:
>
> (IV, 739,43)

At this point Milton launches into a 37 line exposition of the value of wedded love under the law of God and how important it is to "Court Amours." We have reached a second important factor in the Rhetorical/ Public attitude. Milton sees Adam and Eve as public symbols of man and woman. They are even more; they are the father and mother of mankind. It is as though they knew that practically every word they uttered was of far more importance than would be private conversation. With all this in mind, it is no wonder that their speeches will tend to have a rhetorical quality about them.

Stylistically, this manifests itself in the quasi-formal, elegant mode of personal address that is employed. "Sole partner and sole part of all these joyes," establishes the relationship of Adam and Eve in Paradise and, in Milton's mind evidently, the proper relationship of woman to man for all time. Eve's reply--"O thou for whom/ And from whom I was formd flesh of thy flesh," is an admission of her rightful place. Eve is Adam's

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"Fair Consort" or "Mother of Mankind" to Raphael or our "general Mother." Adam is "O prime of men" or "our first Father" or "My Author and Disposer" to Eve. The precise relationships of the characters are always carefully maintained. Adam makes this point very clear when he recognizes what his transgression means for all the future generations of men.

> . . . Fair Patrimonie
> That I must leave ye, Sons; O were I able
> To waste it all my self, and leave ye none!
> So disinherited how would ye bless
> Me now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind
> For one mans fault thus guiltless be condemn'd,
> If guiltless? . . .
>
> (X, 818-24)

People in such a position cannot be less than grand and rhetorical. If it appears sometimes to border on posing, all we can say is, "How appropriate!"

The awareness of position and power is equally visible in the "official" paintings of the Baroque era. It is only to be expected, and it is found, in the courtly and religious paintings of the period. It is part of the public definition of such figures. Even paintings like Rembrandt's Syndic project this air of self-awareness. To be a successful and important business man was of the same nature, though of a lesser degree, than being a king. People in the Seventeenth Century were aware of their position and struck the appropriate pose.

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A great deal of the rhetorical flavor of Paradise Lost arises from the fact that a great deal of it is an account related by someone within the work. In a sense, the entire poem is the telling of the world's greatest story by John Milton. We trust him, and in doing so give him license to present the narrative in the manner he deems appropriate. His personal interjections, found primarily in the proems, heighten this sense of "revelation."

Within the poem itself, we discover that a great deal of the work is the telling of a story by someone within it. On a purely quantitive basis, we find that half of Book V and almost all of Book VI is occupied by Raphael's account of the War in Heaven. Book VII is filled with the same narrator's account of the Creation. A fair part of Book VIII is given over to Adam's remembrance of his creation and the appearance of Eve. Michael's presentation of the visions of the history of mankind is close enough in nature to be included in this listing. It occupies most of Books XI and XII. In other words, roughly half the poem is an account delivered by a speaker. What effect does this have?

One could argue that a delivered "eye witness" account heightens the believability of the events, but I believe that this is a very minor consideration. The first three books, in which the poet writes in the first

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person, prove that Milton expects us to accept what happens in the poem as truth provided by divine inspiration. The benefit of having so much of the action of Paradise Lost "delivered" by one of the figures in the work is a heightening of interest. The narrator in each case has assumed the mantle of storyteller, and from the beginning of history this guise has automatically gained attention from the audience. We expect the storyteller to have given some thought and attention to what he is about to relate. We expect that unimportant material will have been edited out.

Consider how Milton leads us into Raphael's lengthy account of the War in Heaven and the Creation. It occurs in Book V after the angel has repeated to Adam God's demand for obedience. All present have dined on the bounty of Paradise and now it is time for discustion.

> . . . if thou consent
> The full relation, which must needs be strange,
> Worthy of Sacred silence to be heard;
> And we have yet large day, for scarce the Sun
> Hath finisht half his journey, . . .
>
> (V, 555-59)

Notice that Adam establishes that the relation of these events "must needs be strange,/ Worthy of Sacred silence to be heard." This, of course, refers to the subject matter that is being requested, but it has far reaching stylistic implications as Raphael himself comments a few lines later.

