

Change Dire and Delectable:
Time as Meaning in Paradise Lost

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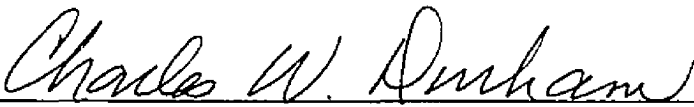
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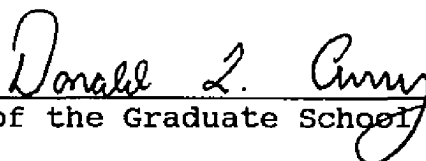
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Abstract

Change Dire and Delectable:
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by

Harry V. Moore

Since for Milton time is the measure of motion, three kinds of time emerge in Paradise Lost: time that moves in a straight line, time that moves in a circle, and time that does not move at all. These varieties of time interact in rich and complex ways to embody major themes of the poem.

In its broadest sense, time in Paradise Lost is linear and virtually absolute, encompassing matters traditionally assigned to a timeless eternity. Time in this sense includes sequence but little sense of duration.

Time as pronounced linear change and unbroken duration is associated most frequently with the fallen angels, including Satan, and with human beings in the fallen world; this is true although history, a form of linear time, is the medium in which Eternal Providence operates. Time as rhythmical recurrence, a kind of dynamic changelessness, is associated with Paradise and prelapsarian humanity, with Heaven and its perpetual praise, and--as a symbol of grace--with natural rhythms in the fallen world. Although Hell has some static qualities, time as stasis is associated primarily with God the Father and his view of all time at once, including the future.

Harry V. Moore

A creative tension between linear, cyclical, and static time embodies the pervasive themes and conflicts of the poem. These conflicts are seen in the experience of Adam and Eve, who feel time as bitter change before they discover through repentance that time can be turned to restoration; in human history, where divine grace converts the linear movement of time toward death into a cycle of restoration after loss; and in the experience of the narrator, who escapes irreversible linear change and dark stasis through the nightly visits of the muse. Although time in these cases causes nothing to happen, it measures each character's spiritual status or spiritual health, linking sin and its effects to linear change and the recovery of grace to rhythmical recurrence. In this sense, time in all its movements in the poem is meaning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Images of Time: Lines, Circles, and Stasis

Time figures in numerous and important ways in Paradise Lost. Most obviously, in an epic poem recounting the Fall of Man, it provides a narrative framework, a chronological sequence of events. In so doing, however, beginning in medias res and ranging to and fro with flashbacks and predictions of the future, it contains all time: from God's eternity and "such day / As Heav'n's great Year brings forth" (5.582-83)¹ when the Son is decreed head of all creatures and Satan initiates his rebellion; through the War in Heaven, the rout of the rebel angels, the creation of the world, the Council in Hell, the Council in Heaven, Satan's invasion of Paradise, Raphael's leisurely afternoon visit in Paradise, and the temptation, fall, judgment, repentance, and expulsion of Adam and Eve; to Adam's vision of the end of history when time will "stand fixt" (12.555), subsumed into God's eternity. In the finished poem, therefore, time is not only sequence but structure, a kind of landscape on which the reader perceives the action as a completed whole, much as God in the poem "from his prospect high . . . past, present, future . . . beholds" (3.77-78). Vertically as well as horizontally, the poem thus contains all time, raising important questions, for example, about how God's foreknowledge is related to human beings' free will. Time is also explicit theme or idea, as Raphael explains to Adam

how time operates in Heaven or Eve in her love song tells Adam that with him she forgets "all time" (4.639). In cycles and rhythms and balance and, conversely, disorder and change, time is an image or pattern of imagery; in pervading the movement and cadences of the verse, time becomes style and even prosody; by pervading key words like "change," "rest," and "vicissitude" in rich and complex ways, it becomes diction and verbal texture. In the temporal experience of Satan and the prelapsarian Adam and Eve, for example, time becomes psychology and perspective, and by thus reflecting the spiritual status of particular characters, it becomes a symbol of the pervasive themes of grace, sin, order, providence, and praise. In Paradise Lost, therefore, time is at once chronology, structure, image, theme, character, style, and symbol. And, as one would expect, time in all these guises has been explored in the critical literature on the poem.

