Negotiating fate: John Milton's recreation of the Homeric and Virgilian model of divine intercession

Kalina Ślaska-Sapała

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Abstract

At the beginning of Book 3 of John Milton's English Christian epic *Paradise Lost*, God is depicted sitting high on his celestial throne in heaven, an image that in its 'ambrosial fragrance' (*PL.* 3. 135) recalls the pagan Olympos. The Father, an anthropomorphic character in the poem, turns to the Son, foretells the imminent fall of Adam and Eve, and foresees its consequences for the fate of all mankind. The Son intercedes on behalf of man, ensuring the eventual redemption of the human race.

This scene has been recognized as modelled on the epic *concilium deorum*. Revising existing scholarship on this scene, I argue that Milton is specific about the type of the epic *concilium* he recreates for the dialogue between the Father and Son in heaven. Whether full assemblies where Zeus presides over the gods, or more intimate dialogues between Zeus and the goddesses Thetis, Athenē, and Herē, the Olympian scenes in epic were problematic to Homer's ancient commentators due to their portrayal of Zeus bowing to the arguments of lesser deities. In recreating a specific model of the epic *concilium deorum,* Milton, I argue, is following a tradition of decorum-based criticism of Homer, according to the master of epic *aemulatio* – Virgil. A learned reader of the epic tradition, Milton, like Virgil, would have been aware of the history of criticism surrounding the dialogue at *Iliad* 16 in particular, where Zeus not only yields to the arguments of Herē, but also seems to bow to fate. The language of the Father's prophecy in *Paradise Lost* reworks the poetic of Christian prophecy in Vida's Renaissance epic, the *Christiad*, by tracing it back to Virgil's language of fate in *Aeneid* 1. Finally, the Son's appeal to the Father on behalf of fallen mankind revises the scenes of intercession by the Olympian goddesses (Thetis and Athenē in Homer and Venus and Juno in Virgil) on behalf of their favourite mortals. Milton follows the pattern of reproach and reassurance that occurs in these exchanges, revising it to reflect the Christian theology and

theodical aim of *Paradise Lost*. The arguments of the Son become the enactment of the Father's will, thereby reconciling the competing claims of justice and mercy, and rendering the Son, in turn, a figure that harmonizes the divine and human spheres of epic.

By drawing on recent work on Milton's theology in *De Doctrina Christiana*, I will challenge the idea that Milton's concerns as poet and theologian are mutually exclusive. I will show that the manner in which the poet attempts to reconcile his use of ancient models with the demands of a Christian theodicy demonstrates a complex engagement with the epic tradition in light of contemporary debates about the depiction of the divine sphere in Renaissance Christian epic.

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Note on the text and translation

All references to the works of John Milton, including *Paradise Lost*, *De Doctrina Christiana*, and Milton's other prose and poetry, are from Frank A. Patterson et al (ed.) *The Works of John Milton*, 18 volumes (New York, Columbia University Press, 1931-1938). I refer to this edition throughout this thesis as *Columbia Milton.* All references to comments by Alastair Fowler are from the following edition: A. Fowler (ed.), *John Milton: Paradise Lost*, 2nd edn. (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007).

All references to Milton's drafts in the so-called 'Trinity manuscript', housed in the Wren library of Trinity College at the University of Cambridge, are taken from my own notes on this manuscript.

Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Greek and Latin, including the ancient and Renaissance commentaries, are my own. In translating from Milton's neo-Latin poetry and prose, I have, where possible, consulted John Hale's translations: J. Hale (ed.), *John Milton, Latin writings: A Selection* (Assen, Netherlands; Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998).

Introduction

This thesis examines a dialogue that takes place between the Father and Son in Milton's first scene in heaven in *Paradise Lost* (*PL.* 3. 56-265). This scene not only recalls the 'general background'[1] of the epic *concilium deorum*, the council of the gods, as has been the dominant view in Milton scholarship. It also reworks the specific components and language of scenes where the Olympian goddesses intercede with the father of the gods on behalf of their favourite mortals.

The term *concilium deorum* contains a variety of categories of Olympian scenes in the epic tradition. There are the full assembly scenes, where Zeus and Jupiter preside over the Olympian gods. There are also the more intimate dialogues between Zeus and lesser deities, scenes that often concern the possibility of divine intervention on the human battlefield. It is these more intimate dialogues that raised objections among Homer's ancient commentators. These objections, as we shall see, centred on principles of poetic decorum. One such scene occurs in *Iliad* 16 (431-61), where Zeus yields to the arguments of the goddess Herē and appears to bow to fate.

Finally, among these dialogues are scenes of divine intercession, where one or more of the Olympian goddesses reproach the father of the gods with the sufferings of their mortal protégés. These reproaches, as we shall see in *Odyssey* 1 and *Aeneid* 1, are aimed to gain reassurance, and elicit prophecies from Homer's Zeus and Virgil's Jupiter. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton reshapes these dialogues to suit the requirements of his Christian theology as he addresses the theodical charges arising from these scenes by recourse to Virgilian epic

[1] F. Blessington, *Paradise Lost and The Classical Epic* (Boston and London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 37.

models. Following the example of Marco Girolamo Vida's *Christiad* (1535), Milton recreates the language of Jupiter's prophecy to Venus in *Aeneid* 1 and its link to epic fate. Milton's poetics of fate, however, is distinct from the Italian humanistic interpretation of Jupiter's prophecy to Venus about an 'empire without end' (*Aen.* 1.279). Finally, in the intercession of the Son on behalf of fallen man, Milton revises the pattern of reproach and reassurance that arises in the Olympian intercessions. He aligns the will of the Father with the demands of the Son, thereby harmonizing the competing claims of justice and mercy, and portrays the Son as a figure that triumphs over the limitations of the Olympian deities as they negotiate the fates of mankind.

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It is hardly a new observation that John Milton's poem *Paradise Lost* is influenced by ancient epic models.[2] Commentary on the wide and varied links to ancient epic, from Homer onwards, is nearly as old as the poem itself. Systematic cataloguing of the poem's numerous allusions to ancient authors has accompanied Milton scholarship since Patrick Hume's first annotations on the text appeared in 1695. Following Thomas Newton's 1745 *variorum editio* of the poem, the commentaries on *Paradise Lost* made subsequent editions of the poem resemble an ancient text. The notes and glosses on the text, the explanation of Latin and Greek etymologies and intertextual allusions contributed to the view of *Paradise Lost* as a poem deserving of a critical apparatus that traditionally accompanied ancient epic.[3]

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[2] Francis Blessington has commented that Milton's debt to ancient epic 'may be the stalest news in Miltonic criticism' (Blessington, *Paradise Lost and The Classical Epic*, p. xi).

[3] Thomas Newton commented on the first *variorum editio* of *Paradise Lost*: 'My design in the present edition is to publish the *Paradise Lost* as the work of a classic author cum notis variorum' (T. Newton, *Paradise Lost : A Poem, in Twelve Books / John Milton ; With Notes of Various Authors by Thomas Newton, in Two Volumes*, 'Preface'). See T. Newton, in E. Miner, W. Moeck, S. Jablonski (eds), *Paradise Lost, 1668-1968: Three Centuries of Commentary* (Cranbury, Associated University Presses, 2004), p. 15.

The poem's so-called 'Latinism', moreover, its Latinate style, syntax, and diction, seemed to situate it closer to the Latin tradition of the *Aeneid*, continued by the Italian poets, (particularly Vida's neo-Latin *Christiad*, 1535) than to English epics, such as Spenser's English *Faerie Queen* (1590/6).[4] Whereas for the Italian poets of the Renaissance composing a poem in Latin meant a return to 'lingua nostra'[5], Milton's choice of the English language for his poem showed both its limitations and its potential for becoming the language of a classically styled epic.[6]

John Hale's conclusion sums up Milton's position best in noting an 'experimentalism of bilingual engagement', in that Milton summoned his vast linguistic resources in his epic, 'using his entire intellectual – which means multilingual – armoury in his best poem.'[7] Milton's languages included Latin as well as Greek, Hebrew and Italian, which he had studied from his initial schooling at home and later at St Paul's, before demonstrating his skills in Latin rhetorical disputations as an undergraduate at Cambridge. The influence of Milton's early school exercises in translation and imitation are only gradually being considered for their

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[4] The complexity of the debate surrounding Milton's 'Latinate' style in *Paradise Lost* can hardly be overemphasized. Thomas Corns points out that these Latin attributions were often incorrect, the case in point being so called 'ghost Latinisms', which Fowler had collected and refuted, demonstrating that they were, in fact, an existing part of English usage. See T. N. Corns, *Milton's Language* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1990), pp. 95ff. In 1997, John Hale revised both Corns and Fowler's definitions of what constitutes a Latinism in *Paradise Lost* by expanding on Fowler's four existing 'bands'. See J. K. Hale, *Milton's Languages: the Impact of Multilingualism on Style* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 106. More recently, Richard DuRocher stated that 'the presence of Virgil's *Aeneid* is palpable from the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* in Milton's expansive, Latinate syntax' (R. J. DuRocher, *Milton and Ovid* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 193. John Hale challenges this view by considering the 'parallel cases' of Spenser and Milton's Latinisms (See J. K. Hale, *Milton's Languages*, pp. 107ff).

[5] A term used by Sordello, as he appears in the Dante's *Divina Commedia* (*Purg.* 7.16-17). Ironically, as Greene points out, the real Sordello only wrote in Provençal and Italian, not Latin, but this did not stop Dante from making him refer to Latin as 'lingua nostra' (see T. M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1982), p. 28).

[6] See Greene, pp. 5-6.

[7] J. Hale, *Milton's Languages*, p. 107.

influence on Milton's style, and the manner in which they introduced him to classical authors as models for imitation.[8]

One of the earliest comments on the nature of Milton's classical usage in *Paradise Lost* comes from the poet himself. In 1668, one year after its initial publication, Milton included a preface to the text. There he gave his famous apology of the poem's blank verse, consisting of unrhymed couplets 'as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin.'[9] The style of the ancient epics is specifically invoked in contrast to the poetical degeneracy of Milton's present age, and its remnants of a medieval, rather than classical aesthetic. Rhyme, Milton says, was 'the Invention of a barbarous Age (....), grac't indeed since by the use of some famous modern Poets': the term 'barbarous' here refers to the medieval, rather than classical world. By contrast, Davenant's *Gondibert*, published in 1650 in heroic quatrains, contained a preface lauding the virtues of this metre: Milton's comment no doubt would, in light of Davenant's manifesto, be considered provocative in undermining the accepted practices of his English contemporaries.[10] Despite its polemical nature, the wording of Milton's apology could be seen as a typical reflection of the humanist attempt to break with medieval style, and to embrace the ancients as poetic models for imitation. Although Milton's poetic career falls near the end of the English Renaissance, with *Paradise Lost* published after the Restoration, his comment, in my view, reflects a humanist poetics: at the same time as he rejects the Restoration

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[8] Hale argues that neologisms are few and cautious and unlikely to result in 'outright coinages' (Hale, *Milton's Languages,* p. 109). Instead, Hale argues that Milton, like Spencer, would have experimented with existing diction. On Milton's early training in Latin rhetoric as part of his public school education, see D. L. Clark, *John Milton at St Paul's School: A Study of Ancient Rhetoric in English Renaissance Education* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 172. For a more recent discussion of the general practices of Latin translation composition in English Renaissance schools, see A. Wallace *Virgil's Schoolboys: The Poetics of Pedagogy in Renaissance England* (Oxford University Press, 2010). For a discussion of Milton's own early experiments in Latin, see E. Haan, 'The Adorning of My Native Tongue: Latin Poetry and Linguistic Metamorphosis', in N. McDowell, N. Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Milton* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 55-6.

[9] J. Milton, 'The Verse' (1668), *Columbia Milton*, volume 2, part 1, p. 6.

[10] For a discussion of the polemical nature of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in light of contemporary debates about English epic, see Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2003), p. 445.

aesthetic of the English Royalist poets, Milton invokes a fraternity with the Renaissance humanists and their attempt to recover the style of the ancient writers.

The Renaissance was the age of imitation, with the classical texts held up as standards of poetic achievement. Yet the perceived distance from the classical world, the *mundus significans* of ancient epics, was as much a part of Renaissance theory of imitation as an attempt to bridge it: this was particularly pronounced in the insurmountable gulf felt to exist between the pagan religion of the ancient epic, and the Christianity of its Renaissance readers.[11] This divided attitude to the classical world, consisting in an elevation of style and a repression of its theology, was an ongoing conflict in Renaissance readings of epic. The attempt to differentiate *theologia prisca* from *theologia nostra* – a distinction made by Cristoforo Landino in the introduction to his commentary on the *Aeneid*[12] – was tied to the history of transmission of ancient epic into the Renaissance. Although, as Anthony Grafton notes, the Renaissance was breaking with allegorical readings of ancient epic, the remnants of this transmission no doubt led to a general tendency of reading epic in a way that would exonerate its pagan elements. This tendency spilt over into discourses surrounding the development of the Christian epic genre.[13] This genre flourished in Italy the sixteenth century, with Pope Leo X commissioning the *Christiad* from the Italian poet and classical scholar Marco Girolamo Vida, following the mixed success of Jacopo Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis* (1526). I will argue that the *Christiad* exerted a noticeable influence on the manner in which Milton approached his own Christian, albeit Protestant epic, over a century later in England.

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[11] The term *mundus significans* is used by Greene, as 'a signifying universe, which is to say a symbolic and rhetorical vocabulary, a storehouse of signifying capacities potentially available to each member of a given culture' (Greene, p. 20).

[12] See C. Kallendorf, 'Virgil to Vida: The *Poeta Theologus* in Italian Renaissance Commentary', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56, 1, 1995, 41-62, 50.

[13] See Anthony Grafton's discussion of the editions of Homer available to Renaissance readers (A. Grafton 'Homer's Renaissance Readers', in R. Lamberton, J. J. Keaney, *Homer's Ancient Readers: the Hermeneutics of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes* (Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 149-73, p. 154.

The discourses surrounding the development of the Christian epic genre, as one distinct and yet similar to its ancient model, are consciously absorbed into Milton's epic. Among these is the question of how a Christian poet ought to imitate a genre whose style and conventions closely reflect its grounding in polytheistic culture. One solution to this question was substitution, by replacing the pagan machinery with a Christian one, as Vida attempts in the *Christiad*. But this was not a smooth transition, due to the demands of the genre, and especially in the task of reconciling theology with the demands of narrative. The greatest challenge perhaps was the attempt by Christian poets to depict the Christian God in the narrative space previously occupied by the pagan deities. In Chapter 1, 'Questions of genre in *Paradise Lost*' I will explore the difficulties of separating style from theology in a genre bound to the religious beliefs in the ancient world. In Chapter 2, 'Models of the epic *concilium* in *Paradise Lost*', I will examine how Milton negotiates an established tradition of mixing Christian truths with pagan fictions, as pagan terms invade the Christian epic genre, both in its poetry, and in the language of its commentators.

Another common solution for Renaissance poets to the challenges posed by pagan theology was the omission of the divine machinery from their epics altogether. Lewalski has argued that Milton's choice to depict a fully articulated Christian machinery is a response to a challenge set up in the discourse of the English Royalists: the preface by William Davenant to his epic *Gondibert* (1651) acknowledges the impossibility of depicting a divine machinery in Christian epic. He criticizes Homer, who 'supernaturally (...) doth often advance his men to the quality of Gods, and depose his Gods to the condition of men'.[14] I propose to consider

[14] Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 445. W. Davenant, 'The Author's Preface To His Much Honur'd Friend Mr Hobs', in W. Davenant, T. Hobbes, *Gondibert*, 1651 (Menston, Scholar Press),1970, p. 2. In his response to Davenant's preface, Thomas Hobbes refers to the invocation to the epic muse as part of the machinery of pagan epic, and sees no cause 'why a Christian should think it an ornament to his Poem; either to profane the true God, or invoke a false one' (T. Hobbes, 'The Answer of Mr Hobbes to Sir William D'Avenant's Preface Before Gondibert', in W. Davenant, T. Hobbes, *Gondibert*, p. 77). For a

Milton's choice to depict a Christian machinery in *Paradise Lost* not only as a challenge to the Davenant-Hobbes manifesto, but as a revision of the earlier humanistic debates in Christian epic. In his programmatic treatise on epic poetry, *Discorsi del Poema Eroico* (1594), Torquato Tasso had advocated the omission of the supernatural in Christian epic: a proposition he had already demonstrated in his own epic *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581). Where the divine machinery of Christian epic demands a replacement of the pagan polytheistic model with the Christian monotheistic one (a transition that Tobias Gregory traces in his 2006 study *From Many Gods to One*: *Divine Action in Renaissance Epic*), Milton's casts the Father and Son as separate characters in his epic. Apart from the questions this poetic choice raised about Milton's view on the Trinity, Milton's dialogue in heaven, in which he separates not only the persons, but also the interests of the Father and Son, recalls the often antagonistic roles played out by Zeus, Herē and Athenē in the council scenes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and those between Jupiter, Juno and Venus in the *Aeneid*. Milton reshapes these epic exchanges from their Homeric origins in a manner mediated by Virgil. Virgil's rereading of the Homeric *concilium*, I argue, provides an intermediary model of a divine figure, Jupiter, who is more suitable to the needs of Christian epic, and whose language had already provided a model for Vida's depiction of Christian prophecy.

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The discussion of the divine sphere in *Paradise Lost*, its role and its success in the poem, was, for two centuries, haunted by the spectre of the so called 'Satan debate'. This debate centred on the question of who among the characters in Milton's epic deserved to be

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discussion of Milton's invocation to the epic muse/Urania in *Paradise Lost* in light of critical debates surrounding Christian epic, see Chapter 1.1.1. 'Invocations to the epic muse', below.

considered its hero. The debate began with Dryden, who declared that *Paradise Lost* could be comparable with the achievement of Homer and Virgil 'if the Devil had not been his [Milton's] hero, instead of Adam; if the giant had not foiled the knight, and driven him out of his stronghold, to wander through the world with his lady errant.'[15] Dryden's charge is expressed in terms of medieval romance: the plot is more important than the theological repercussions of Satan's triumph in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden. The dominance of plot over theology in discussions of *Paradise Lost* continued into the eighteenth century, where, as Roger Sharrock notes, the idea of Satan as Milton's hero did not carry theological overtones.[16] For these critics, Milton's error was of structure and decorum, rather than theology.[17]

It is not until the Romantic period that we find a more sustained comment on the moral implications raised by the prominence of Milton's Satan in the poem. Satan, a compelling, all too human character appealed to the Romantic sensibility, as did the idea of the poet of *Paradise Lost* being affected by an impulse that transgressed his ostensible theological aims in the poem. Despite Milton's straightforward claim in Book 1 to 'justifie the wayes of God to men' (*PL*. 1.26), the long tradition of commentary on the poem has questioned the words of Milton himself.[18] William Blake famously proclaimed that Milton was 'of the devil's party without knowing it'[19] (a statement has become the motto of the Satan debate), and Shelley

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[15] J. Dryden, 'Dedication to the Aeneis' (1697), *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 5 (University of California Press, 1987), p. 276. See R. Sharrock, 'Godwin on Milton's Satan', *Notes and Queries*, 9, 196, 463-5, 464.

[16] R. Sharrock, 'Godwin on Milton's Satan', p. 464.

[17] As reflected in Rousseau's comment: 'Milton est sublime dans les blasphémies de Satan' (Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, cited in Sharrock, 'Godwin on Milton's Satan', p. 464).

[18] In the introduction to his study of *De Doctrina Christiana*, Kelley argues that the 'primary function of a Miltonist is obvious. By dispelling the mists of ambiguity and misunderstanding, he should determine - as far as it is in his power to determine - just exactly what his poet intended to say' (M. Kelley, *This Great Argument: A Study of De Doctrina Christiana as a Gloss upon Paradise Lost* (Princeton University Press, 1941), p. viii). This includes the at times unfashionable view that Milton intended his poem as a theodicy.

[19] M. Phillips (ed.), *William Blake: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (Oxford: The Bodleian Library, 2011), plate 6, line 13, p. 65.

echoed this idea in his 'Defence of Poetry' (1821), by stating that 'Milton has so far violated the popular creed (if this shall be judged to be a violation) as to have alleged no superiority of moral virtue to his God over his Devil.'[20]

In 1823, only two years after Shelley published his 'Defence of Poetry', a manuscript was discovered that again put Milton's Christian theology at the forefront of discussion. This manuscript, a learned treatise on Christian doctrine, recorded in Latin, was signed IM, IOANNES MILTONVS and believed to belong to the Miltonic corpus: a view that has been re-confirmed in a 2007 study by Gordon Campbell, Thomas Corns, John Hale, and Fiona Tweedie, after the debate about Milton's authorship was reopened by William Hunter in 1991.[21] We know that Milton spent several years as Latin secretary for the Commonwealth in the 1650s. Perhaps the treatise is the product of those idle hours between drafting official documents, or perhaps Milton had thought about drafting a systematic theology long before this time. Whatever the answer, the discovery of *De Doctrina*, despite the authorship debate it inevitably began, meant that Milton's theological views were at the forefront of discussion again. The two persons of the Trinity, the Father and Son, receive a separate chapter ('De Deo' and 'De Filio Dei'), whereas Satan receives only a few lines. Milton's laconic treatment of the Satan figure in *De Doctrina* reflects the sparseness of his development in Scripture.[22]

For Milton scholars, the discovery of *De Doctrina* meant that now they had a new text to test their ideas against and to explain those passages in *Paradise Lost* whose theology had

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[20] P. B. Shelley, 'A Defence of Poetry', in H. A. Needham (ed.), *Sidney: An Apology for Poetry; Shelley: A Defence of Poetry* (London, Ginn and Company, 1959), p. 94.

[21] See G. Campbell, T. Corns, J. Hale, F. Tweedie, *Milton and The Manuscript of De Doctrina Christiana* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 122).

[22] John Carey: 'In *Christian Doctrine* Milton collects all the available biblical evidence in a few sentences. It amounts to little more than that Satan is the author of evil and has various titles' (J. Carey, 'Milton's Satan', in D. Danielson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Milton* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 160-175, p. 160).

baffled generations of Milton's readers.[23] One of the more troubling passages was Milton's scene in heaven in Book 3, where the Father foretells the Fall of man as he beholds Satan on his way to Eden. This speech raised the charge that the Father's foretelling predetermines the Fall. Milton goes to great lengths in this passage to demonstrate that foretelling does not make Adam and Eve's actions inevitable in the poem. It is clear that the 'free will defence', the argument that Adam and Eve are responsible for their sin, having been created free, just like Satan and the fallen angels, is what the drama of the poem hangs upon, and Milton reinforces this point through a carefully crafted speech by the Father (*PL.* 3.80ff).[24] Undermining the theodical success of this speech seems to be the chief concern of contemporary Miltonists, in what is considered a clash between Milton's poetic and theological impulses in portraying the Father complaining about the ingratitude of mankind at *PL* 3.96-9. But an awareness of this charge and questions about Milton's theology of predestination will become evident in notes on this passage by Milton's early commentators, Patrick Hume (1695) and Jonathan Richardson (father and son, 1734).[25] Their insistence on Milton's theodical success in this passage is a testament to the theological difficulties raised by this scene for Milton's earlier readers, on an issue that, as Campbell and Corns observe, was one of the defining theological issues of Milton's lifetime.[26]

Milton's essentially Arminian views of the theology of predestination appear in a separate chapter on predestination ('De praedestinatione') in *De Doctrina Christiana.* The author

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[23] Maurice Kelley's *This Great Argument* (1962) remains the only systematic consideration of *De Doctrina* as a gloss on the theology of *Paradise Lost.*

[24] For a discussion of the 'free will defence', see D. Danielson, 'The Fall and Milton's Theodicy', in D. Danielson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, pp. 144-160, pp. 148ff.

[25] See P. Hume, *Annotations on Milton's Paradise lost: wherein the texts of sacred writ, relating to the poem, are quoted, the parallel places and imitations of the most excellent Homer and Virgil, cited and compared, all the obscure parts by P.H* (London, Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1695), *Early English Books Online*, p. 102, note 99; and J. Richardson (Father and Son), *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's Paradise Lost* (London, Knapton, 1734), p. 104, note 117. Hume and Richardson's comments on *PL.* 3.96-9 are discussed in section 3.1.1: 'The Father's prophecy and the free-will defence'.

[26] Campbell, Corns, et al point out that 'like Christology', predestination was 'the defining theological issue of Milton's lifetime' (Campbell, Corns, et al, p. 151).

addresses this question in true Protestant form by claiming his authority by quoting from Scripture alone. It is surprising then, that the chapter culminates with an example not from Scripture, but from the pagan Homer, from a passage that occurs in the first *concilium deorum* of the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 1. 32-4). The 'Homeric *exemplum'*, as I will refer to it, and its echoing in two places in the Miltonic corpus, has been noted before, and the example in *De Doctrina* has most recently been discussed in Campbell and Corns' study, where they attempt to place this usage in existing rhetorical techniques of other systematic theologies.[27] It is, nevertheless, a complex example that has not been fully considered in light of Milton's knowledge and use of the Homeric epics, both as theologian of the *De Doctrina* and as poet of *Paradise Lost*.[28] In my study, I will go one step further in considering how this use of a pagan author to illustrate a point of Christian doctrine is not a uniquely Miltonic practice. Rather, it is indicative of the manner in which this Homeric scene was read at the time. By examining the comment on this passage in the most widely read edition of the *Odyssey*, that of the French commentator Jean de Sponde (or Spondanus, as I will refer to him), I will show that the *locus classicus* of ancient theodicy became a fitting point for Renaissance readers of Homer for the illustration of the Christian doctrine of free will.[29] Milton's recreation of the *concilium deorum* becomes more than just a poetic *topos*, but, rather, opens a field in which Milton achieves his Christian theodicy, while exploring ancient objections to the behaviour of the gods through his poetic recreation of the key Homeric and Virgilian dialogues on Olympos.

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[27] See Blessington, p. 101, C. Martindale, *John Milton and The Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London, Croom Helm, 1986), p. 58, and Campbell, Corns et al, *Milton and the Manuscript of De Doctrina Christiana*, p. 150.

[28] Campbell and Corns note that this 'extended allusion could elicit extended comment' (C&C, *Milton and the Manuscript of De Doctrina Christiana*, p. 150).

[29] Blessington notes that Zeus' speech in *Odyssey* 1 'is the *locus classicus* of classical theodicy in epic poetry' (p. 48), but does not consider the relationship between Milton's poetic echo of *Odyssey* 1 at *PL*.3.95-9, and its occurrence in the chapter 'De praedestinatione' in *De Doctrina* (although he notes its occurrence in the appendix, see note 26 above). Martindale, on the other hand, notes that '[i]n *De Doctrina Christiana* Milton quotes with approval the passage in *Odyssey* 1 (32ff) in which Zeus denies that the gods are to blame for the sufferings of men' (Martindale, p. 58); but, in turn, does not consider this example in comparison with *PL*. 3.96-9.

Though acknowledged as a version of the epic *concilium deorum*, Milton's scene of dialogue between the Father and Son in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost* has, in the twentieth century, often been considered only in terms of the infernal council that precedes it. It has been argued that inasmuch as the infernal council represents the epic *concilium deorum*, so the heavenly council represents the triumph of the Christian world over the classical one. For Francis Blessington, the failure of the classical heroic model exemplified in Milton's Satan and his infernal legions is contrasted with the 'true heroism' of the Son. In Chapter 2, 'Models of the epic *concilium* in *Paradise Lost*', I will consider the various epic dichotomies that the two councils create, including those arising in the Homeric and Hesiodic tradition, as Milton progresses from a full infernal council to the dialogue in heaven by recalling the epic model of the heroic *anabasis*. In Chapter 3, 'Milton and the language of epic prophecy', I will argue that Milton's scene in heaven adopts elements of the Homeric and Virgilian dialogues on Olympos, including their result: the reassurance and epic prophecy that transcends the scope of the poem. This kind of prophecy is itself a Virgilian rereading of the promise of Zeus to Thetis depicted in *Iliad* 1, and reforged in the Latin epic tradition. By the time the concept of epic prophecy reaches Milton, it has already been adopted by Vida and reflected in his use of two distinct verbs of speaking: one to indicate regular speech, and the other to indicate Christian prophecy. In Chapter 4, 'The Son's "Olympian" intercession', I explore Milton's casting of the Son as divine intercessor, one that not only provides an alternative model of epic heroism, as has been argued, but, when viewed in light of *concilia deorum*, becomes a revision of the charges laid against the pagan goddesses of Homer and Virgil, goddesses whose self-interest and partisanship lead them to test the boundaries of epic decorum. In Milton's revision of this ancient epic type-scene, I argue, we can trace the history of these debates, which are preserved in the ancient and Renaissance commentaries that Milton was likely to have consulted. Milton's scene of divine intercession performs a double duty,

invoking both the biblical and classical canons in a remarkable feat of bilingual and bicultural dexterity through which he achieves his Christian theodicy in epic terms.

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The last fifty years have produced several authoritative works on Milton and ancient epic: the most comprehensive being Alastair Fowler's series of annotated editions of the poem. A comparison of subsequent editions (1968, 1997, and the revised 2007 edition) charts the progress in Milton studies across recent decades. Fowler's first edition serves as a response to the polemical arguments put forward by William Empson in *Milton's God* (1961). Fowler fashions his response by recourse, among other things, to Milton's classical allusions. The second and revised editions serve as the most up-to-date and comprehensive compendium of current scholarship of Milton's classical usages in *Paradise Lost*, along with allusions to Scripture, the Church Fathers, and intertextual links to other Christian epic poems of the European Renaissance.

Aside from Fowler's commentary, there have been several monographs devoted to exploring the question of Milton and his wide ranging debt to ancient epic, from Homer to Lucan: Francis Blessington's *Paradise Lost and the Classical Epic* (1979), Charles Martindale's *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (1986), and William Porter's *Reading the Classics and Paradise Lost* (1993). These studies have done much more than identify allusions to ancient epic; they have created a way of systematizing discussion about Milton's use of the Classics, of testing methodologies used by scholars interested in questions of intertextuality. It was once the task of Milton's 'fit reader' (a term associated with Milton's famous prayer for a 'fit audience' at *PL* 7.31) to spot Milton's learned nods to the classical

tradition, a game of allusions that can be traced back to ancient epic practices. But the commentary tradition has performed much of this task, and William Porter argues that the challenge of the contemporary reader lies not in recognizing Milton's classical borrowings, but in reinterpreting those that have been noticed by generations of scholars in over three hundred years of commentary. [30] In Chapter 2, therefore, I consider existing scholarship on the council-scenes in Books 2 and 3 of *Paradise Lost*, synthesizing views by scholars ranging from Patrick Hume to Alastair Fowler in his most recent commentary on the poem.

Martindale's study considers the influence of each epic poet from the Greek and Roman canon in separate chapters devoted to Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Lucan. This division serves to collect and systematize the many and varied authors whose echoes appear throughout lines and entire scenes of *Paradise Lost*. What it loses, however, is the sense of dialogue between these texts. Specifically, it side-steps a problem that Martindale himself recognizes, that of multiple layers of allusion, particularly in those of Virgil, which have long been considered the dominant influence on Milton's epic. Martindale points out, for example, that many allusions in *Paradise Lost* that are considered 'Virgilian' are, in fact, Homeric, and have therefore not been considered with adequate precision.[31] Martindale's observation hinted at how Virgil fits into an epic dialogue with Homer, but his chapter divisions force him to consider the influence of the two poets separately. Porter revisited this issue in his 1993 study, where he observed, in passing, that the Homer we encounter in *Paradise Lost* is one mediated through Virgil. Porter concludes that Milton's Homeric allusions are 'seldom pure, (...), direct or unambiguous'.[32] What Porter does not consider is *how* Homer is mediated through Virgil, specifically, how an allusion, or an entire type-scene in *Paradise Lost* may be a reflection of a double transformation of Homer through Virgil. The idea of a Homeric allusion mediated, and

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[30] W. M. Porter, *Reading the Classics and Paradise Lost* (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1993), pp. 17-18.
[31] Martindale, p. 107.
[32] Porter, p. 90.

corrected by Virgil in light of the critical tradition, will be the basis of my discussion of Milton's treatment of the *concilium deorum* type scene in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*.

The final two chapters of Martindale's study are devoted to Ovid and Lucan: these authors have, in recent times, enjoyed a resurgence of interest as alternative models for Milton's epic. Following David Norbrook's chapter on Lucan in his seminal work *Writing the English Republic* (2000), the *Bellum Civile* has been seen as a better fit than the Augustan Virgil for Milton's Republican politics. Why then, have I settled for Homer and Virgil for my scene of divine intercession? The reason lies in the nature of Lucan's poetic transformation of the Virgilian divine machinery. Lucan, at first glance, might provide a more suitable model for Milton's political themes, a case that Norbrook convincingly lays down, but Lucan also famously breaks with the Virgilian system of the gods. Milton, in casting his Father and Son in epic roles, and making the aim of his poem theodical, not only does include a divine machinery in his epic, as Vida does in his imitation of Virgil, but places the role of the divine at the forefront of the story. I will return to Norbrook's objection about the anti-Augustinianism and epic fate in my third chapter, arguing that it is a theological, rather than a politicized model in Virgil that Milton inherits and transforms from existing Christian epic practice in Vida.

Another epic model for *Paradise Lost* that has received increased attention in recent times is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: most recently, in Mandy Green's *Milton's Ovidian Eve* (2009) and in Maggie Kilgour's *Milton and the Metamorphosis of Ovid* (2012). In his 1985 book, Richard DuRocher had put forward the case that Milton looks to a classical author for a solution to the eternal problem of epic succession. He argues that Ovid, an ancient poet, could provide Milton with a model of how to negotiate the epic tradition, and to transform it for his own aims. In Milton's case, this means transforming his epic models to suit the needs of his Christian theodicy. My work expands on this notion of ancient epic providing solutions to its own

problems. Ovid, I will argue in my second chapter, provides a fitting model for Milton's language of accommodation in depicting the fall of Satan and its aftermath in Book 2. But it is Virgil who provides a model for negotiating the charges arising from the divine sphere in epic, in his revision of the Homeric *concilium deorum* and the critical tradition. The critical tradition that Virgil was likely to have consulted in turn provides the theological background for Milton's reconsideration of these scenes in his Christian epic.

It is in consulting the commentaries that were likely to have reached Milton along with his editions of the *Iliad, Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* that I also distinguish my methodology from the studies by Porter, Martindale, and Blessington. Martindale in particular has provided ample evidence that Milton consulted the commentary tradition in his reading of epic: but the implications of these commentaries as having some impact on his poetic choices have not been explored. There are a few reasons for the relative neglect of the role of commentaries in shaping Milton's epic allusions in *Paradise Lost.* The first is a lack of direct, indisputable evidence. This is the reason that Blessington provides for his failure to consult the commentaries that 'there can be little doubt that Milton used.'[33] The second reason that Blessington provides seems to reinforce, rather than undermine the case for examining the commentaries. Blessington argues that '*Paradise Lost* is Milton's own commentary on these classical texts.' [34] I propose that is precisely Milton's poems themselves that may provide the key to his approach to the ancient and Renaissance epic commentaries. In making this argument, I have adopted a technique associated with Virgilian scholarship. In 1974 Robin Schlunk made the case for Virgil as a critical reader of the Homeric scholia.[35] Schlunk's

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[33] Blessington, p. xi.

[34] Blessington, p. xi.

[35] Schlunk was, of course, not the first to recognize this. As Robert Lamberton states in his review of Tilman Schmit Neuerburg's 1999 study: "The notion that we might be able to throw light on Virgil's *imitatio* and *aemulatio* of Homer by consulting the ancient interpreters of Homer goes back at least to Richard Heinze (1915, 164, n. 1; Schlunk 1974, viii) and to a scattering of suggestions, largely in footnotes, in G. N. Knauer's monumental *Der Aeneis und Homer* (1964), where Homeric echoes in the

evidence is not a library collection, but the proof of the *Aeneid* itself.[36] For a poet who alluded with such subtlety to the Homeric poems, he argues, there is little doubt that Virgil would also be aware of the long critical debates surrounding aspects of the Homeric epic, debates that he, in his own poetic *aemulatio*, would attempt to resolve by improving upon his models.[37] Virgil was venerated in the Renaissance as the poet of decorum, one who readdressed the problematic elements of the Homeric poems – including the behaviour of the gods – according to his *humanitas*. It is entirely possible that Milton would have imitated not only the style of Virgil, but also his approach to the Homeric models, which includes revising comments that exist in generations of Homeric and later Virgilian commentators. I will therefore put the case forward that Milton consults the commentaries available to him, some of which he was likely to have shared with Virgil, that is, the Homeric scholia.

But whereas Virgil 'corrected' the Homeric models according to the principles of decorum, remnants of Alexandrian criticism preserved in the Homeric scholia, Milton had another element to correct: his task was to invest the epic genre with a Christian theology. Whereas it has been argued that the way to do this is to purge epic of its pagan elements, I will argue that Milton achieved this corrective rewriting of ancient epic without abandoning the distinctly epic ingredients of his ancient models. In the example of Vida's *Christiad*, Milton may have found a precedent for how a Christian epic poet could adopt the style of Virgil to suit his

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Aeneid were globally catalogued in the most exhaustive manner to date" (R. Lamberton, Review of Tilman Schmit-Neuerburg, *Vergils Aeneis und die antike Homerexegese, Untersuchungen zum Einfluss ethischer und kritischer Homerrezeption auf imitatio und aemulatio Vergils. Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte. Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2001.08.37).

[36] "[I]t is clear from the allusions in his poetry that that he was an extremely learned man. We do not need the need the testimony of the ancient *vitae* or of Quintilian or of Macrobius to substantiate either of these points" (R. R. Schlunk, *The Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid: a Study of The Influence of Ancient Homeric Literary Criticism on Vergil* (University of Michigan Press, 1974), p. 1).

[37] See Schlunk on Virgil's *aemulatio*: "There can (...) be no doubt that Vergil not only imitated Homer throughout the whole of the *Aeneid*, but at the same time sought to rival his predecessor both in the overall purpose of his epic as well as in the finest and most minute of poetic details." (R. R. Schlunk, *The Homeric scholia and the Aeneid*, p.1).

Christian themes. Milton goes one step further than Vida, however, in recalling decorum-based criticism of the Homeric poems and finding a Virgilian solution to Homeric problems. Despite the prevalence of debates about the role and behaviour of the gods in the history of Homeric criticism, however, Schlunk's study of Virgil's composition of the *Aeneid* in light of the scholia leaves theological concerns on the backburner. Part of the reason is because decorum-based criticism arose separately from theological concerns among the Alexandrian critics, as we will see in Chapter 1, 'Questions of genre in *Paradise Lost*'. Yet there are scenes where both dimensions co-exist and emerge in the Homeric scholia. One such case is in the episode in *Iliad* 16, on the death of Sarpedon, which Schlunk argues is revised by Virgil in *Aeneid* 11 in the depiction of the death of Camilla and the grief of the goddess Diana. Schlunk argues that the Alexandrian objections to Apollo's tending of the corpse of Sarpedon are incorporated in Virgil's omission of the details of the cleansing of Camilla's corpse, as is Virgil's describing of the place of her burial and later fame. Schlunk therefore states that '(...) led on by the Alexandrians' comments on decorum, Vergil has developed the entire episode in such a manner as to tighten the coherence of the action and so heighten its pathos'.[38] In my own consideration of this scene in *Iliad* 16, however, I will focus on the dialogue between Zeus and Herē that precedes the death of Sarpedon. I will put the case forward that Milton's reading of this dialogue in the scene of the Son's intercession may have been affected by the theologically-centred commentary on *Iliad* 16, both in ancient, medieval, and Renaissance commentaries, as well as in Virgil's revision of a fundamental theological question arising from the dialogue at *Iliad* 16: that of Zeus' relative power in light of fate.

In my selection of Virgilian commentaries, I have deliberately steered away from the allegorical commentaries, choosing Servius and J. L. de La Cerda's commentaries, rather than those by Fulgentius and Cristoforo Landino. This choice creates obvious limitations

[38] Schlunk, p. 14.

within my study, as the division between what is deemed 'allegorical' and what is not is near-impossible to make, particularly during the Renaissance, where allegorical readings were mixed with historical ones.[39] But we must remember that allegorical readings arose long before medieval re-readings of epic, and are a separate stream of epic criticism emerging from late antiquity. Allegorical readings of epic belong to a tradition that, as Robert Lamberton argues, Dante inherits in the Renaissance.[40] I will show that Milton is evoking a different critical tradition in his rereading of the Olympian dialogues in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a tradition that focuses on the theological rather than the allegorical nature of these scenes. I trace this tradition to the Homeric scholia and to the views preserved in the twelfth century commentary by the Byzantine archbishop Eustathius.

Martindale suggests that Milton would have consulted Eustathius' commentary on Homer, looking to the Miltonic corpus itself for evidence.[41] We know too that Eustathius appears in the notes to Pope's translation of Homer. Milton, whose *Paradise Lost* preceded Pope's translation of the *Iliad* (1715/20?) and *Odyssey* (1726), and whose skill in Greek was superior

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[39] Just how closely allegory permeated the humanist movement, despite its attempts for separation, is best illustrated by Thomas Greene, in his description of Petrarch's manuscript of the *Aeneid* (Milan, Ambrosian MS SPF 1), a testament to the many traditions that merged on the one frontispiece: there Virgil is depicted, seated like a biblical prophet or evangelist, and an ancient grammarian, whom Greene associates with Servius, points to Aeneas, who is drawn in the likeness of a medieval knight. As Greene observes: 'the miniature breathes the spirit of late medieval allegory, represented in a heavily stylized Gothic manner' (Greene, p. 35).

[40] Robert Lamberton addresses the disparity between our own imaginings of what constitutes 'allegory' (and the tradition of Christian and even earlier neo-Platonist allegorizations) and ancient ideas surrounding passages where there is hidden meaning, where the poet 'speaks allegorically' (ἀλληγορικῶς λέγει...): 'Ancient "critics" would normally make no distinction of kind between the observation that Homer *says* 'Hera' but *means* "mist" (ἀὴρ) – i.e. that Homer is allegorical in the modern sense – and the observation that Homer *says* Athenē tricked Pandarus into acting in a cowardly manner, but *means* only that he was a weak and cowardly character' (R. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*: *Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1986), p. 20). See also D. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, New York, Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 10, on the origins of allegorical readings in ancient epic criticism.

[41] Martindale directs us to Milton's 'Notes on Euripides', *Columbia Milton*, volume 18, p. 305. Martindale's use of the example from Eustathius challenges Blessington's assumption that Milton does not provide an indication of the commentaries he may have consulted. See Blessington, p. xi. Frank A. Patterson's edited *Works of John Milton* also provide notes from Pindar that have, however, now been excluded from the Miltonic canon.

to Pope's, would have been likely to have consulted the Eustathius commentary directly.[42] Although his commentary is prone to much allegorical exegesis, Eustathius' comments on the dialogue between Zeus and Herē at *Il.* 16.431ff avoid any discussion of allegory. His notes on this Homeric scene are a fascinating document on several centuries of discussion about the role of fate in the death of Sarpedon, as witnessed by the gods.

In my fourth chapter I will show how Milton, in the dialogue between the Father and Son, deliberately avoids an allegorical imagining of the Homeric and Virgilian scenes of divine intercession. Despite the fact that Milton's dialogue in heaven has been subject to allegorical readings even within its Christian theology, where the Father and Son are said to represent the competing claims of justice and mercy, Milton does not treat the epic material he reworks in an allegorical fashion, attempting to find in Zeus and Herē symbols of natural phenomena. Milton evades allegory in this scene, while nevertheless presenting the dialogue as an external manifestation of the Father's inner counsel. The key to this paradox lies in Milton's depiction of the Son, whose humanity is the point of departure for Milton's treatment of both biblical and epic material. Human traits, which were a source of charges of impropriety in the behaviour of the epic gods, become the grounds for depicting Christ as the 'one greater Man' (*PL*.1.4) of Christian epic.

Owing to the unique nature of his program for poetic imitation in *Paradise Lost*, Milton attempted to engage with both the alien as well as the familiar in his emulation of ancient epic models. The critical tradition he recalls in his dialogue in heaven revisits debates about the role of fate and objections about the perceived weakness of the father of the gods in the world of Homeric and Virgilian epic. At the same time as he corrects these charges, Milton creates a portrait of the Father that accords with the needs of his Christian theodicy. Milton's Christian

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[42] Martindale, p. 55.

theodicy, therefore, however successful we may judge it, is negotiated in traditional epic terms.