> . . . and what surmounts the reach
> Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
> By lik'ning spiritual to corporeal forms,
> As may express them best, though what if Earth
> Be but the shaddow of Heav'n, and things therein
> Each to other like, more then on earth is thought?
>
> (V, 571-76)

Of course Milton is giving himself latitude here. The Doctrine of Accommodation can be employed whenever necessary to make Heavenly, or Hellish, events understandable to mortal minds. There is a tantalizing note of ambiguity in Raphael's suggestion that there may be more similarity between Heaven and Earth than ordinarily imagined. The idea of "Accommodation" applies, however, only to those events happening in the divine regions. All that has taken place on earth is described literally so far as Milton, or the Seventeenth Century reader, is concerned.

It is only appropriate considering the above circumstances, then, that the figures in Paradise Lost should project a sense of the rhetorical pose. Everyone in the poem, including the author, is aware that an important revelation is being made--hence the elevated diction, lavish imagery and profound poetic force. Nor is it surprising that the entire work has the air of a public pronouncement. That is precisely what it is. Milton felt obligated to suit the tenor of his epic to the subject.

. . . Or if Sion Hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook that flow'd
Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,

(I, 10-13)

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Decorum and Unity

Finally I should like to discuss Milton's observance of stylistic decorum. This discussion will both unify and expand what I have said previously. I believe that the decorum possessed by Paradise Lost adds greatly to its projection of a sense of Grandeur. Before proceeding on, however, a definition of what I mean by decorum is necessary. It is the casual usage of such terms by critics that has produced so much of the confusion found in scholarly writings.

The dictionary definition of decorum emphasizes social conduct and describes it as conformity to accepted standards.[98] Decorum, in this sense, is the observance of proprieties. Now, I am concerned with stylistic decorum, and the above definition ignores the application of the word to aesthetics. There seems to have occurred a loss of faith in the arts since the Seventeenth Century. Just as there is no generally accepted code of behavior existing today, there likewise appears to be no set rules of composition and expression which must necessarily be adhered to if one wishes to produce a work of art worthy of serious attention.

[98] Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1953, 3d., p. 215.

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Yet the word is still used. Wylie Sypher offers such a statement as, "Both Milton's poem and Borromini's facade are 'tectonic' structures having a mighty decorum."[99] Sypher is comparing Paradise Lost and the facade of St. Agnese, and a loose comparison it is. So far as I am concerned, it is far too vague to be of any use to a scholar.

Joseph Summers thinks that, for Milton, "Decorum concerned the proper relations between the parts and the whole, the propriety of means and ends."[100] I think the last phrase, "the propriety of means and ends," is of special value in discussing Paradise Lost. It is the suitability and appropriateness of the expressive artistic devices in their function of projecting the author's ideas. To determine whether they are truly "appropriate," one must first analyze the author's ends or purposes.

I wish to avoid redundancy and will not repeat many of the observations I already have made in this chapter, but I would like to repeat that Milton's purpose, both in his mind and in the opinion of his contemporary audience, was the most important that had ever been undertaken. As I have shown, Milton is aware, from the first lines of the work, of the scale and

[99] p. 219.

[100] p. 21.

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seriousness of his attempt. Had he failed, it would have been more than an artistic disaster; it would have been, to Milton's mind, a moral disaster of the first order. Thus, everything in the work, literally every facet of it, must reflect upon and amplify the author's chief moral purpose. In the area of style, had Milton carried the particularization of characters too far, a point I have already discussed, our attention would have been focused on the figures too much. We would have found them, the characters, more interesting than the far more important business of their precise relationship to God. I am convinced that the definition of moral condition of each figure was far more important to Milton than their individualized "reactions." There is enough of the latter present to prevent Milton's personages from degenerating into mere cardboard cut-outs. But there is, if one looks closely, just enough. To Milton, it is what a figure does, the action he or she performs, that is the central point of any passage. It is by actions that the all-important moral state is defined.

I realize that I am on dangerous ground when I start speaking of an author's "purpose" or "attitude" in relation to stylistic phenomena. Rosemund Tuve in "Baroque and Mannerist Milton" dismisses Wylie Sypher's already mentioned analysis by pointing out that his

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whole approach is "grounded in knowledge about the state of mind of an author which we can never have."[101] I agree, but I point out that I am not attempting to explain Milton's mind. I am merely trying to discover the guiding stylistic principle by which he composed the work. I have touched on the use of stock responses, the public/rhetorical air of the speeches and the sense of decorum present in the work. I hope I may now offer a general opinion as to what all this signifies without appearing to launch myself into the realm of the psychology of the author.