In a lively and far-ranging article, "Counterclockwise: Flux of Time in Literature," that appeared in 1936 connecting philosophical ideas of time and their literary treatment, Madeleine B. Stern cites an astonishing 180 writers from the Western tradition. Though she ranges over every period from classical times to modern and from the seventeenth century cites Newton, Hobbes, Herrick, and the likes of Aurelean Townshend and William Browne (339), there is no mention of John Milton. In 1972, in his sweeping study The Renaissance Discovery of Time that includes Dante,

Petrarch, Rabelais, Montaigne, Spenser, and Shakespeare, Ricardo Quinones remarks that, "Modern scholars . . . have continued to discuss the great prominence of time in Milton's thought, and have formed, in so doing, the best bibliography on time devoted to any of the writers covered in this study" (538n). Between Stern in 1936 and Quinones in 1972, obviously, critics were busy exploring Milton's treatment of time.

Two articles sounded the new interest. In 1942 E. E. Stoll challenged Marjorie Nicolson's claim, in a statement attributed to David Masson, that "Shakespeare lived in a world of time, Milton in a universe of space," arguing quite the contrary that Milton "takes very considerable account of time," drawing in Paradise Lost, for example, a map "from eternity to eternity, from the begetting of the Son to the ultimate Judgment and consequent purging conflagration" (473). In a vein less polemical but nonetheless indicative of a new direction in Milton studies, Arnold Williams had, the year before Stoll's challenge, already explored Milton's unorthodox views on "when the world was created . . . when time itself first came into being, and when angels were created" (151), suggesting some connections between Milton's thought and Renaissance commentaries on Genesis that Milton likely would have known.

In the ensuing years, critics have opened up a number of lines of inquiry into time in Paradise Lost. One line, after the fashion of Williams's early essay, attempts simply

to clarify Milton's ideas about time in his works more generally. Such are Edmund Reiss's note on "Naturam Non Pati Senium" in 1957, Stapleton's essay on "Milton's Conception of Time in The Christian Doctrine" in 1964, and Babb's The Moral Cosmos of Paradise Lost in 1970. Such works are more scholarly than critical, but they solidify the bases for critical judgments. One particular focus of such scholarly inquiry is Milton's "view of history." Maurice Kelley, for example, has argued that what Paradise Lost is really "about" is "the Christian theory of history," which is "linear," unlike Toynbee's "cyclical" view and distinct from Marx's "linear" economic determinism (3). C. A. Patrides in his Milton and the Christian Tradition and The Grand Design of God links Milton to a long line of writers holding the "Christian view of history," concluding that Paradise Lost is "the most successful attempt in poetry to fuse the essential aspects of [this view] into a magnificent whole" (Grand 86). History, however--as the collective experience of a race or nation--is only one expression of time, and Adam's vision of the story of the race occupies less than two books of Milton's epic. While history, will figure as one part of my chapter on time in the fallen world, it is not central to this study of time.

Another obvious line of inquiry is the chronology of Paradise Lost. Milton's precise indication of when certain events occur and how long they continue gives the poem a clear chronological framework. Grant McColley, for example,

offers a tightly knit scheme of thirty-one days from the Exaltation of the Son to the Expulsion of Adam and Eve (16-17). Lawrence Babb (128-30), Helen Gardner (37-38), and Laurence Stapleton ("Perspectives" 736-42) agree largely with McColley on the sequence and duration of major events, but they suggest the poem is vague about when the Creation occurs, how much time passes during the events of books 1 and 2, and exactly what a "day" means outside the human world. Of more use for critical purposes is what Milton does with chronology. Gardner remarks that while the time scheme is "brief and firmly stated"--a matter of days--the imaginative effect is one of "long time"; time in the poem is "at once brief and precise, but also long and vague" (38, 43). Stapleton observes similarly that while some times in the poem are "indefinite" (for example, the time of creation, the length of Satan's voyage from Hell to Earth), in other cases "specific indications of time . . . give verisimilitude [sic] to events . . . remote from our experience" or create, for example, the sense of a past for Adam and Eve in Paradise, so that they are "at home" there and not "transients" ("Perspectives" 737, 740). While I will assume, therefore, a sequence of events in Paradise Lost and will comment on when certain events occur, my interest is not precisely in chronology but in the way chronology is established or modified for effect at key points.

A seminal and influential essay by Joseph Summers in 1954 on Adam and Eve's morning hymn in Paradise (5.153-208) has greatly fostered and shaped the study of time in Paradise Lost. In a careful probing of imagery, style, and structure, Summers finds in the hymn a celebration of God's creative "motion," observing that for Milton "variety and change represented energy, beauty, and the will of God" ("Grateful" 257). I will later return to the significance of motion, of which, as Summers remarks, time is a measure ("Grateful" 251).