Chapter 1. Questions of genre in *Paradise Lost*

Introduction

The collection of Milton's handwritten drafts of various unfinished works, known as the Trinity manuscript, shows that around 1640 Milton had imagined the story of the Fall as a tragedy, bearing the title 'Paradise Lost'. His final choice of epic as the vehicle for his narration of the Fall implied more than just a change in genre; the change applied also to the conventions he would observe when narrating the story. Among the various allegorical 'Persons' in the unfinished drama is the Old Testament figure of Moses, who is the one to 'speak a prologue' (signaled by the Greek verb: προλογίζει).[43] In Milton's epic, however, the generic shape that *Paradise Lost* would eventually take, the planned prologue of Moses is replaced by four separate proems of the poet-narrator in the epic, in which he invokes the muse of Christian epic to aid him in his task. In the four proems to books 1, 3, 7, and 9, the poet of *Paradise Lost* sets out a poetic program and tests the challenges that arise in adapting the epic genre, a genre associated with the ancient world and its pagan religion, to a Christian subject.

In attempting to compose an epic poem on a Christian subject, Milton faces the practical conundrum of how to recreate the conventions that, on the one hand, were the signals of the genre, but, on the other, were the source of charges against the pagan religion they recalled. The Christian poet was expected to both signal his debt to the style of the ancients and

[43] For a presentation of the case for *Paradise Lost* as a tragedy, rather than epic, in view of Milton's draft of 'Paradise Lost' as a drama, see Fowler, *Paradise Lost*, second edition, p. 1ff.

surpass them in one all-important aspect: in the theological dimension of the poem. I argue that in the openings of Books 1 and 9, Milton announces a poem that does not only recreate the epic divine sphere, but follows Virgil's retreatment of Homeric material, by placing this sphere at the forefront of his story as he adapts the pagan machinery to a revised Christian model.

Part 1. 'Answerable style': *Paradise Lost* and the poetics of Renaissance imitation

In the invocation in Book 9 of *Paradise Lost*, the poet claims to undertake a subject, '[n]ot less but more Heroic' (*PL.* 9.14) than the subjects of previous epics. Among the various allusions to ancient and medieval romances (the 'long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights / In Battels feign'd', *PL.* 9.31), Milton differentiates his epic subject from a list that includes both human and divine action.[44] The poet addresses his 'Celestial Patroness' (*PL.* 9.21) to aid him in the task of narrating his Christian subject. Arnold Stein focused on Milton's prayer for an 'answerable style' (*PL.* 9.20) as the programmatic motto for the poet's experiment in epic.[45] Milton's claim to undertake 'Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime' (*PL.* 1.16) may refer not only to 'things unattempted' by other poets, placing Milton above his predecessors and peers, but also of poetic techniques that he himself has not yet undertaken.[46] In the exordia we see that Milton sees his poem as testing ground for the theory and practice of writing a Christian epic in light of ancient models.

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[44] *PL.* 9.13-19, see discussion at 1.2.1. below.

[45] A. Stein, *Answerable Style* (Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1953). The last chapter of Harding's study bears the same title. See D. P. Harding, *The Club of Hercules: Studies in the Background of Paradise Lost* (Urbana, The University of Illinois Press, 1962).

[46] Stein argues that Milton's statement at *PL.*1.16 'insists less on competence in advance than on the aspiration to competence. Milton's style is also answerable to the as yet *unattempted*, to the poem this proves to be' (Stein, *Answerable Style*, pp. 121-2).

Stein further states that, as Milton calls upon epic models, his style is 'answerable to the Renaissance concept of epic, which links the poem to classical literature', as well to 'the Renaissance concept of a *Christian* epic'.[47] The attempt to make the poem able to withstand comparison with its ancient models, as well as to fulfill the demands of its Christian theology, is not an easy balance to achieve for a Christian poet who saw in the religious themes a violation of epic decorum. Milton's concept of an 'answerable style' contains a reflection of the challenges facing the Christian epic poet as attempts to separate the style and theology of ancient epic. In Stein's reading, Milton's oft-quoted claim to soar '[a]bove th' *Aonian* Mount' (*PL*.1.15) is less a statement of poetic hubris, and instead conveys the sense of responsibility in connection with his superior Christian subject.

1.1.1. Invocations to the epic muse

Milton's invocation to the 'celestial patroness' for an 'answerable style' in Book 9 of *Paradise Lost* is considered an autobiographical reference to the poem's composition, as the poet relates the 'nightly visitation' by the muse. The 'unpremeditated' flow of his verses recalls the familiar account of the blind Milton dictating his memorized verses to a series of amanuenses.[48] The account of Milton's flowing dictation of his verses, whether fact or legend, recalls the earliest Greek tradition of epic as an oral performance by a bard recreating epic songs from the vast resources of memory.

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[47] Stein, *Answerable Style,* p. 121 (my italics).

[48] The motif of Milton's self-fashioning as the 'blind bard' is explored in Martindale's chapter on Homer in *Paradise Lost and The Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London and Sydney, Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 64ff. For establishing Milton's method of composing *Paradise Lost*, we rely on the account in John Phillips' 'Life of John Milton': 'The time friendly to the Muses fell to his Poetry; And hee waking early (as is the use of temperate men) had commonly a good Stock of Verses ready against his Amanuensis came; which if it happened to bee later than ordinary, hee would complain, Saying, *hee wanted to bee milkd*' (H. Darbishire (ed.), *The Early Lives of Milton*, p. 33, cited in B. K. Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography*, revised edition (Oxford, Blackwell, 2003), p. 448). For Jonathan Richardson and Edward Phillips' accounts of Milton's dictation of *Paradise Lost*, see B. K. Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 448.

Milton alludes to the act of composition as a divine possession or *furor*. [49] Unlike the muses of Homer and Virgil, who are summoned by the poet to aid the memory of the poet (see below), Milton's 'Celestial Patroness' visits the poet 'unimplor'd':

> ...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...(*PL*. 9. 20-4)

Milton's prayer at the beginning of Book 1 to the Spirit who 'from the first / Wast present' (*PL*.1.22) may echo Vida's opening of the *Christiad*, where the narrator calls upon 'spiritus alme' – 'the nourishing spirit', who 'fills the sea and the lands and the heavens with your divinity' ('Qui mare, qui terras, qui coelum numine comples', *Christiad* 1.1). Milton transforms the spatial transcendence of the 'Spirit' in Vida's account into a temporal one.

In lines 11 and 12 of the *Christiad*, the poet further asks: 'May I be permitted, a mortal man, with you as my guide, to tell with worthy voice of immortal things' ('Fas mihi te duce mortali immortalia digno / ore loqui ...[...] (*Christiad*, 1.11-12). The juxtaposition between the mortal poet and the immortal spirit in Vida's line emphasizes the complete dependence of the poet not only on memory of the muse, but also on the divine insights of the Holy Spirit. The poet's

[49] This is how Landino interpreted Virgil's account of the raging Sibyl at *Aeneid* 6.100 ('ea frena furenti / concutit et stimulus sub pectore vertit Apollo', 'Apollo shakes those reigns of the raging Sibyl, and turns the goad beneath her breast' *Aen.* 6.100-1) as a divinely administered frenzy, and one that is shared by poets (see C. Kallendorf, 'Virgil to Vida: The Poeta Theologus in Italian Renaissance Commentary', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56, 1, 1995, 41-62, 50).

divine subject requires insight into privileged matters, and carries a sense of responsibility that Milton expresses in the proem of Book 3, as he approaches the portrait of the Father.[50]

This sense of responsibility is, however, not limited to the Christian poet alone: this consciousness of complete subordination to the goddess-Muse, according to Austin, is 'deep in the ethos of ancient epic'.[51] In both the Homeric and Miltonic invocations, the narrator seeks to transcend his human limitations. For the Homeric narrator, his frailty consists in the limitations of his memory. At the beginning of the Catalogue of Ships, the poet of the *Iliad* calls upon the muses to aid his memory in twofold recognition of his own limited powers and those of the muses, who 'being goddesses are present and know all things' ('ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα', *Il.* 2.485).

The narrator of *Paradise Lost*, on the other hand, expresses his limitation through the motif of darkness, signifying both a physical dimension (where darkness becomes an image for the poet's physical blindness, an image that he will continue to explore in the exordium to Book 3), as well as a moral (figured as 'what is low') and intellectual limitation. It is only with the aid of the Spirit that the poet can achieve his theodicy, to 'justifie the ways of God to men':

> ...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 ways of God to men. (*PL.* 1. 22-6)

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[50] See Chapter 2.2.3. 'Approaching the Father: Milton's poetic *anabasis*'.
[51] R. G. Austin (commentator), *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Primus* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 31.

Replacing the epic muse(s) with the Holy Spirit was problematic, however, in light of Christian theology. In Milton's *De Doctrina*, invocation of the Holy Spirit is considered a practice unwarranted by Scripture: 'qui a patre, non a se ipso, et petitur et datur, nec Deus esse potest, nec invocandus' (he who is both sought and given from the Father, and not from himself, cannot be God, nor should he be invoked' (*De Doctrina*, 1.6).[52] This may be the reason, why, at the opening of Book 1, Milton does not call specifically upon the Spirit, as Vida does, but upon the 'Heav'nly Muse', following Tasso's exordium to *Gerusalemme Liberata*:

> Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
> Of *Oreb*, or of *Sinai*, didst inspire
> That shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
> In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
> Rose out of *Chaos*... (*PL*.1.6-10)

Compare with Tasso:

> O Musa, tu che di caduchi allori
> non circondi la fronte in Elicona,
> ma su nel cielo infra i beati cori
> hai di stelle immortali aurea corona,
> tu spira al petto mio celesti ardori,
> tu rischiara il mio canto, e tu perdona
> s'intesso fregi al ver, s'adorno in parte
> d'altri diletti, che de' tuoi, le carte.

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[52] *Columbia Milton*, vol. p. 394. See Fowler, p. 59, note to ll. 17-22.

[O heavenly Muse, that not with fading bays

Deckest thy brow by the Heliconian spring,

But sittest crowned with stars' immortal rays

In Heaven, where legions of bright angels sing;

Inspire life in my wit, my thoughts upraise,

My verse ennoble, and forgive the thing,

If fictions light I mix with truth divine,

And fill these lines with other praise than thine]. (*GL*.1.2-3)[53]

In the above translation, Fairfax adds the epithet 'heavenly' to Tasso's 'Musa', an addition that suggests a link to Urania, one of Hesiod's nine muses (*Theogony* 79) and named among the daughters of Zeus. The muse of astronomy, she is celebrated in Giovanni Pontano's *Urania* (1505) and, in Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas' treatise, *La Muse Chrestiene* (1574), is identified as the muse of Christian epic.[54] Despite her new status, however, Urania's name, and her history, is in pagan epic. The Hesiodic poet recalls the visitation by the muses who admit to speaking both truth and fiction:

αἵ νύ ποθ' Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδήν,

ἄρνας ποιμαίνονθ' Ἑλικῶνος ὕπο ζαθέοιο.

τόνδε δέ με πρώτιστα θεαὶ πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπον,

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[53] Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, a cura di Fredi Chiapelli, Milano, Rusconi Libri, 1982, pp. 42-3. English translation by T. E. Fairfax (T. Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, (New York, Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 2). Fairfax chooses 'fictions' in place of the more accurate 'adornments', possibly to align Tasso's lines more closely with *Theogony* 27-8.

[54] See Fowler, 2nd edition, p. 388, note to ll. 1-7; Martindale, p. 70. For a detailed discussion of the occurrence and role of Urania in *Paradise Lost* in the context of Renaissance art and literature, see M. A. Treip, *Descend from Heav'n Urania: Milton's Paradise Lost and Raphael's Cycle in the Stanza della Segnatura* (Michigan, English Literary Studies, University of Victoria, 1985); and E. Haan, 'From Helicon to Heaven: Milton's Urania and Vida', *Renaissance Studies*, 7.1, 1993, 86-107.

Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο·

'ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,

ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.'

[And then they taught Hesiod a beautiful song, when he was pasturing lambs beneath holy Helicon. And first of all the goddesses make this speech to me, the Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus: 'You, rustic shepherds, horrid disgraces, nought but bellies, we know how to say many lies that are like truths, and we also know whenever we so wish, to speak the truth.'] (*Theogony*, 22-28)

The last two lines (27-8) uttered by the daughters of Zeus to the Hesiodic poet had become the *locus classicus* for the distrust of poetic accounts in the ancient world. Elizabeth Belfiore has argued that it may have been these lines that Plato had in mind when formulating his critical attack on poetry in Book 2 of the *Republic*.[55]

Fowler hesitates in identifying Milton's 'Heav'nly Muse' at *PL* 1.6 with Urania, who is named explicitly at *PL* 7.1.[56] Instead, Fowler argues that Milton's invocation in Book 1 alludes to Hesiod indirectly.[57] I propose, further, that Milton's invocation in Book 1 is a careful negotiation between alluding to and correcting the Hesiodic passage. Milton's account replaces Helicon, the place where Hesiod encountered the epic muses, with biblical locations.

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[55] Elizabeth Belfiore argues for a 'specific verbal echo' of *Th.* 27 at *Rep.* 2.382 D2-3. See E. Belfiore, "'Lies Unlike the Truth': Plato on Hesiod, *Theogony* 27", *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 115 (1985), 47-57. For the truth of Hesiod's Muses in the *Theogony* and the reception of this passage, see, most recently, H. Konig, *Hesiod: The Other Poet. Ancient Reception of a Cultural Icon* (Boston, Leiden, 2010), pp. 223-35.

[56] Fowler states that the 'Heav'nly Muse' is '[p]ossibly the *Urania* of vii 1…' (Fowler, 2nd edition, p. 58, note to ll. 6-22).

[57] Fowler identifies Milton's technique as 'antonomasia', or 'periphrastic naming', where Milton is '[a]ssuming common ground with the reader, like Dante in his prophetically obscure historical allusions, or Horace in *Odes* 1.15.1' (Fowler, 2nd edition, p. 58, note to ll. 6-8).

The 'shepherd' in line 8 may be Hesiod, but he also may be Moses, who in *Exodus* 3 had a vision of God in a burning bush on mount Oreb, or who received the Ten Commandments atop of mount Sinai (*Exod.* 19: 20).[58]

The replacement of pagan with biblical locations was enough for Patrick Hume to purge this image of its pagan associations. Hume commented that this invocation is superior to Tasso's proem to *Gerusalemme Liberata*, since Milton limits his allusions to biblical locations, 'as much as *Helicon* is inferior to *Horeb*':

> The Christian Poet, the famous *Torquato Tasso*, the Darling of discerning *Italy*, begins his *Exordium* (...) in which, though he calls to his Assistance the same Heavenly Spirit, yet we shall find him fall short of our Poet, both as to the Sublimity of his Thoughts and Argument, as much as *Helicon* is inferior to *Horeb*, and that he had but too just occasion to ask Pardon (as he does in the end of this *Stanza*), for mixing and intangling Truth with vain Fiction.[59]

Hume believes that Milton has surpassed his Italian predecessor by avoiding pagan associations with Helicon, the 'great and holy mountain' where Hesiod's muses dwell (αἵθ' Ἑλικῶνος ἔχουσιν ὄρος μέγα τε ζάθεόν τε, *Theogony* 2). In accusing Tasso of 'mixing and intangling Truth with vain Fiction', Hume recalls the same lines uttered by Hesiod's muses, lines that, remarkably, Tasso recreates in his own exordium. Tasso later attempts to rehabilitate these lines in his *Discourses on the heroic poem (Discorsi del poema eroico*, 1594), by claiming that it is he, the poet, and not the muses, who tends to 'mix [fictions light]

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[58] See Fowler, 2nd edition, p. 58, note 6-8.

[59] P. Hume, *Annotations on Milton's Paradise lost: wherein the texts of sacred writ, relating to the poem, are quoted, the parallel places and imitations of the most excellent Homer and Virgil, cited and compared, all the obscure parts by P.H* (London, Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1695), *Early English Books Online*, p. 3, note 6.

with truth divine':

> Hesiod, the ancient Greek poet in the *Theogony*, wrote that the Muses can tell many lies that resemble the truth, or if they want to can tell the truth, but in an absolute sense he calls them the daughters of Jupiter, and truth-tellers in these lines".[60]

It would appear that the statement of the Hesiodic muses is, in Tasso' rereading, a Cretan lie.[61] Tasso's revision could only add to problems of propriety. The desire to avoid association with the pagan muses may have also prompted Milton to be more specific about his source of inspiration in a subsequent proem, that to Book 7 of *Paradise Lost*. Like Tasso, Milton attempts to differentiate Urania from her Hesiodic origins: Tasso and Milton's Urania does not dwell on Olympos, but in the Christian Heaven:

> Descend from Heav'n, *Urania*, by that name
> If rightly thou art call'd, whose Voice divine
> Following, above th' *Olympian* Hill I soare,
> Above the flight of *Pegasean* wing.
> The meaning, not the Name I call: for thou
> Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
> Of old *Olympus* dwell'st; but, Heav'nlie borne,
> Before the Hills appeerd, or Fountain flow'd,
> Thou with Eternal wisdom didst converse,
> Wisdom thy Sister, and with her didst play
> In presence of th' Almightie Father, pleas'd

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[60] T. Tasso, *Discourses on The Heroic Poem*, translated by M. Cavalchini and I. Samuel, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 33.
[61] On this point, see discussion by P. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1977).

With thy Celestial Song... (*PL.* 7. 1-12)

In asserting that the source of his inspiration is 'Heav'nlie borne', Milton uses the same technique that Tasso had in his exordium, calling upon the muse who dwells 'not ...by the Heliconian spring, / But ...crowned ...in Heaven'.[62] The poet of *Paradise Lost*, moreover, declares that it is 'the meaning, not the name I call' (*PL.*7.5), a statement that serves for more recent commentators as 'a clear directive to the reader to avert the eyes from Urania's classical origins.'[63] But the reader's gaze is not easily averted from classical associations, and Milton's 'answerable style' is accountable to his Christian reader, and guilty, like Tasso perhaps too, of mixing Christian truths with pagan fictions.

1.1.2. Dante to Dryden: Renaissance theories of imitation

accidit ut, quantum illos proximius imitemur, tantum rectius poetemur.

[It so happens that the closer we may come to imitating those [great poets], the closer we may be to the rightful practice of poetry] (*De Vulgari Eloquentia*, 3.4.3)[64]

Dante's statement about imitation, in *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, encapsulates the doubleness that was at the heart of the Renaissance concept of *imitatio*; from the imitation of objects and

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[62] Ironically, the insistence on Urania as the muse of heaven recalls the Greek etymology of her name, associated with the Greek οὐρανός, meaning sky or heaven. Milton draws attention to this etymology. In his statement to Urania: 'by that name/ If *rightly* thou art call'd' (my italics) he further alludes to the etymology of her name (ἔτυμος meaning 'true', thus 'right') by employing an 'etymological marker' such as *verus* or *e vero*, used by Latin poets in order to draw attention to the etymology of a name. On 'etymological markers', see F. Cairns, 'Ancient 'Etymology' and Tibullus: On the Classification of "Etymologies" and on "Etymological Markers"', *PCPS*, 42, 1996, 24-59), The pagan muse Urania, usually associated with astronomy and astrology, is rehabilitated to her 'rightful' role in the Christian Heaven!

[63] S. Davies and W. B. Hunter, 'Milton's Urania: "The Meaning, Not the Name I Call"', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 28.1 (1988), 100.

[64] D. Alighieri, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, edited and translated by S. Botterill (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 56. My translation.

natural phenomena (with its origins in the Greek concept of μίμησις), to the imitation of existing poetic works and especially the veneration of classical works.[65] The question not of whether but of *how* to imitate these classical models is even more complex than the definition of imitation itself, and was being redefined in light of the rediscovery of new classical texts in the Renaissance.

In considering the various ways developed in the Renaissance for approaching classical models, Greene isolates several distinct models. The first of these was forged in the Italian Renaissance; it viewed the Latin tongue as 'lingua nostra', and resulted in a faithful, 'sacramental'[66] type of imitation of the classical subtext that seeks to reproduce the classical model, one that is viewed as a static object on the far side of a historical, cultural, and religious abyss.[67] The problem of reconciling the ancient model with its new context is ignored, resulting in a jarring collocation of pagan and Christian. We see this jarring juxtaposition in Jacopo Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis* (1526), where the language that describes the epic gods, including even their names, is used for God the Father, Christ, and a collection of natural phenomena. Sannazaro's epic enshrines the pagan epic machinery in a way that ignores the theological needs of the story. A reverence for one subject precludes a reverence for another, and Sanazzaro was criticized by Erasmus on these grounds.[68] A second common model for imitation is the concept of *contaminatio*, which consists of an eclectic mix of references from the sacred and profane, from mixed sources, without any attempt on the part of the poet to recall or engage with the context of their borrowings. Greene's main objection to this method of imitation is that these appear without rhyme or

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[65] See J. Scodel's entry on 'Imitation and Mimesis' in A. Grafton, G. Most, *The Classical Tradition*, p. 472.

[66] Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p. 38.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] Erasmus said of Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginiis*: 'He would have deserved more praise if he had treated his sacred subjects somewhat more reverently' (D. Erasmus, *Ciceronianus: or a Dialogue on The Best Style of Speaking*, trans. I. Scott (New York, Columbia University), 1908, p. 118. See Greene, *The Descent from Heaven*, p. 163.

reason, without discrimination on the part of the poet – and that, moreover, they produce an a-historical effect (a similar problem to the one we saw in the previous model).[69] In Sonnet 3, for example, 'the early sonnet that records the first vision of Laura', Petrarch 'brings together elements from the Christian gospels [as well as] Ovid's *Amores*'.[70] Yet Greene argues that '[n]'o higher meaning emerges from the clash of this allusion.'[71]

By the time John Dryden engages in discussion about theories and categories of imitation, in 1683, sixteen years after *Paradise Lost* was first published, the concept of *imitatio* is tied to ideas of poetic decorum. It also carries the responsibility of *aemulatio*: of not only imitating, but also improving upon classical material. In the introduction to his translation of Ovid's *Heroides*, Dryden lists and describes the various techniques of translation: 'metaphrase', 'paraphrase' and 'imitation'.[72] It is to the last, its possibilities and its pitfalls, that he devotes most of his attention. The most creative of the three techniques, it is also the one that is most likely to depart from its original. For Dryden, it is a game of omission and invention, one that barely can be included in the other categories of translation: in that '[i]mitation [is] where the translator (if now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion.'[73] The Renaissance poet is to be something more than a translator: he is to emulate his material 'as he sees occasion', according to the principles of poetic decorum.

It was this responsibility to improve upon the original that Quintilian had advocated in the

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[69] 'At its slackest, eclectic imitation falls back into mere anachronism, and becomes indistinguishable from the ahistorical citations of the Middle Ages' (*ibid*).
[70] Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p. 39.
[71] Greene, p. 40.
[72] Dryden defines metaphrase as 'turning an author word by word, and line by line, from one language into another'; and paraphrase as 'translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered' (J. Dryden, "Preface to the Translation of Ovid's *Epistles*", in W. P. Ker (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden,* 2nd edition, vol. 1 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 237.
[73] J. Dryden, 'Preface to the Translation of Ovid's *Epistles*', p. 237.

Institutio Oratoria, where he uses the term *aemulatio*, an imitative technique that entailed a competition with its original model.[74] In the *Eikonoklastes,* Milton declares of imitation: 'For such kind of borrowing as this, if it be not better'd by the borrower, among good Authors is accounted Plagiarie.'[75] Dryden's analogy for translation, that "tis [the] business [of the painter] to make it [the picture] resemble the original' recalls Platonic ideas of representational *mimesis.*[76] Dryden does, however, provide a qualification to this, presenting the 'two cases' that provide an exception to this mimetic rule. In Dryden's critique, Platonic ideas of *mimesis* are subject to the dominating criterion of poetic decorum:

> .... that is, if the thought be notoriously trivial or dishonest; but the same answer will serve for both, that then they ought not to be translated: –

To illustrate this point, Dryden borrows lines from Horace's *Ars Poetica* (149): ...*Et quae / Desperes tractata nitescere posse, relinquas* ('And leave aside that which you fear cannot be polished / by your manipulation').[77] Dryden's example from the *Ars Poetica* reflects the importance of this poem for Renaissance theories of *imitatio.*[78] The Augustan age in Rome specifically was considered to be the golden age of poetry – with the *Ars Poetica* providing a theory of imitation and emulation of existing genres. Despite the prominent role of the *Ars Poetica* and its author, Horace, it was the *Aeneid* of Virgil that provided the best example to

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[74] Quintilian: 'neque ego paraphrasim esse interpretationem tantum volo, sed circa eosdem sensus certamen atque aemulationem' ('and neither do I desire for a paraphrase extend only as far as its interpretation, but I wish for it to be a contest and an act of emulation, centred on the same impressions' (*Institutio Oratoria*, 10.5.5).

[75] Here Milton is referring to the appropriation of one of David's psalms by Charles I in addressing an 'audience of Divines'. Milton comments: 'Had he [Charles] borrow'd Davids heart, it had bin much the holier theft.' Milton's hyperbolic statement conveys a sense of violation of Scripture that contributes to Milton's adverse assessment of the character of the executed English king (*Eikonoklastes*, XXIII, *Columbia Milton*, vol. 5, pp. 258-9. See also Blessington's *Appendix*, p. 102).

[76] See Grafton et al, *The Classical Tradition*, p. 472.

[77] J. Dryden, "Preface to the Translation of Ovid's *Epistles*", p. 242. My translation.

[78] See Grafton et al, *The Classical Tradition*, p. 472. Importantly, Vida's *Ars Poetica*, as its title suggests, was aimed as a revision of its Horatian model (though Di Cesare argues that its chief model was Quintilian's *Institutiones oratoriae*). See M. A. Di Cesare, *Vida's Christiad and Vergilian Epic* (New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 40.

Renaissance readers of a Latin poet not only imitating, but surpassing his Greek model, Homer. Virgil's *humanitas* and *decorum*, the way in which he handled the material of his poetic predecessor, Homer, became the model for Renaissance epic *imitatio*. In his argument to his own *Ars Poetica*, Vida elevates Virgil over Homer, chiefly for his *humanitas*, and, in a letter, refers to Virgil as the pupil who surpassed his Greek masters.[79]

1.1.3. 'Virgilian humanism' and the principles of epic propriety

Di Cesare used the term 'Virgilian humanism'[80] to describe the unique place that Virgil occupied for the Italian humanists as the Roman poet *par excellence*, in his transformation of Homeric material to create a Roman epic that manifests Rome's destiny. The high status of Virgil for Renaissance readers of epic is evident in the role he is given by Dante in his *Divina Commedia*, where he guides the poet through the underworld. Virgil is the most noble of the 'noble school' ('la bella scola', line 93) of Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan, whom the Christian poet encounters in Book 4 (*Inf.* 4. 88-90).

Virgil's status in the Renaissance was not unique to the Italians, but continued in English epic criticism. John Dryden claimed that, of the ancient poets, Virgil cannot be improved upon, and his *Aeneid* was consistently favoured over the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in terms of the overall propriety of the story.[81] Milton himself referred to the poet as 'summus artifex decori',[82] and it is Virgil, I will argue, who becomes the model for Milton's version of epic imitation. For Milton,

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[79] M. G. Vida, *Cominiana,* in Di Cesare, p. 41. Di Cesare notes that '[i]f Quintilian, Cicero, Horace, and the humanists supplied the general framework and many of the particular precepts and turns of phrase, Vergil's example supplied the controlling attitude and the controlling ideas' (Di Cesare, p. 40).

[80] Di Cesare, *Vida's Christiad and Vergilian Epic*, p. 42.

[81] 'By this way, 'tis true, somewhat that is excellent may be invented, perhaps more excellent than the first design; though Virgil must be still excepted, when that *perhaps* takes place' (J. Dryden, 'Preface to the Translation of Ovid's *Epistles*', p. 240).

[82] J. Milton, *Defence of the English People*, Columbia Milton, Volume 7, p. 324. For a discussion of the full context of this description and the Virgilian passage quoted, see Chapter 3.2.4: 'Milton's Virgilian *prolepsis*'.

Virgil was a model for reading and re-reading Homer, and one that Milton too set out to imitate and surpass, specifically by recreating one of the aspects of the *Aeneid* that was problematic: the appearance of the divine sphere.

1.1.4. From *imitatio* to *aemulatio*

In the introduction to his treatise *On the Ancient Orators*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus reserves the term ζῆλος for classical imitators alone. Greene comments that this omission demonstrates that "[h]e may not have considered it possible for a postclassical writer to … seriously rival, a true classic".[83] For Milton's modern critic Stein, Milton's attempt to rival the ancients borders on the ridiculous for a similar reason to Dionysius' near-2000 year old objections.[84]

When viewed in light of the question of epic theology, however, Milton's claim to surpass the ancients does not seem so hubristic. Christian epic is *a priori* superior in its theology to the ancients: it is not the poem's solitary merits that elevate it above ancient models, but Milton's subject matter. Even Virgil can lead Dante only as far as the gates of limbo in the *Commedia*, and to the threshold of the pagan world. The leap of (Christian) faith, to heaven, is Dante's to perform alone.[85]

Leaving Virgil behind is a requirement of a poet whose subject transcends the world and the theological underpinning of pagan epic. In Book 7, the poet of *Paradise Lost* claims to 'soare' 'above th' *Olympian* hill', following the voice of Urania (*PL* 7. 3). Thomas Newton saw in these lines a fulfillment of the ambition he had expressed in Book 1 for his poem to 'soar / above th'

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[83] Greene, *The Light in Troy,* p. 58.

[84] 'It [Milton's style] must expect to be measured against noble examples, and yet so lofty is the undertaking that any appearance of a direct contest will exhibit the personal and flirt with the ridiculous' (Stein, *Answerable Style*, p. 121).

[85] 'Dante walks with Virgil through the first two canticles as a disciple but also as a peer, until he passes beyond Virgil's purview and becomes the catechumen of Beatrice' (Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p. 29).

Aonian mount' (*PL* 1. 15). Newton claimed that Milton had achieved this goal through a choice epic subject 'more sublime than the loftiest flights of the Heathen poets'.[86]

Part 2. 'A divine poem': Paradise Lost as aetiological epic

> Poetry (...) is an imitation in verse. But imitation of what? Of human and divine actions, the Stoics said. It follows that those who do not sing human or divine actions are not poets. Thus Homer was not a poet when he described the war between the frogs and the mice, nor Virgil when he described the customs, laws, and wars of the bees. On the other hand, he who describes divine actions is a poet.[87]

Tasso's comment on the content of epic being 'divine and human actions' in Book 1 of his *Discourses on the heroic poem (Discorsi del poema eroico)* echoes Servius' claim in the preface to the *Aeneid.* There he defined heroic poetry as made up of divine and human characters ('ex diuinis humanisque personis')[88], reflecting the fusion of history (human actions) and myth (divine and aetiological accounts) that characterized the early conceptions of epic, and was reflected in Herodotus' claim that Homer and Hesiod, in defining the shapes of the gods, were both the historians and theologians of the Greeks (Herod. *Hist.* 2. 53-4).[89]

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[86] [The poet] had said in the beginning that he intended to *soar above th' Aonian mount*, so now he says very truly that he had effected what he intended, and *soars above th' Olympian hill, above the flight of a Pegasean wing*, that is his subject was more sublime than the loftiest flights of the Heathen poets' (T. Newton, *Paradise lost : A poem, in twelve books / John Milton ; with notes of various authors by Thomas Newton, in two volumes*, volume II, p. 5, note to line 1).

[87] T. Tasso, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, trans. M. Cavalchini, I. Samuel, Oxford, Clarendon, 1973, p. 7.

[88] Servius, p. 4, line 4. See Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, p. 270.

[89] See R. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, pp. 22ff, for a discussion of Herodotus' famous claim. Lamberton argues that Herodotus aims to liken his own undertaking in creating history to his account of Homer's transmission of knowledge about Greek religion (Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, p. 23). For modern views that the gods are peripheral to the action of the *Iliad*, see, among others, E. Kearns, 'The gods in the Homeric epics', in R. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 59-74, at p. 59. For an analysis of the hypothesis of the *Iliad* without the gods found in a papyrological fragment dating to the 2nd or 3rd century A.D., see J. J. O'Hara, 'Fragment

For the requirements of Christian epic, Tasso specifies the kind of history and religion that Christian epic must contain in order to be distinct from its pagan ancestor: 'The argument of the epic poem', Tasso argues, 'should be drawn...from true history and a religion that is not false'.[90] For the Italian poets, 'true history' ('vera istoria') consisted in a continuation of the history of Rome in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. Tasso demonstrates this continuity of events in his Christian epic, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, where he depicts the battle between the Catholics and Muslims before Jerusalem during the first Crusade.

Tasso's second requirement, however, that Christian epic contain 'a religion that is not false' ('non falsa religione') is more difficult to achieve while imitating ancient epic models. Unlike Sannazaro and Vida, who replace the Olympian machinery of ancient epic with a portrait of the Father and Son in their poems (with varying degrees of success), Tasso sees no possibility for rehabilitating the pagan machinery of Homer and Virgil, and advocates the omission of the divine sphere altogether from Christian epic: a proposition he had already demonstrated in the *Liberata*.

1.2.1. Lucan, Tasso, and the divine machinery in epic

Tasso's omission of the divine sphere in the *Liberata* does not preclude its importance. He advocates the need for combining the verisimilar with the 'marvellous' in epic, but without recourse to the 'false gods of Greece'.[91] Instead, Tasso suggests attributing divine actions to God, or his agents, while refraining from depicting the Christian God as a character in the poem. He is, rather, an unspoken force to which 'actions that far exceed human power' can

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of a Homer-Hypothesis with No Gods', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 1984, 1-9. See also Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, p. 262, note 49).

[90] 'Dee dunque l'argomento del poema epico esser derivato da vera istoria e da non falsa religione' (T. Tasso, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico*, a cura di Luigi Poma (Bari, G. Laterza & Figli, 1964), p. 98. Translation: M. Cavalchini and I. Samuel (see note above), p. 39.

[91] 'If we do not [have recourse to the gods worshipped by the pagans], we lose the marvellous; and if we do resort to the gods invoked by the ancients in that part we lose the verisimilar and credible...' (Tasso, *Discourses*, pp. 34-5).

be attributed. This focus on attribution, rather than depiction of the supernatural in epic creates a parallel with the way in which the supernatural is represented in Lucan in contrast to Virgil.[92]

The departure from the Virgilian model is a bold one for Tasso, and not only because of Virgil's status among the Italian humanists. Servius, in comparing Lucan to Virgil, stated that the former was not a poet, in that he composed history: 'Lucanus namque ideo in numero poetarum esse non meruit, quia videtur historiam componuisse, non poema.'[93] Servius' objection to Lucan is expressed through the same argument that Tasso uses in establishing the conditions of epic: that it contain both 'true history' and a true religion. Even as a model of history, the Republican themes in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (*The Civil War*) provide an uneasy model for the authoritarian Tasso, who, as Quint has shown, rereads the heroic action so as to make Caesar, whom he aligns with Goffredo in the *Liberata*, the hero of Lucan's poem.[94]

Why, then, in light of Lucan's reputation, both among the ancients and in the Renaissance, and the politics of the *Bellum Civile*, does Tasso insist on distancing himself from a Virgilian epic model, in view of ancient criticism of Lucan, and in light of Virgil's status as a poetic model for the Italian humanists? The reason lies in Virgil's depiction of the divine sphere. Tasso's objection to the Virgilian model is not directed specifically at Virgil, but against the general problems of poetic representations of the divine that Virgil, as any poet attempting the portrayal of a supernatural machinery, must grapple with. His objection expresses a concern with epic propriety: Tasso's claim that 'no divine action ...so far as it is divine...can be

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[92] Again, as with Tasso's arguments, the absence of the gods does not preclude their importance. Feeney claims that the gods in Lucan are notable for their absence, and that 'belief in the gods is something that much of the poem takes for granted, in the sense that the poet commonly addresses the gods, and affects to attribute to them motives and will" (Feeney, p. 274). On narrative echoes of the Lucan's *Bellum Civile* in the *Liberata*, see Quint, *Epic and Empire* p. 216-7.)

[93] Servius, comment on *Aeneid* 1. 382, lines 17-18, p. 129.

[94] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 216. In the *Discorsi,* Tasso aligns poetry with 'the best form of government', that is, with 'monarchy' (Tasso, *Discourses*, p. 37).

imitated by any of the means proper to poetry'[95], is an objection that emerges in ancient Homeric criticism. The Christian poet, in transforming the divine machinery of epic into the 'true' Christian model, faces these questions all over again. Imitating the divine action of traditional epic involves a continuation of the charges of impropriety in depicting an anthropomorphic and anthropopatheic godhead that is present in the earliest criticism of Homer. The concept of 'accommodation'[96], a concept in Miltonic criticism, is common to the ancient epic canon, as Feeney notes. It can be used to describe the same problem that pagan and Christian poets face in likening divine things to human, and is a conflict that Milton explores as poet of *Paradise Lost*.

1.2.2. The challenges of accommodation

> ἀλλ' οἱ βροτοὶ δοκέουσι γεννᾶσθαι θεούς,
> τὴν σφετέρην δ'ἐσθῆτα ἔχειν φωνήν τε δέμας τε. (Xenophanes, B. 14)
>
> [But mortal men imagine the gods to have been born, and to have their own [that is, mortal] dress, voice, and body].[97]

Xenophanes' objection to the gods in the Homeric poems is not based on their resemblance to humans: it is inevitable, he argued, that humans, in describing their gods, will give their own distinct voice and appearance [B. 14, 15, 16].[98] What was the source of Xenophanes'

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[95] Tasso, *Discourses*, p. 9.
[96] Feeney, *The Gods in Epic,* p. 47. See below.
[97] H. Diels, *Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker* (Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin, 1956), p. 132. Cf Kathleen Freedman's translation: K. Freedman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1948), p. 22.
[98] ἀλλ'εἰ χεῖρας ἔχον βόες < ἵπποι τ'> ἠὲ λέοντες / ἢ γράψαι χείρεσσι καὶ ἔργα τελεῖν ἅπερ ἄνδρες, / ἵπποι μὲν θ' ἵπποισι βόες δέ τε βουσὶν ὁμοίας / καί < κε > θεῶν ἰδέας ἔγραφον καὶ σώματ' ἐποίουν / τοιαῦθ' οἷόν περ καὐτοὶ δέμας εἶχον < ἕκαστοι >. 'But if oxen, horses, or lions had hands, or were able to draw with their hands and to make things which men can, horses would draw images of the gods like horses, and oxen of gods like oxen, and they would create their bodies in the same form as each of them

criticism were the human faults and foibles that these representations carry. Homer and Hesiod are condemned for making their gods resemble humans who behave badly, and for depicting 'all things that are shameful and a reproach among mankind, (ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν, B.11), that is the 'thefts, adulteries, and mutual deceptions' shown in the Homeric and Hesiodic epics (B.11).[99] It is not so much anthropomorphism, therefore, but anthropopathy that is the problem in epic representations of the gods.

In literary discussions of Homer, the concern with the propriety of poetic representations arose from the aesthetic criteria of the Alexandrian critics. Since their primary criterion was poetic decorum, the Alexandrian school was not chiefly concerned with theological categories. Tilmann Schmidt-Neuerburg, however, reminds us that the origin of Homeric criticism, as we see in Xenophanes' fragments, also lay in the critiques of the gods: critiques that are absorbed into Alexandrian decorum-based discussions.[100] The conflict between the verisimilar and the proper in depictions of the gods, for example, is played out in the later Alexandrian categories of criticism: the criterion that a poetic account be convincing (πιθανός), and that, consequently, the gods behave like humans, becomes, for the Alexandrian critics, the source of the violation of what is fitting (τὸ πρέπον).[101] The principle of ἀνθρωποπάθεια, which makes the image of the gods convincing, however, also makes it offensive, in that the gods represent the worst of human behaviour.

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themselves possess. (Xenophanes, B.15, in Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, pp. 132-3). See Kathleen Freedman's translation, p. 22.

[99] Diels, p. 132. Cf Kathleen Freedman's translation, p. 22. See also B.12.

[100] "[E]s bleibt allerdings daran zu errinnern, daß in der Kritik der Homerinterpreten wie auch in der Art, wie Vergil sie in seiner Götterdarstellung berücksichtigt, immer auch philosophisch-ethische und theologische Aspekte, von denen die Kritik einst ausgegangen war, im Hintergrund stehen" (T. Schmit-Neuerburg, *Vergils Aeneis und die Antike Homerexegese*, p. 244).

[101] Tilman Schmit-Neuerburg sums up the competing claims of the ancient poet: 'Der Dichter musste es nach Auffassung der Kritiker, wann immer möglich, „wirklichkeitsnah" (πιθανῶς, βιωτικῶς) darstellen und durfte, wenn er die Götter wie idealisierte Menschen empfinden und agieren ließ, nicht gegen das πρέπον verstoßen, das prinzipiell von den etischen Maßstäben der Alexandriner bestimmt wurde' (T. Schmit-Neuerburg, *Vergils Aeneis und die Antike Homerexegese*, pp. 242- 243).

In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton alludes to debates among the 'Grammatici', the ancient grammarians, who also argued against anthropopathy as a way of justifying the bad behaviour of the gods. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, he uses the same term, ἀνθρωποπάθεια, to refer to the foolish depictions of the gods by the ancient grammarians:

> Hic igitur Ἀνθρωποπαθείᾳ (quam figuram Grammatici ad excusandas poetarum de suo Jove nugas olim excogitarunt) Theologis, opinor, non est opus...
>
> [In this matter, therefore, I think that the Theologians do not need anthropopathy (a figure which the grammarians previously devised for excusing the absurdities of poets in their depiction of Jove)...] [102]

Yet this objection to anthropomorphic creations in epic does not stop Milton from depicting his God as a human-like character in *Paradise Lost*. To avoid association with the immoral pagan gods, Milton finds a precedent in Scripture, rather than the epic tradition, for a model for his anthropomorphic and anthropopatheic God.[103] Milton justifies the Scriptural model in his chapter 'De Deo' in *De Doctrina*, where he describes Scripture as the 'safest way to look for a representation of the Christian God':

> Nobis tutissimum est, talem nostro animo comprehendere Deum, qualem in sacris literis ipse se exhibet, seque describit.
>
> The safest thing for us to do is to perceive God in our minds in such a way as he

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[102] J. Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Liber I, Caput II, "De Deo", Columbia Milton, Vol.14, p. 32.
[103] See B. K. Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1985.

presents and delineates himself in the sacred writings.[104]

Like Xenophanes commenting on the depictions of the gods by human authors, Milton as theologian acknowledges that any conception of the Christian God is subject to the 'imperfect understanding of humans':

> De cognoscendo Deo quod loquimur, id de imperfecto hominum captu intelligi debet; nam Deus, prout in se est humanam cogitationem, nedum sensus longe superat (...) What we say about understanding God, this has to be understood about the imperfect grasp of human beings: for God, as He exists in Himself, surpasses human thought, to say nothing of the fact that he by far surpasses all perception.[105]

As poet of *Paradise Lost*, Milton tests the limits of accommodation that he had expressed in *De Doctrina* by giving the narrative of the War in Heaven to the angel Raphael in Book 5 of *Paradise Lost*. The link between the two narrators is signalled in Raphael's preface, and the angel expresses a sense of grief in retelling the war in which he lost many of his fellow angels. The 'sad task', shared by Raphael and Milton (*PL* 5. 564 = *PL* 9. 13), likens Raphael to a martial hero saddened by the recollection of his struggles to an insistent audience (Adam and Eve); and signalls Aeneas' preface about the 'unspeakable pain' ('infandus dolor', *Aen.* 2.3) that he is asked to recall in narrating the fall of Troy to queen Dido.[106]

Raphael's status as divine narrator makes him privy to the secret counsels of the Father: he is a figure who understands the divine sphere better than anyone. Unlike the narrator of *Paradise Lost,* Raphael need not invoke the Holy Spirit to 'raise and support him' in his physical and moral human frailty. But Raphael's divine status does not preclude the need for

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[104] *De Doctrina Christiana, Columbia Milton*, vol. 14, p. 30.
[105] Ibid.
[106] See Fowler, p. 316, note to ll. 563-4.

accommodation in his narrative to Adam and Eve, the first human audience. Like the Miltonic narrator, Raphael too faces the dilemmas of 'likening divine things to humans':

> Thus *Adam* made request; and *Raphael*
> After short pause assenting, thus began.
> High matter thou injoinst me, O prime of men,
> Sad task and hard, for how shall I relate
> To human sense th' invisible exploits
> Of warring Spirits; how without remorse,
> The ruin of so many glorious once
> And perfet while they stood; how last unfould
> The secrets of another world, perhaps
> Not lawful to reveal? yet for thy good
> This is dispenc't, and what surmounts the reach
> Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
> By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,
> As may express them best, though what if Earth
> Be but a shaddow of Heav'n, and things therein
> Each to other like, more then on earth is thought? (*PL.* 5. 561-76)

Raphael must not only depict his God in human form to his listeners: he must also grapple with the moral dimension of this accommodation. Raphael's tale is an aetiological one, in that it narrates the causes of the war in heaven. But Adam and Eve have not yet sinned; his account, nevertheless, serves as a cautionary tale, and he ends in warning Adam and Eve to 'remember' the fate of Satan and his crew, 'and fear to transgress' (*PL.* 6. 912).