The obvious, and often ignored, danger in this more interpretative step in critical judgment is that, as Tuve suggests, we can never really know which of the stylistic characteristics of a work are dependent upon conscious artistic choice, which emulate of models, and which of them are due to the "real" feelings of the author. If we ignore this issue and concentrate on the stylistic elements within Paradise Lost, I think one general fact becomes clear. The work is unified. Everything in the work relates to a central focus; but what is that focus? Daniells seems to feel it is Will, both divine and mortal. Sypher feels it is the Baroque presentment of the flesh, hence mortality. R. M. Adams rather hesitantly offers the observation that Milton's

[101]Tuve, Milton Studies (Urbana, 1961), p. 216.

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style must have a relation to something larger, perhaps a particular world view.[102] Yet a few pages later he says that the lists of diseases, Gods, and so forth that appear in Paradise Lost are possibly due to the Baroque love of "exhuberant, luxuriant exfoliation."[103] There obviously isn't much help to be gained from examining these critical evaluations which depend on one element of the Baroque mind to explain the unity of Paradise Lost.

I prefer to see unity as existing on a purely stylistic level. Isn't it possible to see Decorum and Unity resulting from a total artistic vision of what is to be created and an awareness of the means most suitable for that creation? I don't believe that an author must follow a particular "worldview" in order to create unified works of art. Although Arnold Hauser in his Social History of Art does have some very definite opinions as to what Baroque unity "means," he offers a purely stylistic comment of value.

> The unity is no longer merely the result, but the a priori of the artistic creation; the artist approaches his subject with a unified vision, and in this vision everything isolated and particular finally perishes.[104]

[102] Adams, p. 184.

[103] Ibid., p. 189.

[104] p. 178.

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In reference to style, Hauser's remark parallels the observation of Wölfflin that, "Only where the single detail seems a necessary part of the whole do we speak of organic articulation, . . . "[105] The key word here is "necessary," and I think this helps explain Baroque decorum arising out of, at the same time reinforcing, unity.

There is, then, a prevailing atmosphere that unifies every utterance into an organic totality. Even the shifts in the style of diction all seem to be part of a whole.[106] This is because the mode of expression so perfectly suits the characters, their position and the action they are engaged in. The action of the poem is monumental, as the the characters. Simple "decorum" demands that they speak in a noble style, varied to suit the circumstances and the person speaking.

Whether such an artistic vision was arrived at suddenly in a burst of inspiration, or, as is actually the case, after years of meditation and experiment; whether it is a purely artistic phenomenon, which I strongly doubt, or whether it in part arises from a particularly Miltonic world view--something I do not propose to analyze--the fact remains that as a work of art Paradise Lost stands before us as coherent in all

[105] Principles, p. 161.

[106] Summers, pp. 22-23.

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its parts. Everything, even the touches of humor, even the "domestic" scenes, are rendered with a never-failing aura of dignity.

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CONCLUSION

To recapitulate the entire process by which I have attempted to prove that Paradise Lost is a Baroque poem would be tedious and redundant. Very simply, I have transferred certain observations of the art historian, Heinrich Wölfflin, to the realm of literature. As the body of this dissertation indicates, this is no easy task. I have found that Wölfflin's famed five categories cannot be applied to a poem in a simple and direct manner. Indeed, I have found Wölfflin's general remarks dealing with Light and Movement to be the most fruitful for the purposes of comparison.

I have attempted to cover as many of the common Baroque stylistic elements as possible in Paradise Lost and Baroque painting. This has meant a broadening of my viewpoint and a subsequent limiting of direct comparative examples. I have offered what I consider to be enough direct substantiation from Paradise Lost to support my case. At no time do I pretend to have said all that can be said about the presence of any one of the Baroque qualities within the poem. Such an undertaking is simply beyond the scope of any dissertation of reasonable length.

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If I were to analyze the "process" by which this dissertation has been composed, I would have to admit that my first feeling of success came with my chapter on Baroque Light in Seventeenth Century painting and Paradise Lost. This is perhaps due to the fact that the parallel uses of Light and Darkness are more, for want of a better term, "visible." One need only "visualize" Milton's technique in this respect and, granting some research in Baroque painting techniques, the likenesses become apparent. The parallels are tangible and easily substantiated.

Yet, valuable as such primary evidence is in supporting my case, I felt that even more solid proof should be based on "tenuous" connections. As the several re-writings of the latter half of this dissertation have progressed, I have felt, more and more, that I am right. I think that Chapter III, dealing with Baroque Vitality, is as important to my case as anything I have offered. The reason for this lies in the fact that Movement, the chief stylistic quality in Vitality, is not only an outstanding Baroque characteristic, but once its presence in a poem is recognized many other Baroque features, such as Unclarity, fall into place. Its influence is subtle and, to my mind, very far reaching. It helps to explain generic description on purely stylistic grounds, for instance,

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rather than falling back on the old and rather lame excuse that Milton simply wasn't interested in particularization. With Baroque Movement in mind, it becomes apparent that Milton's technique, far from originating in some idiosyncratic bent of his, is solidly grounded in the prevailing artistic mode of the Seventeenth Century.

And this, to me, is perhaps the most important aim of what I have done. That is, to show that Milton was a product of the Seventeenth Century style in art which we call the Baroque. This is no way detracts from his uniqueness, which lies in his talent and genius rather than his technique. Milton's apparent uniqueness comes from many sources. In the first place, England was by and large untouched by the movements in the visual arts of the continent during the Seventeenth Century. Its insular position and political/religious upheavals worked against a general influence effect, such as that observable in equally Protestant Holland. In the second place, Milton consciously selected a Biblical subject and epic form for his supreme achievement. The Northern European Protestant bias against "graven images" in the visual arts denies the critic a body of indigenous art works with which to compare Milton's accomplishment. Thus it stands out as unique. Denied external corroboration for his style, we are forced to conclude that Milton is "unique." Yet one aspect of his uniqueness argues against that very conclusion. Milton was a

travelled man, had been to Italy, the fountainhead of the Baroque, knew the literary works of half a dozen nations, both ancient and modern, was privy to the inner councils of the Interregnum government and was one of the most learned men of his time. This surely makes him unique, even for the Seventeenth Century, which was, by any measure, a century of remarkable men, but unique in an inclusive manner, rather than exclusive. Considering his background and gifts, who of that era would be better qualified to create a work of art that would be expressive of the general style and movement of the Seventeenth Century? Had he not done it, England would have nothing in the way of art to compare with Bernini or Rubens.

But what does he share, then, with these very Catholic and continental artists? In what way does he fit into this list of heroes? I have, so far, been arguing primarily from a stylistic base, but at this time I would like to examine the "beliefs" of the artist--that very undertaking that I insist has led so many competent critics astray.

To develop this point adequately, it is necessary for me to advance my opinion on the Seventeenth Century mind. I have already hinted at what I am about to say, but putting it into condensed form will make it more coherent. I believe that the Seventeenth Century was an

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age of certainty. What is more, I believe that certainty directly influences the Baroque style. The central idea of an art work is advanced, to use Wölfflin's words, "with a hitherto unprecedented force." Where I differ with the Zeitgeist critics I so severely take to task is that I don't believe the Baroque effect of certitude is dependent upon any particular ideology, any special moral or ethical system.

By certainty or certitude, I do not mean a universally agreed upon system of beliefs that we like to think existed in, for example, the Middle Ages. I simply mean that a faction which espoused a particular belief embraced it with a ferocity remarkable to behold. How else can we understand that a body of devout and true Englishmen, the Roundheads, dared to cut off their king's head. Their belief that they were in the right and obeying a higher law of God gave them the strength to perform this act of supreme rebellion which petrified all of Europe and makes the French Revolution seem a very reasonable course of action. This was not a killing of a cousin as was the case in the War of Roses. Nor was it on the battlefield of honor. This was a group of "subjects," who guided by an inner light, decided that their king must die. On the continent, the horrifying cruelties practiced by both the Catholic and Protestant forces in the Thirty Years War in Germany

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argue for such a depth of conviction that the humanistic, rational mind is appalled.