Raphael's exordium could be viewed in the light of Milton's own poetic undertaking. Even in these idealized circumstances, where a story is told to an innocent, prelapsarian audience, the divine narrator still faces the problems and challenges of explaining divine matters to humans.[107] In each exordium Milton probes more deeply into the idea of what he wants to achieve in his poem. The prayer for an 'answerable style' in Book 9 not only establishes a poetics of imitation for Milton's treatment of his classical material. It is also a prayer for a language that will accommodate a divine subject to human understanding, a challenge that crosses the boundaries between pagan and Christian poetry.

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In commenting on the theory of accommodation in *Paradise Lost*, Denis Feeney argues that a disparity arises between Milton's choice of the epic genre and his Christian theology in *Paradise Lost*. Feeney states that the epic genre 'has its own determining power', and that Milton's choice to portray the Christian God as a person within the poem creates a tension between Milton the theologian and Milton the poet:

> ....once Milton starts to portray God within the conventions of epic, the very nature of that narrative mode has its own determining power, which may be a disruptive one: Milton's theological discourse is not straightforwardly commensurate with his epic tale.[108]

Feeney's observation about Milton's specific challenge in composing *Paradise Lost* as a divine poem reflects a general conflict for Renaissance readers of epic between *theologia*

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[107] See Mindele Anne Treip's analysis of Raphael's statement in light of Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana*, 2.2: '"Accommodation": Raphael's Theory of Discourse', in M. A. Treip, *Allegorical Poetics and The Epic: The Renaissance Tradition to Paradise Lost* (University Press of Kentucky, 1994), pp. 192 ff. See also Martindale, p. 63.

[108] Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, p. 47.

prisca and *theologia nostra*, and the attempt to reconcile the two in the practice of Christian epic poetry. We have seen how, in the proems to Books 1, 3, 7 and 9 of *Paradise Lost*, Milton negotiates the pagan associations of the ancient epic genre in light of his Christian poetics, illustrated in his invocation to the Holy Spirit and the muse of Christian epic, Urania. Further, we saw the manner in which Milton handles the twofold canon of epic and Scripture in what was a central question of Christian epic – that is, the depiction of the divine – and seeks to circumvent the problem of anthropomorphism by presenting it as a challenge voiced even by a divine narrator, Raphael. Attempting to reconcile this tension between biblical and epic precedents means that theological and decorum-based concerns merge within Milton's epic venture.

According to Tasso's criteria for epic poetry, Milton's story is a 'true history' of the Fall. It narrates an event that was considered historical for Christians. At the same time, the story of the Fall, its causes and its aftermath, occupies the space of myth in the Judaeo-Christan canon, and Milton narrates apocryphal events that predate the Fall: the War in Heaven and the dialogue between Father and Son that precipitates the Son's offer to atone for the sin of Adam and Eve. Milton's own shift from a historical epic (there was a draft for a story of the 'British Troy' in the Trinity manuscript)[109] to events pertaining to Christian aetiology could be seen to symbolize the progression that the ancients saw in the transformative power of myth in creating poetry as opposed to history. In order to compose a heroic poem, Milton recreates a fully articulated divine sphere, while establishing his poem as a Christian theodicy. Judgment of Milton's success as poet, therefore, cannot be separated from his success as the theologian in *Paradise Lost* (a distinction that Empson attempted, unsuccessfully, to make). Unlike Tasso, who eschews a Virgilian model of recreating the divine sphere in epic in

[109] "A Heroicall Poem may be founded / somewhere in Alfred's reigne. [E]specially at his issuing out of Edelingsey on / the Danes / whose actions are / well like those of / Ulysses" (From section '24' of the Trinity manuscript).

favour of a Lucanian one, Milton undertakes the challenges that arise from placing the divine at the forefront of his story by framing his theodicy in the language of Virgil's exordium to Book 1 of the *Aeneid*. Virgil's tracing of an Augustan genealogy back to a heroic past may not have suited Milton's Republicanism,[110] but Virgil's concern for aetiology provides a fitting model for Milton's retelling the full history of the Fall, including its causes in the divine sphere, as well as its consequences in the human one.

1.2.3. Subjects and causes: the epic opening of *Paradise Lost*

Act 3 of Milton's unfinished drama of *Paradise Lost* in the Trinity manuscript foresees Lucifer 'contriving Adams ruine', and a speech by the Chorus 'feares for Adam and 'relates Lucifers rebellion and fall'. In Milton's epic, by contrast, the speech of the Chorus, a dramatic aside in the projected drama, is replaced by Raphael's cautionary tale to Adam and Eve about the causes and effects of Satan's rebellion. The same aetiological concerns that we see demonstrated in the draft of Milton's drama are preserved in his epic. In *Paradise Lost*, the aetiology of the Fall is placed at the forefront of the narrative, and the story of Adam and Eve's temptation and Fall is postponed until Book 9. This shifting between the divine and human plane is part of the back-story of the Fall: the fate of Adam is linked to that of Satan. I propose that Milton's arrangement of the action of *Paradise Lost* is more than just a remnant of tragic time frames, where the negative turn of events is postponed until the end; but an overriding concern with the aetiology of the Fall, an aetiology that necessitates the appearance of the divine sphere in Milton's epic. This shifting of cause and effect in the divine sphere is contained in the opening of Book 1, where the poet of *Paradise Lost* announces his epic subject by recalling the opening lines of both the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*.[111]

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[110] See Chapter 3.2.4: 'Milton's Virgilian *prolepsis*'.

[111] Milton 'is serving advance notice (...) of the particular tradition in which he will be writing his poem and, by implication, inviting the sort of comparison which will lead to a clearer realization of what he

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It is the opening lines of an epic poem that traditionally signalled the subject of the whole poem.[112] At times, this subject evokes a previous tradition. Just as in the *Aeneid*, where Virgil's claim to sing "of arms and the man" ('arma virumque cano', *Aeneid* 1.1) has been regarded as signalling his attempt to take on the subject matter of both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the many stories of *Paradise Lost* reflect the varied subjects of preceding epics, subjects that literally spill over into the following lines. The postponed imperative to the epic muse is itself a reflection of the weight of Milton's epic inheritance. Whereas Virgil compresses his subject into one neat verse, and omits the invocation to the muse, Milton's intricate subject matter, its causes and effects, spans six lines:

> Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> 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 heavenly Muse... (*PL*.1.1-6)

For Martindale, the invocation is more indebted to Homer than to Virgil, in that Milton's enjambments imitate the Homeric style of the invocation,[113] where the consequences of the wrath of Achilleus spill over into further lines of the poem. The list of consequences

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himself is contributing to that tradition' (Harding, *The Club of Hercules*, p. 34). See also Martindale: '[Milton's] exordium is a conflation of the openings of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*' (Martindale, p. 71). Later Martindale argues for the more Homeric nature of the invocation. See discussion below.

[112] On the debate about whether there was an alternative opening to the *Aeneid*, see Austin, p. 25; L. Gamberale, 'Il cosidetto preproemio dell'Eneide', in A. Butteto and M. von Albrecht (ed.) *Studi di filologia classica in onore di Giusto Monaco* (Palermo, 1991), pp. 963-80.

[113] See Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic*, p. 71. Fowler also refers to enjambment as one of the features of Milton's style in *Paradise Lost*. (Fowler, *John Milton's Paradise Lost*, 2nd edition, p. 13).

precipitates questions about causality, as the subject moves closer and closer to the role of the gods in the poem:

> μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
> οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε,
> πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν
> ἡρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν
> οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι, Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή,
> ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε
> Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.
>
> [Sing, goddess, the wrath, the destructive wrath of Achilleus son of Peleus, the wrath that put numberless sufferings upon the Achaians, and cast to Hades many strong souls of heroes, and turned their bodies into spoils for all manner of dogs and birds, and the plan of Zeus was fulfilled, from that time when first they stood apart in strife, the son of Atreus, lord of men, and godlike Achilleus.] (*Il.* 1. 1-7)

The long enjambed line is contrasted with the choppy end stopped line – and its question: Which one of the gods was it who brought them together in strife? (τίς τ' ἄρ σφωε θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι; *Il.*1.8). Homer's link to Apollo, who was instrumental in raising the conflict between Achilleus and Agamemnon, suggests the limited action of the poem as it pertains to the development of the μῆνις plot.

Milton's passage ends with a one line question, echoing the combination of enjambment and end-stopping that characterizes *Il.*1.8:

... say first what cause

Mov'd our Grand Parents in that happy State,

Favour'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off

From thir Creator, and transgress his Will

For one restraint, Lords of the World besides?

Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt? (*PL*.1.27-33)

For Martindale, Milton's exordium privileges Homeric elements over Virgilian ones. He combines the *propositio* (the statement of theme) with the invocation to the epic muse, a fusion that Servius had praised in poets (obviously other than Virgil) and considered a Homeric feature.[114] Milton, unlike Tasso, who begins his poem with the verb 'canto', 'I sing' (an imitation of the Virgilian or perhaps the Lucanian 'cano/canimus, cf *Aen.*1.1, *BC.* 1.2), adopts the Homeric imperative to the epic muse. Martindale also notes the distinctly Homeric quality of calling upon the muse first and foremost: 'without such inspiration from outside, without such inbreathing of the divine, the poet cannot even begin to sing'.[115] Moreover, there is a distinctly Homeric element in Milton's introduction of the divine sphere. In recalling the end stopped Homeric question about the role of the divine sphere in human suffering, Milton creates an oblique recollection of the semantic origins of the Greek term aetiology, signaling a

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[114] '8. MVSA MIHI CAVSAS MEMORA (...) in tres partes dividunt poetae Carmen suum: proponunt invocant narrant. Plerumque tamen duas res faciunt et ipsam propositionem miscent invocationi, quod in utroque opere Homerus fecit; namque hoc melius est (...)'
[Poets divide their songs into three parts: they give a preface, invocation, and a narration. For the most part then they do two things and mingle the preface with the invocation, which Homer did in both of his works. For this is better] (Servius, vol. 1, p. 14).

[115] Martindale, p. 71.

history of causes, but also of blame[116] (a dichotomy that is more clearly played out in the Virgilian exordium, see below).[117] Milton dramatizes this aetiology by dichotomizing the heavenly and Satanic realms: Satan is the cause of 'all our woe', and it is the Satanic realm that will occupy the first two books of *Paradise Lost*.

In the Homeric invocation, questions about the role of the divine sphere in the immediate action of the poem – the intervention of Apollo in the wrath of Achilleus – are coupled with a wider allusion to Διὸς βουλή, the plan of Zeus (*Il.*1.5). The allusion to Zeus' plan in line 5 raises questions that are both theodical as well as theological. The nature of Διὸς βουλή remains a mystery: does it pertain to the action of the poem, the μῆνις plot, or does it allude further to the Homeric cycle? In his comment on this line, the French Renaissance scholar and commentator Spondanus suggests that its meaning was determined from a collection of ideas in the later tradition ('Quae sit haec Διὸς βουλή, variis opinionibus determinatum est…' note 1.5c), an idea that is echoed in Kirk's modern commentary.[118] Both comments, though divided by several centuries, show that it is the critical tradition that can be used by Homer's readers to discuss and illuminate this idea. Both the critical and the epic tradition can be considered a commentary on these lines.

Towards theodicy

In Milton's prayer for an 'answerable style' in Book 9, the poet of *Paradise Lost* sets out to tell the story of the Fall, and reflects, like Raphael, on the '[s]ad task' before him:

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[116] "αἰτία, ἡ responsibility, mostly in bad sense, guilt, blame, or the imputation thereof" (H.G.Liddell, R.Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, With supplement, Oxford, Clarendon, 1968).

[117] See below.

[118] See G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol.1 (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 53, note to line 5. The similarities between Kirk's note and Spondanus' comment on *Iliad* 1.5 are striking: both acknowledge the long history of debate (Spondanus, notes: "Que sit haec Διὸς βουλή, variis opinionibus determinatum est…"), and both refer to scholiast Aristarchus and parallels with the post-Homeric *Cypria*.

...Sad task, yet argument

Not less but more Heroic then the wrauth

Of stern Achilles on his Foe pursu'd

Thrice Fugitive about Troy Wall; or rage

Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd,

Or Neptun's ire or Juno's, that so long

Perplex'd the Greek and Cytherea's Son;

If answerable style I can obtaine

Of my Celestial Patroness (...) (*PL.* 9. 13-21)

Milton situates his poem in the existing classical canon. As he prepares to narrate the first sin of man, Milton recalls the history of ancient epic as a history of infamy. He does not recall heroic actions, but the infamous episodes of epic: the flight of Hektor from Achilleus (instead of his brave actions before and after, when he faces Achilleus and dies heroically[119]), and the jealous rage of Turnus against Aeneas. Milton's narration quickly moves from human to divine actions: the narrator considers the 'ire' of Neptune (the Greek Poseidon) and Juno, and its consequences on the human plane. Thus he recalls the openings of the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, in which the fates of the heroes Odysseus ('the Greek') and Aeneas ('Cytherea's son') are dictated by the revenges of the gods, who feel they have been offended. For Odysseus, it is the wrath of Poseidon: as the Homeric narrator states, 'all the gods pitied him, except for Poseidon':

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[119] Milton's account, in *Paradise Lost*, of the flight of Hektor stands in contrast to Hektor's αἰδώς, recalled in Milton's 'Reason for Church Government' as an ancient model of 'generous and Christianly reverence one of another', to be imitated in Christian communities. J. Milton, 'The Reason of Church-government urg'd against Prelaty', *Columbia Milton*, vol. 3.1, p. 259. Hektor's αἰδώς, a sense of reverence towards his family and his community, results in his expression of the shame he would feel if he were to fail to fulfill his patriotic obligations, a sense which he expresses to Andromache in Book 6 (*Il.*6.441-3) and again to his parents, Priam and Hekabe, in Book 22 (*Il.* 22.104-10).

θεοὶ δ' ἐλέαιρον ἅπαντες

νόσφι Ποσειδάωνος· ὁ δ'ασπερχὲς μενέαινεν

ἀντιθέῳ Ὀδυσῆι πάρος ἣν γαῖαν ἱκέσθαι.

[All the gods felt pity for him, apart from Poseidon, who raged without ceasing against godlike Odysseus up until that time when he reached his country] (*Od.* 1.19-21)

Milton moves from Homer's Odysseus to Virgil's Aeneas in one line. Aeneas, like Odysseus, is a wandering hero; but any allusion to the role of Poseidon in the sufferings of Odysseus is deferred.[120] Virgil, however, alludes to the role of the gods at the same time as he relates the sufferings of his hero in the opening lines of the *Aeneid.* Aeneas is introduced as 'exiled by fate' (fato profugus) and 'flung about both on land and sea by force from above, because of the unforgiving wrath of harsh Juno' ('et terris iactatus et alto / vi superum, saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram', *Aen.*1.2-4). In alluding to Juno's wrath early in the exordium, Virgil is revising the openings of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in light of the questions they prompted for Homer's critics about the behaviour of the gods. As he invokes the muse to aid his memory, the poet of the *Aeneid* also asks for help with his theodicy in attempting to fathom the nature and extent of Juno's wrath:[121]

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso

quidve dolens regina deum tot volvere casus

insignem pietate virum, tot adire labores

impulerit. tantaene animis caelestibus irae?

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[120] The role of Poseidon is deferred until *Od.*1.19.

[121] Servius commented that the narrator's question at line 11 pertains to the quantity and not the quality of Juno's wrath. See Servius, vol. 1, p. 15, note to line 11.

> [Muse, tell me the causes: with what divine authority having been offended or suffering what pain did the queen of the gods drive on a man of outstanding duty to fall into so many misfortunes, to approach so many hardships? Can there be so much anger in celestial spirits?] (*Aeneid*, 1.8-11)

Juno in the *Aeneid* represents the divine figures who are antagonistic to the founding of Rome, and therefore to hero's mission in the poem. Williams compares *Aeneid* 1.11 to the exclamation by Milton's Raphael on the nature of the fallen angels in Book 6 of *Paradise Lost*:

> '[C]an there be such anger in the hearts of gods?' in Milton's words (*PL*. 6. 788) 'In heav'nly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?'[122]

Milton echoes 'animae caelestes' in 'heav'nly Spirits', as well as in the allusion to the extent of the anger: compare Virgil's 'tantae irae' with Milton's 'such perverseness'.

Austin argues that Virgil's question at *Aen* 1.11 signals a wider theodical concern in the *Aeneid*:

> Virgil has put in the forefront of the *Aeneid* the problems that constantly exercized him: [to explain] the ways of gods to man.'[123]

It is no accident that Austin finds in a paraphrase of Milton's exordium to *Paradise Lost* a way of articulating Virgil's aim in setting up the divine sphere of the *Aeneid*. This comparison works in the opposite direction too, in that Virgil becomes a model for the way in which Milton

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[122] Williams, p. 159, note to line 11. Cf Fowler, p. 380, note to line 788.
[123] Austin, p. 34, note to line 11.

addresses the theodical charges arising from the Olympian dialogues, by recalling the language of Virgil's Jupiter in his 'Olympian' scene in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*.

The Virgilian narrator, in his exordium to Book 1, is the first to express a reproach against the perceived injustice of the gods that will later be voiced by the Olympian goddesses, Venus and Juno, in their scenes of intercession with the father of the gods, Jupiter. The structure of the dialogues, I will argue, creates a pattern of reproach that results in a reassurance on the part of Jupiter and a reassertion of his justice in light of the goddesses' complaints. In Chapter 3, 'Milton and the language of epic prophecy', I will examine that language of Virgil's Jupiter as a revision of the charges against Zeus' relative weakness in the Homeric *concilia deorum*. In the *Odyssey*, Athena's reproach that Zeus is not concerned with the fate of the pious Odysseus results in Zeus' claim that he is helpless in light of Poseidon's anger (*Od.* 1.64-71). In the *Aeneid*, however, the reproaches of Venus and Juno result in prophecies where Jupiter asserts his authority over the arguments of the interceding goddesses, and over fate. In revising the language of the Homeric dialogues on Olympos, and the theological challenges they activate, Virgil creates an overall portrait of the father of the gods whose speeches become a fitting model for the Christian Father, as we will see, in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*.

Conclusion

In the first lines of *Paradise Lost*, Milton signals that he by no means will be following Tasso's advice in the *Discorsi*, but the example of Scripture. He will depict a God with human feelings in his epic, and place the divine at the forefront of his theodical undertaking. Milton is aware of the charges that this recreation of the epic divine sphere will produce. In *De Doctrina*, he asserts the dangers of anthropomorphism and anthropopathy in epic, and condemns the depictions of the gods and the discussion of their bad behaviour by the ancient critics. But the

Father and Son are not the only aspect of Milton's divine machinery in *Paradise Lost*. As part of an aetiological history of 'Man's first Disobedience', Milton narrates the story of Satan's fall and his role in the Fall of Adam and Eve. The story of 'the fall before the Fall' is signalled in the exordium to Book 1, where Satan is introduced as the cause and origin of evil for mankind, and the instigator of actions leading to tragedy on the human plane. Milton's exordium to Book 1 dispenses with the uncertainty pertaining to the Homeric divine sphere, but instead recalls a Virgilian model of divine aetiology, where the muse is called upon to recall a history of causes and of blame against the gods. For his narration of the aftermath of Satan's fall, Milton proceeds, after his invocation, to the depiction of the fallen angels in Chaos. He invokes the aetiological myths of Hesiod, myths that predate Zeus' rule of Olympos, to reflect the polarization of the divine sphere in the opening books of *Paradise Lost* as a battle between the Satanic and celestial spheres for the soul of man.

Chapter 2. From the parliament in hell to the dialogue in heaven: models of the epic *concilium* in *Paradise Lost*

Introduction

In Andrew Marvell's poem 'On Paradise Lost', added to the 1674 edition of Milton's epic, Marvell summarizes the essence, as he saw it, of Milton's epic undertaking. There is a divine quality present in Marvell's figure of the unnamed 'Poet' unfolding his 'vast Design', an idea that Tasso had expressed in the *Discorsi*, when he likens the poetic act to that of the creation by the Christian godhead, the 'Great Artificer':[124]

> When I beheld the Poet blind, yet bold,
> In slender Book his vast Design unfold
> *Messiah* Crown'd, Gods Reconcil'd Decree,
> Rebelling Angels, the Forbidden Tree,
> Heav'n, Hell, Earth, Chaos, All.... (A. Marvell, 'On Paradise Lost', 1-5)[125]

Marvell's lines trace the order in which events take place in Milton's epic: 'Messiah crowned', the elevation of the Son, is the event that precipitates Satan's rebellion. 'God's reconciled decree' refers to the divine council scene recreated in Book 3, where the Father foretells the fate of mankind, and the Son offers his own life in ransom, securing the eventual redemption of the human race. The 'Rebelling angels' alludes to the war in heaven, an event that is recalled in Raphael's account in Books 6 and 7. It is not until Book 9 that the events around

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[124] '...[T]he great poet (...) is called divine for no other reason than that as he resembles the supreme Artificer in his workings he comes to participate in his divinity' (Tasso, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, p. 78).

[125] *Columbia Milton*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 3.

the 'forbidden tree' – the temptation of Eve and Adam and the ostensible subject of the poem – take place.

In the exordium to Book 1 of *Paradise Lost*, as we observed in Chapter 1, Milton signals his aetiological concern in narrating the story of the Fall: the focus of the first books is not on the Fall of man, but of Satan, the cause and the culprit of 'Mans First Disobedience' (*PL*.1.1). The time frames of Milton's narration are fluid. As in the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, the temporal order of events is not presented in a linear fashion. The events leading up to the fall of Satan, and the ensuing war in heaven, are narrated by Raphael in Books 5 and 6, as the action moves between the spheres of heaven, hell, and Chaos, and finally Eden, where the drama of the Fall is played out.

Until now, Milton's description of the aftermath of Satan's fall and the ensuing council of the fallen angels has been chiefly considered in light of heroic models in ancient epic: Blessington argues that Milton's depiction of the Satanic sphere in Books 1 and 2 exhibits three features that situate the council in hell in Book 1 of *Paradise Lost* within the heroic world, that is 'the descent into the underworld, the catalogue of heroes, and the epic journey'.[126] In this chapter, I will reconsider all three features as aspects of Milton's portrayal of the divine sphere in his epic. I will argue that these motifs pertain chiefly to the poet's experience of narrating the fall of Satan and of finding a language to portray apocryphal events by calling upon the epic tradition. In the 'Catalogue of Devils' (*PL.* 1.376ff), the narrator creates a 'catalogue of

[126] Blessington, p. 75. This is also the assumption behind DuRocher's chapter, 'Satan's Metamorphosis and Ovidian Counterheroism', in R. DuRocher, *Milton and Ovid* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 114ff. DuRocher argues that 'Satan's heroic self-assertion is contained and qualified by (...) the Miltonic narrator', in scenes such as 'his opening dialogue with Beelzebub; the devil's first entry into Pandaemonium; the Council in Hell; Satan's journey through Chaos; the temptation of Eve' (DuRocher, *Milton and Ovid*, p. 114).

infamy'[127] as he anticipates the future names of the fallen angels. He therefore transforms the traditional epic catalogue of heroes into an exercise in foreshadowing instead of memory. Further, the motif of the heroic journey that Satan undertakes at the end of Book 2 is also shared by the poet of *Paradise Lost*, as he relates the experience of navigating through the supernatural geography of the poem. The heroic *katabasis*, the descent of the epic hero into the underworld, is evoked in the poet's account of his own experience of leading the reader through the depths of hell in Books 1 and 2. In Book 3, the perspective of the poem shifts from the limited knowledge of the Satanic council to the enlightened vision of the heavenly sphere, as the poet attempts a portrait of the Christian God. In reascending from the Chaos, the poet of *Paradise Lost* performs the ultimate *anabasis*, a heroic journey from the depths of hell to the heights of the Christian heaven, which he introduces by imitating the introduction of the Olympian scenes in Homer and Virgil's epics.

Part 1. The fall before the Fall: Milton's Satan and the epic tradition of divine rebellion

The story of Satan's fall is an apocryphal tradition in Scripture. Fowler argues that in order to narrate these events, Milton looks to earlier models for depictions of divine beings falling from grace and power, such as Hesiod's theomachic myths.[128] At several points in *Paradise Lost*,

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[127] The 'catalogue of infamy' is term used by Philip Hardie to refer to Milton's exercise at *PL* 1.376ff: 'When Milton begins his epic catalogue of the fallen angels by stating that he will use the names by which they will be known in the future, he transforms a traditional epic vehicle for the preservation of famous names into a catalogue of infamy, a polytheistic babble…' (P. Hardie, *Rumour and Renown*, p. 546). I argue that Milton furthermore transforms the role of the catalogue in recalling the names of epic heroes, into a catalogue of names that do not yet exist, foreshadowing the future fame (or rather, infamy) of the fallen angels. See discussion below.

[128] 'Milton often reverts to Hesiod's mythological supplement (and distortion) of the war in heaven, for which there was scant biblical authority' (Fowler, *Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed., p. 62, note to lines 50-83). See also P. Gallagher, '*Paradise Lost* and the Greek *Theogony*', *English Literary Renaissance,* vol. 9, 1979, 121-48).

Milton imagines the fall of Satan and the contest between the divine spheres of heaven and hell through the Gigantomachic, Titanomachic, and Typhonomachic myths contained in Hesiod's *Theogony*. George Butler argues that Milton had found precedents in Dante for his bringing the divine conflict in Hesiod into Christian subject matter; and that Milton's Hesiodic allusions, moreover, are mediated through Dante.[129] There is ample evidence, however, that Milton would have been aware of many retellings of the Hesiodic myths, and would by no means have encountered Hesiod's *Theogony* through Dante's *Commedia* alone.[130] By examining Milton's treatment of the Hesiodic theomachic myths in two of his earlier poems, '(*De*) *Natura(m) non pati senium*' and the *First Prolusion*, I will argue that Milton demonstrates a complex engagement with aetiological myths and their role in the epic tradition, in Homer, Virgil, and, finally, in Ovid.

2.1.1. Narrating the fall: Milton's epic languages

By relating the nine-day-long fall of the angels, Milton recalls Hesiod's account of the expulsion of the Titans from Olympos (*Theogony*, 664-73) as well as Hephaistos' account of his own fall, narrated in the first divine council scene in the *Iliad* (*Il.*1.590-3):

> Nine times the space that measures day and night
> To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
> Lay vanquished (*PL.*1.50-2).[131]

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[129] Butler argues that the image of Satan 'Chain'd on the burning Lake', for example, 'recalls Dante's Briareos: 'grave a la terra per lo mortal gero' [lying heavy on the ground in mortal chill] (*Purgatorio* 12.30) (G. F. Butler, 'Giants and Fallen Angels in Dante and Milton: The *Commedia* and the Gigantomachy in *Paradise Lost*', *Modern Philology*, 95, 3, 1998, 352-63, 359).

[130] See J. C. Boswell, *Milton's Library* (New York and London, Garland, 1975), p. 129.

[131] Blessington further suggests a parallel with the nine days of the plague at the opening of the *Iliad*, as well as *Odysseus'* nine days drifting at sea at *Od.* IX, 82; XII, 447)' (Blessington, p. 2), nine days being a traditional epic span of time.

Hephaistos' Roman equivalent, Mulciber (or Vulcan), appears in Milton's catalogue, among the apocryphal biblical villains, Satan and Beelzebub, as one of the high-ranking angels cast down from heaven:

> Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
> From Heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
> Sheer over the crystal battlements: from morn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day; and with the setting sun
> Dropt from the zenith like a falling star,
> On Lemnos the Aegean isle...

Martindale sees this passage as a 'close imitation of *Iliad* 1.589-94, where Hephaistos narrates his fall to the assembled gods on Olympos.[132] Behind it is Milton's fascination with the 'cosmic grandeur of the idea of a divine being thrown out of heaven'[133], a narrative that spans the Greek aetiological myths that he adapts in the story of Satan's fall.

The Catalogue of Devils

'Then were they known to men by various names, / and various idols through the heathen world' (PL.1.374-5)

[132] For Geoffrey Kirk, Milton's description of the fall of Mulciber not only recalls, but improves upon the Homeric description: 'The description is full of charm and subtle meaning, and it is a sign of Milton's genius that he could even improve on it' (Kirk, vol. 1, p. 113, note to ll. 592-4).
[133] Martindale, p. 73.

At *PL* 1. 376ff, the poet summons the help of the Muse to recall the names of the fallen angels, lines that echo the invocation to the Homeric catalogue of ships in Book 2 of the *Iliad* (*Il.* 2.484ff)[134]:

> Say, Muse, thir Names then known, who first, who last,
> Rous'd from the slumber, on that fiery Couch,
> At thir great Emperors call, as next in worth
> Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
> While the promiscuous croud stood yet aloof? (*PL*.1.376-80)

Whereas the Homeric catalogue conveys *kléos* on the heroes who took part in the war on Troy, the poet of *Paradise Lost* struggles with naming the angels, for whom names do not yet exist. Beelzebub is 'Long after known in *Palestine*, and nam'd *Beelzebub*' (*PL*.1.80-81), and Satan, until now referred to as 'th' Arch-Enemy', or 'the foe', is 'thence in Heav'n call'd Satan' (*PL*.1.82). In its proleptic nature, Milton's catalogue is an exercise not in memory, but in foreshadowing. Rather than preserving the fame of heroes as the singer does in Homer's poem,[135] the Miltonic narrator anticipates a history of infamy in the human world, a history that extends beyond the Judaeo-Christian tradition of Satan and his legions to include the Ionian gods (*PL*.1.508-9), Hesiod's Titans (*PL*.1.510-17), the local Greek cults at Delphi and Dodona (*PL*.1.517-8), and, finally, the false idols of the Old Testament (such as the Egyptian 'bestial gods' worshipped by the Israelites, *PL*.1.435). Milton's other devils, the ones who will remain unnamed, are a 'promiscuous crowd' (*PL*.1.380), a phrase that not only signals the moral degeneracy of the fallen legions (who are not distinguished in Milton's catalogue), but also

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[134] See Blessington, p. 75.

[135] Note the deliberate omission of an equivalent 'catalogue of angels' in *Paradise Lost*. The narrator states that the unfallen angels require no fame bestowed by the poet: 'I might relate of thousands, and thir names / Eternize here on Earth; but those elect / Angels contented with thir fame in Heav'n / Seek not the praise of men' (*PL*. 6.373-6).

reflects the poetic act of summoning figures 'promiscuously' from various canons. By tracing a history of infamy through a variety of canons, Milton recalls the Latin etymology of 'promiscuous' ('promiscuus'), meaning 'mixed' or 'in common'.[136]

Chaos

A further challenge in finding a language to depict the fall of Satan emerges in Milton's account of Chaos in *Paradise Lost*, a place that combines epic and Judaeo-Christian accounts of the underworld. Chaos had previously been referred to by the poet of *Paradise Lost* in the 'Hesiodic' invocation to Book 1, where the poet sings of the shepherd (who has been associated with Hesiod) whom the 'heav'nly muse' inspires to sing "In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth / Rose out of *Chaos*" (*PL.* 1. 9-10). For Porter, the allusion to Hesiod is 'embedded' in these last two lines, in the aetiological sense it creates of narrating things 'from the beginning'. The term chaos (χάος), moreover, is used for the first time in the Greek canon at *Theogony* 116.[137]

In *Paradise Lost*, Chaos is the place to where the angels fall, 'from the verge of heav'n' (*PL.*6.862) after the Son routs them in the final stages of his epic *aristeia* in Raphael's narration of the war in heaven (*PL.* 6. 864-77).[138]

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[136] The term 'promiscuous' is used in this way by Hume in commenting on Milton and other Christian epic poets' use of the Latin term *vates*, which, Hume states 'is promiscuously used for both Poets and Prophets of the noblest Strain and Endowments' (see P. Hume, *Annotations of Milton's Paradise Lost*, p. 99, note 36).

[137] 'The Muses tell Hesiod "from the beginning" (ἐξ ἀρχῆς, *Theogony* 115) "how the heaven and the earth and all things else rose out of chaos." "Chaos" (χάος) is Hesiod's own word, first attested in Greek here in the *Theogony* [see note above].' Porter argues that Milton's concern with theodicy in *Paradise Lost* can be traced to the theme of δίκη, in both the human and divine spheres, in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (Porter, *Reading the Classics and Paradise Lost*, p. 47).

[138] The Son's intervention in the war in heaven begins at *PL.*6.749, while his *aristeia*, resulting in the expulsion of Satan's legions from heaven, is signaled at *PL.*6.826, where the Son is 'full of wrauth bent on his Enemies' (*PL.*6.826). For the *aristeiai* of Abdiel, Gabriel and Michael, see Blessington, p. 35.

In the *Theogony*, Chaos is what was there in the beginning; it is the the origin and 'first state' of the universe.[139] Milton recreates the Hesiodic link by making his Chaos, the final destination of the fallen angels, predate and contain the Christian Hell[140]: in the 'Argument' to Book 1, Milton describes Hell '*not in the Center* (for Heaven and Earth may be suppos'd as yet not made, certainly not yet accurst), *but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest call'd* Chaos' ('The Argument').[141]

Although it is the place to which the fallen angels are expelled, Milton's Chaos is not the domain of Satan alone. Norbrook refers to Chaos as 'the cosmos' default mode',[142] the place of Satan's fall, but also the place from which Eden arises[143], and a place that changes depending upon the perspective from which we encounter it in the poem: whether the limited view-point of Satan or the all encompassing vision of the Father.[144]

This idea of Chaos as an uncertain, undefined location, Norbook argues, shows Milton's debt to Ovid's image of Chaos in the opening of the *Metamorphoses*. This image reveals a shared desire by both Ovid and Milton to 'go back to the simplest components and start again'.[145] Following Norbrook, I further suggest that Milton finds in Ovid's description of Chaos an epic

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[139] Liddell and Scott define χάος as 'the first state of the universe', a meaning that is traced to line 116 of the *Theogony*. See also Plato's 'nether abyss' or 'infinite darkness' as definitions for χαός (Pl. *Ax.* 371e, see Liddell and Scott), another fitting analogy for Milton's description of chaos as 'a place of utter darkness' (*Paradise Lost*, Book 1, 'The Argument', *Columbia Milton*, vol. 2, p. 7).

[140] Personfied Chaos here 'felt confusion' – much like the poet who is inventing a geography for the fall based on images of Scripture (the image of personified Hell that receives the angels 'hell at last / Yawning received them whole' *PL*.6.874-5). Hell is their 'fit habitation' (*PL*.6.874).

[141] Note that the word 'Chaos' in Latin can also mean the underworld, and thus comes closer to hell (e.g. Ovid, *Fasti* 4. 600).

[142] 'Chaos is as it were the cosmos' default mode, transformable into concord only by a continued process of careful intervention' (Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics 1627-1660* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 472).

[143] 'Raphael notes how 'late' God has elected to 'build / In *Chaos* (vii. 92-3), Norbrook, p. 72).

[144] Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, p. 472. Fowler too contrasts Satan's 'sudden view / Of all this world at once (*PL*. 2. 890-1) with the Father's all-encompassing vision of the cosmos at *PL*. 3. 56ff, where '[o]ne survey looks to mankind's salvation, the other their destruction'. Fowler, 2nd ed. p. 170, note to ll. 56-79.

[145] Norbrook argues that 'Milton echoes the passage from the opening of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*' and 'highlights a basic radicalism in the poem, a desire to go back to the simplest components and start again' (Norbrook, p. 472).

language that attempts to situate itself within an existing tradition. The sense of an undefined place 'which they call chaos', in Milton's account, could reflect Ovid's awareness of an existing epic corpus of aetiological myth, from which he builds an image of a confused mass that can only be approximated to 'chaos':

> Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum
> unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
> quem dixere chaos...
>
> [Before the sea and the earth, and that which covers all, the sky, one was the face in the whole globe of nature, which they called chaos...] (Ovid, *Met.* 1. 5-7)[146]

Ovid's description of chaos in the opening of the *Metamorphoses* could signal the poetic act of composition within an existing tradition.[147] Ovid's reimagining of the language of aetiological/theogonic myth, through the allusion to 'those' who, in the past, called this place Chaos (the 'they' conveyed in the verb 'dixere'), is a fitting model for Milton's handling of material from the ancient epic tradition to paint a picture of an indefinite location in the Christian geography of the poem, a place that is '*fitliest call'd* Chaos'.

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[146] Melville translates this phrase as 'well-named Chaos' (A. D. Melville, *Ovid: Metamorphoses* (Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 1). Hume notes this same parallel with *Met.* 1.5-7 in a comment on *PL*.1.10. See Hume, *Annotations on Paradise Lost*, p. 3, note 10.

[147] See S. M. Wheeler, 'Imago Mundi: Another View of the Creation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 116, no. 1, 1995, 95-121. By presenting Ovid's account of chaos in light of an allusive engagement with the Homeric shield of Achilleus, Wheeler argues that 'Ovid's description of the universe resembles the ecphrasis of a work of art' (Wheeler, 'Imago Mundi', 98).

2.1.2. Hesiodic theomachies: '*(De) Natura(m) non pati senium'* and the *First Prolusion*

For Neil Forsyth, Milton's casting of the conflict between heaven and hell in *Paradise Lost* in the light of the Hesiodic theomachies reflects a partisanship with Satan and his role in the poem. The story of Satan's fall, Forsyth argues, 'provided the major ancient model of an epic that sided with the rebel'.[148] Forsyth's comment relates to the tradition of Zeus' rebellion against Kronos, a story that Milton alludes to in the catalogue of Book 1, where, in naming the Titans among the infernal ranks, he remembers the story of 'mightier *Jove*' (*PL*.1.512) who 'usurping reign'd' (*PL*.1.514) on Olympos. Milton had alluded to the Hesiodic theomachies in two early poems. The image of Jove presiding over the cosmos describes the Christian Father, a parallel that is continued in the Hesiodic imagery of the heavenly sphere in *Paradise Lost*. In '*(De) Natura(m) non pati senium*' (henceforth '*Naturam*'),[149] a poem likely to have been composed as an undergraduate exercise at Cambridge,[150] Milton alludes to the myth of Kronos in imagining the figure of personified Tempus (Time) as a figure who supplants his father. The poem is a two-staged argument, the first half being based on a proto-Yeatsian 'things fall apart' motif. Here personified 'Tempus' is imagined as the Titan Kronos, who ravages with his 'loathsome lapse' and 'never ending hunger of years', and even consumes his father: 'an & insatiabile Tempus / Esuriet Caelum, rapietque in viscera patrem?' ('Or will

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[148] 'Hesiod's *Theogony* was an especially important predecessor for Milton since it provided the major ancient model of an epic that sided with the rebel (without appearing to do so) (…) Hesiod makes it seem as if the older gods, the Titans, are the rebels' (N. Forsyth, *The Satanic Epic*, (Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 30-1). Contrast this view with Martindale, who argues that 'Milton ignores the context, and was evidently attracted primarily by the cosmic grandeur of the idea of a divine being thrown out of heaven' (Martindale, p. 73). In my view, Martindale's view is the more convincing, especially when considered in light of Milton's use of the theogonic myths in his other works, as I argue here.

[149] Hale translates the title as a proposition: 'That Nature does not wear out', and notes that the title is an indirect statement that outlines the subject of Milton's argument, using Latin accusative-and-infinitive locution (J. Hale, *Milton's Cambridge Latin: Performing in The Genres, 1625-1632*, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), p. 34.

[150] See Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 29. Hale refers to *Naturam non pati* as an 'act verse', where an 'act means an official academic exercise, (…) a disputation' (See Hale, pp. 33ff).

insatiable Time be hungry for the sky, / and snatch his father into his entrails?' '*Naturam*', 14-15). The allusion moves from Kronos' supplanting of his father to his battle with the Olympian gods – his offspring. In this latter case it is Kronos who is figured as an impious rebel:

> ...Heu, potuitne suas imprudens Jupiter arces
> Hoc contra munîsse nefas, & temporibus [sic] isto
> Exemisse malo, gyrosque dedisse perennes?
>
> [Ah, was unforseeing Jupiter able to defend his strongholds against this crime, and to release them from that evil that belongs to time, and to have given them eternal revolutions?] [151] ('*Naturam*', 16-18)

The poet anticipates the fall of the current order, foreseeing that the 'Olympian will fall from his court on high':

> Ergo erit ut quandoque sono dilapsa tremendo
> Convexi tabulata ruant, atque obvius ictu
> Stridat uterque polus, superâque ut Olympius aulâ
> Decidat...
>
> [Therefore that will be, when the floors of vaulted (heaven) crash, fallen to pieces with a sound that causes trembling, and exposed to a strike, the poles on each side grate; then the Olympian may fall down from his high court...] ('*Naturam*', 19-22)

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[151] J. Milton, *(De) Natura(m) non pati senium*, *Columbia Milton*, vol. 1.1, p. 260.

This point signals a crisis in the poem, soon refuted by a re-establishment of the cosmic order. The Christian God, triumphing over the wars of the pagan deities, becomes an image of the eternal order of the universe. At the same time, the image of the 'almighty father' ('pater omnipotens', 33) consulting on the sum of things and balancing his scales creates a distinct parallel with Homer's Zeus as he weighs the fates of the Greeks and Trojans (*Il.*8.69-77), and of Achilleus and Hektor (*Il.*22.208-13) on his scales, a parallel that is fully explored at the end of Book 4 in *Paradise Lost* (4.990 ff):[152]

> ...
>
> At pater omnipotens fundatis fortius astris
>
> Consuluit rerum summae, certoque peregit
>
> Pondere fatorum lances, atque ordine summo
>
> Singula perpetuum jussit servare tenorem.
>
> ...
>
> [But the omnipotent father, when the stars were set on stronger foundations, consulted on the sum of things, and with certainty balanced the scales of fate, and ordered each thing in the highest order to preserve the eternal course]. ('*Naturam*', 33-36)

The instability of the cosmic order in heaven is part of Satan's false rhetoric in *Paradise Lost*: Satan refers to Father as 'our grand Foe, / Who now triumphs, and (...) / Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven' (*PL.*1.122-4). But there is no doubt that Satan's rebellion is doomed to fail, and if Milton imagines it in terms of the theomachic myths of Hesiod, he sees in them an image of a vain war against a stronger and more enduring foe.

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[152] See Chapter 4.3. '"Die he or justice must": the Father's conditions of mercy'.

In his *First Prolusion,* another of his university exercises,[153] Milton advocates the superiority of day over night in addressing the question 'Whether Day or Night is the Most Excellent'. He likens the attempt by personified night to supplant the day to the uprisings of the Titans, Typhoeus, and Briareos against the Olympian gods:[154]

> At at [sic] noctémne dixi cum die struxisse lites? Qui hoc rei est? quaenam haec molitio? numnam antiquum *Titanes* redintegrant bellum, *Phlegraei* praelii instaurantes reliquias? an Terra novam in superos Deos enixa est portentosae magnitudinis prolem? an vero *Typhoeus* injectam *Aetnae* Montis eluctatus est molem! an denique, decepto *Cerbero*, catenis adamantinis subduxit se *Briareus*? quid est aliquando tandem, quod Deos manes ad Coelestis imperii spem jam tertio erexerit? adeone contemnendum *Jovis* fulmen?
>
> [...But have I said that night arranged a contest with day? What kind of a matter is this? What is this undertaking? For do the Titans renew their ancient war, restoring the remains of the Phlegraean battle? Or has the earth borne a new offspring of monstrous size against the gods above? Or has Typhoeus indeed struggled out from beneath the mass of Mount Aetna cast upon him! Or, finally, has Briareus, having deceived Cerberus, stolen away from his adamantine chains? What is it then, at last, that will have encouraged the divine shades to hope now for a third time, for heavenly

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[153] Full title: 'In Collegio', &c. *Utrum Dies an Nox praestantior sit?* Lewalski argues that *Prolusion* 1 was modeled on the Latin rhetorical exercises by so called sophisters (second and third year undergraduates) in Christ's College. Milton's rhetorical strategy, Lewalski argues, was due to the fact that he anticipated the audience's hostility to his argument (see Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, pp. 28-9).

[154] For Satan's conflation of Chaos and Night in the account of his journey to Eden, see *PL.* 10.469-80, discussed by DuRocher, *Milton and Ovid*, p. 126.

rule? Is the lightning bolt of Jove to be despised to such an extent?]

(*Prolusiones* 1)[155]

In the rhetoric of Milton's prolusion, the contest between night and day is as futile as that between the Titans and the Olympians, where the lightning bolt of Jove ('Jovis fulmen') triumphs over his enemies. The image of the thunder-wielding Jove reappears as a model for the Christian God in another of Milton's Cambridge poems, '*In Quintum Novembris*', and eventually becomes a model for Milton's portrait of the Father in *Paradise Lost.*

2.1.3. The council in Pandaemonium

There stood a hill not far whose grisly top

Belched fire and rolling smoke (PL.1.670-1)

When we are introduced to Satan as he wakes on the burning lake, he sees his fallen 'companions' (*PL.*1.76). After 'confer[ring] on thir miserable fall' ('Argument', p7), the need for a formal council is recognized: Satan has heard an 'ancient Prophesie or report from Heaven' about 'a new world and a new kind of Creature to be created'.[156] This prophecy relates to the creation of man, whom the devils may corrupt and so make share their misfortune. The fallen angels agree to summon a formal council, erecting a special palace of Satan, named Pandaemonium, 'the high capital / Of Satan and his peers' (*PL.* 1. 756-7)

Fowler notes that Milton's 'hill', where the palace of Pandaemonium is to be built is'[o]ne of Satan's high places, travesties of the cosmic mount'.[157] The concept of the council in hell as a

[155] *Columbia Milton*, vol.12, pp. 122-4.
[156] J. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1, 'The Argument', p. 8.
[157] Fowler, 2nd edition, p. 100, note to l. 670.

mirror of the one in heaven may be signaled in Milton's 'Argument', where he describes Pandaemonium, the 'Palace of Satan', that 'rises, suddenly built out of the Deep' (Book 1, 'The Argument'). Fowler notes that this 'high capital' recalls Virgil's 'Capitolia (...) alta' (*Aen.* 6.836)"[158] Milton, in describing the Pandaemonium as the 'high capital' that 'rises...out of the deep', may be alluding to the twofold meaning of the Latin 'alta', signifying height as well as depth:[159] a fitting term for the corresponding yet opposing spheres of heaven and hell in the geography of *Paradise Lost.*

A case can easily be made that Satan's palace Pandaemonium is meant to evoke ancient – and overtly pagan – architecture. It is '[b]uilt like a Temple' (*PL.*1. 713) and with 'Doric pillars' (*PL.*1. 714). The 'Golden Architrave' (*PL.*1. 715) could, according to Fowler, recall the roof of the Pantheon.[160] However, Schaar notes that the golden roof is a motif used by Virgil and other Latin poets including Lucretius, Horace, Statius, and Lucan, as an image of opulence 'frequently used (...) to indicate the presence or threat of strife, violence greed, seductiveness, or ambition'.[161]

Milton expresses the sense of moral violation that occurs in the building of Pandaemonium through an Ovidian image: at *Met.* 1.137-40 Ovid depicts men venturing into the very bowels of the earth in search of wealth, the source of evil. Fowler identifies these lines from the *Metamorphoses* as the '*locus classicus* for the impiety of delving into the earth's bowels (*viscera terrae*) for wealth hid amidst 'Stygian shades':[162]

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[158] Ibid., p. 106, note 756.
[159] The Oxford Latin Dictionary defines 'altus (–a, -um)' as '1. Having great extension upwards, lofty, tall, high' (see also definitions 2 and 3); and '4. Having great extension downwards, deep' (see also definitions 5 and 6).
[160] Fowler, 2nd ed., p. 104, note to ll. 713-17.
[161] Schaar, p. 293. See also Spenser's description of Mammon's house in *The Faerie Queene.* C. Schaar, *The Full Voic'd Quire Below: Vertical Context Systems in Paradise Lost* (Lund, C.W.K. Gleerup, 1982), pp. 293-4.
[162] Fowler, 2nd ed., p101, note to ll. 684-92.

Nec tantum segetes alimentaque debita dives
poscebatur humus, sed itum est in viscera terrae:
quasque recondiderat Stygiisque admoverat umbris,
effodiuntur opes, inritamenta malorum.

[Not only were the crops and the rich earth seeking the nourishment that was owed them, but men also ventured into the bowels of the earth: and wealth that is the incentive for wickedness, that wealth which he[163] had stored way and moved it to be amidst the Stygian shades, they dug out.] (*Met.* 1. 137-140)

Milton's account of the ransacking of the hill for gold by Mammon and 'his crew' with 'impious hands' foreshadows human impieties against nature, recalling this Ovidian passage:

Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid. (*PL*.1. 685-88) [164]

The capacity to disturb the natural universe, moreover, does not belong to Milton's devils alone. During the war in heaven the angels upturn the hills, an image that Fowler traces to the Gigantomachy in Hesiod's *Theogony* 713-15, where the Giants hurl massive rocks at the Titans and send them, defeated, 'τόσσον ἔνερθ' ὑπὸ γῆς ὅσον οὐρανός ἀπὸ γαιης' ('as far beneath the earth as the sky is above the ground', *Theog.* 720).

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[163] The god 'whoever it was of the gods, who divided the [chaotic] mass' 'quisquis fuit ille deorum/ congeriem secuit (...)' (*Met.*1. 32-3).
[164] Again, Hume was the first to note the parallel between *Met.* 1. 137-140 and *PL*.1.685-88. See Hume, *Annotations on Paradise Lost*, pp. 43-4.

Joad Raymond notes that Milton's use of models from ancient epic to describe both the fallen and the unfallen angels makes it difficult to establish a dichotomy between the Satanic and celestial spheres in his epic more generally.[165]

In the next section of this chapter, I will consider how Milton handles the epic sub-genre of the 'infernal council', as it had developed both in the Christian epic genre. As in the war in heaven, this scene, as Norbrook argues, is a 'disconcerting mixture of political discourses' with its frequent allusion to ancient epic models.[166] I will consider how imagery pertaining to the 'infernal council' was used in literary debates in the religious and political sphere of the English Civil War, in the century leading up to the composition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Part 2. Epic dichotomies: the false and true council

'It was by means of his infernal council that the transformation of Paradise Lost to the epic form was accomplished' (M. Hammond)

In tracing the history of the epic *concilium deorum*, from its Homeric origins to its Renaissance transformations, Mason Hammond argues that the 'infernal council' in Claudian's poem *In Rufinum* provided the model for the revision of the epic council scene in

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[165] J. Raymond, *Milton's Angels: the Early-Modern Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 277. For the defining study of the War in Heaven in the context of existing Renaissance genres, see Stella Purce Revard's *The War in Heaven: Paradise Lost and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1980).

[166] Norbrook states that '[l]ike Lucan's Hell, Milton's is a disconcerting mixture of political discourses, so that it is hard for the republican reader to know when to applaud' (Norbrook, p. 452). Sharon Achinstein argues that the onus is on Milton's 'fit reader' to interpret his complex allusions (see Chapter 5: 'Milton and the Fit Reader: *Paradise Lost* and the Parliament of Hell', in S. Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 177-224). See also Achinstein's discussion of the dangers of reductive readings of *Paradise Lost* in preventing the training of 'fit readers' of Milton's epic (Achinstein, pp. 181-2).

Renaissance Christian epic.[167] The council-scene that Hammond is referring to in Claudian's poem takes place in the underworld (1.25 ff). There the fury Allecto leads a council of personified evils: 'innumerae pestes Erebi' ('countless banes of Erebus', *In Rufinum*, Liber Primo, l. 29).[168]

Claudian's revision of the epic *concilium deorum*, as it reaches Renaissance readers – including Tasso and Milton – relies on creating a dichotomy between true and false religion. This Claudianic dichotomy is subsequently demonstrated in the council in hell in Tasso's Christian epic, *Gerusalemme Liberata*.[169] As in Vida's *Christiad*, the figures in Tasso's council are taken from classical mythology: there are sphinxes, centaurs, gorgons, and Scylla, alongside Homer's 'blind Polyphemos' (*GL.* 4.5, cf *Christiad* 1.143-5). Since Tasso's poem, however, does not depict a Christian divine sphere, the *Liberata* remains without an alternative *concilium deorum* in heaven. Indeed, the only scene that resembles an alternative *concilium* in the Christian sphere in Tasso's epic occurs in canto 8, where Goffredo reassures the assembled Christian army. Following Hammond, David Quint has traced the model for this scene to Book 5 of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, where Caesar addresses his mutinous troops (*BC*, 5. 237-374).[170] Since Tasso populates his false council with figures from Greek epic and mythology, and imagines his council in Pluto, he achieves a polarization of false and true religion between the Christians and Muslims; but he also suggests that this relationship between true and false exists between pagan and Christian epic models.

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[167] 'In the composition of his Infernal *Concilium*', Hammond argues, 'Claudian has not only drawn on his predecessors, notably Virgil, but he has likewise contributed to certain later poets, especially Milton' (M. Hammond, '"Concilia Deorum from Homer to Milton', *Studies in Philology*, 30, 1, 1933, 1-16, 2).

[168] J. B. Hall (ed.), *Claudii Claudiani Carmina* (Leipzig, Teubner, 1985), p. 14.

[169] Hammond argues that Tasso, in setting up his own council scene, is influenced by Claudian's council in his poem *In Rufinum*, as well as by the depiction of the false council of Allecto by the French poet Alanus de Insulis (Alain de Lille). Hammond argues that Alanus' Allecto may have been another model for Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*, in her resolve 'to attack Nature through her latest work [i.e. man]' (Hammond, p. 8).

[170] Quint suggests that by modeling Goffredo on Caesar, Tasso is rereading the *Bellum Civile* in light of his own imperial politics, and making Caesar the hero of Lucan's poem (see Quint, *Epic and Empire,* p. 216).

Unlike Tasso, Milton eschews the polarization between classical and Christian motifs in the council scenes in Books 2 and 3 of *Paradise Lost*. He continues the epic imagery he had already demonstrated in his early poem, '*In Quintum Novembris*', in recreating not only an infernal council, as Hammond has demonstrated,[171] but a heavenly one too, a dichotomy that will be later, more fully developed in *Paradise Lost*. Following Estelle Haan's observations on the linguistic parallels between '*In Quintum*' and *Paradise Lost*,[172] I will argue that in this early poem we find not only a prefiguring of Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*, but also of the Father who is portrayed in a manner that recalls Homer' Zeus and Virgil's Jupiter. Finally, in setting up the scene in heaven in Book 3 as a dialogue between the Father and Son, Milton recalls the manner in which the father of the gods, Homer's Zeus and Virgil's Jupiter, is introduced in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* in the context of a dialogue, rather than a full assembly of the gods. I will show that this model of introducing the divine sphere in epic had already been adopted in the dialogues between Christ and the Father in Vida's *Christiad*.

2.2.1. The parliament in hell and English Royalist poetics

In England, the infernal *concilium* became a literary vehicle for illustrating political and religious allegiances in the lead-up to, duration, and aftermath of the English Civil War. The 'parliament in hell', as this genre became known among English poets and pamphleteers, was chiefly practised by the Royalist side, and came to be identified with Civil War allegory. After the Restoration, Milton himself was named in Colonel Baker's satirical poems on the

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[171] See Hammond, pp. 9-10.

[172] See E. Haan, 'The "adorning of my native tongue": Latin Poetry and Linguistic Metamorphosis', in N. McDowell, N. Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Milton* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 51-66.

Rump parliament, where he appears among a group of figures, one of Cromwell's counsellors, plotting 'Hell's Counsels' in 'Pluto's Black Court'.[173]

It is possible that Milton had deliberately hijacked a Royalist genre for his Republican poetic. Nevertheless, Miltonists have attempted to account for the appearance of this chiefly Royalist sub-genre in *Paradise Lost* in a variety of ways: Thomas Corns has argued that Milton's choice of this type-scene could be part of a critique of his personal experiences of parliament under the Commonwealth,[174] whereas Achinstein suggests that Milton may have adopted this Royalist sub-genre after the political amnesty in the Restoration, as a way of removing suspicion that he harboured any continuing Republican allegiances.[175] Debates continue about the political allegiances reflected in Milton's poetry after the Restoration, debates that polarize readings of *Paradise Lost* as the work of 'politics abandoned' or 'politics encrypted'.[176] Mary Ann Radzinowicz has pointed out the importance of genre in establishing Milton's political as well as his poetic program in *Paradise Lost*. Radzinowicz's study remains, in my opinion, the most compelling argument for Milton's choice of the epic genre as a reconciliation of his ambition as poet and theologian, and also as a political reformer.[177] Following Radzinowicz, I argue that Milton's attempt to harmonize the public and private spheres in his poetic practice is demonstrated early in his poetic career, in his undergraduate poem, '*In Quintum Novembris*',[178] a miniature epic that relates the events leading up to Guy

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[173] Extract from Colonel Baker's 'The Blazing Star; or Nolls Nose Newly Revived, and taken out of his TOMB', in *The Rump; or, An Exact Collection of the Choycest poems and songs relating to the late times*, 1662, cited and discussed in Achinstein, p. 195.

[174] T. Corns, *Regaining Paradise Lost* (Michigan, Longman, 1994), p. 134.

[175] Achinstein, p. 201.

[176] I borrow these terms from Mary Ann Radzinowicz, 'The Politics of *Paradise Lost*', in K. Sharpe, S. Zwicker (ed.), *Politics of Discourse: the Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1987), pp. 204-230, p. 205.

[177] Radzinowicz, 'The Politics of *Paradise Lost*', pp. 205-6.

[178] We cannot be sure of the date of Milton's neo-Latin poem. Milton dates it 'anno aetatis 17', which would place its composition around 1625. But Milton may have been considerably older when he composed the poem. In dating his early poems, Lewalski notes that 'Milton often exaggerates his own youthfulness, or his poems' early dates, as a subconscious defence against his sense of belated achievement' (Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 23).

Fawke's Gunpowder Plot in 1605. Estelle Haan has argued that Milton's '*In Quintum Novembris*' placed him in a group of English epic poets – Francis Herring, Michael Wallace, Phineas Fletcher, and Thomas Campion – who had published neo-Latin poems on the gunpowder plot as early as 1606.[179] Milton retells this contemporary event from a cosmic perspective, and activates epic dichotomies between false and true religion, using imagery from ancient epic to paint both the tension of the poem in the infernal council and the resolution and triumph of the heavenly sphere.

2.2.2. Milton's '*In Quintum Novembris*'

Although Milton's '*In Quintum Novembris*' is a miniature epic, or epyllion, Lewalski refers to a 'Virgilian aspiration' by the teenage Milton in composing a poem with deliberate echoes of the *Aeneid*.[180] As is the case in Michael Wallace's *In Serenissimi Regis Iacobi...Liberationem* (1606), the distinctly Virgilian elements in the style of Milton's poem add to the epic colouring of the narrative.[181] The English in Milton's *'In Quintum'* are identified as 'Teucrigenae' (IQN, 2) ('sprung from Troy'), in an attempt to trace the ancestry of the English, as the Romans had, to Homeric origins. The image of 'rosy Tithonia' ('rosea Tithonia') opening the gates of Dawn ('Eoas pandens (...) portas', 133) recalls Virgil's figure of Aurora in her rosy car (*Aen.* 6.535,

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[179] Francis Herring, *Pietas Pontificia* (1606), Michael *Wallace In Serenissimi Regis Iacobi...Liberationem* (1606), Thomas Campion, *De Pulverea Coniuratione* (1615-8?), Phineas Fletcher, *Locustae vel Pietas Iesuitica* (1627). Haan refers to these poets, including Milton, as a 'virtual school of pseudo-Virgilian gunpowder epicists' (E. Haan, 'Introduction', in E. Haan (trans.), *Phineas Fletcher: Locustae vel Pietas Iesuitica* (Leuven University Press, 1996), pp. xi-lxxi, p. xxxiv).

[180] Lewalski refers to Milton's 'Virgilian aspiration' in the seventeen-year old Milton, who 'may have thought to emulate sixteen-year-old Virgil in writing a brief epic, but ...looked past Virgil's *Gnat* to the *Aeneid* for heroic conception and many motifs' (Lewalski, The *Life of John Milton*, pp. 24-5).

[181] Haan claims that Wallace's 'sustained *imitatio* of Virgil' over his relatively short poem, nevertheless develops the 'epic potential of the conspiracy' (Haan, *Phineas Fletcher: Locustae vel Pietas Iesuitica*, p. xl).

7.26). England's King James is referred to by the Virgilian epithet *pius* (1).[182] Finally, Milton recreates the epic figure of Fama, the epic personification of rumour and renown, in language that recalls her Virgilian appearance ('In Quintum', ll.181-93).[183] As Hardie has most recently shown, Milton's Fama is rehabilitated to serve God's plan, rather than Satan's: paradoxically, her half-truths and association with rumour serve ultimately to reveal the truth, leading to the triumph of the Christian heroic sphere and the thwarting of the gunpowder plot.[184]

Milton's portrait of Satan has produced the most discussed parallels between '*In Quintum*' and *Paradise Lost*. Lewalski observes that in the Satan of '*In Quintum*', we 'at times catch glimpses of his magnificent namesake in *Paradise Lost*.'[185] Among these glimpses is the image of Satan as 'fraudumque magister' ('*In Quintum*', 17) 'master of lies', which Estelle Haan compares to the 'Artificer of fraud' (*PL*. 4. 121) whom we see in *Paradise Lost*. In both poems we also see the link between Satan and mythical figures cast from heaven: Hephaistos, the Titans, and Typhon. In Milton's '*In Quintum*', Satan is described as a 'wandering exile from airy Olympos' ('aethereo vagus exul Olympo', 8) an image that corresponds to the Satan of *Paradise Lost* who was 'Hurld headlong falling from th' Eternal Skie' (*PL*. 1. 45). Satan's plot against England in Milton's '*In Quintum*' is imagined through a simile that recalls Typhon's rebellion against Zeus. The same mythic parallel appears in Dryden's Royalist poem, 'Astraea Redux', where, conversely, Dryden imagines the ascent of Cromwell after the execution of Charles I in terms of the Typhonomachy:

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[182] Hardie has most recently argued that the whole action imitates Book 7 of the *Aeneid*, likening 'pius Iacobus' to 'pius Aeneas' and Satan to Allecto (see P. Hardie, *Rumour and Renown*, p. 430).
[183] For a discussion of the Homeric genealogy of Fama in 'In Quintum', see Hardie, *Rumour and Renown*, pp. 435-6.
[184] See Hardie, pp. 436-7. He further argues that Milton is following Sannazaro and Vida's transformations of Fama as serving the Christian sphere: 'As in Sannazaro and Vida, *Fama* is enlisted as an irresistible agent of the truth in a providentialist narrative, not now [as in the *De Partu Virginis* and the *Christiad*] in the original story of the Gospel, but in a struggle between right and wrong forms of Christian religion' (Hardie, *Rumour and Renown*, p. 437).
[185] Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 25. Estelle Haan has examined the specific language in which Satan is portrayed in Milton's '*In Quintum*', language that, she argues 'recur[s] in a transmuted form in *Paradise Lost*'. E. Haan, 'The "adorning of my native tongue": Latin Poetry and Linguistic Metamorphosis', p. 64.

Thus when the bold *Typhoeus* scal'd the Sky,

And forc'd great *Jove* from his own Heaven to fly,

(What King, what Crown from Treasons reach is free,

If *Jove* and *Heaven* can violated be?)

The lesser Gods that shar'd his prosp'rous State

All suffer'd in the Exil'd Thund'rers Fate. ('Astraea Redux', 37-42) [186]

Upon witnessing the piety of the English, Satan lets out a sigh that resembles the breath of 'fierce Typhoeus': an extended comparison that recalls the interplay of similarity and difference that characterizes the Homeric simile. Milton does not suggest a direct correspondence between the figures of Satan and Typhoeus, but compares an aspect shared between them. His simile suggests rather than dictates a more general comparison between the two figures:[187]

At simul hanc opibusque & festâ pace beatam

Aspicit, & pingues donis Cerealibus agros,

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[186] E. N. Hooker et al (ed.), *The Works of John Dryden* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1956), vol. 1, p. 23. See also Achinstein, p. 199

[187] One of the most memorable examples of this kind of complex allusion in Homer is found in the simile at *Odyssey* 8.521-31, where Odysseus weeps upon hearing Demodocus' retelling of the sacking of Troy. The narrator describes Odysseus weeping in the same way as a woman weeps over the body of her dead husband, a woman who is about to be taken into captivity (*Od.*8.523-31). Richard Buxton notes that this simile creates pathos by alluding to Penelope's own anguish over the absent Odysseus, while also recalling the drama of war in the *Iliad* by likening the victor (Odysseus, who is on the winning side) to the vanquished (the widows of Troy). Buxton argues that this is an 'untypical' simile, in the dialogue it creates with the *Iliad* (see R. Buxton, 'Similes and other likeness', in R. Fowler (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Homer, pp. 139-55, p. 149). I would argue, however, that part of the subtlety and the uniqueness of the Homeric simile lies in creating a parallel with a situation that can, at times, stand in conflict with the narrative, as demonstrated by Fränkel in his seminal discussion: 'Das Verhältnis des Gleichnisses zur Erzählung' pp. 104-107. Frankel demonstrated that 'in this tension between two images, which appear neither completely similar nor completely different, lies the special charm of the [Homeric] simile' ('In diesem Widerstreit zweier Bilder, die weder völlig gleich noch völlig verschieden erscheinen, liegt der eigene Reiz des Vergleichs') (H. Fränkel, *Die Homerischen Gleichnisse* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), p. 106.

Quodque magis doluit, venerantem numina veri

Sancta Dei populum, tandem suspiria rupit

Tartareos ignes & luridum olentia sulphur.

Qualia Trinacriâ trux ab Jove clausus in Aetna

Efflat tabifico monstrosus ab ore Tiphoeus

Ignescunt oculi, stridetque adamantinus ordo

Dentis, ut armorum fragor, ictaque cuspide cuspis.

> [At once, moreover, he (Satan) beholds this land, blessed, with wealth and with festive peace, and the fields rich with the gifts of Ceres, and that which pained him more, a people worshipping the sacred divinity of the true God. At length he bursts forth with sighs that stink of Tartarean fires and of lurid sulphur, like the creature confined by Jove to Trinacrian Aetna breathes out from its decay-breeding mouth, fierce Typhoeus: his eyes are ablaze, and the adamantine row of his teeth grinds, like the crash of weapons, and the point [of a spear] struck by a point [of another spear].] ('*In Quintum Novembris*', 31-9)

As in *Paradise Lost*, the account of Satan's rebellion in Milton's '*In Quintum Novembris*' is built through layers of intertextuality and complex allusions to the theomachic myths of Hesiod. These allusions place the onus on Milton's 'fit reader' to draw more general parallels between the narratives of divine rebellion and the Judaeo-Christian story of Satan's fall, and thus contribute to the richness of reading Milton, not only the consummate poet of *Paradise Lost*, but also the promising student in the early stages of his poetic career.

'The one and the many': heroic and divine dichotomies in '*In Quintum Novembris*'

Milton achieves a thematic contrast between the Catholic and Protestant spheres in '*In Quintum*' by recourse to heroic models in Virgilian and post-Virgilian Latin epic. He depicts a contest between the solitary king James as a earthly manifestation of monotheistic rule in the heavenly sphere, and the many personifications of evil imagined in the infernal *concilium* gathering to plot evil against the Christian world. Milton opens the poem with an image of England as the last frontier of Protestant virtue under James, an image that contrasts with the papal intrigue taking place in Rome, to which Satan travels in order to hold an infernal council. The dichotomies of the poem are clearly dictated by the events that it aims to portray. The two spheres, the false and true religious spheres, are separated, where the Catholic celebrations and the council in the cave belong to the antagonistic sphere, the infernal *concilium* against Milton's Protestant England.[188] Satan travels to Rome where he encounters celebrations for the feast of St Peter, imagined as an orgiastic revel,[189] where the Eucharistic procession is presented as a parade of false gods 'made of bread' ('Panificosque Deos', 56). Satan suffers on witnessing the piety of England under James, where the English honour the divinity of the one true God (33), an image that contrasts with the many personified vices in the infernal council.

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[188] The council in the cave in Milton's '*In Quintum*', which the Pope summons at Satan's request, has been compared to the 'secret conclave' (*PL*.1.795) of fallen angels in *Paradise Lost*. See Schaar on *PL*. 1.789-92 (the closing lines of Book 1): these lines 'have since Newton and Todd been regarded as a sarcastic allusion to the assembly of the Catholic Church dignitaries entrusted with the duty of electing a Pope, the word 'conclave' being the key word of this interpretation.' Schaar notes that '[p]erhaps this idea has loomed somewhat too large in criticism of the lines, and, as Frye observes, Milton's "days of sectarian controversy and bickering were over, and it is incumbent upon us not to read into *Paradise Lost* sectarian biases not demonstrably present"' (Schaar, p. 82. See R. M. Frye, *Milton's Imagery and The Visual Arts: Iconographic Tradition in The Epic Poems*, Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 135).

[189] Again, Milton achieves this comparison by recalling a 'Homeric' simile, likening the noise made by the chanters on the feast of St Peter to the noise made by Bromius (Dionysus or Bacchus) and his crowd chanting orgiastic hymns ('[o]rgia cantantes', '65'). See '*In Quintum Novembris*', 62-67.

Hammond argues that the gathering of personified evils in the infernal council of '*In Quintum Novembris*' (139-165) echoes the council of the 'infernas sorores' (1.27) in Claudian's *In Rufinum*.[190] Milton polarizes the two heroic spheres in the poem by activating the epic contrast between the 'one and the many', a contrast that Hardie considers as a development of the Homeric hero's ambition to gain the highest status in heroic society.[191] Milton paints this epic contrast between 'the one and the many' in portraying James who sits alone and preeminent: 'sedebat / In solio' (5-6) as the hero of the epic; an image that is reflected in the cosmic sphere in the solitary figure of the Christian God who alone populates heaven.

'From many gods to one': transformations of the epic *concilium* in Christian epic

The *concilium deorum* in the opening of Luis Camoens' Portuguese epic, *Lusiads* (*Os Lusíadas*, 1572) stands in stark contrast to the model that Milton adopts in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*. It is a scene that exploits the epic charges against the behaviour of the Olympian gods that Milton would wish to avoid in his council in heaven. The *Lusiads* is not a Christian epic, but a history of Portuguese conquest, and Camoens includes a full-scale Olympian council scene in Book 1. The council begins with Jove presiding over the other gods, expressing his will that the Portuguese fleet pass safely to Africa. The council soon progresses to an outright fight between Bacchus, who opposes this plan, and Venus and Mars, a battle that causes a loud tumult on Olympos (1. 35) This scene of the gods' bickering contains a memory of the parodic nature of the *theomachy* in *Iliad* 20. Camoens' council of the gods recreates the parodic elements of the Homeric scene, exploiting charges that poetic decorum had been

[190] See Hammond, p. 3.

[191] 'Epic is a totalizing form; the agents in epic narrative are also expansive, striving for a lonely pre-eminence and ultimate omnipotence. (...) [T]he seeds are Homeric, but the full crop is reaped by Virgil and his successors.' P. Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 3.

breached.[192] Vida, too, in *De ludo scaccorum* ('The Game of Chess', 1527), a mock-heroic Latin poem, demonstrated the parodic effect that arises from casting the Roman gods in an imaginary contest.[193]

We have already seen how Milton paints the contrast between the populous council in hell and the figure of the solitary, preeminent Father in his early poem '*In Quintum Novembris*'. In the coming chapters I will consider this model of a more intimate council-scene for Milton's first scene in heaven in *Paradise Lost*. Irene Samuel first coined the term 'Dialogue in Heaven' to refer to the interaction that takes place between the Father and Son at *PL*.3.1-417.[194] Samuel's discussion, however, does not consider this dialogue in light of an epic model of the *concilium deorum*.[195] The *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* both begin their initial portraits of the father of the gods, Zeus/ Jupiter engaging in a dialogue with another deity. In Book 1 of the *Iliad*, the goddess Thetis approaches Zeus in an act of supplication, in an intimate scene that introduces Zeus and precedes the discussion between Zeus, Here, and Hephaistos that ends with the gods feasting together at *Il.* 1. 601-604. Virgil recreates this intimate Homeric dialogue by casting Jupiter and Venus as the sole participants of the first scene on Olympos in *Aeneid* 1. In the 'Dialogue in Heaven', I argue, Milton imitates the Homeric model by which Zeus is introduced in the *Iliad* by depicting the Father sitting 'High Thron'd above all highth' (*PL*. 3. 58). The Father towers above the attendant ranks of angels and is accompanied by his 'onely Son' (*PL*. 3. 64), to whom he directs his prophecy. In Chapter 4 we will consider the Son as figure who revises the epic ambition of the solitary and preeminent hero in his own

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[192] For Milton's own adoption of parodic aspects of the Homeric *theomachy* in his narration of the war in heaven in *Paradise Lost*, see Martindale, pp. 97-8.

[193] See Gardner's 'Introduction' (Marco Girolamo Vida, *Christiad*, trans. J. Gardner (Harvard University Press, 2009), p. ix.

[194] I. Samuel, 'The Dialogue in Heaven: A Reconsideration of *Paradise Lost*, III. 1-417', *PMLA*, 72, 4, 1957, 601-11.

[195] Lewalski's discussion, building on Samuel's, acknowledges Milton's epic precedent in the *concilium deorum*: 'Milton imagines and presents the Dialogue in Heaven through many generic frames and with reference to several specific models (...) First of all, the scene is a species of epic *Concilia Deorum*' (Lewalksi, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms,* p. 115).

liminal status as both God and man, both in Christian theology, but also in Milton's recreation of the Son as an epic figure who fuses both the heroic and divine spheres in Christian epic. First, however, I will consider the manner in which Milton as poet of *Paradise Lost* attempts to cross from an infernal council to the heavenly sphere in the supernatural geography of the poem.

2.2.3. Approaching the Father: Milton's poetic *anabasis*

In the 'Argument' to Book 1, Milton refers to the infernal *concilium* according to the principles of a 'full Councel'[196], and ends with Satan volunteering to undertake the perilous journey to Eden. Satan's voluntary offer has been seen mainly in terms of heroic action. Martindale argues that Milton's signals his debt to epic journeys throughout ancient epic: he calls not only on Homer's Odysseus or Virgil's Aeneas, but on Jason and the Argonauts, as depicted in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (and later in Latin epic by Valerius Flaccus)[197], to describe Satan's journey as 'more endanger'd, then when *Argo* pass'd /Through *Bosporus* betwixt the justling Rocks, / Or when *Ulysses* on the Larbord shunnd / *Charybdis*, and by th' other whirlpool steard.' (*PL*.2.1017 – 20).[198]

I suggest that Satan's journey could be viewed in light of the epic *concilium deorum*: like the divine assemblies in Greek and Latin epic, the council in hell ends in concrete action. The

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[196] *Paradise Lost*, Book 1, 'The Argument', p. 8.

[197] We can have little doubt that Milton was familiar with Apollonius' *Argonautica* (See Boswell, *Milton's Library*, p. 9). The case for Valerius Flaccus' version of the Argo myth, however, is more difficult to establish. A case could be made for Milton's familiarity with Valerius' *Argonautica* based on a 1647 letter to Milton from the Italian academician and classical scholar, Carlo Dati, Milton's younger friend and principal correspondent. In this letter, Dati cites lines from Book 4 of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* alongside passages from Virgil's *Aeneid* and Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus* (J. Milton, *Private Correspondence* (1647-1648), in D. Bush et al (ed.), *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, volume 2 (New Haven, London, Yale University Press, Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 769-70. See Boswell, *Milton's Library*, p. 248.

[198] Martindale observes that '[t]he literary ancestry of Satan's voyage through the abyss is carefully signaled to the reader lest he miss the point' (Martindale, p. 62).

model of Satan's journey through Chaos could be seen as a result of the 'active council'[199] in epic, where a deity is dispatched, or volunteers to descend, to the human plane. Hardie has suggested a parallel between Satan's journey after the infernal council and Mercury's journey through Chaos in Statius' *Thebaid* (7.34-9).[200]

The exordium to Book 3

Milton begins Book 3 of *Paradise Lost* with a change of scene and perspective, from the limited view of heaven from Satan's perspective to the heights of heaven, where he will attempt a portrait of the Christian God. The Father, who had previously been referred to in Satan's false speech to the fallen legions in hell, will now appear as a fully articulated 'Person' in Milton's epic. Milton employs a new exordium to signify the literal distance travelled by the poet, from the depths of hell to the heights of heaven, and the moral and spiritual shift that must be undertaken in order to undertake a portrait of the Father in the heavenly sphere of his epic.[201]

Milton begins his exordium to Book 3 with an invocation to the 'holy Light' (*PL*.3.1), an image that suggests both physical light and spiritual enlightenment,[202] and activates the dichotomy of light and darkness that will be an ongoing motif of the exordium. He traces his poetic journey from narrating the false council in the depths of hell, an 'obscure sojourn' that is figured in terms of a heroic *katabasis*:

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[199] Councils of the gods in martial epic concern intervention in the human sphere, and it is the deliberation before the action that, as Feeney has shown, was 'the irreducible line of demarcation between epic and history' in Greek literature from Herodotus onwards (Feeney, p. 261).

[200] See Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil*, p. 78, note 44). On other epic descents, see Virgil's account of Mercury's journey in *Aeneid* 4, after he is sent by Jupiter to reprimand Aeneas (Hardie, p. 79). Blessington sees Virgil's description as a model for Raphael's journey to Eden in Book 5 of *Paradise Lost*, where he will provide a cautionary tale to Adam and Eve. See Blessington, pp. 26 ff.

[201] T. Gregory, *From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 200. Fowler notes that 'the change of *mise en scène* from hell and chaos to heaven (…) requires a ceremonial approach to the divine presence' (Fowler, 2nd ed., p. 165, note 1-55).

[202] See Fowler, 2nd ed., p. 165, note 1-55.

Thee [holy light] 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 than 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... (*PL*.3.13-20)

The parallel between the poet's journey through the narrative in hell, the narrative of the previous book, and the heroic *katabasis* is suggested through an allusion to Orpheus, whose descent into the underworld is narrated in Virgil's *Georgics*. Orpheus also appears in *Aeneid* 6 (119-20), where Aeneas, in his journey to the underworld, encounters the figure of the legendary bard as one 'among those [k]atabatic figures who made the journey to the World of the Dead before [him]'[203].

The figure of Orpheus in the ancient world was also associated with a distinct poetic and critical tradition, separate from the Homeric one.[204] Milton, I argue, alludes to Orpheus in both these roles, as the hero who ventures to the underworld, and the poet who sings of the origins of the universe. The latter image suits the task of the Christian poet of *Paradise Lost*, who in tracing the aetiology of the Fall makes a symbolic journey to Chaos. The poet of *Paradise Lost* claims to have been '[t]aught by the heavenly Muse to venture down / The dark

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[203] Clark, *Catabasis*, p. 95. Clark points to a brief allusion in Euripides' *Alcestis* as the 'earliest known evidence for Orpheus' descent' (Clark, p. 111).

[204] Lamberton, for example, points out that the term ὁ θεολόγος was more commonly used to refer to Orpheus by the time the Neoplatonist Porphyry described Homer with this term. See Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, pp. 22 ff.

descent and up to reascend'. The *anabasis*, or ascent, is equally important, especially, for the Christian poet-hero: like Dante, the Miltonic narrator 'reascends' from Hell and approaches the heights of the Christian heaven.

Orpheus

It was not unusual for a Christian poet to create an autobiographical parallel between himself and the mythical figure of Orpheus. The story of Orpheus had survived in an early Christian legend according to which he recanted his pagan beliefs in Egypt. The Orphic Hymns, moreover, had become available to Renaissance readers in a Latin translation by the Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino.[205] Milton's mention of Orpheus' lyre in Book 3 is, however, a negative one: as poet of *Paradise Lost*, he asserts that he has sung 'With other notes than to th' *Orphean* lyre' (*PL* 3.17). For DuRocher, this differentiation serves as an assertion of Milton's Christian subject matter:[206] his version of Chaos was different from the tale narrated by Orpheus in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (see *Arg.* 1. 496-502). At the same time, however, Milton's assertion is in itself a nod to the epic tradition, and to Ovid's reworking of the Orpheus story in the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's Orpheus, as narrator and poet, prefaces his song in Book 10 by declaring that he will sing 'with a lighter lyre' (leviore lyra):[207]

> 'ab Iove, Musa parens, (cedunt Iovis omnia regno,)
> carmina nostra move! Iovis est mihi saepe potestas
> dicta prius: cecini plectro graviore Gigantas
> sparsaque Phlegraeis victricia fulmina campis.

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[205] See A. Voss: 'Orpheus Redivivus: The Musical Magic of Marsilio Ficino', in M. J. B. Allen et al (eds), *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy* (Leiden, Brill, 2002), pp. 227-243.
[206] See R. DuRocher, pp. 72-3.
[207] Knox observes that in making Orpheus sing of love, Ovid contrasts 'epic seriousness (*plectro graviore,* 150) with Callimachean lightness (*leviore lyra*, 152).' P. E. Knox, *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Tradition of Augustan Poetry*, (Cambridge Philological Society, 1986), p. 50.

Nunc opus est leviore lyra, puerosque canamus

dilectos superis inconcessisque puellas

ignibus attonitas meruisse libidine poenam'

[From Jove, O mother Muse, (for all things submit to the rule of Jove) inspire my song! Often before I sang of the might of Jove: I sang of the Giants, with a weightier lyre, and of the conquering thunderbolts scattered on the Phlegraean plains. Now my task calls for a lighter string, and let me sing of youths beloved by the gods above, and of girls struck with forbidden fires, who deserved a penalty for their lust.] (*Met.* 10. 148-54)[208]

The poet of *Paradise Lost* further imagines himself wandering through a bucolic landscape, literally 'revisit[ing]' (*PL.* 3. 21) the allusion he had made in Book 1 to Hesiod's encounter of the Muses:

...thee [holy light] 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;

So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs,

Or dim suffusion veild. Yet not the more

Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt

Cleer Spring, or shadie Grove, or Sunnie Hill,

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[208] Orpheus' story relates to the illicit love of the gods: Peter Knox argues that by making Orpheus sing 'of youths beloved by the gods' (Ganymede, Hyacinthus, and even Adonis beloved by Venus) and 'of girls struck with forbidden lust' (Myrrha), Ovid depicts both mortals and the gods as equally susceptible to the tragic consequences of *amor*.

Smit with the love of sacred Song; but chief

Thee *Sion* and the flowrie Brooks beneath

That wash thy hallowd feet, and warbling flow,

Nightly I visit: nor somtimes forget

Those other two equal'd with me in Fate,

So were I equal'd with them in renown,

Blind *Thamyris* and blind *Maeonides*,

And *Tiresias* and *Phineus* Prophets old. (*PL.* 3. 21-36)

The Miltonic narrator is '[s]mit with the love of sacred Song', a statement that, for Hume, conveyed the same sense as the Latin 'percussus', and recalling the passage in the *Georgics*, where "Virgil prays that 'smitten with a great love' of the Muses ('ingenti percussus amore', 476) and he may be shown nature's secrets (*Georgics*, 2.475-89).[209]

Milton's poetic landscape may recall a classical *locus amoenus*, but the poet soon states that his main haunt is the biblical Sion: 'Thee *Sion* and the flowrie Brooks beneath / That wash thy hallowd feet, and warbling flow, / Nightly I visit' (30-2). Again, as he had done in the exordium to Book 1, Milton raises the possibility of an association with a pagan location, only to replace it with a biblical one, according to the principles of decorum for Christian epic.[210] The company that the poet invokes in Sion, nevertheless, comprises pagan figures: 'Blind *Thamyris* and blind *Maeonides*, / And *Tiresias* and *Phineus* Prophets old' (35-6), known in the ancient world for their blindness and also for their insight into divine matters.[211] The allusion to

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[209] See Fowler, p.168, note 29. These lines (*Georgics* 2.475-89) were also Cowley's epigraph for his own epic, *Davideis*.

[210] Fowler suggests that the allusion to Sion signifies Hebrew poetry more generally (Fowler, p. 168, note to l. 30).

[211] Martindale argues that Milton is picking up the 'notion of compensatory blindness' (Martindale, p. 69), an idea that emerges in his *Defensio Secunda*, where Milton identifies himself with the 'worthy blind' (see p. 69 Martindale).

the 'eyes that rowle in vain / To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn' (*PL* 3.23-4) signals Milton's physical blindness,[212] a concept that he marries to ancient myths of divine insight. Among these figures is the blind Homer (Maeonides),[213] and Tiresias, whom Hume describes as both a poet and a prophet (like the Latin *uates*), a role he continues when Odysseus meets him as a ghost in the underworld (*Od.* 11. 90-151).[214] Whereas the figures of Thamyris and Phineus are meant as cautionary tales on the dangers of insight into divine matters,[215] Milton approaches the celestial sphere with a confidence in the muse as his guide.[216]

The poet of *Paradise Lost* had, in the exordium to Book 1, asked the heavenly muse to 'raise and support' him as he began his Christian poem. Now, in attempting his portrait of the Father in the heavenly sphere in Book 3, the poet asks the 'holy light' to 'shine inward' as he presents things 'invisible to mortal sight'. The imagery of light and divine vision reappears in the first image of the Father in *Paradise Lost*: Waddington notes that he is imagined in terms of his sight, a metaphorical tradition that spans Scripture, and appears in the Orphic hymn 'To the Sun'. There the Orphic poet addresses the Sun as the 'golden Titan' (Τιτὰν χρυσαυγὴς) and as celestial light (οὐράνιον φῶς), who is blessed with all-seeing, eternal vision (πανδερκὲς ἔχων αἰώνιον ὄμμα).[217]

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[212] As does the description of the 'drop serene' that Fowler identifies as an allusion to Milton's eye condition (*gutta serena*), and the 'suffusion' that Fowler identifies with 'cataracts' (see Fowler, 2nd edition, p. 168, notes 25 and 26). See also Martindale, p. 66.

[213] Homer is referred to by his alternative name, Maeonides, to avoid a tautology (where ὄμηρος = blind). See Fowler, p. 168, note 35-6. Liddell and Scott note that 'ὄμηρος was a Cumaean word for τυφλός (blind) (Pseudo Herodotus *Vita Homeri* 1.3).

[214] Hume identifies Tiresias as '[a] Theban Poet, blind also, and a great Southsayer, even aft his Death, as *Homer* makes him' (Hume, p. 99, note 36).

[215] See Fowler, p. 168, note 35-6. Martindale also posits Sophocles' Oedipus and Demodocus as further models for Milton's 'paradox of blindness', where physical blindness is matched with spiritual insight (in the case of Oedipus), and the gift of poetry (as with Demodocus (*Od.* 8.63-4) (see Martindale, pp. 69-70).

[216] DuRocher observes that the 'Muse's teaching, not the Virgilian or the Orphean model of a descent to the Underworld, becomes the acknowledged guide for Milton's excursus through Hell and Chaos'. (DuRocher, p. 73).

[217] 'VIII ΗΛΙΟΥ' [sic] (Hymn 8: ‚To the Sun'), 1-2, in E. Abel (ed.), *Orphica* (Hildesheim, Gerstendberg, 1971), p. 61. Waddington argues that 'th[is] phrase echoes through the writings of the Platonic philosopher Secundus, the poet Ovid, St. Ambrose, Macrobius, Kepler, to Milton's contemporaries

The poet's inward vision, as far as it shares in the Father's knowledge and insight, is free of the anxieties of both the pagan figures whose blindness brings with it divine insight, and from the dangers of the Orpheus myth, in which the song proves ultimately fatal to its singer. DuRocher sees in Ovid's version of the Orpheus myth a distinctly Ovidian 'expression of the danger of poetic rapture' and a distrust of his Augustan audience,[218] a danger that Milton alludes to in Book 7, in his account of the 'wilde Rout that tore the *Thracian* Bard / In *Rhodope'* (*PL.* 7. 34-5).[219] DuRocher claims that Milton's Restoration readers may have been 'no less dangerous'[220] an audience than Ovid's. But Milton's allusions to Orpheus are free of Ovidian anxiety, owing to his trust in the Christian Muse and in his subject-matter, as he approaches the portrait of the Christian God in heaven.

2.2.4. 'Airy Olympos': towards a dialogue in heaven

In the *Aeneid*, the *katabasis* of the epic hero brings to him and the reader insight into the divine realm of the afterlife. Aeneas' vision is indeed so privileged that he must relinquish it upon leaving the underworld: it remains confined to the realm of delusive dreams ('falsa insomnia', *Aen.* 6.896) as the hero leaves the underworld and passes through the ivory gate of false dreams. The journey of the Miltonic narrator from Chaos, by contrast, carries the promise of still greater knowledge, as the poet ascends to the heavenly sphere. In

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Alexander Ross and John Swann, who asserts that 'the sunne may well be called *Oculus mundi, The eye of the world.* For he is indeed the chief fountain from whence the whole world receiveth luster' (see R. B. Waddington, 'Here Comes the Son: Providential Theme and Symbolic Pattern in "*Paradise Lost*", Book 3', *Modern Philology*, 79, 3, 1982, 256-66, 257).