I simply believe that it didn't matter what the Baroque artist believed, so long as he believed. I am perhaps still sentimental enough to believe that an artist cannot convince me if he himself does not believe. I certainly can appreciate the purely artistic and stylistic achievements he may manage, but the underlying feeling of belief must somehow assert itself. I cannot believe that Bach did not believe in and love his God, or that Beethoven did not feel the human being was God's greatest creation. I argue that the depth of belief, the certainty, is the feature which unites such disparate Baroque figures as Milton, Rubens, Bernini, Poussin.

Another dominating feature of the Baroque style is its public orientation, which I have commented upon in my previous chapter. After the loss of belief and ensuing upheavals of the Sixteenth Century, which continued into the Seventeenth to a lesser degree, all of the agencies of mankind, church, government and artist, recognized that re-establishing Renaissance confidence was vital to the preservation of humanity. But whereas Renaissance confidence had grown out of humanism, the belief that man was the measure of all things, Seventeenth Century confidence was founded on more mystical

and non-rational premises. Now I do not contend that an artist set out with the conscious aim of instilling a certain system of belief within his public, but he certainly did have a cause to support. All of this means that Baroque art is going to reveal a sense of conviction--hence the usage of easily read symbols, arousing of emotion on the part of the spectator, the focusing of all the artistic means on a central theme or idea. It is no longer a time for perplexity, doubts or connundrums. It is an era of ready made answers.

These Baroque answers, it must be confessed, were somewhat mystical. The veneration accorded Louis XIV, reinforced by political absolutism and the glory of Versailles, does not bear rational analysis. On the more positive side, the Baroque era took scientific discoveries that should have shattered all its bases of belief and converted them into stylistic devices. Whereas Mannerist painting of the Sixteenth Century and English Metaphysical poetry of the early Seventeenth thrive on paradox and tension, the Baroque artist reconciles all the contradictory evidence. Paradise Lost is an excellent example of this reconciliation. Christainity, Pagan mythology and this solid earth are blended together into an organic and harmonious whole.

Milton would not have been true to his heritage if he had not assigned primacy to reason, more

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specifically right reason, but this in no way precludes the legitimate enjoyment of the sensual delights God has so generously given us.

> Not that matter is in itself evil, or that the body and its normal desires are to be utterly repressed; matter is actually divine, a part of God, and soul and body are one.[107]

If the modern world has lapsed back into a Platonic separation of body and soul or more likely, "progressed" to the point where it denigrates both and has no faith in either, then we can only look back to the Baroque era with envy.

[107]William Chase Greene, Moira (New York, 1963), p. 395.

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APPENDIX

I am offering this appendix to present some collateral information relative to John Milton and Baroque painting. To have attempted to incorporate it within the main body of my dissertation would have introduced the somewhat extraneous matter of influence. Nevertheless, I offer the following facts as they may pertain indirectly to what Milton accomplished stylistically in Paradise Lost. It is clear to me, however, that any truly substantive comparison utilizing the following material would require direct observation of the primary visual art works in Italy.

I have been arguing that Paradise Lost demonstrates the same stylistic devices as can be detected in Baroque painting. In 1638, Milton embarked on a trip to Italy, fountainhead of the Baroque style. It would seem that here is an opportunity to establish vital connections between what Milton saw and what he later was to write. I have avoided such a speculation for several reasons. In the first place, over twenty years elapse between Milton's Italian journey and the publication of Paradise Lost. It is perfectly conceivable that something he saw while in Italy made so great

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an impression on him that he retained its recollection in his memory and drew upon it when composing his great epic. Unfortunately, such speculation is rather loose at best.

My more personal reason for avoiding this inquiry as a major part of my dissertation is that I am convinced that an "influence" study is one of the most difficult critical projects one can undertake. I have already commented on the unhappy fact that in order to pursue the direct influence that Italian painting might have had on Milton's poetry, I would have to have access to everything that Milton probably saw while in Italy. I have resolved that when I do get to Italy I am going to visit the Barberini Palace, carrying my copy of Milton, and spend some time finding out whether a genuine, and what is more important, critically defensible, connection can be made.