[218] DuRocher, p. 73. On this, see mainly P. J. Johnson, *Ovid Before Exile: Art and Punishment in the Metamorphoses* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), and V. Pagán, 'Speaking before Superiors: Orpheus in Vergil and Ovid', in I. Sluiter, R. M. Rosen (eds.), *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*, (Leiden, Brill, 2004), pp. 369-89.

[219] See Fowler, p. 391, note 32-8.

[220] DuRocher, p. 73.

approaching the heavenly sphere in epic, I propose that the poet performs the ultimate *anabasis*, or heroic reascent from the underworld: he moves the narrative upwards, in an epic sweep, to the heights of heaven. There the Father sits 'High Thron'd above all highth' (*PL*.3.58), and looking down, witnesses Satan making his way towards Eden.

The ascent to the divine plane and the portrait of the godhead in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost* recalls the significance of the transition of the narrative to Olympos in *Iliad* 1, as Thetis' ascends from the depths of the sea. There we first encounter Zeus, the father of the gods:

> εὗρεν δ' εὐρύοπα Κρονίδην ἄτερ ἥμενον ἄλλων
> ἀκροτάτῃ κορυφῇ πολυδειράδος Οὐλύμποιο...
>
> [She found the far-seeing son of Kronos apart from the others
> on the top-most peak of rocky Olympos...] (*Il*.1.498-9)[221]

The physical location and the portrait of the reigning godhead are inseparable. Indeed, the first description of the gods in the *Iliad* is accompanied by the epithet as 'ones who have homes on Olympos' (θεοὶ (...) Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες, *Il*.1.18).

Schaar suggests that 'the picture of God on his throne', an image that is recreated in the Christian epics of Vida and Sannazaro, 'equally suggests Homeric and Christian descriptions of the powerful celestial monarch'.[222] In the opening of Jacobo Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis*,

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[221] Kirk argues that the epithet for Zeus, εὐρύοπα, should be translated as 'loud-sounding' (ὄψ = 'voice'), not 'far-seeing' (cf. ὀψις, ὄπωπα), as is appropriate to the god of thunder.' (Kirk, vol. 1, p. 106, note 498-9). Cunliffe suggests '[e]ither far-sounding, far-thundering, or far-seeing' as adequate translations of εὐρύοπα (R. J. Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1963, s.v.). Liddell and Scott point out that the epithet was 'Derived by the Greeks from ὄψ- ὄψομαι, *wide eyed*, (...) or from 'voice' (cf. ἔπος, ὄψ, vox) (my emphasis).

[222] Schaar, p. 142.

God is depicted as watching the devils hoarding their spoils of souls in Hell from his heavenly stronghold ('aetherea...ab arce', *De Partu Virginis* 33ff), and in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, 'the Father's throne is erected in the clearest part of the sky (*GL*.1.7).[223] In Book 5 of Vida's *Christiad*, the action of the poem moves to heaven where the Father, witnessing the death of Christ, is described as seated on the uttermost peak of heaven:

> Est templum gemmis interlucentibus auro
> E solido factum sublimi in vertice Olympi,
> tectum immane, ingens, superi penetrale parentis,
> sidera despiciens subter labentia mundi.
>
> [There is a temple made from solid gold and shining gems, on the summit of Olympos, an enormous structure and a mighty one, the inward chamber of the supreme Father, who looks upon the stars of the universe falling down below.] (*Christiad*, 5.453-6)

The image of the Father ('pater omnipotens') appears amidst the gathered angels, 'coelicolae; (literally, 'heaven dwellers, *Christiad*, 5.461; cf 'caelicolae' in the assembly scene at *Aen.* 10.6, 117, and at *Met.* 1.174). He is distinguished from the angels in both rank and in appearance, sitting apart on a lofty throne ('in medio solio ...alto'):

> In medio pater omnipotens solio aureus alto
> sceptra tenet, lateque acie circum omnia lustrat...
>
> [In their midst, the almighty Father, golden on his high throne, holds the scepter, and

[223] Schaar, p. 144.

with his piercing gaze surveys everything widely...] (*Christiad*, 5. 469-70)

Vida's conflation of the Christian heaven with pagan Olympos, as we see occuring at line 454 above, and of the figure of the Godhead with the epic father of the gods, was not uncommon in Christian epic and its critical apparatus.[224] In his prefatory poem to the 1674 edition of *Paradise Lost* (*In Paradisum Amissam Summi Poetae Johannis Miltoni*), Barrow describes the war in heaven episode: 'Stat dubius cui se parti concedat Olympus' ('Olympos stands, unsure in which of its parts to yield', line 27). There can be no doubt that 'Olympus' denotes the Christian heaven.

One way of explaining this occurrence of pagan and Christian terminology may be Christian epic's adoption of Latin language and style, as we see in the opening of Vida's *Christiad.* The poet begins with an invocation to the 'nourishing spirit' to assist in telling the tale of the 'bis genitum' twice begotten king, who took the souls of the dead to Olympos ('Olympo', *Christiad* 1.7).

Drake and Forbes, in their 1978 translation, translate Vida's 'Olympo' at line 7 as 'to heaven'. There is little doubt that it is the Christian heaven that is meant here. Gardner, in the most recent 2009 translation of the *Christiad* below, chooses the term 'paradise':

Qui mare, qui terras, qui coelum numine comples
Spiritus alme, tuo liceat mihi munere regem
Bis genitum canere, e superi qui sede parentis

[224] A similar conflation is found in secular neo-Latin epic of the 16th century too. The Italian poet Andrea Fulvio dedicated his Latin poem *Antiquaria Urbis* (1513) to Pope Leo X, 'to whom, by the keys of heaven, belongs the highest authority over things, and he is rich in *Olympian* (i. e. 'heavenly') divinity': 'rerum cui summa potestas / Clavibus aethereis & numine diues Olympi' (Andrea Fulvio, *Antiquaria Urbis* (Mazochi, Bibliothèque jésuite des Fontaines,1513), p. A ii, ll. 2-3).

Virginis intactae grauidam descendit in aluum,

Mortalesque auras hausit puer, ut genus ultus

Humanum eriperet tenebris, et carcere iniquo

Morte sua, manesque pios inferret Olympo.

[Gentle spirit, who fills with your divine presence the sea, the earth and the sky, help me to tell of the twice-born king who, from his Father's throne in heaven above, descended into the womb of an Untouched virgin and, as a mere infant, drew mortal breath; so that, by his death, he might avenge the human race, rescuing it from darkness and sinful durance and leading the souls of the pious into paradise.] (Vida, *Christiad*, 1. 1-7, trans. J. Gardner)

The Renaissance practice of conflating Christian and pagan locations for heaven and hell stands in firm contrast with later, neoclassical attempts to omit this ambiguity. Cranwell's 1768 free translation omits the line featuring 'Olympo',[225] whereas Edward Granan's 1771 version suggests 'the fields of light' as the place where the Son 'waft[s] the pious shades' in the final line, a phrase that may contain some memory perhaps of the Elysian fields.[226]

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[225] M.G. Vida, *The Christiad, a poem in six books; translated from the Latin of Marcus Hieronymus Vida by J. Cranwell, M. A. Rector of Abbots Ripton in Huntingdonshire* (Cambridge, 1768), p. A2, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, National Library of Australia, accessed 25 April 2012: <http://find.galegroup.com.rp.nla.gov.au/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=nla&tabID=T001&docId=CW113362952&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>

[226] M.G. Vida, *The Christiad: An Heroic Poem; in six books. Written by Marcus Hieronymus Vida, and translated into English verse, by Edward Granan, M.A.* (London, 1771), p. B2, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, National Library of Australia, accessed 25 April 2012: <http://find.galegroup.com.rp.nla.gov.au/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=nla&tabID=T001&docId=CW115271243&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>

Vida's epic shows that the term was used to imitate Virgilian style. Vida's omission of the Olympian machinery of Virgil's epic contributes to the thesis that the term 'Olympos' would have been an accepted synonym for the Christian heaven in the context of Christian epic. In commenting on this passage, Hardie notes that '[i]n 'Olympo' we have an emblem of the fusion of antique form and Christian content that is Vida's goal as a poet.'[227]

Not only did Christian epic freely appropriate this term. Similar practices can be found in the critical discussions of ancient epic by Christian commentators.. One such commentator is the young Abraham Cowley, a Cambridge undergraduate who, like Milton, was an accomplished Latinist from an early age. Cowley included a critical gloss on the English and Latin text of Book 1 of his Christian Latin epic *Davideis*. Unlike Vida's *Christiad*, which is an entirely Latin text, the majority of Cowley's *Davideis* is composed in English. Cowley's poem could have provided an example for Milton of an attempt to recall a 'Virgilian' style in the English language.[228] In what seems to be a light-hearted conflation of the classical and biblical canons, Cowley refers to pagan Tartarus and Christian hell in unison, as he comments on a technical question arising in his own work: that of the distance between heaven and hell in the geography of his poem, and in epic poetry more generally:

> There is a place, deep, wondrous deep below,
> Which genuine *Night* and *Horror* does 'oerflow;
> No bound controls th'unwearied Space, but *Hell*

[227] P. Hardie, 'Renaissance Epic', in A. J. Boyle, *Roman Epic* (London, Routledge, 1993), pp. 294-314, p. 309.

[228] Sue Starke observed that 'Cowley's blend of classical and Christian texts provides a foundation for Milton's achievement', particularly, his attempt to 'take up the challenge of writing a Virgilian epic on Christian matter' (S. Starke, '"The Eternal Now"': Virgilian Echoes and Miltonic Premonitions in Cowley's "Davideis", *Christianity and Literature*, 55.2, 2006, 195-219, 195).

Endless....(*Davideis*, 1. 81-4)

Cowley comments on these lines:

> This [description of hell] must be taken in a Poetical Sense: for else, making *Hell* to be in the *Center* of the Earth, it is far from infinitely large, or deep (...) *Lessius* in his Book *de Morib. Divinis*, as if he had been there to *survey* it, determines the *Diameter* [of Hell] to be just a *Dutch Mile*. But *Ribera*, upon (and out of the *Apocalypse*) allows *Pluto* a little more Elbow-room, and extends it to 1600 Furlongs, that is 200 *Italian* Miles. *Virgil* (as good a Divine for this Matter as either of them) says it is twice as deep as the Distance betwixt Heaven and Earth...[229]

Cowley's considerations are hardly scientific: this distance is discussed 'in a poetical sense'. He names Virgil as a 'Divine' [i.e. a theologian'] alongside contemporaries Lessius and Ribera, worthy to be compared to these Jesuit theologians in discussions of supernatural geography. Satirical though the discussion of 'a little more Elbow-room' for Pluto may be, there is something of Dante's concept of poet as theologian and authority on the nature and shape of the cosmos[230] present in Cowley's assertion of the insight to be found in the *Aeneid* on the location of the Christian Hell.

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[229] A. Cowley, *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose* (ed. A. B. Grosart, 1881), vol. 2 (Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung Hildesheim, 1969), p. 63, note 11.

[230] Hardie has argued that 'In Dante's *Commedia*, the poet unembarrassedly steps forward as both theologian and philosopher, to present a comprehensive account of the cosmos as then understood.' Hardie further argues that Milton shares this idea of the poet as an authority on theological as well as scientific matters in his account of the cosmos in *Paradise Lost*, including allusion to contemporary advances in science: 'In (...) Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the themes of contemporary astronomy and cosmology are fully accepted as subjects suitable for the most noble form of poetry.' See P. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 5-6.

*

In his portrait of the Father in Book 3, in his physical location, and in the precedents he creates in his portrayal of the Christian God in his earlier poems, Milton moves beyond what is required by an anthropomorphic creation shared by Scripture and epic, and gives Milton's God qualities that suggest the pagan father of the gods in Homer and Virgil's epics. The portrait of 'Aethereus pater' (221) in Milton's '*In Quintum*' creates an identifiably 'Olympian' atmosphere. In '*Naturam non pati*', God is depicted balancing the scales of fate: Milton does not dispense with epic imagery, but harnesses it to depict the divine sphere even in his early poems. The God of '*In Quintum*' is described through the epithet 'Tonatus' ('the Thunderer, 204) and 'hurls the thunderbolt' ('Fulmine praemisso', 200). The thunderbolt, for Blessington, is synonymous with Olympian Zeus 'who delights in thunder' (τερπικέραυνος, *Il.*8.2), a stock epithet of Zeus in the *Iliad*, and an image that appears in Milton's description of the Christian God ('*In Quintum*', 204).[231] For Blessington, Milton's decision to arm his God with Zeus' thunderbolt has implications for his role in the poem: '[o]nce he [Milton's God] does [hurl the thunderbolt], however, he becomes Zeus through *theocrasia* and helps to fuse the two worlds.'[232] There is something of the sense of θεοκρασία, of 'divine mingling'[233], moreover, in Milton's literary creation itself, in his mingling of existing traditions of both the pagan father of the gods with the Christian godhead.

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[231] This decision makes it impossible to talk of Milton's divine sphere as a dichotomy between Christian and pagan. As Blessington points out: 'If Milton had wanted to oppose Christian and pagan values, he could easily have done so: his God did not have to wield the thunderbolt' (Blessington, p. 19). Schaar makes a strong case for the image of the thunder hurling deity being evocative in both the epic and the biblical canons. See Schaar, p. 143.

[232] Blessington, p. 19.

[233] Liddell and Scott describe θεοκρασία as a concept in Neoplatonist philosophy (Iamblichus, *de Vita Pythagorica*, 33. 240; Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, 5), as well as the title of an earlier Greek work by Pherecydes of Syros on the origins of the gods and the cosmos.

Conclusion: two questions of fate

Blessington argues that the fallen angels gathered in council in Book 2 of *Paradise Lost* 'exemplify the "hybris" of the pagan heroes in their attempts to learn the future, make war, and assert their self-glorification.'[234] Of those three, it is the desire to learn the future that creates the greatest contrast between the mortal and divine in the *Iliad*. In this chapter, we have seen that achieving glory and serving one's self-interest are actions that are practised by the epic gods as well as heroes. When the council in hell takes place, the human sphere is non-existent: it is an 'Ancient prophecy or report in Heaven' (*PL.* 1, 'The Argument').[235] In Satan's false rhetoric, God's 'Prophesie' is synonymous with a rumour, a characteristic expression of the confusion of alternatives that characterizes Satan's limited knowledge with the Father's omniscient vision of the past, present and future, a vision that transcends both the temporal and spatial confines of Milton's epic world.[236] The Father demonstrates this knowledge in the speech that begins the Dialogue in Heaven; his words are a prophecy of events that have not yet unfolded on the human sphere. Joseph Wittreich argues that the motif of prophecy unites both the infernal and the heavenly councils, and gives the speech of the Father its transcendent quality and narrative significance.[237] In the following chapter, I will trace both the charges and the solutions arising from the tradition of epic prophecy, as it arises in the first speech of the Father in *Paradise Lost*.

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[234] Blessington, p. 75.

[235] Satan 'tells them lastly of a new World and new kind of Creature to be created, according to an ancient Prophesie or report in Heaven' (*PL.*1, 'The Argument', *Columbia Milton*, p. 8).

[236] I suggest that in Satan's alternatives, Milton continues the reception of Lucretian 'multiple explanations' into English epic. For Hardie's chapter on Lucretian 'multiple explanations' and their reception in Latin didactic and epic, see P. Hardie, *Lucretian Receptions* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 231-64.

[237] J. Wittreich, '"All Angelic Natures Joined in One": Epic Convention and Prophetic Interiority in the Council Scenes of Paradise Lost', *Milton Studies*, 17, 1983, 43-74, 45.

Chapter 3. 'What I will is fate': Milton and the language of epic prophecy

Introduction

In a revision of Mason Hammond's study of the *concilium deorum* in *Paradise Lost*, Joseph Wittreich suggested that it is only when the councils of hell and heaven in books 2 and 3 are considered side by side that the full effect of Milton's treatment of this epic scene and its role in the poem can be appreciated.[238] If the council in hell was about testing an 'ancient Prophesie or report in Heaven' about the creation of 'a new World [Eden] a new kind of Creature [man]',[239] the first speech of the Father in heaven (*PL*. 3.80-134) is about creating a new prophecy about his Fall: one that will affect the action of the poem and will stretch beyond its scope in its consequences. Thus the limited knowledge of Satan is contrasted with the omniscient and proleptic knowledge of the Father.

In addition to its prophetic nature, the speech of the Father is a theodicy. The Father asserts the doctrine of free will in an attempt to answer the charge that his foretelling of the Fall of Adam and Eve renders it inevitable. This charge, that the prophecy amounts to an act of predetermination, is in part motivated by the link existing in ancient epic between the *concilium deorum* and its role in foretelling events within the poem (in Homer) and beyond its scope (as in Virgil).

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[238] '[It is] by means of both the infernal council of Book II and the heavenly council of Book III [that] *Paradise Lost* achieves its prophetic character' (Wittreich, 'All Angelic Natures Joined in One', 45).
[239] J. Milton, *PL* 1 ('The Argument').

For Milton, the epic *concilium* activates the charge and, in turn, provides the means for its resolution in the overall theodical aim of the poem. The Father's theodicy on free will is expressed in Book 3 in an echo of the speech of Zeus at *Od.* 1. 34-5. Intriguingly, these same lines from the *Odyssey* recur as the final *exemplum* at the end of Milton's chapter on predestination in his theological treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana.* Although the double occurrence of this Homeric quotation in the Miltonic corpus has been noted by Blessington, Lewalski and Martindale,[240] no attempt has been made to consider the relationship that may arise as a result of this occurrence between Milton as theologian of *De Doctrina*, and Milton as poet of *Paradise Lost.* In this chapter, I will consider Milton's juxtaposition of Christian doctrine and Homeric theodicy in the context of recent scholarship on Milton's rhetoric in *De Doctrina.* I shall compare this *exemplum* with other Homeric exempla in Milton's prose works, to the extent that these *exempla* reflect the critical practices of Milton's contemporaries. I will argue that in *Paradise Lost* Milton deliberately evokes this association, not only in the words of Zeus, but also in the scenario of the epic *concilium*, including its activation of the language of fate.

Wittreich considers the importance of prophecy as the 'containing form'[241] of *Paradise Lost*, and recognizes its origins in ancient epic, specifically the Virgilian *concilia.*[242] His study does not, however, consider the full context of the epic *concilium* that Milton evokes, in particular the manner in which Milton imitates Virgil's revisions of the theological issues arising in the Homeric scenes. Mario Di Cesare has shown how Vida uses Virgilian prophecy in the

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[240] Blessington, *Paradise Lost and the Classical Epic*, p. 48; Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, p. 115; Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic*, p. 58. Examples discussed below.

[241] Wittreich, 44.

[242] Wittreich argues that in *Paradise Lost,* 'as in the *Aeneid*, the element of prophecy is introduced: the council scene is occasioned by as well as responsive to a situation arising out of a prophecy fulfilled or about to be fulfilled' (Wittreich, 48).

Christiad.[243] Taking this claim as my starting point, I will examine the origins of Virgil's epic prophecy as a revision of the Homeric dialogues on Olympos.

In my view, Milton does not rely on Vida's transmission of Virgilian prophecy, but recalls the long and complex tradition of commentary on the Homeric and Virgilian *concilium deorum*.. I will argue that Milton revises the Father's rhetoric in *Paradise Lost* by answering the theological charges that are expressed in the Homeric scholia and in the Byzantine commentary of Eustathius on a dialogue between Zeus and Herē in *Iliad* 16. Furthermore, I will propose that in setting up the first speech of the Father in *Paradise Lost*, Milton, following Vida, recalls a distinctly Virgilian poetics of fate in order to translate the epic *concilia* to the context of Christian epic, and to portray a providential Christian godhead. Whereas Vida employs Virgilian prophecy in the *Christiad* for his Roman Catholic view of the future, Milton discovers and follows an alternative model in *Paradise Lost* for his own republican politics and Protestant themes.

Part 1. The Dialogue in Heaven

3.1.1. The Father's prophecy and the free-will defence

In the previous chapter we saw how Milton portrays the Father as the source of divine knowledge by means of the imagery of light and darkness set up in the exordium to Book 3.[244] The Father's omniscience is reflected in a temporal as well as spatial vision as he surveys the cosmos, 'beholding [Satan] from his prospect high, / Wherein past, present, future he beholds' (*PL*.3.77-8). The Father sees Satan making his way to Eden. Satan has just

[243] See M. Di Cesare, 'Vergilian Framework', in *Vida's Christiad and Vergilian Epic* (New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1964), pp. 103 ff.
[244] R. B. Waddington, 'Here Comes the Son: Providential Theme and Symbolic Pattern in "Paradise Lost", Book 3, *Modern Philology*, 79, 3, 1982, 256-66, 256.

departed from the council in hell, and the Father foresees the events that will follow after he makes his way to Eden with the plan to corrupt mankind. The Father gives words to this vision by turning to the Son and foretelling the plan of Satan and the consequences this will have for the human race: 'So will fall, Hee and his faithless Progenie' (*PL*.3.95-6).

The Father's foretelling of the Fall activates the second of the theological challenges of *Paradise Lost* and, Gregory would argue, of Christian epic generally: the doctrine of free will.[245] The story of *Paradise Lost* relies on the doctrine of free-will, not just for Milton's theodicy, but for the success of the story as a drama of the Fall. The Father's prophecy cannot possibly spoil the story for Milton's post-lapsarian reader, but it can complicate its theology: the Father's prophecy invites the charge that his speech is an enactment of the doctrine of predestination. This doctrine was one of the most hotly debated subjects in the intellectual and theological discourses of post-Reformation Europe, continuing throughout the seventeenth century,[246] and still remains a controversial aspect of Milton's theology.

In setting out the narrative in the 'Argument' to Book 3, Milton anticipates the theodical challenge that the Father's act of foretelling entails.[247] The poet announces that the Father 'foretells the success of *Satan* in perverting mankind' and 'clears his own Justice and Wisdom from all imputation, having created Man free and able enough to have withstood his Tempter'[248] in a speech that immediately follows his prophecy and invades the same line:

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[245] 'When Renaissance poets set out to reinvent epic divine action in monotheistic terms, two of the oldest and most intractable of Christian theological problems – the problem of free will and the problem of evil – emerged as problems of narrative' (Gregory, p. 9).

[246] Campbell and Corns observe that 'like Christology', predestination was 'the defining theological issue of Milton's lifetime' (Campbell and Corns, p. 151).

[247] Danielson notes that '[f]or Milton and for many of his contemporaries, to accept any kind of determinism was to abandon free will, and to abandon free will was to abandon theodicy" (Danielson, 'The Fall and Milton's Theodicy', p. 150).

[248] 'God sitting on his Throne sees *Satan* flying towards this world, then newly created; shews him to the *Son* who sat at his right hand; foretells the success of *Satan* in perverting mankind; clears his own Justice and Wisdom from all imputation, having created Man free and able enough to have withstood his Tempter' (*Paradise Lost*, Book 3 'The Argument'), p. 76.

...So will fall,

Hee and his faithless Progenie: whose fault?

Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of mee

All he could have; I made him just and right,

Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall. (*PL.* 3. 95-9)

Milton's contemporaries considered the Father's defence successful: Hume argued that Milton handles this tricky theological question unambiguously. Commenting on line 99, he states that '[h]ere begins the excellent Discourse of Free-will, the Reasons of which are plainly and very convincingly laid down'.[249] The Richardsons compare the Father's defence to a passage from Scripture (*Gen.* 18.17-20), and argue that 'tho what God Forsees cannot be Altered, That Fore-sight has no Influence on the Event'.[250] But contemporary scholarship has viewed it differently. For Danielson, the Father's self-defence compromises Milton's theodicy. He argues that it creates a 'dramatic context' for Milton's theodicy, with 'God sounding like a human being vociferously defending his own actions.'[251] But it is precisely in the so-called 'dramatic' context that the strength and epic resonance of the passage is to be found. The Father's complaint activates an intertextual link with the complaint voiced by Homer's Zeus in the opening council of the gods in *Odyssey* 1:

ὢ πόποι, οἷον δή νυ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται:

ἐξ ἡμέων γάρ φασι κάκ' ἔμμεναι, οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ

σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν

[249] Hume, p. 102, note 99.
[250] Richardson (Father and Son), p. 104, note 117.
[251] Danielson, 'The Fall and Milton's Theodicy', p. 149.

[Ah, that mortal men do lay blame upon the gods!

They say that evils come from us, when it is they themselves

Who suffer beyond their share through their own folly.] (*Odyssey*, 1. 32-4)

Zeus complains about the unjust accusations leveled at the gods for the sufferings of men, sufferings that they have brought on themselves. Both speeches, that of Zeus in *Odyssey* 1 and that of the Father in *Paradise Lost,* are framed as theodicies, defences of divine justice in light of human misfortunes. [252] Both express the idea that humans transgress the boundaries of what is given them. In Homer, these boundaries are dictated by fate; in Milton's Christian theodicy, they are defined by the necessary and sufficient conditions of grace. The gulf separating the narrative situation of the Homeric *concilium deorum* from Milton's discussion of the Christian doctrine of free will is pronounced. Yet the same sense of anthropomorphic frustration expressed by a divine being towards human behaviour, though separated by millennia and by religious beliefs, has led Milton scholars to argue that Milton's God expresses his theodicy 'in the same aggrieved tones and terms'[253] as Homer's Zeus.[254]

3.1.2. 'In persona Iovis': Milton's Homeric *exemplum* in *De Doctrina Christiana*

'[M]ans own freewill self-corrupted is the adequate and sufficient cause of his disobedience besides Fate; as Homer also wanted not to expresse both in his Iliad and Odyssei'. (J. Milton,

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[252] Blessington argues that these lines are the *locus classicus* of ancient theodicy in epic (Blessington, p. 48). Stephanie West places a greater emphasis on the rhetoric of the statement within the wider context of the Homeric narrative, and argues that blaming the gods is 'a standard feature of Homeric conversation, sometimes serious and sincere, sometimes a way of disclaiming responsibility' (A. Heubeck, S. West, J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. 1, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, p. 77, note to ll. 32-3).

[253] Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, p. 115.

[254] Blessington comments that 'readers…are likely to see in the Father's defensiveness a classical precedent' (Blessington, p. 48). Martindale: 'In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton quotes with approval the passage in *Odyssey* 1 (32ff) in which Zeus denies that the gods are to blame for the sufferings of men' (Martindale, p. 58).

'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', 2.3)[255]

It is possible that this echo of the *Odyssey* in the speech of the Father can be attributed to Milton's characteristic ambidexterity in handling classical and biblical canons: the fusion between the two is a result of the 'eclectic' style that Greene argues was still part of Renaissance *imitatio*.[256] Yet this same Homeric *exemplum* recurs in Milton's theological treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*, in the fourth chapter, 'De Praedestinatione'. There it appears at the culmination of Milton's discussion of the doctrine of predestination, where he refutes the Calvinist doctrine of reprobation. Espousers of this doctrine proclaimed that the elect are predestined to salvation and others to damnation, irrespective of their actions. Among other examples, Milton cites Paul's letter to the Thessalonians as a refutation of this doctrine, in that 'all who did not believe in the truth, but who found solace in iniquity, may be condemned' ('ut damnentur omnes qui non crediderint veritati, sed acquieverint in iniustitia...' (2.*Thess.* ii. 12).[257] But in the final flourish of his argument, Milton draws an example from the pagan epic canon. He argues that a refutation of this doctrine of reprobation – and its challenge to divine justice – is found 'even in the pagan Homer', who expresses a theodicy 'in the person of Jupiter' at *Odyssey* 1.34, and provides a Latin translation of the Homeric lines:

> Haec qui attenderit, facile perspiciet, in hac potissimum doctrina esse toties offensum, dum poena obdurationis a decreto reprobationis non distinguitur...Accusant enim revera Deum, tametsi id vehementer negant: et ab Homero etiam ethnico egregie redarguuntur, *Odyss.* I.7.
>
> Αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο

[255] *Columbia Milton*, vol. 3, part 2, p. 441. See also Blessington, p. 101.
[256] Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p. 39. See Chapter 1, p. 41.
[257] J. Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana*, I.4, *Columbia Milton*, vol. 14, pp. 173-4. Note that Milton does not cite the Greek.

Suis enim ipsorum flagitiis perierunt.

Et rursus, inducta Iovis persona: Lib. I. 32.

Ὢ πόποι, οἷον δή νυ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται:

Ἐξ [sic] ἡμέων γάρ φασι κάκ᾽ ἔμμεναι, οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ

σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον, ἄλγε᾽ ἔχουσιν.

Papae, ut scilicet Deos, mortales accusant!

Ex nobis enim dicunt mala esse: illi vero ipsi

Suismet flagitiis, praeter fatum, dolores patiuntur.

[He who will have paid heed to such things will easily recognize that in this doctrine a principal mistake arises so often as the punishment of hardening of the heart is not distinguished from the decree of reprobation...For in truth they find fault with God, vehemently though they deny it: and are remarkably refuted by even the pagan Homer:

(...)

For they perished by their own folly. {Greek}

For they perished by means of their own misdemeanours. {Latin}

And once again, having assumed the character of Jupiter:

(...)

> Ah, that mortal men do lay blame upon the gods!
> They say that evils come from us, when it is they themselves
> Who suffer in excess of fate through their own sins. {Greek}
>
> Strange, to be sure, how mortals reproach the gods!
> For they say that evils come from us: (but) truly, it is they themselves
> who endure sufferings beyond fate through their own misdemeanours. {Latin}].[258]

Milton refers to Homer's Zeus by the name of his Roman counterpart, Jove, and includes a Latin translation of the Greek text of the *Odyssey*. The most recent commentators on *De Doctrina* note that parallel translation is not Milton's usual practice, and conclude that in this example 'the needs of faithful clarity are uppermost.' [259]

Despite his insistence in the opening of *De Doctrina* that he has drawn upon the sacred writings alone in setting out his Christian theology,[260] Milton's Homeric *exemplum* is, nevertheless, not an unusual practice among Christian theologians in the Renaissance.[261] Calling upon *exempla* from pagan authors was relatively common. Although Milton summons a range of ancient poets in *De Doctrina* alone, including Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, as well as

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[258] J. Milton, *De Doctrina*, p. 174.
[259] Campbell and Corns, *Milton and the Manuscript of De Doctrina Christiana*, p. 150.
[260] J. Milton, *De Doctrina*, *Columbia Milton*, vol. 14, p. 14. In the opening of *De Doctrina*, Milton anticipates charges of heresy, by claiming that he has adhered to sacred writings ('sacri libri') alone ('De me, libris tantummodo sacris adhaeresco'). Imitating the practices of contemporary biblical scholars and Hebraists, such as those of the Saumur Academy, whose work he admired, Milton declares his theological position chiefly by drawing upon Scripture. Campbell and Corns suggest that at the same time as he was likely to be composing *De Doctrina*, he wrote to his former pupil, Richard Jones, who was in Saumur, assuring him that 'So long as you remain there (in the society of learned men) you will be in harbour; elsewhere you will have to beware the Syrtes, the Rocks and the Song of the Sirens.' Campbell and Corns find in Milton's metaphor an image of his negotiation of various doctrines and discourses, of the 'quicksands of Roman Catholicism, the rocks of Calvinism and the Sirens' song of Lutheranism' (See Campbell, Corns, et al, pp. 91-2).
[261] Campbell and Corns, p. 149.

Euripides, Thucydides, and Plutarch, he exercised more restraint in his classical *exempla* than did his contemporary, John Owen.[262]

Other Homeric *exempla* in the Miltonic corpus

The interplay between similarity and difference is fundamental to the rhetoric of Milton's Homeric *exemplum* in his chapter on predestination (above). Campbell and Corns argue that Milton is calling upon a pagan author to describe a self-evident truth. Emphasis is placed on 'etiam' in their view – the point of emphasis being that this truth is so self-evident that 'even' the pagan Homer understood it.[263] Another Homeric *exemplum* in *De Doctrina* that relies on the 'etiam effect' occurs in Milton's discussion of modesty among the feminine virtues (*De Doctrina*, 2.9). Milton states that 'Talis etiam apud Gentes mulierum verecundia fuit' ('Such was the modesty even among the Gentiles'), and offers the example of Penelope as she is introduced in Book 1 of the *Odyssey*: 'ut Homerus de Penelope; Odyss. á: στῆ ῥα παρὰ σταθμὸν τέγεος πύκα ποιητοῖο... / stetit ad postem tecti ... (*De Doctrina*, 2.9, p. 220)' standing at the pillar of the densely-wrought roof', a picture of feminine modesty that Milton compares to the image of the Shunammite woman in the *Book of Kings*, who, summoned by Elias, stands modestly at his threshold ('quum vocasset eam stetit illa ad portam illius' , 2. *Reg.* iv.15).

The Homeric *exemplum* in Milton's chapter on predestination in *De Doctrina*, however, is unique. It is unique in its position, in the way it is used to illustrate such a contended point: Milton, moreover, is not the only Renaissance reader of Homer to regard these lines as acceptable in the light of Christian doctrine. In his critical apparatus to his 1606 edition of the

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[262] Ibid., p. 151.

[263] 'The extended allusion could elicit extended comment here, but perhaps it will do to select only *Homero etiam ethnico egregie redarguuntur*, "*Even* the pagan Homer' can supply us with an outstanding refutation' (Campbell and Corns, p. 150).

Odyssey, Homer's French commentator Spondanus (Jean de Sponde) also comments on these lines. We can safely assume that Milton would have been aware of this standard edition of the extant works of Homer, which included a Latin translation and commentary and formed the basis of Chapman and Pope's translations of Homer.[264] Spondanus' comment on this line of *Odyssey* 1.34 states:

> Elegans est hic locus, & no[n] Ethnico, sed Christiano homine plane dignus. Agnoscit enim Poeta sub Iouis loquentis persona, malorum quae hominibus contingunt, causam non esse in Deum, sed in ipsas hominum nequitias…
>
> [This is a sophisticated point, and clearly worthy for a Christian rather than a pagan man. For the poet, speaking in the person of Jupiter, recognises that God is not the cause of evils that befall humankind, but the actual depravities of men]. (J. de Sponde, *Homeric quae extant omnia…*, note 1.33 d)

For Spondanus the idea expressed in Zeus' complaint 'that mortal men do lay blame upon the gods' is worthy of a Christian man ('Christiano homine plane dignus') and appears almost out of place in a pagan poem. Similarly, the Flemish scholar Jodocus Badius Ascensius, in his 1558 commentary on the *Aeneid*, argued that Virgil's depiction of the underworld in Book 6 contains 'many things not unworthy of a Christian man' (multa Christiano non indigna).[265]

By endorsing lines from *Odyssey* 1 as a reinforcement of his argument against predestination in *De Doctrina*, Milton activates the unique interplay between similarity and difference that

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[264] Previous proof of Milton's use of Spondanus was contained in the annotations to an edition of Pindar that have now been excluded from the Miltonic corpus, following Kelley and Atkins' 1964 article, 'Milton and the Harvard Pindar' (*Studies in Bibliography*, vol. 17, 1964, 77-82).
[265] Ascensius, f. 237r, on *Aen.* 6, in Kallendorf, p. 54. On Ascensius' relationship to his predecessor Landino, see Kallendorf's discussion at p. 53.

was at the heart of interpretation of Homer's and Virgil's poems by Christian readers. The idea that these lines express a universal idea, one that transcends the gulf between pagan and Christian theology, makes it possible for Milton to recreate the context of this Homeric exemplum, that of the *concilium deorum*, in his Christian epic. This scene, which for Spondanus was more fitting for Christian than a pagan theology, is, for Milton, the starting point for the Father's theodicy in Book 3. Milton recreates both the Homeric type scene of the *concilium deorum*, and the language of Zeus in the first Olympian council of the *Odyssey* in the Father's theodicy in Book 3. Milton's challenge is to create a council scene in his Christian epic without resorting to allegory, and to maintain the conventions of the epic *concilium deorum* while upholding his Christian theodicy. In this way, as poet of *Paradise Lost*, Milton reflects the challenge that Kallendorf described for Virgilian commentators, to 'steer between the Scylla of ahistorical syncretism and the Charybdis of a pure classicism that had little bearing on an everyday life infused with the goals and values of Christianity.'[266] Kallendorf argues that the tension between these two opposing Renaissance tendencies of reading and commenting upon epic is resolved in Vida's *Christiad*, 'an epic poem whose fusion of the Christian and the Virgilian resolves the tension within the commentary tradition.'[267] I would argue further that Milton, following Vida, harmonizes the practices of both poet and epic critic by revising the Homeric *concilium* in light of Virgil's rereading of this Homeric model, thereby participating in a wider tradition of epic interpretation. In the Father's speech in Book 3, Milton addresses the question of fate in Homeric as well as Virgilian terms. In doing so, he attempts to resolve the theological tensions arising from the epic *concilia* as he fulfills the needs of his Christian theodicy in *Paradise Lost.*

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[266] Kallendorf, p. 43.
[267] Kallendorf, p. 43.

3.1.3. Christian predestination to epic fate: a retrospective view

The foreknowledge of Milton's God, of course, accords with the portrait of a providential deity. As Gregory argues, foreknowledge is a requirement of the Christian God, who must replace the Olympian pantheon. The providence of the Father replaces the abstract concept of fate.[268] In Book 7 of *Paradise Lost*, the Father declares: 'Necessitie and chance approach not me/ And what I will is fate' (*PL*.7.172-3),[269] thereby dismissing the idea of fate as an autonomous force separate from the providential godhead. Ben Gray Lumpkin comments that through this statement, and its counterpart in Milton's discussion of fate in *De Doctrina*, 'Milton was making God insist that Fate is neither God's superior or his agent.'[270] But Lumpkin goes one step further, and declares that the Father, by equating fate with his will, is thereby *replacing* this pagan notion with the idea of the providence of the Christian God.[271] Lumpkin argues that this is a similar refutation to that which we see in his invocation to the epic muse, Urania, through a simple substitution of a pagan notion with a Christian one:

> Just as Milton used the word *Urania*, the name of a classic muse, to mean 'the spirit of God in the form of Understanding,' he used *Fate* to mean the will or decree of God.[272]

As we saw in the first chapter, Milton emends his invocation to Urania at the opening of Book 7, claiming that it is 'the meaning, not the Name I call' (*PL*.7.5). In the case of fate, however, as it exists in Milton's Virgilian model in epic, the meaning and the name are synonymous. The verb for speaking implies the word for fate in the Latin language, a link that Virgil utilizes

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[268] Gregory, p. 6.
[269] Fowler notes of these lines as 'Undercutting Satan's Stoic fatalism' (see Fowler, 2nd edition, p. 399, note 173).
[270] B. G. Lumpkin, 'Fate in *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in Philology*, 44.1, 1947, 56-68, 60.
[271] An idea echoed by Gregory, p. 9.
[272] Lumpkin, p. 59, note 13.

in the prophetic speeches of Jupiter in the *Aeneid*, and that Servius asserts in a note to *Aen.* 4.614 ('et sic fata Iouis poscunt; 'and if the fates of Jove demand that it be so'): 'fata: dicta, id est Iovis voluntas' ('fates: things having been spoken, that is, the will of Jove').[273] Virgil's epic language of fate is itself a revision of the Homeric model: it is a language, moreover, that Milton deliberately recalls in the spirit of *aemulatio* rather than *retractatio* – a technique that retains a link to the original model, achieving the ultimate corrective reading of ancient epic ideas of fate.[274]

In his chapter entitled 'De Deo' ('On [the nature of] God') of *De Doctrina*, Milton had asserted the nature of the cosmos as proof for the existence of an omnipotent deity, and dismisses the idea of an abstract concept of fate without an originator. By tracing an etymological parallel between the Latin concept of 'nature', which implies an agent ('nator'), Milton argues, so the concept of 'fatum' must presuppose a speaker:

> Nonnulli naturam aut fatum supremum quoddam in rebus esse argutantur: sed natura natam se fatetur...et fatum quid nisi effatum divinum omnipotentis cuiuspiam numinis potest esse?
>
> [A number of people argue that nature or fate is something supreme amongst things: but nature acknowledges itself as having been born....and fate: what else can it be but a divine utterance belonging to some omnipotent divinity?][275]

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[273] Servius, vol. 1. p. 571.

[274] On the point of Milton's *aemulatio* rather than *retractatio* in the language of epic fate, I disagree with both Lumpkin and Blessington, who argue that the Father's declaration 'What I will is fate' is a refutation not only of Satan's false rhetoric of fate, but of the concept of epic fate in general. See Lumpkin, p. 60, and Blessington, p. 42.

[275] J. Milton, *De Doctrina*, I.2, *Columbia Milton*, vol. 14, p. 26.

Gregory has argued that the epic concepts of '*moira* and *fatum* are supplanted [in Christian epic] by the more theologically precise concept of divine providence.'[276] Homeric *moira* and Virgilian *fatum* are, however, not the same concept: between them there is a tradition of criticism that addresses the charge of Zeus' relative helplessness in light of fate in *Iliad* 16. While a full survey of epic fate as it exists in Homer and Virgil is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will demonstrate how some of the issues raised in the Homeric dialogues on Olympos between Zeus and the goddesses Thetis, Herē, and Athenē continue to be explored in Virgil's own Olympian scenes. These dialogues become part of the Virgilian tradition that inherited by Vida and Milton, who revise these epic scenes to suit the portrait of an epic universe governed by a providential Christian God.

Fate in Homer

In *Odyssey* 1, Zeus complains that men heap sufferings on themselves 'ὑπὲρ μόρον' 'beyond their lot'. The term μόρος is, in this example, translated as 'one's lot in life or portion', or, in this context, the decrees of fate (see, μόρος (3) in Cunliffe, s.v.).

According to West, Zeus' statement 'at first sight looks like a theological paradox'.[277] The fact that Zeus does not elaborate on the idea of humans suffering 'beyond fate', however, contributes to West's opinion that this view represents a standard view of Homeric theology.[278] But the idea of Homeric fate, and, specifically, its relationship to the father of the gods, is one of the unresolved questions of Homeric theology, and a question that arises in the Olympian council scenes.

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[276] Gregory, p. 6.

[277] A. Heubeck, S. West, J. B. Hainsworth (ed.), *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. 1 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988), p. 78, note to ll. 34-5.

[278] '[I]f the poet had meant that wicked men can frustrate or circumvent destiny, he would surely have explained so abnormal a view in greater detail' (Heubeck et al, p. 78, note 34-5). Here I think Zeus is referring to a meaning of moros that is more closely aligned to moira, signifying 'lot' or 'portion', and carrying a sense of decorum (eg. 'due measure'), rather than 'fate' or 'destiny'. See Cunliffe, s.v.

The word μόρος, along with μοῖρα and αἶσα are the most common terms that convey the idea of fate in Homer, including the sense of fate as death or doom.[279] Both αἶσα and μοῖρα can also signify personified fate, in the singular (αἶσα *Il.* 20.127, *Od.* 7.197, μοῖρα: *Il.* 19. 87, 410, 24. 209), and in the plural ('Μοῖραι', 'the Fates', *Il.* 24. 49).[280] The personification of fate is retained in the Latin *Parcae* – the Roman equivalent of the Greek Μοῖραι, possibly based on a false etymology.[281]

The English 'fate' is linked to the Latin and not the Greek tradition: the English fate is derived from the Latin *fatum*, which itself is related to the verb *'for/fari'* to speak.[282] The Virgilian tradition relies upon a conception of fate that, in Homer, is the exception rather than the rule: the idea of fate as spoken by a god θέσφατος (-ον) is a rare Homeric occurrence. Fate is identified with divine speech in only two instances in the *Iliad*; in Book 5.64, and again in Book 8, where the construction θέσφατόν ἐστι (*Il.* 8. 477) follows a speech where Zeus announces to Herē the *aristeia* of Hektor and the death of Patroklos (*Il.* 8. 469-477).[283]

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[279] See Cunliffe, s.v.

[280] See Cunliffe, s.v.

[281] Parca: as an alternative Roman personification is, according the OLD 'identified (apparently by false etymology) with the Greek *Moirai* and then pluralized to correspond with them. (see OLD s.v.).

[282] See OED, s.v.

[283] Kirk argues that is it not clear whether Zeus is referring here to his general will and/or foreknowledge or alluding to his more recent weighing of the fates of the two armies on his scales at *Il.*8.68-74 (Kirk, vol. 2, p. 334).

Part 2. Dialogues on Olympos: Christian epic and the Virgilian language of fate

3.2.1. Homeric questions of fate: Zeus and Hera

The scene in the *Iliad* that brings up the question of fate in the poem is not a full council of the gods, but a scene of divine intercession between Zeus and Thetis. In Book 1 Thetis travels to Olympos to intercede on behalf of her son Achilleus and finds Zeus sitting apart from the other gods on his Olympian height. She clasps Zeus' knees with her left hand and holds his chin with her right, before addressing him (*Il.* 1. 500-2). Thetis' intercession is a ritual that is a common type-scene on the human plane in Homer. In the *Iliad*, supplication on the battlefield is made for the life of the suppliant; it is always unsuccessful.[284] This is another area where the lives on the mortal plane contrast with the divine one. Unlike human intercessions, however, where the results are played out there and then, the result of Thetis' intercession has far-reaching consequences, not only for the fate of her son Achilleus, but for the action of the poem. Thetis' intercession is successful, and elicits a promise from Zeus that will bring the action on the divine sphere into alignment with the human one, a promise that is tested in *Iliad* 16, as the full consequences of Zeus' plan become personal, and are played out in his dialogue with Herē.

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[284] Griffin pointed out that 'the scene of a warrior begging for his life comes five times in the *Iliad*, and every time the suppliant is in fact slain' (J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, Claredon Press, 1983), p. 53. The most dramatic scene of supplication in the *Iliad* occurs between Achilleus and Lycaon, who is another of Priam's sons (see *Iliad* 21.34-119). The scene is dramatic for a number of reasons: Lycaon is also a son of Priam, and had previously been captured by Achilleus, but subsequently released for a ransom. The memory of Achilleus' previous practice with suppliants is contrasted with his present treatment of Lykaon: he disregards his supplication, kills him, and throws his body in the river, an act that foreshadows his treatment of Hektor's body. Finally, Achilleus' speech to Lykaon, right before he kills him, is a subversion of the language of kinship, and highlights Achilleus' alienation from the Homeric social code (Achilleus addresses Lykaon as φίλος, 'friend', *Il.*21.106) while emphasizing the inherent tragedy of the heroic way of life for the Homeric warrior, whether Greek or Trojan, where each man, including Achilleus himself, is fated to die (see *Il.* 21.103-113). For a perceptive and authoritative discussion of this scene, see Schein, *The Mortal Hero*, p. 147ff.

This moment stands in sharp relief against Zeus' prophecy at *Il.* 15. 65-7, where he foretells the *aristeia* of Patroklos, which will result in the death of his son Sarpedon among his other victims. Now, however, faced with the imminent death of his son, Zeus protests at his own pronouncement: that which he had resolved in *Iliad* 1, and confirmed in *Iliad* 15 (where he forbids the gods to interfere until he has honoured his promise to Thetis, *Il.* 15. 72-77), he considers reversing.[285]

The poignancy of this scene, it has been argued, is to show the tension between Zeus the most powerful of the Olympian gods, who can alter the course of events, and Zeus the bereaved father, likened for a moment to the human bereaved fathers of the *Iliad.* This seems to be largely a modern revision of the ancient objections to the anthropomorphism of Zeus in this scene. The scholiasts explained Zeus' anthropomorphic pity of Sarpedon through the idea of accommodation.[286] Janko, on the other hand, argues that Zeus' pity adds to the pathos of the poem, picking up the leitmotiv of the bereaved fathers of the *Iliad.*[287] The big difference between the father of the gods and the bereaved fathers of the *Iliad* is that Zeus *can* save Sarpedon. What, or, rather, who persuades him not to do so is Herē.

Objections to Herē's interventions with Zeus, here and at other points in the narrative, date back to Xenophanes' earliest comments on the depiction of the Homeric gods.[288] The ability of a goddess who is clearly weaker than Zeus, but who is capable of affecting his actions is evident in the notorious Διὸς ἀπάτη, the deception of Zeus, in Book 14 of the *Iliad* (14.153-

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[285] Kirk, however, suggests that the emphatic 'my son' 'υἱὸν ἐμὸν' at *Iliad* 15.67 already shows Zeus' partiality and foreshadows his inner conflict in *Iliad* 16 (Kirk, p. 235, note 56-77).
[286] See bT 8.429, in Feeney, pp. 46-7.
[287] 'Even the king of the gods must share the lot of the bereaved fathers whose grief is a leitmotif in the poem' (Janko, *The Iliad: a commentary*, vol. 4, p. 375).
[288] Xenophanes [B.11], see my discussion in Chapter 1.

353).[289] Other Olympian scenes also raise this question of relative power: where our expectations of Zeus as the omnipotent deity are subverted by Herē's powers of manipulation and her status as his spouse. Herē is aware that she does not have power over Zeus – she acknowledges his superior strength in a speech to Zeus in *Iliad* 4 (55-7).[290] But Herē is quick to remind him that she is also his wife (as well as one of Kronos' daughter, *Il.* 4. 58-61), a status that carries its own privileges. Herē exercises spousal authority that turns Zeus at times into a henpecked husband: his promise to Thetis is prefaced by a concern that Herē will cause him strife (*Il.* 1. 517-21).

In Book 16, however, Zeus addresses Herē of his own accord, expressing doubt about what action to undertake: whether to intervene on the battlefield or to leave Sarpedon to his fate. At this moment to confide in Herē would seem foolish – the stepmother of Sarpedon, with a hatred for the Trojans, she has double reason to argue only one position. And her attempt to dissuade him is not surprising. But the way she does it is what interests us. Herē protests, beginning her speech with an echo of the language she had used in *Iliad* 1, when she recoils at Zeus' assertion that he could be considering a decision – such as his recent promise to Thetis – without consulting her (*Il.* 1. 545-50):

> τὸν δ' ἠμείβετ' ἔπειτα βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη:
>
> αἰνότατε Κρονίδη ποῖον τὸν μῦθον ἔειπες;

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[289] Herē deliberately uses her proximity to Zeus as his spouse, deceives Aphrodite (with lying purpose: δολοφρονέουσα, 14.197) into granting her 'sex-appeal' (φιλότητα καὶ ἵμερον, 14.198). She bribes Ὕπνος Sleep (14.233-41) to cover Zeus' eyes with sleep after their love-making, thereby ensuring that he cannot intervene in the fighting and the Greeks may gain an advantage over the Trojans.

[290] Zeus can easily dismiss or punish her, as he reminds her in *Iliad* 15. After awakening from his deep sleep and realizing Herē's deception, Zeus recalls her previous punishment: he reminds her how he hung her by her feet in the air among the clouds, (ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλῃσιν, *Il.*15.20), and bound her hands with a golden chain, and prevented the other gods from helping her, a story that leaves her frightened (ῥίγησεν δὲ βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη, *Il.*15.34).

[Then the ox-eyed lady Herē spoke to him in answer:

Most dread son of Kronos, what sort of thing have you spoken?] (*Il*.1. 551-2 = 16. 439-40)

Herē's statement contains repeated elements from other addresses, including her standard address of Zeus: αἰνότατε Κρονίδη ('most dread son of Kronos') is a homage to his power among the gods, as well as the preface to the rebuke that immediately follows.[291] Herē asks 'what sort of a thing have you said'? (ποῖον τὸν μῦθον ἔειπες), an exclamation that, as Elizabeth Minchin has shown, is 'reserved in the *Iliad* for Herē', and always introduces a protest to Zeus.[292]

Herē uses the same question again in the council scene on Olympos in *Iliad* 4, and follows it with defiant: ἔρδ'– do it! – an imperative that is aimed at producing the opposite effect. Herē cannot order Zeus to do anything: she knows she does not have the power. Consequently, her argument to dissuade Zeus does not focus on what he can and cannot do, but what he *ought* do. As she had previously done in Book 4, Herē makes the argument about Olympian politics, and warns Zeus of the precedent he will set for the other gods:

αἰνότατε Κρονίδη ποῖον τὸν μῦθον ἔειπες:

(…)

ἔρδ'· ἀτὰρ οὔ τοι πάντες ἐπαινέομεν θεοὶ ἄλλοι.

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[291] Herē addresses Zeus as 'αἰνότατος at *Il.* 1.552, 4.25, 8.462, 14.330, 16.440, and 18.361. As well as acknowledging his power and relative status among the gods on Olympos, this term it could also carry a pejorative sense (as when Iris uses it of Athenē at *Il.*8.423, see Kirk, vol. 1, p. 111, note 552).

[292] E. Minchin, 'The Words of Gods: Divine Discourse in Homer's *Iliad*', in A. P. Lardinos, J. H. Blok, M. G. M. Van der Poel (ed.), *Orality and Literacy in The Ancient World*, vol. 8 (Leiden and Boston, Brill), 2011, p. 22.

[Most dread son of Kronos, what kind of a thing have you said?

Do it: but we, all the other gods, will not praise you for it.] (*Il.* 4. 25-9 = 16. 440-3)

But Herē uses another argument in her address to Zeus, one which may be the most convincing. For this she does not resort to her spousal authority (as the scholiast comments on *Iliad* 1)[293] or to feminine wiles (as in the Διὸς ἀπάτη). Instead, Herē points out that in saving either Sarpedon from death, he will be acting against what has long since been fated, in lines that will be repeated by Athenē in Book 22 in connection with the death of Hektor:

ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόντα πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ

ἆψ ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ἐξαναλῦσαι;

[You want to take back a man who is mortal, long doomed by fate,

And free him from woeful death?] (*Il.* 16. 441-2 = 22. 179-80)

The bT scholiast identifies αἶσα with its synonym μοῖρα in commenting on *Il.*16.441:

441. πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ: κεκριμένον τῇ μοίρᾳ... b (BCE3E4) T[294]

[441. 'destined by fate {here: αἶσα}: chosen by fate {here: μοῖρα}...]

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[293] Kirk refers to the comment by the bT scholiast at line 542: 'δυσχεραίνουσιν αἱ γυναῖκες, εἰ μὴ πάντα αὐταῖς ἀνακοινοῖντο οἱ ἄνδρες' ('wives are angry if their husbands do not share everything with them' (Erbse, vol. 1, p. 147). See Kirk, vol. 1, p. 110, note to ll. 540-3.

[294] Erbse, vol. 4, p. 259, note to l. 441.

Herē's argument from αἶσα in Book 16 stands in contrast with Athenē's echoing of the same lines in *Iliad* 22. Zeus considers saving Hektor and Athenē reminds him that his time has come, in a repetition of Herē's statement at *Iliad* 16 ('Go ahead and do it!). What is different about the scene in Book 22 is the manner of Zeus' reassuring response to Athenē:

> τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις
> ὦ πάτερ ἀργικέραυνε κελαινεφὲς οἷον ἔειπες:
> ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόντα πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ
> ἄψ ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ἐξαναλῦσαι;
> ἔρδ': ἀτὰρ οὔ τοι πάντες ἐπαινέομεν θεοὶ ἄλλοι.
> τὴν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς:
> θάρσει Τριτογένεια φίλον τέκος: οὔ νύ τι θυμῷ
> πρόφρονι μυθέομαι, ἐθέλω δέ τοι ἤπιος εἶναι:
> ἔρξον ὅπῃ δή τοι νόος ἔπλετο, μηδέ τ' ἐρώει.
>
> [And to him grey-eyed Athenē spoke in response: 'O father, wielder of the bright thunderbolt, god of the black cloud, what kind of a thing have you said:
> Do you wish to take back a man, who is mortal and long doomed by fate and free him from woeful death? Do it! But we, all the other gods, will not praise you for it. And cloud-gathering Zeus spoke to her in answer: Take courage, dear child, Triton-born: in no way do I say what I intend in my heart, and my wish is to be well disposed towards you.] (*Il.* 22.177-85)

In *Iliad* 22.208-13 Zeus enacts fate by holding forth his golden scales. Erbse notes that this externalizing is not for the benefit of the gods or humans, but serves as a signal to the

audience that what is happening is fate.[295] In Book 16, none of this allegorical sense is present: the image of the scales is absent, as is the associated sense of impartiality that it carries. Indeed, it is precisely Zeus' partiality that contributes to the drama of the scene. For the T scholiast, this prompted the charge that he is responsible for Sarpedon's death directly, as reflected in the verb he uses: δαμάσσω (I will subdue (him)), and, by emphasizing ἤδη in line 438, goes as far as to say that Zeus' decision revolves not around whether or not to kill Sarpedon, but *when* to do it, now or later:

> ἤ ἤδη <ὑπὸ χερσὶ Μενοιτιάδαο δαμάσσω>: τὸ ἑξῆς ἤ ἤδη δαμάσ<σ>ω: οὐ γὰρ τοῦτο βουλεύεται ὁ Ζεύς, εἰ ὕστερον ὑπὸ Πατρόκλῳ δαμάσει τὸν Σαρπηδόνα, ἀλλ εἰ ἤδη δαμάσει, τουτέστι νῦν ὑπὸ Πατρόκλῳ δαμάσει. T
>
> ['Whether now' (I will subdue him at the hands of the son of Menoitios): the next statement being 'whether I will subdue him presently': for Zeus is not debating the question of whether he will subdue Sarpedon later at the hands of Patroklos, but if he will subdue him presently, that is if he will subdue him now beneath the hands of Patroklos.]

The b scholiast attempts to clarify this statement by shifting the emphasis away from the temporality of the decision and arguing that Zeus is considering saving Sarpedon in real terms:

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[295] 'Die Wägung ist also eine Demonstration – nicht etwa vor den übringen Göttern, die den Ausgang des Kampfes kennen und durch den Ausschlag der Waage nur (wie Apollon) über den Beginn der Katastrophe unterrichtet werden, aber auch nicht vor den beteiligten Menschen, die weiterhin im Unklaren über das Kommende bleiben müssen, sondern vor dem Hörer: Ihm wird vor Augen geführt, daß das, was hier geschieht , der μοῖρα entspricht' (H. Erbse, *Untersuchungen zur Funktion der Götter im Homerischen Epos* (Berlin, New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1986, p. 289).

οὐκ ἔστι δισταγμοῦ τὸ ἤ ἤδη δαμάσσω: οὐ γὰρ τοῦτο σκέπτεται ὁ Ζεύς, εἰ ὕστερον ὑπὸ Πατρόκλῳ δαμάσει, ἀλλ ὅτι δύο βούλεται, ἤ σῶσαι ἤ δαμάσαι νῦν. **b** (BCE3E4)

[There is no doubt in the statement 'whether I will subdue him presently': for Zeus is not considering whether he will subdue Sarpedon later at the hands of Patroklos; but that statement rather implies that he is debating two options, whether at this moment to save Sarpedon or subdue him.]

The problems of Zeus' direct agency, or the arbitrariness of his decision, are ones that Eustathius addresses in a comment on *Iliad* 16.435. He argues that the poet arranges the scene so that Sarpedon is found to die through fate, and not by the arbitrary will of Zeus, so as to avoid the charge that Zeus is tyrannical ('τυραννικὸς'), in sparing his own son, but allowing Achilleus, another hero with divine parentage, to be killed, an event that is alluded to but not fulfilled in the *Iliad*.[296] Eustathius argued that by referring to the death of Achilleus, Homer anticipated the consequences of this decision not just in the course of the poem, but in the epic cycle. According to Eustathius, although Herē argues convincingly (προβαλλομένη πιθανῶς)[297] about the precedent Zeus may set for the other gods, it is fate that is the trump card in this scene. Eustathius thus separates the idea of fate from the rhetoric of Herē, a view that has continued in Homeric scholarship on this scene: Janko points out that this scene is unremarkable for Homeric theology in that 'nothing ever happens contrary to fate in the

[296] *Eustathii Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem et Odysseam,* (Hildesheim, G. Olms, 1960), vol. 3, p. 335.
[297] *Eustathii,* vol. 3, p. 334.

Iliad.'[298]

At the same time, however, the conflict that Zeus feels at this moment is a real one. Whether we believe that it was Herē's argument about Olympian politics or the argument about fate that ultimately convinces Zeus to let Sarpedon die (or whether indeed he acts of his own accord), what is significant in this scene for the later epic tradition is that, for a moment at least, fate seems to stand at odds with Zeus' will. As Janko points out, the scene ends, while the question of fate, and its relationship to the father of the gods, lingers on, unanswered.[299] Following Janko, I would argue that it is this question that remains the inheritance of the epic tradition: Janko states that 'the tangled relation between fate, human freedom, and the gods was left for later thinkers to unravel'. In the next section of this chapter, I will consider how Virgil inherits this theological question about Homeric fate, and transforms it in the *Aeneid*, in his first scene on Olympos. Virgil's revision, in turn, paves the way for the reimagining of fate in Christian epic as it is aligned to the will of the Christian God.

3.2.2. Virgilian recreations: Jupiter and Venus

In Chapter 1, we examined the manner in which Virgil begins his *Aeneid* by mirroring the emphatic way in which the divine machinery is set up in the *Iliad*, where an Olympian scene appears early in the poem. Virgil was not the first Roman poet to attempt to emulate the Homeric divine machinery and adapt it to Latin epic. Casting the Roman gods in the place

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[298] Janko (ed.), *The Iliad: a commentary*, vol. 4, p. 5. Janko further alludes to the role of the conditional as the closest glimpse of events being contrary to fate. I discuss the Homeric conditional, and Milton's adaptation of it, in Chapter 4. This idea of fate as a fixed concept in Homeric theology is confirmed in *Iliad* 6, where Hektor reassures Andromache that no man will be able to hurl him to Hades beyond what is fated (ὑπὲρ αἶσαν), and that μοῖρα is inescapable, for both a bad and a good man (*Il.* 6. 486-9).
[299] Janko points out that the scene ends, but '[Zeus'] protest against fate does not prove that he can reverse it' and 'the question of relative power, though posed, is left unanswered' (Janko, vol. 4, p. 375, note to ll. 431-61).

occupied by Homer's Olympian deities had, as Feeney points out, already been accomplished by the time Naevius composed his epic on the first war of Rome with Carthage.[300] Both Naevius' *Bellum Punicum* and Ennius' *Annales* trace their stories back to Troy, and, presumably, transpose the partialities of the Homeric gods onto their Roman counterparts: Herē becomes the vengeful Juno, bent on thwarting Aeneas' attempt to found a new Troy.[301] The 'violence from above' ('vi superum', *Aen.* 1. 3) that follows Aeneas, is primarily identified with Juno's wrath ('ira').[302] Feeney has shown that the Roman Juno, in Ennius' transformation, could also be identified with the Carthaginian goddess Tanit. If we accept this Ennian precedent as a model for Virgil's divine machinery in the *Aeneid*, the wrath of Virgil's Juno is 'memor', as it recalls the wrath of Homer's Herē (*Aen.* 1. 23-4). But Juno's 'ira' is also proleptic, in that it anticipates the future war of Rome with Carthage.[303]

Virgil's Jupiter, like Homer's Zeus, appears after a delay in the poem, a delay that puts the carefree lives of the gods in sharp contrast with the difficulties facing heroes on the human plane.[304] In Book 1 of the *Aeneid*, Jupiter turns his gaze from his heavenly height ('sic vertice caeli', *Aen.* 1.225) to Libya after the storm has been calmed by Neptune. The phrase 'iam finis erat' (*Aen.* 1.223) could refer to the end of the storm or, as Austin suggests, to the end of

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[300] Feeney, p. 115. Feeney further notes that the practice of finding equivalents for one nation's deities in another's was not limited to the Romans in their appropriation of the Greek pantheon, but was 'a habit of thought diffused round the Mediterranean' (see Feeney, pp. 115-6).

[301] For the possibility that Juno is the hostile deity alluded to in Naevius' conversation between Jupiter and Venus, based on its imitation of the conversation between Zeus and Athenē in *Odyssey* 1, see Feeney, p. 116-7.

[302] See Austin: The implication in *superum* is made more precise by *Iunonis ob iram* (Austin, p. 30, note to l. 4).

[303] 'This historical perspective of Ennius and the mythical perspective of Homer converge in this one character [Virgil's Juno], heightening and extending her force, and making her traditional malevolence oppressively meaningful in a Roman context' (Feeney, p. 131).

[304] In Book 1 of the *Iliad*, Zeus and the other gods return to Olympos on the twelfth day, after feasting with the Aithiopes, the Ethiopians (*Il.*1.423-5, 1.493-5). Ethiopia is also the place that Poseidon visits in the opening of the *Odyssey* (*Od.*1.22-5): this explains his absence at the assembly of the gods in *Odyssey* 1 and makes it possible for the gods to plot against his plan to keep Odysseus on the island of Calypso.

'one chapter of the Trojan's affairs'[305] and the signaling of a shift in the narrative.[306] Feeney notes that, paradoxically, '[f]rom the beginning Jupiter is associated with the end',[307] a paradox contained in the first line that introduces him:

> Et iam finis erat, cum Iuppiter aethere summo
> despiciens mare velivolum terrasque iacentis
> litoraque et latos populos, sic vertice caeli
> constitit et Libyae defixit lumina regnis.
>
> [And now was the end, when Jupiter, looking down from the highest heaven, on the sail-winged sea and the scattered lands, on the shores and the nations far and wide, thus looking over the height of heaven, stopped, and fixed his eyes upon the kingdoms of Libya.] (*Aen.* 1. 223-6)

Jupiter's neglect of the mortal sphere is the source of Venus' reproach in *Aeneid* 1.[308] As was the case with Thetis' supplication for Achilleus, Venus is concerned with the fate of her son, 'meus Aeneas' (*Aen.* 1. 231 below). She reproaches Jupiter for the sufferings of Aeneas and his men:

> atque illum talis iactantem pectore curas
> tristior et lacrimis oculos suffusa nitentis
> adloquitur Venus: 'o qui res hominumque deumque

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[305] Austin, p. 87.
[306] Williams comments on this phrase as 'a curious transition, vaguely and majestically suggesting that when the mortals had fallen to sleep the king of the gods disposes the affairs with which they had exhausted themselves' (Williams, p. 177, note to l. 223).
[307] Feeney, pp. 137ff.
[308] Williams notes that 'the scene in heaven [in *Aeneid* 1.223 ff] is based to begin with on the complaints by Thetis to Zeus in Hom. *Il.* 1.495f., and of Athenē to Zeus in *Od.* 5.5f.' (Williams, p. 177, note to ll. 223f.).

aeternis regis imperiis et fulmine terres,

quid meus Aeneas in te committere tantum

quid Troes potuere, quibus tot funera passis

cunctus ob Italiam terrarum clauditur orbis?

[And Venus addressed him as he was mulling over such cares in his heart, Venus, who was sadder than usual, and drenched with tears pouring from her shining eyes: 'Oh you who rule the affairs of men and of gods with eternal command, and who spread terror with your lighting-bolt, what great crime has my Aeneas committed against you, and what could the Trojans have done, to whom, who have endured so many deaths , the whole world is closed on account of Italy.] (*Aen.* 1. 227-233)

Virgil's Venus is bolder than both Homer's Thetis and Naevius' Venus, whose self-abasing 'Summe deum regnator, quianam me genuisti?)[309] is a possible echo of Thetis' self- abasing appeal to Zeus in *Iliad* 1:

ὣς φάτο: τὴν δ' οὔ τι προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς,

ἀλλ' ἀκέων δὴν ἦστο: Θέτις δ' ὡς ἥψατο γούνων

ὡς ἔχετ' ἐμπεφυυῖα, καὶ εἴρετο δεύτερον αὖτις:

νημερτὲς μὲν δή μοι ὑπόσχεο καὶ κατάνευσον

ἢ ἀπόειπ', ἐπεὶ οὔ τοι ἔπι δέος, ὄφρ' ἐῢ εἰδῶ

ὅσσον ἐγὼ μετὰ πᾶσιν ἀτιμοτάτη θεός εἰμι.

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[309] One of the versions of fragment 17* [14]: 'Summe deum regnator, quianam genus <od>isti?' (W. Strzelecki (ed.), *Cn. Naevii Belli Punici carminis quae supersunt* (Kraków, Teubner, 1964). Cf E. H. Warmington (ed.), *The Remains of Old Latin*, vol. 2 (London, Heinemann, 1957), p. 54.

[Thus she spoke, and cloud-gathering Zeus gave no response to her,
But sat for a long time in silence: and Thetis, as she had clasped his knees,
so she held on, clinging closely to them, and she asked him a second time once more: 'Promise me this infallible thing and nod your head to confirm it,
or else refuse it, since there is no fear hanging over you, so that I may know well just how dishonoured I am among all the gods.] (*Il.* 1.511-16)

Virgil's Venus, unlike her Homeric counterpart and Naevian predecessor, exacts a promise from Jupiter with reproach, not supplication. She addressing him with a lengthy apostrophe 'o qui res hominumque deumque / aeternis regis imperiis et fulmine terres',[310] and follows with a reproachful question (quid meus Aeneas in te committere tantum / quid Troes potuere, quibus tot funera passis / cunctus ob Italiam terrarum clauditur orbis?). The more obvious model for this assertive address is in Athenē's reproach to Zeus in *Odyssey* 1 (*Od.*1.45-62), where she combines a propitiatory address, by addressing Zeus as 'ὔπατε' (*Od.* 1.45), and following up with a reproach (τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὠδύσαο, Ζεῦ; 1. 62).

But Virgil's Venus has one more weapon in her rhetorical arsenal. She alludes to an earlier promise he had made about Aeneas, when Troy was about to fall:

certe hinc Romanos olim uoluentibus annis,
hic fore ductores, reuocato a sanguine Teucri,
qui mare, qui terras omnis dicione tenerent,
pollicitus – quae te, genitor, sententia vertit?

[310] Feeney argues that there is a further layer of transmission between Homer and Virgil through Naevius, arguing that the epithet 'supremum' (Naevius, fr. 15) is a nod to the Homeric epithet ὔπατε: see Feeney, p. 113.

hoc equidem occasum Troiae tristisque ruinas
solabar fatis contraria fata rependens;
nunc eadem fortuna uiros tot casibus actos
insequitur. quem das finem, rex magne, laborum?

[Surely you promised once that, henceforth, with the passing of years, the Romans would become leaders from the restored blood-line of Teucer, and they would hold the sea and all the lands in their power. You promised! What argument, father, has changed your mind?[311] Indeed, this was my consolation for the destruction of Troy and its sad ruin, when I weighed one fate against the other. Now the same misfortune overtakes them, men who have been subjected to so many sufferings. What limit will you give to their suffering?] (*Aen.* 1 .234-41)

As Feeney notes, Venus' statement relates back to the Homeric bargain: Virgil, like Naevius, is tracing the history of Jupiter and Venus to the bargain between Zeus and Aphrodite at the fall of Troy (an event that dictates the course of events in the *Aeneid*), and Jupiter's responsibility to uphold his end of the deal. Servius identified Venus' description of herself as weighing fate against fate ('fata contraria fata rependens') as a pecuniary metaphor.[312] For E. L. Harrison, however, the idea of *fatum*, as it exists in the *Aeneid,* is 'ultimately based on an agreement made by Jupiter with Venus at Troy'.[313] Harrison's argument would imply that Virgilian *fatum*, which he traces to Zeus' promise to Herē, is synonymous with the Διὸς βουλή

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[311] Austin comments on 'pollicitus': '"You *promised*", says Venus to her father, like any disappointed daughter' (Austin, p. 90, note to l. 237).
[312] '239. FATIS CONTRARIA FATA utrum fatis bonis in praesentibus? REPENDENS conpensas. Et est translatio a pecunia' (Servius, vol. 1, p. 89). See also Williams, p. 178, note 239.
[313] Harrison argues that 'Any consideration of the divine action in the *Aeneid* must begin with Fatum, Jupiter's plan for the future Roman world. (...) For just as all but one of the major Homeric plans originate as concessions made by Zeus to importunate goddesses, so Fatum is ultimately based on an agreement made by Jupiter with Venus at Troy, before the final debacle.' (E. L. Harrison, 'The *Aeneid* and Carthage', in T. Woodman, A. Woodman, D. West (ed.), *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 95-117, p. 105).

alluded to in the opening of the *Iliad*, and in turn governs the divine and human action of the *Aeneid*. How far we can trace the promise of Zeus in the Homeric cycle to the μῆνις plot is difficult to establish, not least because of the debate around the precise nature of Διὸς βουλή in *Iliad* 1.5; nevertheless, the allusion to this promise extends the epic time frame and creates a continuity between the Homeric gods and the Virgilian counterparts. The main point of difference between the theology assumed in these Homeric and Virgilian scenes lies in Jupiter's relationship to this promise: whereas in *Iliad* 16 Herē challenged Zeus with the idea of fate, there is no such conflict in Virgil's Jupiter: Venus' reminder of an earlier promise results in Jupiter's 'smiling reassurance' and in an assertion of his relationship to fate:[314]

> Olli subridens hominum sator atque deorum
> vultu, quo caelum tempestatesque serenat,
> oscula libavit natae, dehinc talia fatur:
> 'parce metu, Cytherea, manent immota tuorum
> fata tibi; cernes urbem et promissa Lavini
> moenia sublimemque feres ad sidera caeli
> magnanimum Aenean; neque me sententia vertit.

> [He, the father of gods and men, smiling at her, with the face that calms the skies and soothes the storms, kissed his daughter. Next he made such a speech: 'Spare your fears, Cytherea: as far as you are concerned, the fates of your people remain unmoved: you will see a city and the promised walls of Lavinium and you will raise

[314] Jupiter's response to Venus' complaint at *Aeneid* 1 is solemn and reassuring (see Austin, p, 98, note 543 for Virgil's echoing of Ennius, *Ann.*457f., and Schaar: 'The diction in the lines on the benevolent deity has a lofty character: the archaic 'olli', the solemn 'subridens' – both words used by Virgil in the *Aeneid* only, and three times out of four together', Schaar, p. 140). Cf the Father's 'smile more bright'nd' as he responds to Adam's complaint about his solitude in Eden, and his request for a companion (*PL*. 8. 368).

great-hearted Aeneas (high) up to the stars of heaven. No argument has turned me'.]

(*Aen.*1.254-60)

Austin notes that 'tibi' in this context functions as an ethic dative,[315] carrying the sense of concern and reassurance, and suggest a translation of 'you'll see', or 'I tell you'.[316] Jupiter's word counts for everything: and he uses no ordinary word to signal the function of his speech. Virgil introduces Jupiter's prophetic reassurance with the verb 'fatur', a cognate of 'fatum'. The speech of Venus, by contrast, is introduced with the verb 'adloquor'. Virgil further implies Jupiter's insight, if not his governance of fate by making him privy to its secrets: in order to make his prophecy, Jupiter puts into words 'fatorum arcana', the secrets of fate:[317]

hic tibi (fabor enim, quando haec te cura remordet,
longius, et volvens fatorum arcana movebo)
bellum ingens geret Italia populosque ferocis
contundet moresque viris et moenia ponet,
tertia dum Latio regnantem viderit aestas,
ternaque transierint Rutulis hiberna subactis.'

[This one (i.e. your son) (indeed, since these concerns unsettle you, I will speak at some length and, put into words the secrets of fate, I will set them in motion) will wage a great war in Italy, and crush fierce peoples, and for his men he will set up

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[315] See also Williams, p. 179, note to l. 258.

[316] Austin, p. 100, note to l. 258. For Servius' comment on the ethic dative and its relationship to Jupiter's accommodation to Venus' request, see Chapter 4.4: 'From concession to accordance (*Aeneid* 10)'.

[317] Servius identifies 'arcana' as 'secreta': 262. ARCANA secreta (Servius, vol. 1 p. 97). Williams puts forward a convincing case for 'fata arcana' being the 'secrets of the book of fate'. Although the participle 'volvens' suggests the turning of a page, I would argue that the metaphor is not explicit: Jupiter is not externalizing fate through an overt image, such as the book of fate or the scales, in order to assert his own governance of it. See Austin: 'in the present context, Jupiter means that he will reveal the hidden decrees of his divine will' (Williams, p. 102, note to l. 262).

laws and city-walls until the time when a third summer will have seen him ruling in Latium, and a third winter will have passed since the Rutulians were subdued.] (*Aen.*1.261-266)

In acceding to Thetis' supplication in *Iliad* 1, Zeus bowed his head to signal the binding nature of his promise. Nodding his head is more significant and more pictureable than just verbal assurance. In Virgil, by contrast, the act of speaking is prophetic in itself alone. By employing the verb 'fabor' Jupiter hints at his governance over fate. Feeney argues that 'by a bald etymological play, Jupiter gives us to understand that the *fata* ('things said') are what *he* says'. The participle is used to imply an agent (cf Servius on *Aen.* 2.54), [318] and with it the implication of Jupiter as a providential deity, a model, I would argue, that Milton picks up in the language of fate in *Paradise Lost*, by making the Father assert 'what I will is Fate' (*PL.* 7.173).

This Virgilian idea of fate and its link to speaking is a model that was gradually adopted in Christian epic. Whereas Sannazaro does not distinguish between ordinary and prophetic or divine speech, [319] we catch glimpses in Vida's neo-Latin *Christiad* of Virgilian verbs of speaking in divine council scenes, as part of Vida's general attempt to imitate Virgil's style. Finally, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton prefaces the Father's speech in the celestial council with a modified verb of speaking (*PL.*3.79, see discussion below), attempting to signal the force of

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[318] The link between 'fata' as a participle and the implication of Jupiter as its agent is reflected in Servius' comment on *Aen.* 2.54, ('fata deum'): '"fata" modo participium est, hoc est, "quae dii loquuntur"'. See Austin, p. 101, note 262.

[319] Sannazaro begins his epic with a Jove-like God speaking on his Olympian height: his first words are an echo of Jupiter to Juno on the death of Turnus: 'Ecquis erit finis?' (*De partu*, 1.41), (cf 'Qua iam finis erit...?' *Aen.*12.793) and his speech is prophetic as he announces his purpose in send Christ as the redeemer to earth. See Chapter 4, below. The speech begins and ends, however, with a phrase that is the standard signaller of epic speech: 'Haec ait' (*De partu*, 1.55). Sannazaro does not differentiate God's prophetic speech from any of the other speeches by other persons in his epic.

Virgilian prophecy in his English epic, and refining Vida's possibly unconscious use of the verb 'for/fari' in both divine and human contexts.

3.2.3. 'Empire without end': epic prophecy in Vida's *Christiad*

In Book 1 of the *Christiad*, Christ first foretells his death to his disciples. His speech is introduced with the verb 'fatur' ('eque imo rumpens suspiria pectore fatur', *Christiad*, 1.37). Later in Book 1, Christ enters the temple of Jerusalem and foretells the fall of the city, foreshadowing the triumph of Christianity (*Christiad*, 1. 574-81), a speech that ends in the phrase 'sic fatus' (*Christiad*, 1. 582).

But forms of 'for/fari' are not limited to divine speech in the *Christiad*: A form of 'for' is used in the speech of Caiaphas that condemns Christ 'Talia fatus erat' (*Christiad*, 2.253); a speech that seals his fate. A form of 'for/fari' also follows the speech of Satan during the infernal council of Book 1, where Satan foretells Christ's triumph in Hell after his death where he will free the souls of the just and triumph over the damned (*Christiad* 1.184-92; 'vix ea fatus', 1. 224). Although the prophecy is partly wrong, as Hardie has observed, what is important in Vida as opposed to Milton is that Vida's Satan is capable of foretelling future events, even if his foresight is not equal to that of the Father.[320]

In my view, the expectation that prophecy is identifiable with the observations of the heavenly sphere alone arises from the expectations created in *Paradise Lost*: throughout the poem,

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[320] 'In the Council of Devils at the beginning of the poem Satan, correctly foreseeing the Harrowing of Hell and Christ's rescue of the souls of the blessed, suggests that Christ might also lead Satan and his crew in chains to heaven in triumph (*uinctosque inducet Olympo / uictor ouans*, *Christiad*, 1.191-2,)' Hardie, *Rumour and Renown*, p. 420.

Milton distinguishes the knowledge of the Father from the ignorance of Satan. Milton's Satan cannot see the future: he calls the council in hell because he has heard a 'prophecy or rumour' in heaven' (*PL*. Book 1, 'The Argument'): it is Satan going towards Eden, in order to fulfill his own plan, that the Father, in his omniscient vision, beholds from heaven.

In Milton, prophecy relates exclusively to the heavenly sphere; it is contrasted with the uncertain knowledge of the infernal council. This strikes me as a more crystallized reading of Virgilian prophecy in the divine *concilia*, which Milton attempts to recreate in the language of English epic. Milton emphasizes the distinction between speaking and prophecy in the first speech of the Father during the council scene in *Paradise Lost:* the verb 'spake' is preceded by the participle 'foreseeing', conveying a stronger force than ordinary speaking, and recalling the meaning of the Viriglian 'for':

> Him God beholding from his prospect high,
> Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
> Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake. (*PL*.3.77-9)

This verb signals that the Father's speech will carry repercussions: and indeed, he foretells events pertaining to the Fall, and its consequences for the fate of mankind, including that of the reader. This opening up of narrative prophecy to transcend the temporal span of the narrative is a feature of Jupiter's prophecies in the *Aeneid*. Following his preface to Venus on fate, Jupiter foretells the events of the poem as they pertain to Aeneas (*Aen*. 1. 263-266). Williams argues that the dialogue between Jupiter and Venus, though initially based on the Homeric Olympian scenes, 'differs entirely from Homer in the emphasis laid both by Venus and by Jupiter on the mission of the storm-tossed hero in the context of world-history'.[321]

[321] Williams, p. 177, note to ll. 223f.

Feeney comments on lines 263-4 that 'as he [Jupiter] speaks, the time-perspective opens up, extending right down to the poet's day, so that a mere seven words concern the action of the poem'.[322] The events that Jupiter foretells expand beyond the action of the poem and beyond the fate of Aeneas: Jupiter foreshadows the history of Rome, from Aeneas' founding of Lavinium, to Ascanius' founding of Alba Longa, and finally the founding of Rome by Romulus (*Aen.* 1. 266-79). Feeney has argued that the expansion of epic prophecy beyond the scope of the narrative is a Naevian transformation of Homeric prophecies, such as the one given by Zeus about Odysseus' return to Ithaca in Book 5 of the *Odyssey*.[323] This Virgilian (and possible Naevian) re-modelling of Homeric prophecy, where events foretold by the father of the gods are later than the poem's own time, was fitting for Christian epic. As Wittreich has argued, the idea of epic events affecting the fate of later generations is aligned with the prophetic character of the Book of Revelation.[324] Mixing Jupiter's speech with the proleptic vision of the apocalypse becomes a powerful means for anticipating future events for the Christian epic poets. Vida and Milton each draw on Virgil's account of Jupiter's prophecy in their poems – but to achieve different goals.

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Jupiter concludes his prophecy to Venus concerning the founding of Rome with a final, expanding prophecy:

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[322] Feeney, p. 139.

[323] In Book 5, Zeus instructs Hermes to convey a message to Calypso about the manner of Odysseus' return to Ithaca ('ὣς γάρ οἱ μοῖρ' ἐστὶ φίλους τ' ἰδέειν καὶ ἱκέσθαι / οἶκον ἐς ὑψόροφον καὶ ἐὴν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν', *Od.*5.41-2). Feeney bases his position on a verbal echo in Macrobius' commentary on Naevius and Virgil's passages where Jupiter engages in epic prophecy. See Feeney, pp. 109-10, note 56.

[324] See J. A. Wittreich, '"All Angelic Natures Joined in One": Epic Convention and Prophetic Interiority in the Council Scenes of *Paradise Lost*'. *Milton Studies*, 17, 1983, 43-74.

'his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono:

imperium sine fine dedi'. (*Aen.* 1. 278-9)

[Upon these men (who will call themselves Romans, see line 277) I impose no boundary of space or time: I have granted empire without end.]

Austin sees in this language the idea of a fulfillment in the Augustan age.[325] Di Cesare, however, argues that this idea of 'empire without end' is taken beyond the Augustan age by Christian readers, so that 'the ideal of Rome which Virgil enshrines has a *partial fulfillment* in the empire of Augustus.'[326] In the final dialogue in heaven between Christ and the Father in Vida's *Christiad*, this prophecy is completed by an allusion to the advent of the Holy Roman Empire. As Jupiter had done with Venus in *Aeneid* 1, the Father kisses his son and reassures him with a promise ('pollicitus'):

Promissa (ne tende manus) afflabimus aura

quos vis, atque viros nostro flammabimus igni,

ut pro te blandae proiecto lucis amore

non ferrum aut flammas metuant morsusve ferarum

aut crinita rotis circum laniantibus haustra.

[We will breathe the promised wind (do not stretch out your hands) upon those whom you wish, and we will inflame the men with our fire, so that, when the love of the

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[325] Austin, pp. 107-8, note to l. 278.

[326] 'Vergil's panoramic view of Rome [in its tracing back from a Homeric origin, from the Trojan war] takes in explicitly eleven centuries, between Aeneas and Augustus (...) there are also, however, suggestions which exceed even these vast limits, in Jupiter's statement: 'imperium sine fine dedi' at line 279 (Di Cesare, p. 254).

caressing light (of life) is set aside for love of you, they may fear neither sword nor flame, the jaws of wild animals or the spiked machines with lacerating wheels around them.] (*Christiad,* 6. 848-52)

The Father foretells events following Pentecost, and gradually traces history further, to the beginning of a golden age, as he expands temporal and spatial bounds:

Quique reformidant nunc omnes aeris auras,
obiicient certis alacres se sponte periclis
pugnando et claras animas de corpore reddent
contemptu necis et vera virtute superbi.
Non illos aestus, non illos frigora sistent,
letiferum aut campos cum sidus findit hiulcos,
coerulea aut glacie cum nectit flumina bruma,
verum ultra Gangem auditi, Bactra ultima supra,
Ismara Bistoniasque plagas Seresque remotos
Gadibus et virides penetrabunt voce Britannos.

[And they who now recoil from every gust of wind from the heavens, they will gladly and of their own free will throw themselves into certain dangers, and, when there is a battle to be fought, they will surrender their pure souls from their bodes, resplendent in their disregard for death and their true courage. Heat and cold will not stop them, or the death-bringing star when it rents the split fields open, or the winter when it fetters the rivers with blue ice.

Truly, (they will be) heard beyond the Ganges, beyond furthest Bactria, in Ismara and the Bistonian plains, and China far from Cadiz, they will even reach the green Isles of Britain with their voice.] (*Christiad*, 6. 853-62)

Further, he anticipates a golden age – not the golden age of Rome under Augustus – but an age when the gospel is spread throughout the world:

Implebunt terras monitis et cuncta novantes
templa, pererrato statuent tibi maxima mundo;
ad tua mutatae properabunt nomina gentes,
divisae penitus toto orbe per aequora gentes,
seclaque conversis procedunt aurea rebus.
Quae tibi saepe ego pollicitus, scisque omnia mecum.

[They will fill the earth with omens, and by renewing entire temples, and having wandered the world, they will raise you the highest ones. Nations, converted (lit. changed), will hasten to your name, races separated far throughout the whole globe by the seas, and a golden age will come when things have changed.] (*Christiad*, 6. 863-8)

It becomes increasingly clear that this golden age is identified with the present, in which Vida foreshadows the composition of his Christian epic. Vida alludes to his own poetic fame by including a reference to his Italian birthplace of Cremona (*Christiad*, 6. 813-897).

The speech of the Father ends with a statement that combines two elements of Jupiter's reassurance to Venus: 'haec tibi certa manent', at *Christiad* 6. 896, conveys a similar sense

of fate being assured, as we see in *Aen.* 1. 257-8. Whereas Jupiter states 'nec me sententia vertit' at line 260, thereby refuting Venus' silent accusation that he has been coerced by Juno, the Father's reassurance to Christ retains the impersonal sense of *Aen.* 1. 257, and the mysterious assurance that the fates will remain unmoved. Vida distils the mysterious nature of the allusion, while ridding it of the implied charges of the original exchange.

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In his *Discorsi*, Tasso discusses a scene in Francesco Bolognetti's epic, *Il Costante* (1565-6), a poem that narrates the historical capture of the Roman emperor Valerian by the Persian Sapor in 260 AD.[327] Bolognetti depicts his epic hero Ceionus Albinus as the great grandfather of Constantine, thereby foreshadowing the succession of the pagan Roman empire by the Christian Roman empire.. This event is foretold in an epic *concilium* featuring Jupiter himself. Tasso objects to the scene not only because an Olympian machinery is included in a Christian poem, but also because it depicts the father of the gods foretelling the downfall of his religion:

> To my mind it was highly unsuitable for Bolognetti to bring in Jupiter, the supreme god, predicting, like a benevolent friend, the greatness of the Roman pontiffs, since he was therewith predicting the destruction of his own idols, temples, altars, and sacrificial offerings. And what is even worse, the prediction is made to Venus, no genealogy of the gods, no fable or history made these things tolerable in his poem. In

[327] For a summary of the content of the poem and the details of its publication, see Dennis Looney's review of A.N. Mancini, *"Capitoli" letterari di Francesco Bolognetti: Tempi e modi della letteratura epica fra l'Ariosto e il Tasso, Italica* , 70, 2, 1993), 242-44, 242-3.