At this point, I am thrown back on one solid source of evidence, Paradise Lost itself, and some weaker sources to try and show a relationship. The safest course, and the only one that I can, in all conscience, follow, it to present the descriptive facts and and leave it at that. The very weakness of this latter group of sources arises from the fact that Milton, in spite of all he wrote, is discouragingly reticent in some respects. At no point in his accounts of his

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Italian journey does he actually mention one work of art that he saw with his own eyes. The best one can do is compare accounts of Milton's Italian journey and what was happening in Florence, Rome, and Naples at that time.

It was in April of 1638, when he was twenty-nine years old, that Milton left England for his famous Italian journey. After being well received and lauded in Florence, he reached Rome in the Fall of 1638. One of the few solid pieces of evidence that throws some light on exactly what Milton did in that city, which was already becoming the dominant art center of Italy, is found in a letter of thanks directed to Lucas Holstein in which he thanks him for courtesies rendered. What is important is that Milton definitely establishes the connection he enjoyed with the Barberini family, which was at the height of its power.

> . . . when I went up to the Vatican for the purpose of meeting you, you received me, a total stranger to you (unless perchance anything had been previously said about me to you by Alexander Cherubini), with the utmost courtesy. Immediately admitted with politeness into the Museum, I was allowed to behold both the superb collection of books, and also very many manuscript Greek authors set forth with your explanations. . . . Then I could not but believe that it was in consequence of the mention you made of me to the most excellent Cardinal Francesco Barberini, that, when he, a few days after, gave that public musical entertainment with truly Roman magnificence, he himself, waiting at the doors, and seeking me out in so great a crowd, nay, almost laying hold of me by the hand, admitted me within a truly most honourable manner. . . . For the rest, you will have bound me by a new

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> obligation, if you salute the most eminent Cardinal with all possible observance, in my name; whose great virtues and anxiety to do right, singularly ready also for the promotion of all the liberal arts, are always present before my eyes. . . .[108]

This sentiment is echoed, although in somewhat milder tones, many years later in A Second Defense of the English People, published in 1654.

> From Florence I pursued my route to Sienna, and then to Rome; and having been detained about two months in this city by its antiquities and ancient renown, (where I enjoyed the accomlished society of Lucas Holstenius and of many other learned and superior men) I proceeded to Naples. . . . As I was about to return to Rome, the merchants gave me an intimation, that they had learnt from their letters, that, in case of my revisiting Rome, the English Jesuits had laid a plot for me. . . . I . . . returned notwithstanding to Rome.[109]

All together Milton stayed about four months in Rome. Considering the high connections he enjoyed there and the unlimited access available to him to the palaces and museums of the city, it is impossible to suppose that the English poet failed to see all the important sights there. Yet the phrase from the Second Defense, "antiquities and ancient renown," more or less sets the tone for Milton's personal accounts. They are very vague and generalized. The door is open to endless speculation and interpretation. Perhaps Milton was

[108]John Arthos, Milton and the Italian Cities (London, 1968), p. 54.

[109]The Works of John Milton, Vol. VIII (New York, 1933), pp. 123-25.

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interested only in antique works and paid very little attention to the flowering of the Roman Baroque which was occurring around him. Perhaps he simply was uninterested in visual art, devoting his attention to the literary and musical accomplishments of the Italians. I reject both of these interpretations. Notice in the letter to Holstein how Milton emphasizes "truly Roman mangificence," evidence that the staging and accessories made a strong impression on him.

Using this rather scanty evidence and launching forth on an admittedly speculative course of reasoning, I would like to focus my attention on what might have been the most significant work of visual art available to him in Rome in 1638-39. By this I mean the sort of thing that the Romans were most likely to lead Milton to see, one of the "musts" for any distinguished English tourist, laying "hold of him by the hand," if necessary.

I cast my vote for the ceiling of the Grand Salon of the Barberini Palace as the most important art work of this period. Milton's established favor with the Barberini's makes this the most likely choice. The Barberini was a family that suddenly sprang into prominence and power in the early Seventeenth Century and, conversely, fell from that position very quickly a short time later. To give concrete expression of their power and wealth, gained apparently through becoming

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Princes of the Church, they erected the Palace at the Four Fountains. They ransacked Rome for art works and building materials. I cannot recall the specific source, but I have read accounts of factories established for the purpose of producing lime for the cement needed for building. One of the best sources of raw material was antique Roman statuary and facing stones from the Colosseum. One of the jokes of the day, utilizing a play on words in Italian, was that "the Barberinis are finishing what the Barbarians left half-done," meaning the sack of Rome, of course.