> Virgil, to be sure, they are marvelous, since it was a belief of the Romans that they were descended from Aeneas (...)[328]

Tasso accuses Bolognetti of a lack of continuity, in that two religious systems cannot easily be understood in the same terms. Christian epic, for Tasso, was hardly a fitting finishing point for the pagan gods. But what Bolognetti's poem was attempting to do, however successfully, was to show not only that Christian epic brings the destruction of pagan models, but also that it does so using the pagan models themselves. Bolognetti may have taken this idea a little too literally, but, in assimilating Virgilian prophecy to Christian epic, Christian poets are fulfilling the task of epic *aemulatio*, using the same technique that Virgil had used in imitating Homeric material. Following Naevian and Ennian models, Virgil adapted the Homeric pantheon to Roman epic, including an expanding epic timeframe arising from prophecies by the father of the gods. So too, in Christian epic, this nuanced concept of epic time is carefully adapted to harmonize with the needs and the ambitions of Christian epic to surpass its ancient predecessors and foreshadow a future that is aligned to the advance of Christianity and, with it, the revised genre of Christian epic.

3.2.4. Milton's Virgilian *prolepsis*

As well as the challenge of aligning his Protestant religion with Virgilian prophecy, which had been used by Vida to foreshadow the triumph of Christianity, Virgil's Augustan themes may have posed another challenge to Milton. How would Milton the Republican have read Jupiter's lines 'imperium sine fine dedi',[329] aware of Vida's appropriation of this time frame to

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[328] Tasso, *Discourses on the heroic poem*, p. 39.

[329] Note that 'imperium sine fine' can apply to space as well as time, a duality that is picked up in Vida's account of the Holy Roman Empire spreading throughout the world. See *Christiad* 6.813-897 above.

suit the history of the Roman Catholic Church? And does he address the Augustan theme implied in Jupiter's prophecy?

In Books 11 and 12 of *Paradise Lost*, the angel Michael gives Adam and Eve a proleptic vision of the future following their expulsion from Eden.[330] He narrates events of both the Old and New Testaments, including the life and death of Christ, and the aftermath of his resurrection and ascension – the subject of Vida's epic. Whereas, for Vida, the sending of the Holy Spirit is the first step of a golden age that finds a high-point in the poet's life-time, Milton, through Michael's prolepsis, imagines himself witnessing not a golden age, but a crisis of Christianity. In the image of the 'grievous Wolves' (*PL*.12. 508), who take the place of the disciples, Milton imagines the negative prophecy of Christ in *Acts* 20: 29 to be fulfilled in Milton's lifetime.[331] The end-point of the Father's prophecy, in Milton's account, is deferred to the second coming. Milton does not abandon the Virgilian model of epic prophecy: rather, he modifies its timeframes still further, as a promise that can be fulfilled only with the second coming of Christ, thereby aligning epic prophecy with the prophecies of the Book of Revelation.

Milton, in recreating Virgil's account of Jupiter's prophecy, reads the politics of the *Aeneid* in more complex ways than has been previously acknowledged. Di Cesare has argued that Jupiter's prophecy not only gives a sense of the greatness of Augustan rule, but of the dangers and challenges that such rule brings: he argues that 'dedi' is the more important term

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[330] The term '*prolepsis*' was first used in 1972 by Gérard Genette to identify narrative foreshadowing. Nünlist has argued that the Homeric scholiasts were aware of this device, which they referred to as προαναφώνησις (see R. Nünlist, 'Narratological Concepts in Greek Scholia', in J. Grethlein, A. Rengakos (eds.), *Narratology and Interpretation: the Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 63-87, p. 65.

[331] See Fowler, p. 670, note to lines 507-8.

than 'imperium'.[332] The responsibilities that accompany divinely appointed rule are emphasized in Milton's *Defensio Prima*, a Republican tract that he had published in 1651 as a response to Salmasius' *Defensio Regia* (Defence of the King) from 1649. Salmasius had deplored the assassination of Charles I in England and the actions of the Commonwealth, citing historical examples of the divine rights of kings.[333] As Lewalski points out, Milton 'gladly took up the challenge to match and overpass Salmasius in sound Latinity as well as in political philosophy and historical scholarship', as he had done in the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), in defending the actions of the Commonwealth. He calls upon examples from both scripture and history of tyrannicide, arguing that God set up the Israelites with a republican government, and only later granted their request for a king.[334] He reminds the reader that the Roman Republic was founded on the expulsion of the tyrant Tarquinius. Among Roman authors whom he names among proponents of the rightful deposing of tyrants – including Cicero and Seneca – he singles out Virgil himself. Milton argues that in Book 8 of the *Aeneid* Virgil recalls the exile of the king of the Etrurians, Mezentius, as a precedent for the custom that lay at the foundation of the Roman Republic. Milton argues that Virgil uses this example as a veiled message to Augustus about the 'righteous rage' that can befall any king from his disgruntled subjects:

> Quid illi [Romanes] in tyrannos suos, sive reges, sive Imperatores fecerint, vulgò notum est. Tarquinium expulerunt; et more quidem majorum; aut enim expulsi civitate Agyllina Mezentii tyranni antiquissimum exemplum Hetruria vicina praebuit, aut eâ fabulâ summus artifex decori Virgilius, quo jure apud cunctas gentes, idque ab omni

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[332] 'It must firmly be underlined that when Jove says, *imperium sine fine dedi*, not *imperium* but *dedi* is the key word. Vergil's epic embodiment of the idea of Rome presents all the issues honestly and looks squarely (...) at the dangers inherent in the kind of empire Augustus was trying to build and at the cost involved. As such, the poem is less propagandistic than analytic.' Di Cesare, p. 211

[333] For the details of publication, see Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 623, note 106. Lewalski argues that the *Second Defence* revises the argument of Milton's main treatise against tyrannicide, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (see Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 223).

[334] See 'Defensio Prima', pp. 342-4.

vetustate, fuissent reges, regnanti etiam tunc Romae Octaviano Caesari voluit ostendere, Aeneid. I.8.

> At fessi tandem cives infanda furentem
> Armati circumsistunt, ipsúmque, domúmque:
> Obtruncant socios; ignem ad fastigia jactant.
> Ille inter caedem, Rutulorum elapsus in agros
> Confugere, et Turni defendier hospitis armis.
> Ergo omnis furiis surrexit Etruria justis:
> Regem ad supplicium praesenti Marte reposcunt.

[How they [the Roman] acted towards their tyrants, whether kings, or emperors, is common knowledge. They expelled Tarquin, and by indeed, by the *mos maiorum*, the way of their elders. For either their neighbouring Etruria provided them with a very ancient example when the tyrant Mezentius was expelled from the city of Agylla, or, through this story, in book 8 of the *Aeneid*, Virgil, the master of what was fitting, meant to show to Octavian Caesar, who was still ruling Rome at that time, by what authority kings were appointed among all peoples, and this from the oldest times:

> And finally the tired citizens surround the man raging with unspeakable madness, and, armed, they surround both him and his house: they cut down his companions, and throw fire upon his rooftop. He slips away amidst the slaughter, flees to the Rutulian fields, and is defended by the arms of his host, Turnus. Therefore all Etruria rose in righteous rage: with war looming,

they demand the king be returned for punishment]

(J. Milton, *Defensio Prima*) [335]

In the *Aeneid*, these lines are addressed to Aeneas by Evander, who assures him 'his ego te, Aenea, ductorem milibus addam' ('I will add you, Aeneas, to these thousands, as their leader', *Aen.* 8. 496); but this would not exempt him from these laws, or from the wrath of his subjects, if, like Mezentius, he were to become a tyrant, nor presumably does it exempt his successor, Augustus. In Milton's account, Virgil means this story, as told to Aeneas, as a cautionary tale for Augustus.[336] It is a testimony to Milton's complex reading of Virgilian themes that he finds in Jupiter's prophecy to Venus in *Aeneid* 1 a model in which to express his own model of the past, present, and future of the Christian faith, within the bounds of Christian epic.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how Milton recreates not only the words of the epic Zeus for his Christian theodicy in *De Doctrina*, but also the entire scenario in which the Homeric father of the gods achieves his theodicy. The scenario of the Homeric *concilium deorum* is transformed through Virgilian re-readings of the Olympian dialogues and their reflections on epic fate. Following Vida, Milton creates a deliberately Christian divine sphere, recalling Virgil's language of fate in the first Olympian dialogue of *Aeneid* 1. Milton, however, avoids the implications that Vida had made between Jupiter's prophecy and an imperial Augustan panegyric. Milton's proleptic scene in Books 11 and 12 of *Paradise Lost* suggests an

[335] *Columbia Milton*, volume 7, pp. 322-4.

[336] Blessington comments on this example: 'In the first *Defence of the English People,* Milton finds Virgil, for instance, to have set patterns for correct political behaviour in his *Aeneid*' (Blessington, p. 100).

alternative way of reading Jupiter's promise to Venus of an 'empire without end': not as a prophecy of Augustan Rome, nor a foreshadowing of a Christian empire, as the Italian humanists saw it, but as a means of expressing the history of Christian salvation.

Chapter 4. Negotiating fate: the Son as epic intercessor

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined how Milton recreated the language of Jupiter's prophecy to Venus in *Aeneid* 1 in the prophetic speech of the Father in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*. There the Father turned to the Son of his own accord, addressing the 'Onely begotten Son' (*PL*. 3.80), and foretold the first sin whose repercussions would span beyond the Fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from paradise, and encompass the entire human race. In commenting on the Father's speech, Irene Samuel notes that '[God speaks]...[W]ithout a word of preface ... and as if with the utmost finality.'[337] The Father's speech however, *is* a preface to the Son's intercession, where he appeals on behalf of soon-to-be fallen man.[338] Although the Father condemns Adam's actions, as well as those of his descendants, his speech ends with a provision for mercy to be exercised towards mankind. He states that 'Man (...) therefore shall find grace' (*PL*. 3.131), a phrase that supplements the earlier prophecy of the Fall ('So will fall, / Hee and his faithless Progenie', *PL*. 3. 95-6). Following the Father's speech, the Son appears 'most glorious' among the ranks of heaven (*PL*. 3.139). He is presented as the image of the Father, as well as a distinct speaker with his own agenda in the dialogue. The Son will speak on behalf of mercy and negotiate the terms of salvation. The result of the dialogue is that the Son volunteers to offer his life for man and to journey from heaven to earth, where humankind will dwell after their expulsion from Eden. Through the Son's intercession and the prophecy of his own death and resurrection at lines 238-65, the

[337] I. Samuel, 'The Dialogue in Heaven', p. 605.

[338] The Father's speech conveys the meaning of the Latin 'praefatio', meaning '[t]he introductory part of a speech or writing, preface, prologue (2)' and 'the preliminary part of legal or similar negotiations (2b)' (*OLD* s.v.).

Dialogue in Heaven enacts Milton's theology of the Atonement and foreshadows the Incarnation, an event that lies beyond the scope of Milton's epic.

The Son's voluntary offer at the end of the Dialogue in Heaven has been seen chiefly as a counterpart in heaven to Satan's offer to travel to Eden following the infernal council in Book 2.[339] The offers of both the Son and of Satan have been considered in heroic terms, where the Son is imagined as a perfected model of epic heroism.[340] In considering Milton's revision of the conventions and the language of the Homeric *concilium deorum*, however, I will consider the Son's intervention, and the speech that precedes it, in terms of the divine intercessions of Olympian deities in the Homeric and Virgilian epics. These speeches precede the interventions of the gods on the human plane. By drawing this parallel between the speech and action of the Son, it is possible to reconcile what Blessington saw as two primary, but separate roles of the Son in Milton's poem: the role of 'intercessor' and the role of 'heroic warrior'. [341] I will argue that Milton follows the example of Vida in portraying the Son as a figure that fuses the divine and heroic realms in epic, while narrating the aetiology of the Fall in the divine sphere. It is not till the Incarnation that the Son will become a human person, as we see narrated in Vida's *Christiad*. I will consider how Vida's depiction of Christ as both god ('deus') and hero ('heros') in the *Christiad* provides a model for Milton's portrayal of the Son as a unique epic figure that moves between divine and heroic discourse as he moves between the heavenly and human realms in the world of Christian epic.

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[339] M. Hughes, 'Filiations on the Celestial Dialogue', p112. Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, p. 475. See discussion at section 4.3 '"Die he or justice must": the Father's conditions of mercy' below.
[340] See Blessington, pp. 37-9. For Blessington, the Son's heroic status emerges chiefly in the narration of the war in heaven, where 'The Son emerges ... as the archetype of the classical warrior, just as Satan was his distortion (Blessington, p. 38).
[341] Blessington, p. 37.

Whereas Blessington argues that the Son's intercession is devoid of similes or other overt indicators traditionally meant to signal the epic genre,[342] I will argue that Milton recreates and corrects ingredients of the Olympian dialogues between the father of the gods and interceding deities by including several of the markers of the Olympian dialogues. The dialogue in heaven recreates the atmosphere following the speech of the father of the gods, as well as the series of reproachful questions centering on divine justice in the appeals of the Olympian intercessors, Herē, and Athenē; the reassurance and ensuing prophecy, as well as the narrative device of suggesting an alternative outcome. These techniques heighten the drama of the scene, but at the same time produce a portrait of both the Father and the Son that resolves the charges arising from the Olympian dialogues in the ancient commentaries.

4.1. Justice, mercy and the theology of the Atonement

In Book 5 of the *Christiad*, Vida paints the scene of Christ's crucifixion. As Christ nears his dying hour on the cross, he invokes the Father, in lines that Vida adapts from the account in Matthew and Mark's Gospels of the words uttered by Christ at the ninth hour of his suffering (*Matthew* 27: 46; *Mark* 15.34). In Vida's retelling of the Gospel scene, however, Christ does not cry out, but speaks ('fatur'):

> Iamque trabem infandam scandens pendensque per auras
> horruit atque deum veluti se oblitus, acerbi
> pertimuit dirum leti genus; aestuat intus,
> atque animum in curas labefactum dividit acres,
> tristia multa agitans animo, totosque per artus
> pallentes mixto fluit ater sanguine sudor,

[342] Blessington, p. 37.

et patriam crebro reminiscitur aetheris aulam.

Tum coelum aspectans haec imo pectore fatur:

'Heu, quianam extremis genitor me summe periclis

deseris? Aut gnati quo iam tibi cura recessit?'

[And now mounting the unspeakable wood and hanging in the air, he shuddered and, forgetful of his godlike status, recoiled in fear of a bitter and harsh death. Inwardly, he wavered, and allowed his quaking heart to be rent with bitter cares, and his heart unsettled by many lamentations, and over this entire pale limbs flowed blackened sweat mixed with blood. Frequently he called to mind his native palace in heaven. Then looking up towards the sky, from the bottom of his heart, he speaks: 'Ah! Why do you desert me, father, at my greatest peril? Or else has all concern for your son left you now?] (*Christiad*, 5. 494-503)

Vida supplements the New Testament account by moving the action to heaven, where he depicts the reaction of the Father to Christ's appeal:

Audiit has summus voces pater; audit omnis

coelestum chorus. Ipse (alta secum omnia mente

versabat genitor, nutu haud oblitus agi rem

nempe suo) stetit immotus seseque repressit.

[The supreme father heard these cries; all of the heavenly choir heard it.

But He (the father weighed all deep things with himself in his mind, not forgetting that surely a thing is done by his nod) stood his ground, unshakeable, and restrained himself.] (*Christiad*, 5. 504-7)

In describing the Father's restraint, Vida makes him remember that the epic nod is the gesture that enacts the will of the father of the gods. The Father, in making his decision, literally recalls ('haud oblitus')[343] the nod of Zeus that gives the words of Zeus their weight in *Iliad* 1. Like Zeus in *Iliad* 16 too, he weighs everything in his mind 'omnia mente versabat', and for a moment we catch a glimpse of the Father considering an alternative outcome. Unlike Zeus who is swayed by Herē in *Iliad* 16, however, Vida's Father is swayed by no-one. Whereas in *Aeneid* 1, it is the fates that are unmoved ('immota', *Aen.* 1. 257), Vida applies the same adjective to the will and resolve of the Father, who is described as 'immotus'. He is not manipulated or affected by any arguments, but 'checks himself' ('seseque repressit'), and holds off the legions arming in heaven, as they prepare to avenge Christ and seize him from death. The Father sends 'Clementia' ('Mildness', or 'Mercy') through the ranks of the angels (5.628-647) to soften their resolve: accompanied by other personified virtues: 'Pietas' ('Duty'), 'Pax' ('Peace'), 'Spes' ('Hope'), 'Fides' ('Faith'), and 'Amor' ('Love', 5. 640-2), they carry an olive branch, a symbol of peace (5.642). They cause the armed legions of angels to check their anger, lay down their arms, and resume their ranks in heaven (5. 643-7).

'Clementia' may be an unexpected choice to play the role of the divinity who prevents the angels from saving Christ from death. Surely the Father would have mercy on the Son, who is calling him in his dying moments. But 'Clementia' here enacts a different kind of mercy from that which saves Christ from the cross. 'Clementia' here alludes to the wider mercy of the Father for mankind in general, one that will ensure their salvation. It is also a mercy that requires, and results in, the sacrifice of the Son.

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[343] Verbs related to memory in Latin literature have, since Conte's programmatic study, been recognized as sign-posters of poetic intertextuality. See G. B. Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation*, trans. G. W. Most (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1987). See also S. Hinds, 'Allusion and Self-Annotation', in *Allusion and Intertext* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-17.

The author of John's Gospel describes the decision about the Son's incarnation and sacrifice as belonging to the Father (*John* 3. 16). It is this solitary decision that Sannazaro retells in the opening scene of *De Partu Virginis* (1. 33-55). He begins the monologue of the Father with an echo of Jupiter's words to Juno in the final duel of Turnus and Aeneas. There Jupiter turns to Juno and asks: 'quae iam finis erit, coniunx?' (*Aen.* 12. 793). In Sannazaro's account, however, these lines are uttered by the Father to himself: 'Ecquis erit finis?' (*De partu*, 1 .41) and relate not to the death of one hero, but to the damnation of the entire human race, a fate that the Father alone resolves to amend.

There is another tradition, however, that consists in imagining that the Father's decision to save mankind as preceded by the Son's intercession on their behalf: this is the tradition that Milton recreates in *Paradise Lost*, according to theory of ransom and satisfaction,[344] whereby the exchange between the Father and Son must involve an appeasement of divine justice through the sacrifice of the Son. In this doctrine, the Father is cast as an angry God, and the Son as both defendant of mankind and as the means of conciliation, in that he embodies the satisfaction of divine justice.[345]

Casting the Father in the role of the angry godhead creates a dichotomy between the Father, who represents the claim of justice in light of man's transgression, and the Son, who represents the desire for exercising mercy towards mankind.[346] The competing claims of

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[344] Campbell and Corns discuss four separate and competing doctrines in Milton's time relating to the atonement: 'the recapitulation, ransom, satisfaction and forensic theories'. They make the case for Milton's views on the Atonement being most closely aligned to forensic theory, which had developed during the Reformation... (Campbell and Corns, p. 112). See also Hughes, pp. 118-9 and C. A. Patrides, 'Milton and the Protestant theory of the Atonement' (*Modern Language Association*, 24, 1, 1959, 1-13, 10) for a discussion of forensic theory as it pertains to *Paradise Lost*.

[345] 'In this doctrine...God the Father is the judge and Jesus is the advocate of fallen humankind who decides to bear the penalty on behalf of his client, so satisfying the requirement of an angry God for satisfaction and the necessity that humankind be punished for sin. The theory gained wide acceptance among Protests, and, at a popular level, was responsible for the Protestant image of an angry God' (Campbell and Corns, p. 113).

[346] See Campbell and Corns, p. 113.

justice and mercy as two parts of the one divine nature were depicted in a popular medieval subgenre, the 'parliament in heaven', where these two virtues were personified and their mutual conflict dramatized in the form of a dialogue.[347]

For Wittreich, the *concilia* scenes in epic have an allegorical centre, one that he argues Milton is revising by dividing both God and Satan's character 'into component parts'.[348] The persons in the councils therefore become 'objectifications of inner turmoil and emblems of mental division'.[349] Casting the epic gods as allegories was one way in which the ancient commentators resolved the conflicts arising in the Olympian dialogues. In Milton's Dialogue in Heaven, similarly, the competing claims of the Father and Son could be imagined as allegorical manifestations of the one divine nature. But by splitting these claims between two voices, each representing a distinct epic character, Milton could be challenging the doctrine of the Trinity (which Campbell and Corns put forward as the case both in *De Doctrina Christiana* and in *Paradise Lost*).[350] I argue, however, that in his revision of the *concilia,* Milton is more careful in showing the harmony existing between the Father and Son. By contrast, the Catholic Vida, in a scene of divine intercession between Christ and the Father, maintains a greater distinction between the interests of the two persons by alluding to Venus' mercenary appeal to Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1 (see below).

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[347] Lewalski, *The Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, p. 118.
[348] Wittreich, p. 48.
[349] Wittreich, p. 49.
[350] Patrick Hume argued that Milton's portrait of the Son in *Paradise Lost* upholds the Athanasian Creed. Hume comments on the Father's address to the Son as 'Second Omnipotence' at *PL.* 6. 684: 'Second Omnipotence: Second Almightiness (it), as being the Second Person in the Holy Trinity (it), of which the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty, making however the one incomprehensible Almighty, acceding to Athanasius' (it) Exposition of the Creed (it). ' (Hume, p. 206, note to l. 684). Campbell and Corns, however, demonstrate Milton's rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity in *De Doctrina Christiana*, specifically in the chapter 'De Filio Dei' ('Concerning the Son of God'). They argue that the polemical ideas in *De Doctrina* 'spill… over into *Paradise Lost*', including his portrait of Sin and Death in Book 2 as 'contributing the a long tradition of Satanic trinities', and parodying the Holy Trinity (Campbell and Corns, p. 100). In my own study, I am interested in how Milton fashions the Father and Son as epic persons with distinct interests and epic voices.

Milton, as Lewalski argues, may have been attempting to recreate a medieval 'parliament in heaven' scene in his unfinished drama of 'Paradise Lost'. Milton's draft in the Trinity manuscript sets out a dialogue between personified 'Justice' and 'Mercie', a debate that centres on a projected situation, 'debating what should become of man if he fall.'[351] In *Paradise Lost,* however, the Father foresees the Fall. The debate that follows between the Father and the Son relates to a real outcome, as the fates of Adam and Eve, and the future generations of mankind, including the readers themselves, are decided.

Lewalski points out that the dialogue between the Father and the Son, unlike the medieval 'parliament in heaven' type-scene, is more than a static sparring of fixed allegories, but is based on a naturalistic exchange between realistic characters.[352] In my view, Milton attempts to recreate the Olympian dialogues in this tradition. Instead of depicting allegorical personifications stating fixed and apparently exclusive positions (as was the convention in the 'parliament in heaven'), Milton chooses the epic *concilium* for the negotiation of the fate of mankind. This choice is also a departure from allegorical readings of the Olympian scenes that are his models.[353] Merritt Hughes argued that '[b]y abandoning the debate between Justice and Mercy... in favour of a dialogue between the Almighty Father and the Son, Milton found the way to a dialogue of distinct persons.'[354] Milton's move from a dramatic dialogue to an epic type-scene in *Paradise Lost* is, I argue, a transition not only from an allegorical to a

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[351] Trinity manuscript. See Lewalski, *The Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, p. 118 and p. 322, note 17.

[352] '[I]nstead of allegorical personifications stating fixed and apparently exclusive positions [as was the convention in the medieval parliament in heaven type-scene] the two speakers are dramatic characters, each of whom responds to and incorporates the argument of the other.' Lewalski, *The Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, p. 119.

[353] In the 12th century commentary on Book 1 of the *Aeneid*, Silvestris sums up the various ways in which the Roman gods should be interpreted in various allegorical works, such as in Martianus Capella's *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, where Jove can sometimes be taken to signify a superior fire, sometimes as a star, and sometimes as the creator himself. He advises the same allegorical interpretation of the gods of the *Aeneid*, arguing that 'Jupiter sometimes signifies fire and sometimes the highest godhead; Venus sometimes signifies the desire of the flesh and sometimes the concord of the world' (see J. W. Jones, E. F. Jones (ed.), *The Commentary on the First Six Books of the Aeneid of Vergil Commonly Attributed to Bernardus Silvestris* (Lincoln, London, University of Nebraska Press, 1977), pp. 9-10.

[354] Hughes, 'The Filiations of Milton's Celestial Dialogue', p. 111.

naturalistic exchange, but also to a different way of reading the epic *concilium deorum.* Milton's Dialogue in Heaven, I argue, recalls and corrects the theological questions arising from the scenes of divine intercession for their ancient commentators.

Blessington draws a parallel between the triumph of mercy over justice in the dialogue in heaven in *Paradise Lost* and the triumph of Christianity over paganism: 'If the Father has the thunder of Zeus on His left', Blessington argues, 'he has the mercy of Christianity on His right'.[355] The dichotomy between justice and mercy as two sides of the divine nature is, however, also activated in epic Olympian scenes, where justice is invoked and mercy negotiated with the Father of the epic gods.

4.2. Reproach and reassurance

The Father ends his prophecy with a provision for mercy: unlike Satan, who fell 'Self-tempted, self-deprav'd' (*PL.* 3. 130), man will Fall 'deceiv'd / By the other' (*PL.* 3. 130-1) and may, nevertheless, earn grace (*PL.* 3. 131-2). The Father's addendum to his prophecy does not alter the course of events that are unfolding as the Father sees Satan travelling through Chaos to Eden. It does, however, reveals the two sides of the divine nature: the Father announces that 'in Mercy and Justice both.../ so shall my glorie excel', and foresees the triumph of Mercy, which 'first and last shall brightest shine' (*PL.* 3. 134). As the Father ends his speech, 'ambrosial fragrance' spreads throughout heaven:

> ...Man therefore shall find grace,
> The other none: in Mercy and Justice both,
> Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glorie excel,

[355] Blessington, p. 46.

But Mercy first and last shall brightest shine.

Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance fill'd

All Heav'n, and in the blessed Spirits elect

Sense of new joy ineffable diffus'd... (*PL.* 3. 131-7)

The epithet 'ambrosial' has elicited much commentary, with explanations ranging from religious symbolism to political associations.[356] In the context of the epic *concilia deorum,* it recalls Zeus' ambrosial locks as he nods in assent to Thetis' supplication in *Iliad* 1. 529-30:

ἦ καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων:

ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος

κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο: μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον.

[He spoke and the son of Kronos nodded with his dark brows, and the fragrant {literally 'ambrosial'} hair of the mighty king flowed forth from his immortal head, and he caused great Olympos to tremble.] (*Il.* 1. 528-30)

Thomas Newton contrasts the serenity in heaven following the first speech of the Father with the silence and fear that spreads among the gods on Olympos.[357] Newton may have in mind the council-scene in *Iliad* 8, where Zeus speaks out among the assembled gods, threatening them with a punishment he will inflict on any god who will attempt to aid the Trojans or the

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[356] See Fowler, p. 175, note to l. 135.

[357] 'Our Milton here shows, that he was no servile imitator of the Ancients. It is very well known that his master Homer, and all who followed him, where they are presenting the Deity speaking, describe a scene of terror and awful consternation. (...) Our author has very judiciously made the words of the Almighty diffusing fragrance and delight all around him' (Thomas Newton, pp. 196-7, note to line 135).

Greeks (*Il.* 8. 10-18). Zeus asserts his strength over the other gods through the image of the golden rope (8. 18-27) in a speech that makes the gods fall silent (*Il*.8. 28-9).[358]

ὣς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ
μῦθον ἀγασσάμενοι: μάλα γὰρ κρατερῶς ἀγόρευσεν.

[Thus he spoke, and all the gods fell into a deaf silence, dumbfounded by his speech: for he had made his declaration very forcefully.] (*Il*.8. 28-9)

Athenē speaks out as an advocate for mercy:

ὀψὲ δὲ δὴ μετέειπε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη:
ὦ πάτερ ἡμέτερε Κρονίδη ὕπατε κρειόντων
εὖ νυ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ὅ τοι σθένος οὐκ ἐπιεικτόν:
ἀλλ' ἔμπης Δαναῶν ὀλοφυρόμεθ' αἰχμητάων,
οἵ κεν δὴ κακὸν οἶτον ἀναπλήσαντες ὄλωνται
βουλὴν δ' Ἀργείοις ὑποθησόμεθ' ἥ τις ὀνήσει,
ὡς μὴ πάντες ὄλωνται ὀδυσσαμένοιο τεοῖο.

[At last the grey-eyed goddess Athenē spoke up: 'Oh, our father, son of Kronos,

[358] Cf Herē's fear after Zeus reminds her of her own previous punishment (*Il.* 15. 34).

supreme among the strong, well do we know that your strength is not to be resisted: but, all the same, we feel pity for the Danaan spear-men, who, fulfilling their evil destiny, must perish. We will inspire good counsel in the minds of the Argives, something that will benefit them, so that they all may not perish on account of your anger.] (*Il.* 8. 30-8)

Athenē's appeal results in a reassurance

τὴν δ' ἐπιμειδήσας προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς:
θάρσει Τριτογένεια φίλον τέκος: οὔ νύ τι θυμῷ
πρόφρονι μυθέομαι, ἐθέλω δέ τοι ἤπιος εἶναι.

[And the cloud-gatherer, Zeus, smiling, addressed her: Take heart, daughter of Triton, my beloved child: I am not saying what my heart intends, but I wish to be kind to you.] (*Il.* 8. 38-40)

The image of the smiling, assenting Zeus is recreated in the first speech of Jupiter in the *Aeneid*: there Venus' complaint results in a reassurance by the smiling Jupiter at *Aeneid* 1.254 ff. Milton revisits the Virgilian model of reproach and reassurance, not only in the Son's speech, but also in the response it elicits from the Father.

In Milton's Dialogue in Heaven, the first speech of the Son (*PL.* 3. 144-66) occurs at a crucial moment: the Father has made his prophecy, his free will defence, and has made some provision for grace and mercy for mankind. His speech does not spread terror and silence, as observed on Olympos, but 'diffus'd' a '[s]ense of new joy ineffable' (*PL.* 3.137) among the angels. The Son begins his response by praising the Father for making a provision for grace.

But the scene in heaven does not end here: the exact terms of man's salvation remain to be negotiated. Merritt Hughes talks about the speech of the Son: a series of questions that culminate in a potential challenge to the Father's justice:

> Oh Father, gracious was that word which closed
> Thy sovereign command, that man should find grace;
> For which both Heaven and earth shall high extol
> Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
> Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
> Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.
> For should man finally be lost, should man,
> Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
> Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
> With his own folly? that be from thee far,
> That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
> Of all things made, and judgest only right.
> Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
> His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfill
> His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught,
> Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
> Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell
> Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
> By him corrupted? or wilt thou thyself
> Abolish thy creation, and unmake
> For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?
> So should thy goodness and thy greatness both

Be questioned and blasphemed without defense. (*PL*. 3. 144-66)

Hughes discusses biblical models of intercession for the Son's appeal to the Father in the prayers of Abraham (*Gen.* 18.25) and Moses (*Numbers*, 14.15-16) to the wrathful God.[359] In *Genesis* 18.25, Abraham calls upon not the mercy, but the justice of the Father, in a loaded question: 'Shall not the judge of the earth do right?' Alongside these biblical parallels, Hughes suggests a more contemporary source: Matheo Aleman's *The Rogue: or the Life of Guzman de Alfarache* (1599, 1604), a work that was considered as a source for *Paradise Lost* by Francis Peck, in his 1740 treatise on Milton's style.[360] There Aleman makes his hero Guzman present 'a morall Fable of the gods of old-time, and the Councel that was held in heaven against Mankind'[361] where Apollo intercedes with Jove on behalf on mankind: like the Son later in *Paradise Lost*, Apollo argues for the consequences that Jove's destruction of the human race will have for his creation, and ends with a question that expresses a theodical concern with the harshness of God's punishment.[362]

Hughes argues that Aleman's scene makes an unconvincing model for Milton's *Paradise Lost*.[363] I propose that its resonance lies in the epic scenes on Olympos that it recalls. Instead of mediating his version of the *epic concilium* through the picaresque and allegorical tradition, however, Milton crafts the Son's speech in light of the Olympian intercessors. Whereas the medieval dialogues focused on speeches by the 'four daughters of God' –

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[359] In the pleas of Abraham and Moses to a stern deity there is more than the germ of the Son's response to the Father's promise that "Man…shall find grace" with the plea [at *PL*. 3. 150-5)' M. Hughes, 'The Celestial Dialogue', p. 115.

[360] Francis Peck, 'An Examination of Milton's Stile', *New Memoirs of the Life and Poetical Works of Mr John Milton*, 1740, pp. 106-32. See Wittreich, p. 116.

[361] Hughes, p. 116.

[362] '[H]ow can it stand with the power and goodnesse of a Creator, to take too strict a course against his Creature, and to exceed, by extraordinary meanes, in his chastisements?' M. Aleman, *The Rogue*, p. 149, cited in Hughes, p. 117.

[363] Wittreich, p. 117.

Mercy, Justice, Peace, and Truth,[364] the Son's speech emulates the rhetorical strategies of the daughter of Zeus, Athenē, and the daughter of Jupiter, Venus.

At lines 165-6 (see passage above), the Son expresses a theodical charge that *would* be leveled at the Father *had he not* made provision for mercy. The Son's statement creates a hypothetical situation. In the Olympian dialogues, on the other hand, the charge is a real one. In *Odyssey* 1, it is Athenē who voices a complaint about the justice of the father of the gods in the council described there. Athenē's objection to his neglect of the pious Odysseus is expressed by means of a powerful juxtaposition, since Zeus has just expressed his frustration at the impiety of men (*Od.* 1. 32-4), prompted by the example of Aigisthos. Athenē's appeal for Odysseus, which immediately follows, picks up on Zeus' complaint. Her address is an acknowledgement of Zeus' justice in punishing Aigisthos (*Od.*1.46-7), but is then followed by a reproach against his treatment of Odysseus, who is not deserving of Zeus' wrath:[365]

οὔ νύ τ' Ὀδυσσεὺς

Ἀργείων παρὰ νηυσὶ χαρίζετο ἱερὰ ῥέζων

Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ; τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὠδύσαο, Ζεῦ;

[Did Odysseus not honor you by offering sacrifices beside the ships of the Argives in wide Troy? Why, Zeus, do you conceive such wrath against him?] (*Od.* 1. 60-2)

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[364] See R. A. Klinefelter, 'The Four Daughters of God: a New Version', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* , 52, 1, 1953), pp. 90-95 for a discussion of the dialogue between the 'four daughters of God' as 'one of the most popular allegories in medieval literature' (Klinefelter, 90). Klinefelter's article revises Hope Traver's seminal 1907 treatment of this subject (see H. Travers, *The Four Daughters of God: a Study of the Versions of this Allegory with Especial Reference to Those in Latin, French, and English* (Bryn Mawr, J. C. Winston, 1907).

[365] It is in fact Poseidon's, and not Zeus', wrath that is the cause of Odysseus sufferings (*Od.* 1.19), as Zeus reminds Athenē at *Od.* 1.64-71. See Chapter 1.2.3: 'Subjects and causes: the epic opening of *Paradise Lost*'.

As Lewalski has observed, the Son's appeal on behalf of fallen man, unlike Athenē's on behalf of Odysseus above, cannot be based on Adam's merit. Mercy, rather, and the Son's merit[366] are the terms by which the Son intercedes with the Father. But in recreating the language of the theodical question in Homer (and its Naevian and Virgilian tradition[367]), Milton is at once signaling and resolving the charges that are levelled at Zeus and Jupiter by Athenē and Venus, respectively. In ending the Son's speech with questions that activate a theodical charge, Milton conveys the rhetorical thrust of the Olympian intercessions, but corrects them by the addition of a hypothetical scenario. The Father has, after all, already made a provision for mercy.

The crux of the Son's speech lies in two rhetorical strategies: the reproachful question and the attack on the enemy: Satan.[368] The Son's arguments recall the double rhetorical assault on Jupiter by Venus and Juno in the opening *concilium* scene at *Aeneid* 10, where Venus and Juno each reproach Jupiter by means of a series of rhetorical strategies. Their speeches are a sequel to Jupiter's command to the gods to refrain from the fighting, and his prophecy about the war with Carthage. Venus and Juno, each concerned for their protégés, approach Jupiter with different arguments. Venus approaches him with flattery, addressing him 'o pater, o hominum rerumque aeterna potestas' (O Father, eternal power over men and the universe, *Aen.* 10. 17). She also anticipates her rival Juno: while in *Aeneid* 1, Venus' question 'quae te sententia vertit' served as an oblique reference to the arguments of Juno (note the recurrence of 'verto' at line 35 below), Venus again makes an oblique allusion to Juno's manipulation.

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366 'In the *Odyssey*, Athenē, goddess of wisdom, plays the suasory role in the Council of the Gods. Appealing to the same principles of justice that rightly condemned Aigisthos, she bespeaks pity and aid for beleaguered Odysseus, who is agreed to be wise and worthy. By contrast, the Son's pleas for fallen man (hardly wise and worthy) are appeals for mercy, not justice' (Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and The Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, p. 116)

367 In Book 1 of the *Aeneid*, Virgil's Venus also ends her first speech to Jupiter, her intercession for Aeneas and his men in *Aeneid* 1, with reproachful questions, echoing the reproach of Naevius' Venus (fragment 17* [14], see chapter 3): 'hic pietatis honos? sic nos in sceptra reponis? Is this the honor given in exchange for piety? Is this the way you restore us to power?' (*Aen.* 1. 253).

368 Hughes shows biblical precedents for the argument about God's enemies, as we see in David Psalm 86. See Hughes, p. 117.

She also reminds Jupiter of the prophecy he gave her at *Aeneid* 1. Here too her accusations seek to gain a reassurance:

> si sine pace tua atque invito numine Troes
> Italiam petiere, luant peccata neque illos
> iuveris auxilio; sin tot responsa secuti
> quae superi manesque dabant, cur nunc tua quisquam
> vertere iussa potest aut cur nova condere fata?
>
> [If the Trojans have sought Italy without your leave and in spite of your divine will [lit. 'with your divinity unwilling'], let them atone for their sins and may you not assist them with aid. But if they have followed the many oracles that the gods and the blessed spirits of the dead gave them, why is anyone now able to overturn your commands or to establish new fates?] (*Aen.* 10. 31-5)

Through this reversed rhetoric, Venus is baiting Jupiter, tempting him to assert his authority as the arbiter of fate. Harrison comments on Venus' rhetoric at lines 34[369] and 35, where, in the phrase 'aut cur nova condere fata', Venus 'makes the impossible but rhetorical point that Juno has taken over Jupiter's role as the arbiter of fate.'[370]

Juno interrupts Venus' questions with a speech of her own. She may have learnt the lessons of Homer's Herē, who had attempted to recreate Athenē's successful appeal to mercy in

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[369] Harrison argues that '*nunc* contrasts Jupiter's promises of book 1, *tua* appeals to his vanity by implying that *his* orders are immutable, while *quisquam* ['anyone'] stresses the universality of his rule, even over Juno, who is clearly meant here' (Harrison, pp. 67-8, note 34-5).
[370] Harrison, p. 68, note 34-5.

Book 8 (*Il.* 8. 32-7 = 8. 463-8)[371], a strategy that backfires in the *Iliad* and results in Zeus' foretelling of the death of Patroklos. In Homer, the speech is meant to annoy Herē, hence Zeus mentions only the death of Patroklos and the fight between Hektor and Achilleus, but omits its results (*Il.* 8. 470-6). He ends his prophecy by insulting her (*Il.* 8. 477-83).[372]

The speech of Virgil's Juno is more successful than Herē's, and results in a more diplomatic prophecy from Jupiter. He answers with a vague statement that placates both goddesses: 'fata viam invenient' ('the fates will find a way', *Aen.* 10. 113).[373]

The Son's rhetoric in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*, could be considered in light of the intercessions by the Virgilian goddess in *Aeneid* 1 and 10, aimed at gaining reassurance from the father of the gods. As Venus and Juno had done, the Son begins his speech with an acknowledgement of the Father's power, and he anticipates the praise that his action will earn (*PL.* 3. 144-9). He follows this with an appeal for mercy for mankind, 'Thy creature late so lov'd' (*PL.* 3. 151). He combines both the attack on the enemy – Satan – ('Or should the Adversarie thus obtain / His end? *PL.* 3. 156-7) whose actions could, in the Son's rhetoric, frustrate the Father's divine plan. The Son couples this statement with speculation about the potential triumph of Satan if the Father should 'abolish [his] Creation' 'and unmake, / For him what for thy glorie thou hast made? *PL.* 3. 162-4), before finally raising a theodical concern ('So should thy goodness and thy greatness both / Be questiond and blaspheam'd without defence' *PL.* 3. 165-6). The Father's omnipotence and his justice are being questioned, but

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[371] Kirk notes that Athenē's protest at *Il.* 8.28-40 was 'out of place', 'since it elicits an unlikely concession from Zeus' (Kirk, p. 333, note 463-8).

[372] We know of course that the death of Patroklos leads to the death of Hektor and finally, to the fall of Troy, but Zeus focuses his rhetoric on that which will annoy Herē.

[373] We know from Book 1, however, that 'fata', the fates, are on Venus' side. There can be no doubt that the prophecy of *Aeneid* 1 will be fulfilled and that fate will favour the Trojans. Stephen Harrison notes that '[t]he precise implications of Jupiter's speech, cast in a lofty, terse, and quasi-oracular style, are not immediately clear, and are not meant to be. His claim of impartiality in this war and his apparent separation of his own powers from those of destiny must be to some degree insincere temporizing in front of a divided divine assembly' (S. Harrison, *Vergil: Aeneid 10*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, p. 90 note to line 113, 'fata viam invenient').

only in a hypothetical scenario. The Son achieves the same rhetorical goal as the Olympian goddesses: provoking the Father to reassert his power as well as his justice, but without the direct charge voiced by the Olympian goddesses.[374]

The Son's speech also recalls the Olympian intercessions insofar as it elicits a reassurance from the addressee: it allows the Father to assert his power over fate. Here the response of the Father is equally as important as the Son's appeal.[375] Unlike Jupiter, however, who sidesteps the warring goddesses in *Aeneid* 10 with a statement about fate, the Father responds with a reassurance that acknowledges not only his own power, but also the alignment of his own will with the Son's. The expectation of negotiation, raised by the rhetoric of the Olympian goddesses, is thwarted:

> To whom the great Creatour thus reply'd.
> O Son, in whom my Soul hath chief delight,
> Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
> My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
> All hast thou spok'n as my thoughts are, all
> As my eternal purpose hath decreed:
> Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will,
> Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
> Freely voutsaft... (*PL*. 3. 167-75)

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[374] The Son's rhetoric also avoids the charge against decorum that Empson objected to in the speech of the Father at *PL*. 3.80, where, Empson argued, the Father's concern over Satan's plan to corrupt mankind is 'the first of God's grisly jokes' (Empson, *Milton's God*, p. 119).

[375] Di Cesare notes the importance of Vida's emulation of both the plaintive Venus and the smiling Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1 in the dialogue between Christ and the Father in the *Christiad* (6.863-7): "The contrast [of the Son] with the volatile and plaintive Venus is effective, and even more, the contrast of the Father with the half-mocking Jove" (Di Cesare, p. 104).

In Book 6 of Vida's *Christiad*, Christ's request for the Holy Spirit to be sent down from heaven results in a reassurance from the Father that recalls Jupiter's response to Venus in *Aeneid* 1.[376] Like Jupiter, the Father kisses his Son ('oscula nato reddidit') and reassures him: 'Iam concessa petis': the sense of yielding to a request is recalled from the bargain that Venus had alluded to at *Aeneid* 1. 238-9. Vida's passage creates a mercenary language (see pp. 190-1 below). Christ shows his pierced feet, thereby satisfying divine justice with his sacrifice:

> Sic fatus, palmas ferro ostentabat acuto
> traiectosque pedes et hians in pectore vulnus
> sertaque et hamatos vepres quos hostia gessit.
> Annuit oranti, delibansque oscula nato
> reddidit haec pater aeterno devinctus amore:
> 'Iam concessa petis. Dabitur tibi nate quod optas.
>
> [Having spoken thus, he showed his hands punctured with sharp iron, and his pierced feet, and the wound gaping in his chest, and the wreath and hooked thorns that he wore as a victim. The Father, won over by eternal love, nodded in assent to him as he was praying, and kissing his son's mouth, answered him: 'The things you ask for have been granted. That which you wish for will be given to you.] (*Christiad*, 6. 842-847)

Milton, however, avoids any sense of bargain in the intercession of the Son, or even of the Father being convinced. There is not even a hint of being 'convinced' – unlike Vida, who

[376] Di Cesare points to the parallels with the intercession of Venus, and their aim in eliciting prophecies from Jupiter: 'The prophecies of the Father during the Transfiguration in the first book and after the Ascension in the last book are evidently intended to emulate Jupiter's prophecies in the opening and closing books of the *Aeneid*' (Di Cesare, p. 103).

presents the Father as 'devinctus' – won over by the words of the Son. The Father reassures the Son that he has spoken 'as my decree entails', and that man will be saved by grace 'Freely voutsaft' (*PL.* 3. 175) by the Father – equally, we could add, this could apply to assurance that is freely given.

The Father's acknowledgment of the Son as 'My word, my wisdom and effectual might' is, as Steadman has shown, itself an echo of Venus' address to her son Cupid (here, 'Amor') in Book 1 of the *Aeneid* ('nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia', *Aen.* 1. 664).[377] This is not the first time that this line has been adapted from Virgil in the epic tradition. As Steadman has shown, this line recurs in Proba's *Centones Virgiliani*,[378] at the re-telling of the scene of Christ's baptism, where the skies part and the Father addresses his Son from heaven. As in *Paradise Lost*, Venus' words, in Proba, are spoken by the Father ('genitor', 402).

> exultantque uada ac subito commota columba
> deuolat et supra caput astitit. inde repente
> radit iter liquidum celeris neque commouet alas.
> huc omnis turba ad ripas effusa ruebat
> certatim largos umeris infundere rores.
> tum genitor natum dictis conpellat amicis:
> 'nate, meae vires, mea magna potentia solus
> ...

[377] See Fowler, p. 177, note to l. 170.

[378] Proba's *Cento Vergilianus de laudibus Christi*, a 4th century AD 'patchwork' poem, which retells the Old Testament story of creation as well as the New Testament story of the life of Christ, but using only lines from the Virgilian canon. For a discussion of the Virgilian *cento*, see Ziolkowski and Putnam, *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 475.

> [Then the shallow waters of the river parted and all of a sudden a startled dove flew down and settled above his head. Thereupon, suddenly, the watery way gleamed but did not shake its wings. The whole crowd rushed to this place, streaming to the banks of the river, eagerly pouring its copious moisture on their shoulders. Then the father called upon his son with fond words: 'O son, my strength, alone my great power...'] (*Cento Vergilianus*, 397-403)[379]

Steadman sees a parallel not only in the language, but also in the scenario in which these words are recalled: the relationship between Venus, the goddess of love, and her son Cupid (or Amor), is recreated in the dynamic between the Father and the Son, who embodies the Father's divine love in Christian theology.[380] He further argues that the echo of these Virgilian lines at this point of Milton's dialogue in heaven anticipates the role that the Son will enact in his intercession in offering his life in exchange for the salvation of mankind.[381] Before this can happen, however, the Father must set out the conditions of mercy, conditions that are framed in the language of epic theology.

4.3. 'Die he or justice must': the Father's conditions of mercy

At *PL.* 3. 203-16, the Father sets out the conditions by which divine justice will be satisfied, in a speech that is thought to exemplify the Father as the enactor of justice. The phrase 'Dye

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[379] E. A. Clark, D. F. Hatch (ed.), *The Golden Bough, the Oaken Cross: the Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba* (Chicago, Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 58-60.
[380] J. Steadman, 'Milton, Virgil, and St. Jerome ("Paradise Lost", III, 168-170), p. 368.
[381] Steadman, pp. 368-9.

hee or Justice must', for Fowler, is a reflection of Milton's theology of the Atonement, where 'death is not punishment [to God], but *satisfaction* for the treason':[382]

> ...Man disobeying Disloyal breaks his fealtie, and sins
> Against the high Supremacie of Heav'n,
> Affecting Godhead, and so loosing all,
> To expiate his Treason hath naught left,
> But to destruction sacred and devote,
> He with his whole posteritie must dye,
> Dye hee or Justice must; unless for him
> Som other able, and as willing, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
> Say, Heav'nly powers, where shall we find such love,
> Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
> Man's mortal crime, and just th' unjust to save,
> Dwels in all Heaven charitie so deare? (*PL.* 3. 203-16)

The idea that all mankind can be implicated by one sin is outlined in Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana.* In Chapter 11 of Book 1, entitled 'De Lapsu Primorum Parentum et De Peccato' ('Concerning the Fall of our First Parents, and their Sin'), Milton argues that it is established not only in Christian religion but 'was also the most ancient law among all peoples', that a violation against sacred laws of various religions involves a punishment to be exacted not

[382] Fowler also points to a possible echo in the Father's speech of 'ransom theory' of Irenaeus and Augustine, as reflected in line 221, in the allusion to 'deadly forfeiture and ransom' at *PL.* 3. 221. See Fowler, p. 180, note to ll. 210-12.

only on the criminal himself ('non ipse solum'), but also on all of his descendants ('sed omnis etiam progenies' *DDC*, 1.11).[383] Milton cites examples from Thucydides and Book 1 of the *Aeneid* (1. 39-41), where Juno complains that Athenē (Pallas) was able to destroy the whole Argive fleet for the sin of one man at Troy:

> Verum in piaculis vindicandis eadem divinae iustitiae ratio nec ignota aliis gentibus, nec iniqua unquam visa est. Sic ...Virgil: *Aeneid.* I.1:
>
> > Pallasne exurere classem
> > Argivum, atque ipsos potuit submergere ponto,
> > Unius ob noxam?
>
> [Indeed the same doctrine of divine justice in the matter of exacting expiatory punishments was not unknown to other peoples, nor did it ever appear to be unjust. Thus, Virgil [wrote in] *Aeneid*, book 1:
>
> > Did not Pallas have the power to burn the Argive fleet, and to drown the men themselves in the sea because of the crime of one man?]
> >
> > (J. Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 1.11)[384]

Despite Milton's argument in *De Doctrina*, the image of the Father at this point in the Dialogue in Heaven in has raised charges about Milton's portrait of an unsympathetic God who demands 'rigid satisfaction' (*PL.* 3. 212): the Father's statement 'Dye hee or Justice must' at

[383] *Columbia Milton*, vol. 15, p. 184.
[384] *Columbia Milton*, vol. 15, p. 190.

PL. 3.210 was criticized by William Empson as a 'fatuous' statement.[385] The image of the pitiless Father contributed to Empson's overall assessement of the failure of the Christian God –the wrathful God of the Old Testament – to provide a subject for Milton's theodicy to be successful in *Paradise Lost*.

Nevertheless, the Father's pronouncement of Christian justice is not the last word on justice. Empson does not take into account the conjunction 'unless' at line 210, and the lines that follow it, in which the Father sets out the conditions for the satisfaction of divine justice. The conjunction, I propose, transforms this statement from an 'insoluble tragic dilemma'[386] into a challenge to the legions in heaven, as the fate of mankind seems to hang in the balance:

> He ask'd, but all the Heav'nly Quire stood mute,
> And silence was in Heav'n: on mans behalf
> Patron or Intercessor none appeerd,
> Much less that durst upon his own head draw
> The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
> And now without redemption all mankind
> Must have bin lost, adjudg'd to Death and Hell
> By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
> In whom the fulness dwels of love divine,
> His dearest mediation thus renewd. (*PL.* 3. 217-26)

[385] 'Oddly enough, the phrase is a metaphysical conceit, in the fashion that Milton usually avoided; and the English language seems designed to make it sound fatuous…' (Empson, *Milton's God*, p. 19).
[386] Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and The Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, p. 119.

In the Father's earlier speech, where he made a provision for grace and mercy, ambrosial fragrance filled heaven. Now the silence that ensues recalls the silence that spreads throughout the assembled gods on Olympos following Zeus' speech in *Iliad* 8. 28-9.

At *PL.* 3. 222-6, the Miltonic narrator gives us a glimpse of what would have happened if the Son had not volunteered. Martindale has argued that this is Homeric tool, a 'quasi-narrative device' that could be based in the 'transitional formulae' in Homer (eg. *Il.* 8. 130 ff). [387] In these constructions, the Homeric narrator offers a glimpse of events unfolding in the opposite direction, and often accompanies it with the phrase: ὑπέρμορον / ὑπὲρ μόρον, were things would have occurred beyond, or in excess of, fate, were it not for the intervention of a deity.[388]

In Milton's construction, it is 'doom severe' (*PL.* 3. 224) that would have enacted the alternative course of events, were it not for the intervention of the Son. Fowler identifies 'doom' with 'judgment' in this example.[389] I suggest that the term 'doom' is also part of Milton's epic vocabulary of fate in this scene: it recalls the way in which the Homeric and Virgilian narrators present the process of decision-making by the father of the gods on the fate of mortals in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid.* By placing 'doom' in the context of a 'Homeric' hypothetical construction, Milton may be signalling an epic conception of fate hanging in the balance: recreating both the dramatic and theological significance of the epic context.

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[387] Mardindale, p. 100.

[388] In *Iliad* 2, for example, the narrator states that, following the arguments of Agamemnon, 'a return would have occurred, beyond fate, had not Hera made a speech to Athene (ἔνθά κεν Ἀργείοισιν ὑπέρμορα νόστος ἐτύχθη / εἰ μὴ Ἀθηναίην Ἥρη πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν', *Il.*2.155-6). The phrase 'ὑπέρμορον' also occurs in negative wishes prefacing and justifying the intervention of a deity on the battlefield: Further, in Book 20, Zeus revokes his prohibition that he had stated in Book 8 to the gods – the should now involve themselves in the fighting because Achilleus in his *aristeia* has gone too far: because he fears 'lest Achilleus storm the wall [of Troy], beyond what is fated' (δείδω μὴ καὶ τεῖχος ὑπὲρ μόρον ἐξαλαπάξῃ, *Il.*20.30), and in Book 21, Apollo goes to Troy out of concern, 'lest the Danaans storm it [the wall of Troy] on that day, beyond what was fated' (μὴ Δαναοὶ πέρσειαν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἤματι κείνῳ, *Il.*21.517). In *Odyssey* 5, Athene helps the shipwrecked Aeneas swim to safety as a wave threatens to drown him: ἔνθα κε δὴ δύστηνος ὑπὲρ μόρον ὤλετ' Ὀδυσσεύς, / εἰ μὴ ἐπιφροσύνην δῶκε γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη [Wretched Odysseus would have perished there, beyond what was fated, if grey-eyed Athene had not given him prudence] (*Od.* 5. 436-7).

[389] Fowler, p. 180, note to l. 224.

Furthermore, Milton paints the image of the Father holding up the scales – a Homeric feature (see discussion on *Iliad* 22. 208-213, below)– at the end of Book 4, where Satan and Gabriel face each other in a duel:

> ...now dreadful deeds
> Might have ensu'd, nor onely Paradise
> In this commotion, but the Starrie Cope
> Of Heav'n perhaps, or all the Elements
> At least had gon to rack, disturbd and torne
> With violence of this conflict, had not soon
> Th' Eternal to prevent such horrid fray
> Hung forth in Heav'n his golden Scales...
> ...
> Wherein all things created first he weighd,
> The pendulous round Earth with ballanc't Aire
> In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
> Battels and Realms: in these he put two weights
> The sequel each of parting and of fight;
> The latter quick up flew, and kickt the beam... (*PL.* 4. 990-1004)

Martindale has shown how Milton harmonizes epic and biblical language to depict the scales as an enactment of the Father's impartiality.[390] Satan is condemned by his own lack of merit,

[390] See Martindale, p. 102. As we saw in Chapter 3, the Homeric scales have been considered as an externalizing of fate and conveying a sense of impartiality. The scales of fate are notably absent in Zeus' decision about the fate of Sarpedon precisely, I would argue, because of his bias as the father of Sarpedon: he does not consider the relative merit of Sarpedon, like he does of Hektor in Book 22.

and his fate flies up (*PL.* 4. 1004). Dryden noted that in this detail, where Satan's fate rises, rather than falls, to condemn him, Milton transforms this scene to allude to the account of Belshazzar in the Book of Daniel.[391] Gabriel's words, furthermore ('thou art weigh'd, and shown how light, how weak', *PL.* 4.1012-3,) are a reworking of *Daniel* 5.27.[392]

In Book 22 of the *Iliad,* Zeus weights the fates of Hektor and Achilleus (*Il.* 22. 208-213): Hektor's fate sinks, and Apollo abandons him (*Il.* 22. 212-3); but it is not until Hektor realizes that Athene had deceived him by appearing as Deiphobos, that he recognizes that his fate has been decided by Zeus (*Il.* 22. 297-303). Previously, Hektor had taunted Achilleus, saying that he was ignorant of what fate had in store: because he avoided Achilleus' spear, Hektor assumed that he was not yet fated to die (*Il.* 22. 279-80). In *Aeneid* 12, on the other hand, the result of Jupiter's use of his scales is never shown to the reader (*Aen.* 12. 725-7). In Milton's recreation of this scene, the result is obvious – to God, to the narrator, the reader – and, remarkably, to Gabriel and Satan themselves. Gabriel asserts that the fight is pointless, since the outcome is known: 'what follie then / To boast what Arms can doe, since thine no more / Then Heav'n permits, nor mine' (*PL.* 3.1007-9). Gabriel's statement seems to dismiss any question of individual autonomy, given the intervention of the Father, and contributes to Milton's parody of the heroic ambition for *kléos* in ancient epic. In Book 22 of the *Iliad*, when Hektor realizes that Apollo has abandoned him and that his death is inevitable, he resolves not to die ingloriously, even though his fate has caught up with him (*Il.* 22. 297-305). Milton's

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(compare also Thetis' intercession in *Iliad* 1, where she does not appeal to Achilleus' piety: his status as the son of a goddess is enough of an argument for divine favour).

[391] See Martindale, p. 102; Blessington, p. 43; and Williams, p. 489, note to l. 727. Cf in Homer, where the death day of Hektor weighs heavily (*Il.* 22.212-3).

[392] J. Dryden, 'Dedication of the *Aeneis*', in W. P. Ker (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1926), pp. 212-13. See Blessington, p. 43; and Martindale, pp. 101-2.

Satan, however, witnesses his fate weighed against him, and resigning any attempt to win glory, he flees 'murmuring' (*PL.* 3. 1015) from the encounter.[393]

Our last hypothetical construction in *Paradise Lost* occurs in Book 6, in the final stages of Raphael's narration of the war in heaven. The Father resolves to end the battle by sending the Son onto the celestial battlefield:

> ...and now all Heav'n
> Had gon to wrack, with ruin overspred,
> Had not th' Almightie Father where he sits
> Shrin'd in his Sanctuarie of Heav'n secure,
> Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
> This tumult, and permitted all, advis'd:
> That his great purpose he might so fulfill,
> To honour his Anointed Son aveng'd
> Upon his enemies, and to declare
> All power on him transferr'd: whence to his Son,
> Th' Assessor of his Throne he thus began. (*PL.* 6. 669-79)

Milton's portrait of the Father 'consulting on the sum of things' recalls Vida's account of the Father balancing options in Book 1, before sending 'Clementia' between the arming ranks of angels,[394] as well as the Father in '*Naturam non pati senium*' (33-36).[395]

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[393] Martindale notes the eloquence of this ending of Book 4 and the thwarted duel between Gabriel and Satan: 'It is striking that the verbose Satan should be so utterly silenced' (Martindale, p. 102). Blessington, on the other hand, argues that 'the scales [of the Father] are a Christian rejection of hybristic heroism in general, represented by Satan' (Blessington, p. 44).

[394] An action is also introduced by a 'Homeric' hypothetical construction: see *Christiad* 5. 618-29.

[395] '*Naturam*', 33-36. See Chapter 2

Wittreich has shown the parallels between the portrait of the Son at *PL* 3. 62-4 and the Book of Hebrews as 'the brightness of his [the Father's] glorie, and the express image of his person (*Hebrews* 1.3).[396] In dispatching the Son onto the celestial battlefield, Milton at the same time recalls the language in which Zeus or Jupiter gives strength to gods and heroes. The Father states: 'Into thee such virtue and grace / Immense I have transfused', where the English 'virtue' carries the Latin sense of 'virtus', or courage. In Book 7, the Son appears 'Girt with Omnipotence' (*PL*. 7. 194), literally 'assuming' the qualities of the Father. The Father, in addressing the Son before sending him onto the battlefield, acknowledges the Son as 'Second Omnipotence', and alludes to the act of creating the angels, an act where the Son was present (thou knowst / Equal in their Creation they were form'd, *PL*. 6. 683-4, see below). The Father's words are not only a revision of Satan's rhetoric in Book 5 on the ignorance of the angels' origins (see *PL*. 5. 853-63), but also a reflection of the Son as agent of the Father's will:

> Effulgence of my Glorie, Son belov'd,
> Son in whose face invisible is beheld
> Visibly, what by Deitie I am,
> And in whose hand what by Decree I do,
> Second Omnipotence, two dayes are past,
> Two dayes, as we compute the dayes of Heav'n,
> Since *Michael* and his Powers went forth to tame
> These disobedient; sore hath been thir fight,
> As likeliest was, when two such Foes met arm'd;
> For to themselves I left them, and thou knowst,
> Equal in their Creation they were form'd,

[396] See Wittreich, pp. 51-2.

Save what sin hath impaird, which yet hath wrought

Insensibly, for I suspend thir doom;

Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last

Endless, and no solution will be found…

Two dayes are therefore past, the third is thine;

For thee I have ordain'd it…(*PL*. 6. 680-700)

The link between the Son as the enactor of the Father's will and the Father as the enactor of fate, as we see later in Book 7,[397] emerges here, as the Father prepares to send the Son onto the celestial battlefield in the final stages of the war in heaven, an intervention that will end the war. The Father gives an account of the war so far, describing it as a stalemate between the fallen and unfallen angels. The Father states that he 'suspend[s] thir doom' (*PL*. 6. 692): he has so far deferred the inevitable defeat of the Satanic legions. This phrase, however, also carries a recollection of the Latin 'pendere' of 'delaying fates' (as we see in Venus' allusion to 'weighing up fates against each other', or 'suspending one fate in favour of another' at *Aen.* 1. 239, itself an allusion to war at Troy).[398] In his account of the Father deciding upon the outcome of the war in heaven, Milton is signaling an awareness of the language of decision-making by the epic father of the gods. The idea of suspending fate, and of delaying death on the epic battlefield, as Jupiter does for Turnus in *Aeneid* 10 (below), creates a literal 'suspense' in the narrative as the outcome remains undecided. The scene where Jupiter balances the scales of fate in *Aeneid* 12 (725-7) raises the question of whether he is ignorant

[397] Later, in Book 7, the Father bids the Son to enact the separation of heaven and earth, and thus to begin the act of creation of Eden. The Father posits himself as the author of creation, giving the Son the role of its enactor: 'I uncircumscrib'd my self retire, / And put not forth my goodness'. In Raphael's account, the words of the Father are enacted by the Son (So spake th' Almightie, and to what he spake / His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect), echoing the account of John, where the Son is the 'word of God'. At the same time, the Father, as we saw in Chapter 3, asserts his authority over fate, declaring that 'Necessitie and Chance / Approach not mee, and what I will is Fate' at ll. 172-3. See *PL*.7.163-75.

[398] See previous discussion of *Aen.* 1.239 at p. 137 above.

of fate.[399] In Milton's account, the Father has total control of the outcome of the war in heaven, and his decision to intervene at this point reflects his will and foreknowledge of events.

4.4. From concession to accordance

As we saw in Chapter 3, Venus' reproach to Jupiter in the dialogue of *Aeneid* 1 elicits a reassurance: 'manent immota tuorum fata tibi' (*Aen.* 1. 257-8).[400] Blessington views this statement as a reassurance that 'fate will save Aeneas'.[401] The ethic dative does more than allude to Venus' interest in the fate of Aeneas; it reveals the nature of Jupiter's concession to Venus. In commenting on this passage, Servius emphasizes that 'the fates are safely assured in your [Venus'] favour', but 'not' nevertheless, 'on your account':

> 258. FATA TIBI non propter te; fati enim immobilis ratio est...
>
> [258. The fates, 'as far as you are concerned', not 'on your account'; since the measure of fate is unmovable....

Servius makes it clear that Jupiter is not changing fate for Venus, but that there is a space within the existing plan to accommodate her request. It is only because her request accords with the wider fates that it can be granted.

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[399] Servius commented on *Aen.* 12. 727: 'nam Iuppiter ignorare nihil poterat' (Servius, vol 2, pp. 635-636). Blessington nevertheless argues that 'In Virgil, there is no ambiguity when Jupiter weighs the fates of Turnus and Aeneas, since the subjunctive of an indirect question tells us that Jupiter is seeking an answer' (Blessington, p. 43). It is possible, however, that the indirect statement at *Aen.* 12.727 could belong to the narrator, and not Jupiter. We do not know the outcome, and whether Jupiter bowed to it or not. Williams notes that 'the most noticeable different between the two [the Homeric scenes and the Virgilian one] is that Virgil does not indicate the result of the weighing' (Williams, p. 488, note 725 f.).
[400] See Chapter 3.2.2: 'Virgilian recreations: Jupiter and Venus (*Aeneid* 1)'.
[401] Blessington, p. 37.

Another example of a goddess' successful intercession with Jupiter – but only when the request accords with fate's wider plan – occurs in *Aeneid* 10, when Jupiter responds to Juno's intercession on behalf of Aeneas' enemy, Turnus, as he faces Aeneas on the battlefield in Latium. Juno attempts to negotiate with Jupiter so that she may save Turnus from present death at the hands of Aeneas, and ensures that their ultimate duel is deferred until Book 12.[402] Jupiter speaks not in terms of making a concession to Juno, but of accommodating her within an existing 'window of opportunity' (note that Jupiter's speech is signalled by the verb 'fatur'):

> cui rex aetherii breviter sic fatur Olympi:
> 'si mora praesentis leti tempusque caduco
> oratur iuveni meque hoc ita ponere sentis,
> tolle fuga Turnum atque instantibus eripe fatis:
> hactenus indulsisse vacat. sin altior istis
> sub precibus venia ulla latet totumque moveri
> mutarive putas bellum, spes pascis inanis'
>
> [To her the king of airy Olympos thus spoke briefly:
> 'If you are praying for a delay from approaching death and of the time of the youth's fall, and you realize that I am doing this on these terms, seize Turnus in flight and snatch him away from his impending doom. Up to this point there is room for indulgence. But if beneath those prayers of yours lurks [the desire for] any greater favour, and you think that the entire war can be shifted or altered, you are nursing a vain hope.] (*Aen.* 10. 621-7)

[402] See Harrison, p. 221, note 608-88.

Jupiter's choice of words in responding to Juno's plea is important. Servius argues that it is not an indulgence ('venia') on the part of Jupiter, but that there exists scope for Jupiter to grant Juno's wish. Servius comments on 'venia' in line 626:

> VENIA VLLA: beneficium, quod te speras mereri. et duas habet significationes: quod petitur, ut hic, et quod conceditur...
>
> [SOME FAVOUR: an advantage, which you may hope to gain. This also has two meanings: what is sought, as is the case here, and what is granted...][403]

Servius also notes that Jupiter, at line 625, 'does not say 'there is a willingness for indulgence', but 'there is room [for it]' ('non ait "indulsisse libet", sed "vacat").[404]

Jupiter sets out the conditions for his concession to Juno: Turnus can only be saved from present danger, but will not avoid death altogether. Jupiter's statement, in his conditions to Juno, revises Zeus' statement to Herē when he contemplated saving his son Sarpedon from death at the hands of Patroklos. As we saw in Chapter 3, the scholiasts disagreed on whether Zeus meant only to delay Sarpedon's death, or to avoid it altogether. Here Jupiter sets the conditions: he is merciful and accommodating to Juno, but he does not alter the promise he made to Venus at *Aeneid* 1, avoiding the charge of being tyrannical in saving his son while condemning others. It is Jupiter who lays down the boundaries of fate to Juno, rather than being reminded of them by his spouse, as happens in the dialogue at *Iliad* 16.

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[403] Servius, vol. 2, p. 454, note to l. 626.
[404] Servius, vol. 2, p. 454, note to l. 625.

Jupiter 'corrects' the behaviour of Homer's Zeus in another, earlier dialogue with Hercules in *Aeneid* 10. Here it is Jupiter who reminds Hercules about fate. Jupiter alludes to 'my son Sarpedon' ('Sarpedon, mea progenies') who died at Troy, thereby strengthening the epic link between Homer's Zeus and Virgil's Jupiter. The argument Jupiter presents about Hercules' protégé Pallas is that his time is ended:

> audiit Alcides iuvenem magnumque sub imo
> corde premit gemitum lacrimasque effundit inanis.
> tum genitor natum dictis adfatur amicis:
> 'stat sua cuique dies, breve et inreparabile tempus
> omnibus est vitae; sed famam extendere factis,
> hoc virtutis opus. Troiae sub moenibus altis
> tot nati cecidere deum, quin occidit una
> Sarpedon, mea progenies: etiam sua Turnum
> fata vocant metasque dati pervenit ad aevi.'
> sic ait, atque oculos Rutulorum reicit arvis.

> [Alcides heard the young man and deep in his heart he suppressed a groan and shed vain tears. Then the father of the gods spoke to his son with kind words: 'Each man has his day, and the span of life is short and irretrievable for all. But to stretch fame out with deeds, this is virtue's task. So many children of the gods fell beneath the high walls of Troy. Indeed, Sarpedon perished as one of them, Sarpedon, my own progeny. Yes, Turnus' fates summon him and he has reached the limits of the time given to him.' Thus he spoke, and he cast his eyes away from fields of the Rutuli.]

(*Aen.* 10. 464-73)[405]

The link between the dialogue between Jupiter and Juno in *Aeneid* 10 and the theological issues raised in the Zeus- Herē exchange in *Iliad* 16 is reflected in an observation by J. L. de La Cerda, the Spanish Jesuit whose Renaissance commentary on the *Aeneid* was heavily influenced by Servius, and whom Milton was likely to have consulted.[406] La Cerda goes one step further by drawing the parallel between intercession in *Iliad* 16 and the substitution of a smaller fate for a bigger one in Jupiter and Juno's dialogue in *Aeneid* 10: it is a debate that de La Cerda brings all the way back to the question of fate that Herē had raised to Zeus in *Iliad* 16:

> 15. SI MORA PRAESENTIS LETHI) Respectum in hoc excursu ad 16.Iliad. vbi Iuppiter, & Iuno consultant de proferendis Sarpedoni fatis, morte iam imminente, interpretes monent...loquitur enim Virgilius ex opinione illorum, qui dicebant, uniuersa fata mutari non posse, singulorum posse.
>
> [15. IF {YOU WISH} TO DELAY PRESENT DEATH)
> Expounders on this diversion suggest looking back to *Iliad* 16, where Jupiter and Juno with Sarpedon's death now imminent, consult on the matter of postponing his doom ... For Virgil expresses the opinion of those who would say that is possible to change individual fates, but not the universal ones.][407]

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[405] Following this speech, Jupiter turns his gaze away, Pallas is killed, and Aeneas has an *aristeia*, killing many Rutulians as he seeks out Turnus (*Aen.*10.510-605).

[406] Martindale observes that de La Cerda's commentary (published in 1608-17) 'was in regular school use, and is recommended by Charles Hoole in *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching School* (1660), along with the famous commentary of Servius (4th-5th century) and Thomas Farnaby's *Notes on Vergil.*' Martindale notes that Carlo Dati mentions de La Cerda's commentary in a letter to Milton. (Martindale, p. 108).

[407] J. L. de La Cerda, *P. Virgilii Maronis Aeneidos Sex Libri Posteriores*, *Coloniae Agrippinae*, 1628, p. 502. Published in digital form by MünchenerDigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliotek, 2007, URN: urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00008167-9.

The conflict between individual and universal fates is a theme that Milton traces in the *Aeneid*, linking it to the overall theology of the poem: in the Virgilian *exemplum* that we saw above from *De Doctrina*, Milton cites Juno's complaint at *Aen.* 1. 39 about being thwarted in her punishment of Aeneas: she says that Athenē had destroyed the entire fleet of the Argives for the crime of one man ('unius ob noxiam', *Aen.* 1. 41). The principle of divine justice, as Milton relates, is that the crime of one man brings the punishment of many. In the Son's offer, however, the sacrifice of one man, Christ, ensures the redemption of all.

Following the passage in Book 6 of Vida's *Christiad*, the Father yields to Christ's intercession, and states that Christ's wounds had 'earnt ('meruere') not only the salvation of Adam, but of all mankind:

> 'Nec tantum tua, nate, piis haec vulnera Olympum
> nunc pandi meruere, nigra quos nocte premebat
> insontes primi scelus exitiale parentis,
> verum alios mox atque alios per secula coelo
> efficient dignos, sua quos commissa piacla
> sidereis procul arcebant a sedibus olim.
> Tanta tuae merces, ea vis, ea gratia mortis.'
>
> ['My son, not only have these wounds of yours earnt that heaven is now opened to the pious men, whom the deadly crime their first father covered in black night, innocent though they were; soon, indeed, through the centuries, these wounds will make others still worthy of heaven, whose sins once excluded them from the starry

seats [of heaven]. That is how much your wounds have bought: that is the force and grace of your death.'] (*Christiad* 6. 869-75)

In Milton's account, by contrast, the Son is both intercessor and the means of satisfaction. It is not his wounds, but his whole self 'made man' that serves as price for salvation. The Son instructs the Father to 'Account [him] man' (*PL.* 3.238 below). The verb 'account', as a transitive verb, could convey the meaning 'regard', thereby anticipating the Incarnation, where Christ is considered both God and man. But the same verb could also carry a mercenary sense, where the death of Christ as man, 'life for life' could repay the cost of Adam's sin:[408]

'Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life
I offer, on mee let thine anger fall;
Account mee man' (*PL.* 3. 236-8)

The Son's offer results in a new prophecy of the Father, one that does not alter the previous one about the Fall of man, but reconciles the claims of both justice and of mercy:

...So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfie for Man, be judg'd and die,
and dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brethren, ransomd with is own dear life. (*PL.* 3. 294-7)

Whereas de La Cerda notes that the wider fates cannot be changed for one man, Milton points out that in Christian doctrine, the fate of *all* mankind can be changed by the action of

[408] See OED, s. v., 2a '*trans.* To provide or present an account of (transaction money given or received, etc.), esp. formall. Also *fig.*' See also 4b: '*trans.* 'To include (something) in an enumeration or reckoning; to count or reckon in. *Obs*'. Also 4.c., 6a.

'one greater Man' (*PL.* 1. 4), Christ. The introduction of the Son as 'one greater man' could be seen as the fulfillment of the epic ambition of the preeminent hero in the figure of the Christ as he appears to negotiate a role between the divine and human spheres in Christian epic.

In Book 1 of the *Christiad*, Christ ascends Mount Tabor where he speaks to the Father (*Christiad*, 1. 830 ff). He pleads on behalf of the disciples, that they not lose faith after his death – anticipating the intercession that he will perform after his death and resurrection, and his final ascent into heaven. The response of the Father acknowledges the co-equality of the Son. He addresses him: 'Nate, patris virtus nostrique simillima imago (*Christiad*, 1.873) and acknowledges that in stating his promise, he is stating things that are known to the Son and were known by the Son from the beginning of time: 'omnia quae mecum mundi ante exordia nostri' (1. 886): like the Son in *Paradise Lost*, Christ participates in the transcendent knowledge of the Father. As Christ the hero ('heros', line 947 below) descends from mount Tabor, he appears to his disciples as a god ('deus', line 939 below):

> Turbidine Christus
> Corripitur rapido mediaque in nube refulsit,
> Verus et aspectu patuit deus atque per auras
> divinum toto spiravit vertice odorem
> luminis aetherei specimen, genitoris imago.
> ...
> Talem se sociis mirantibus obtulit heros...

[Christ was seized in a rapid whirlwind and shone in the middle of the cloud; and he revealed himself a true god in his appearance, and throughout heaven in all its

> height, he breathed a divine fragrance, a vision of ethereal light, the image of the Father...Such was the hero in the way he presented himself to his astounded companions] (*Christiad*, 1. 936-47)

Vida uses the scene of the Transfiguration to illustrate Christ's liminal status in the epic world. As both the hero and divine intercessor, Christ is a figure that performs the ultimate intervention from the divine to the human plane in Christian epic.

Conclusion

The council in *Paradise Lost* ends in celebration in heaven (*PL*. 3. 271-2) and in praise of the single God in two persons, the Father and the Son (*PL*. 3. 344- 415). The scene of the Son's intercession becomes the subject of the first heroic song in heaven: the angels sing of the 'dear and onely Son' (*PL*. 3. 403) who 'Perceive[d] thee purpos'd not to doom frail Man / So strictly, but much more to pitie enclin'd' (*PL*. 3. 404-5) and offered his life for man by negotiating the fate of mankind.[409] The Son becomes the subject not only of angels' song in heaven, but of the poet's too: Milton announces the Son as the 'copious matter of [his] Song / Henceforth', possibly anticipating the subject of his final epic, *Paradise Regained*:

> Hail Son of God, Saviour of Men, thy Name
> Shall be the copious matter of my Song
> Henceforth... (*PL*. 3. 412-4)

[409] Contrast the divine song of the angels with the heroic song of the devils after the council in Pandaemonium, who 'sing ... /Thir own Heroic deeds and hapless fall / By doom of Battel' (*PL*. 2.549-50).

Despite the celebratory song of the angels, the tragic events of the poem are yet to take place within the action of *Paradise Lost*. Following the angels' song, the narration moves back to Chaos as the action moves into the present, as 'From *Chaos* and th' inroad of Darkness old, / *Satan* alighted walks' (*PL.* 3.421-2). But as Satan walks to Eden, he also journeys towards the resolution of the Father's prophecy, and instigates the series of events that the Father had foretold in Book 3 and that Michael had shown to Adam after the Fall. The intervention of the Son is deferred until far in the future, in events that the Son himself foretells at lines 242-65. In its result, therefore, the scene in heaven fails to provide a counterpart in action to the infernal *concilium*. Unlike the council in hell, the Dialogue in Heaven does not end in immediate action, but ends rather, with a promise of events that extend beyond the scope of the poem. The Son's 'journey' to the human sphere is anticipated in the vision given to Adam by Michael in the closing Books of *Paradise Lost*: Michael traces later events known from Scripture, from the murder of Abel by Cain, to the Flood (Book 11) and in Book 12, events leading up to the coming of the 'second Adam' (11.384) – Christ.

Fowler points to an inconsistency between the Christocentric character of this scene and the pessimistic ending of the poem, where we see Adam and Eve making their solitary journey out of Eden in order to face their future in a fallen world.[410] The *felix culpa* theology – the idea that an event in the future can alter the shape of the past, is strengthened, I argue, in the epic context of *Paradise Lost* by Milton's use of Virgilian *prolepsis*. The ending of Milton's poem has been considered the ending of a tragedy, but it is also the first of a series of events that will enact the proleptic vision that will lead to the sacrifice of Christ. Michael's vision of the future serves as a consolation to Adam, who marvels at how the goodness of God 'all this

[410] The Christocentric character of Milton's theology once encouraged critics to see the *felix culpa* motif as a key to *Paradise Lost* ... But Milton's view of the Fall was resolutely and realistically tragic, as is now agreed' (Fowler 2, p. 41)

good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good' (*PL.* 12. 470-1). At the same time, the promise of salvation detracts nothing from the weight and suffering of the Fall as it is related in Milton's epic.[411] Insofar as the sacrifice of the Son eventually transforms the sin of Adam into happier outcome foreshadowed through the epic technique of *prolepsis*, so too the dialogue in heaven transforms the ending of *Paradise Lost* from a tragedy to an enactment of the future already foretold in the ancient epic framework of Milton's poem.

[411] Fowler argues that Milton does not unequivocally echo the *felix culpa*, and 'never loses sight of the unmitigated misery brought on by the Fall' (Fowler, p. 668, note to lines 469-78).

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to read Milton's council-scenes in Books 2 and 3 of *Paradise Lost* in the light of both their Homeric and their Virgilian antecedents. Whereas Mason Hammond considered the 'infernal council' as the genre that arises from late antique and medieval recreations of the epic *concilium deorum*, I show how Milton depicts both a heavenly and an infernal council scene in *Paradise Lost* by narrating the aetiology of the Fall as played out in the divine sphere in epic. I propose that Milton introduces the scene in heaven by imitating the first Olympian scenes in Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Joseph Wittreich had already redressed the imbalance in Hammond's study by considering the infernal and heavenly scenes together. He argued that both scenes explore the convention of epic prophecy. Wittreich did not, however, consider the epic tradition that Milton was recalling in his council-scenes in *Paradise Lost*. I have proposed therefore, that the Father's prophecy in the heavenly council in Book 3 draws on a uniquely Virgilian poetics of fate. Through a close reading of the relevant texts, I have demonstrated that Milton revises Vida's language of fate in the *Christiad*, while recalling the epic tradition behind it: specifically the critical tradition arising from the Homeric *concilium deorum*. By considering the critical history behind key passages in the Homeric and Virgilian epics, I have argued that Milton's language of fate is deliberately modeled on Virgil's: it recalls Virgil's responses to the theological charges that had arisen in the ancient commentaries on Homer.

Whereas Francis Blessington and Charles Martindale have considered the influence of Homer and Virgil separately as epic models for Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*, my thesis argues that, in the Dialogue in Heaven, Milton recalls a tradition of decorum-based criticism as practised by Virgil in his re-reading of the Homeric *concilium deorum*.

In Chapter 1 I argued that Milton's choice of the epic genre for his narration of *Paradise Lost* not only dictated the generic conventions that he would use to narrate the story of the Fall: this choice of genre brought with it a responsibility for the Christian poet to revise the conventions that reflected the pagan theology of the ancient world. We saw that, for Renaissance poets composing a Christian poem, the imitation of the conventions of traditional epic created problems, particularly in the depiction of the divine machinery, that is, the pagan pantheon of epic deities.

Milton depicts a revised Christian machinery in *Paradise Lost*, reworking not only ancient models, but those of the previous Christian epics of Jacopo Sannazaro and Marco Girolamo Vida. In Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis* and Vida's *Christiad*, both the Father and the Son are portrayed as epic persons. Unlike his Italian predecessors, however, Milton does not focus his narration on the life of Christ in *Paradise Lost*, but refocuses the narrative of the Fall to reflect aetiological concerns: he locates the origins of the Fall of Adam and Eve in the divine sphere, as a conflict between heaven and hell for the soul of man. In narrating events relating to the fall of Satan and the War in Heaven by recourse to Hesiodic and Ovidian models, Milton finds an epic language to convey an apocryphal event in Scripture (Chapter 2). In the opening books of *Paradise Lost*, which focus on the divine prehistory of the Fall, the poet moves from his narration in hell (imagined as Hesiodic and Ovidian Chaos) to a heaven that resembles the pagan Olympos. The poet's progress from a narrative perspective that mirrors the false and uncertain knowledge of the council in hell, to one that participates in the omniscient and privileged knowledge of the heavenly sphere, is imagined as a heroic *anabasis*. Milton imitates the epic movement to Olympos in the opening Books of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* by presenting the Father in dialogue with the Son, reworking the dialogues between Zeus and Herē in *Iliad* 1 and Jupiter and Venus in the first book of the *Aeneid*. Milton follows

the model of the Olympian dialogues one step further, by activating the epic language of fate in the prophetic speech of the Father (Chapter 3). He revises this traditional epic language to assert the providence of the Christian God over epic fate.

In the response of the Son to the Father, Milton recreates the rhetorical components of the intercessions of the Olympian goddesses. Although the scene alludes to allegorical debates between personified justice and mercy, the Father and Son in Milton's dialogue in heaven are imagined as real epic persons, speaking the language of the Homeric and Virgilian dialogues on Olympos (Chapter 4). Milton revises the theological charges arising from the Olympian intercessions, where the father of the gods is seen to yield to the arguments of a lesser goddess. In Milton's dialogue, the Father does not yield to the Son: the Son's intercession accords with a wider providence. In his portrait of the Father granting his Son's appeal for mercy towards humankind, Milton is following Virgil's reworking of Homeric scenes on Olympos, and the theological charges they raised amongst Homer's ancient commentators. Finally, Milton's adaptation of Virgil's language of epic prophecy transforms the pessimistic ending of the poem from a drama of the Fall to an epic *prolepsis* that anticipates the transition from pagan to Christian epic.

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The idea that Milton's career reached its summit with *Paradise Lost* has been revised in recent times, as has the notion that his career is modeled on the Virgilian *cursus*.[412] Maggie Kilgour has suggested an alternative model for Milton's poetic career from the Viriglian *cursus*, favouring the Ovidian model instead. Kilgour has stressed the significance of Milton's final publication, in 1671, of his last epic, *Paradise Regained*, and a dramatic poem, *Samson*

[412] On the idea that Milton is signaling a Virgilian *cursus* early in his poetry, see R. Neuse, 'Milton and Spenser: The Virgilian Triad Revisited', *ELH*, 45, 4, 1978, 606-639; and L. L. Martz, *Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton's Poetry* (Yale University Press, 1980).

Agonistes, alongside two editions of *Paradise Lost.*[413] *Paradise Regained*, in particular, has been seen to fulfill a Virgilian ambition expressed early in Milton's career,[414] which we saw demonstrated in '*In Quintum Novembris'* (Chapter 3). But these last works, as Kilgour argues, also reflect the anxieties faced in Milton's poetic career, a career that was inseparable from his life as a classical scholar.

Paradise Lost was neither Milton's last epic, nor the last time when he grappled with the question of imitation of ancient models in epic. In *Paradise Regained* (1671), Milton tells the story of forty days in the earthly life of Christ, during which he is tempted by Satan in the desert (following the accounts in *Matthew* 4: 1-11, *Mark* 1: 12-3, and *Luke* 4: 1-13).[415] Among the various temptations that Satan sets before Christ is the temptation of classical learning. Satan argues that it is Christ's responsibility to absorb the teachings of the pagan philosophers, poets, and tragedians, and calls upon the story of the twelve year old Christ teaching the Rabbis in the temple, where he explained the ways of God to men. The image of the youthful Christ creates an underlying parallel with the child Milton in his famous statement that 'the childhood shews the man, / As morning shews the day'.[416] Milton had prepared for, and anticipated his poetic career from an early age:

> the childhood shews the man,
> As morning shews the day. Be famous then
> By wisdom; as thy Empire must extend,

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[413] Kilgour revises the 'retrospective' argument about Milton announcing his Virgilian ambition in the 'Nativity Ode' (1645), with the 'exilic' *Elegy* 1 (M. Kilgour, 'New Spins on Old Rotas: Virgil, Ovid, Milton' in P. Hardie, H. Moore (eds), *Classical Literary Careers and Their Reception* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 179-96, p. 184). For the reception of Ovid as a poet of exile, see, most recently, J. Ingleheart (ed.), *Two Thousand Years of Solitude: Exile After Ovid* (Oxford University Press, 2011).
[414] See J. Coolidge, 'Great Things and Small: the Virgilian Progression', *Comparative Literature*, 17, 1, 1965, 1-23, 20-3. Lewalski argues that *Paradise Regained* is a 'complement, not a sequel to *Paradise Lost*' (Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 510).
[415] See Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, p. 510.
[416] These lines are the title for Lewalski's first chapter on Milton's early years. See Lewalksi, *The Life of John Milton*, pp. 1 ff.

So let thy mind o're all the world,

In knowledge, all things in it comprehend... (*PR.* 4. 220-4)

Satan tempts Christ to extend his knowledge by looking beyond Scripture: he argues that 'All knowledge is not couch't in *Moses* Law', but that 'The *Gentiles* also know, and write, and teach / To admiration' (*PR.* 4. 225-8). Satan's acknowledgement of the wisdom of the ancients seems to echo Milton's practice of calling on the *ethnici*, the pagan writers, in *De Doctrina Christiana*. By making an apology for classical learning an element of Satan's false rhetoric, Milton may be expressing an anxiety about his own education and even revising his poetic and scholarly practices.[417] What the Christ-figure in *Paradise Regained* rejects in epic, however, is not possible for Milton, the classical scholar, to escape: Satan's account of the ancient philosophers recalls the authors whom Milton knew and cited in both his poetry and his prose, in his political tracts, and in his theological discussions on Christian doctrine. It was the responsibility of the Christian poet to negotiate the pagan canon in a way that upheld his identity as both a Christian poet and a classical scholar. The two voices of Satan and Christ in *Paradise Regained* externalize the two roles of Renaissance readers of epic, whose attempts to rehabilitate the religious dimension of the ancient epics resulted in a range of practices of reading epic poetry, from allegorical interpretations to insights that are common to both pagan and Christian writers, as Spondanus had acknowledged in his comment on Zeus' complaint at *Odyssey* 1: an example that Milton invokes to illuminate his Christian theology in *De Doctrina Christiana*. Milton's Christ may have exorcised the pagan poets in *Paradise Regained*, but Milton himself cannot. Throughout his poetic career, Milton is both poet and theologian. He attempts to reconcile these roles in the practice of Christian epic as he identifies himself as a *poeta theologus* whose knowledge crosses the gulf between the ancient and modern world.

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[417] Lewalksi argues that Milton is contrasting ecclesiastical debates about ministerial learning against his position, argued in *De Doctrina*, about the individual path to truth through Scripture (see Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic: the Genre, Meaning, and Art of Paradise Regained* (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1966), pp. 284-5.

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