When their own interests were concerned, the Barberini were unsparing with money. Bernini was one of the chief architects of the Palace. Borromini worked on sculptural decoration. As their chief painter, they engaged the most important figure of the day, Pietro da Cortona, an artist who did much to establish the Roman High Baroque style. In 1631 Pietro was working on the chapel of the palace, with the assistance of Romanelli. In the same year the construction of the ceiling of the Grand Salon was finished and Cortona was given the commission.[110]

The ceiling was not completed even when Milton visited Rome seven years later. In the first place,

[110]Giuliano Briganti, Pietro da Cortona (Firenze, 1962), p. 139.

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it was an enormous undertaking, this being one of the largest Grand Salons ever constructed. In the second place, Cortona was busy with other projects, both for the Barberini and other patrons, in cities other than Rome, especially Florence. Giuliano Briganti, in his Peitro da Cortona, gives a chronological account of the life of the painter, assembled from personal letters, household accounts of patrons and the like. All of the dates and references relative to Corton's activities come from this apparently definitive work. He states that Cortona probably did not begin the work on the Salon until near the end of 1632. In 1633 there is an entry recording payment for an assistant to Cortona, "che dipinge nella volta grande."[111]

As the end of the decade approached, Cortona apparently decided it was time to conclude this enormous undertaking. It is also possible that the Barberini were tired of having their Grand Salon full of scaffolding. By 1638, Cortona had returned to Rome to remain on a rather permanent basis, resuming the interrupted work on the Barberini ceiling. Various letters to Michelangelo, the younger, establish that Cortona was working during the time Milton was in Rome. The work was not finished, however, until late Fall of 1639, after Milton had left Rome and Italy. In a letter to the younger

[111]p. 139.

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Buonarotte, dated September 24, 1639, Cortona states that part of the scaffolding already had been removed.[112]

What Milton probably saw, then, when he visited the Barberini Grand Salon as I am confident he did, was a monumental work in the last stages of completion. It is very likely that at least part of the scaffolding was up and he was able, therefore, to climb the ladders and see the work at first hand. It could be argued that this experience was not the most profound imaginable as Milton does not specifically refer to it in his letters and accounts. Such an objection ignores the nature of the effect the Italian journey had on Milton. It seems to have been more a general, atmospheric impression that Milton gained from his experiences there. He noted, for instance, that Cardinal Barberini was concerned with the "promotion of all the liberal arts." I believe that is the way Milton managed to assimilate all the artistic stimuli he was exposed to in a rather short span of time. I am making no judgment as to the nature of that assimilation, but merely observing that Rome, and Italy in general, certainly made an impression on Milton.

Plate VII in this dissertation is a reproduction of the Cortona ceiling. One glance shows that a normal sized photograph cannot begin to resolve the detail of

[112]All of the dates in this paragraph are from Briganti, p. 141.



PLATE VII. THE TRIUMPH OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

by Cortona

the fresco. Yet, inadequate as the illustration is, it does project some of the general features to be found in the work. Briganti, writing in the Encyclopedia of World Art, says that this work by Cortona, the Barberini ceiling, shows the true measure of the Baroque in that it, by its very nature, demanded complex themes and great spaces in which to essay them.[113]

The entire work is unified, in spite of the fact that there are various "episodes." One allegorical panel shows cyclopean figures forging arms. They are colossal figures surrounded by flame and smoke. Another shows the triumph of peace over the forces of war. In this, Peace, Prudence and other angelic figures float over another titanic figure, who, looking very fierce, is bound in chains. If one were to attempt an influence study, here would be the sort of material to use. But the connection between these allegorical compositions and Milton's Biblical epic is, to my mind, stretching a comparative point. The ceiling contains the general characteristics of the Baroque style, and it is not inconceivable that Milton cast his mind back to this as well as other Baroque works of art when be began to compose Paradise Lost twenty years later. He may have recalled especially the stunning effect this ceiling must have had on him.

[113]Col., 358.

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