Summers's essay set a precedent for exploring the symbolic significance of certain times of day in Paradise Lost. Albert Cirillo, for example, has explored at length the connection between midnight and noon, concluding that "the ambiguity of noon/midnight [connected to Satan, the Fall, and the noon-day devil] is resolved under the single unambiguous noon of the crucifixion, the symbol of the noon of eternal life"; noon, thus, man's temporal marker, is also a symbol of God's eternity ("Noon-Midnight" 392). Sister Agnes Veronica McLaughlin has further explored the connection in Paradise Lost between Satan, midnight, and noon, finding, much as Cirillo did, that "Time--the ultimate basis of structure--is the metaphor for the eternal" (127). One difficulty with this critical approach is that the connections between a time of day and its significance are likely to be either obvious ("By Night [Satan] fled, and at Midnight return'd" [9.58]) or vague and overly schematic, as

when McLaughlin remarks, "In Books II, III, and IV the cyclical movement of Satan encircles page upon page" (133) or when Cirillo says of Eve's midnight dream and her noon fall, "Satan thus defects at midnight and apparently succeeds at noon as, conversely, man apparently succeeds at midnight but fails at noon" (376). A fruitful, even-handed example of this approach is Dustin H. Griffin's sensitive study of "evening in Eden, gentle, cool, and soft," concluding, much as Summers had about Adam and Eve's morning prayer, that evening in the poem is "directly associated with the beneficent [sic] creativeness in the universe" (270). While times of day or night are often significant in Paradise Lost, they are not the primary focus of my study.

Since Paradise Lost includes not only all of human time from beginning to end but also God's time in relation to human time--all vertical as well as horizontal time--the relation of eternity to time in the poem has generated much critical interest. In an influential essay first published in 1960, Rosalie Colie explores "the paradox of eternity and time": "because He 'is' all things and thus knows all things, God is beyond time and outside it, as well as in it" ("Time" 128). Valerie Carnes notes similarly in the poem "the existence of a double time scheme, through which events might be experienced simultaneously in human time and under the aegis of eternity" (536). This connection between time and eternity will be examined at some length in my chapter

3, but two corollary lines of study need to be mentioned here.

One is the connection between time and structure in the poem. If time is imagined all at once--as one presumes God sees it--then in effect time becomes space, and time is an ordering principle for the "whole" narrative. Barker's analysis in 1949 of the implications of Milton's re-division of Paradise Lost from ten books to twelve set an important precedent for structural studies. Such an approach minimizes movement and, curiously, merges with "mythic" studies where time is transmuted to space and meaning inheres in images and structures. Isabel MacCaffrey, for example, distinguishes between "historical experience within time, and the mythic experience beyond time in the remote past or future" that Milton embodies in Paradise Lost (32); she explores in the poem "the management and placing of incidents to form an ordered pattern that is strikingly un-chronological" (47). Milton, she says, "experienced the world of his epic architecturally, in terms of mass and space," modulating "time into spatial effects" (76-77). In a "metaphoric" approach that he equates with MacCaffrey's "mythic" one, Jackson Cope also treats time in Paradise Lost largely in terms of space, citing with approval Joseph Frank's view of "the modern mythologists": "time is the subject matter which paradoxically ends as spatial pattern" (Metaphoric 17). As one would expect, God's view of time--in which "Time has become space" (Metaphoric 60)--is central

for this approach. Such "mythic" studies of time in Paradise Lost slide imperceptibly into the study of the poem's structure, and Douglas Northrop provides a helpful perspective when he contrasts the "sequential" approach to structure, which is "essentially chronological," and the "geometric approach" that emphasizes, among other things, "spatial relations" (75-76). The important thing, he argues, is that the two perspectives are compatible, being "carefully counterpoised by Milton" and thus reflecting the "double perspectives of time and eternity" in the poem (76). As with chronology, structure is not the focus of my study, though God's view of time as a completed and constant whole will be treated in chapter 3.

Another corollary, along with structure, of the connection between time and eternity in Paradise Lost is the tension between God's foreknowledge and human free will. If what God foreknows will certainly happen (as, by definition, of course, it will), then how are human beings yet "free" in what they do? Colie sounded this note early, calling the matter simply a "paradox" related to the "paradox . . . of eternity and time" ("Time" 128). The attempt to solve the paradox has continued into more recent criticism, with J. B. Savage and Julia Walker, for example, questioning free will in the poem and with Dennis Danielson and Stephen Fallon arguing for free will. More useful for critical purposes is R. D. Bedford's exploration of how Milton exploits in the

poem "logically incompatible but poetically energetic perspectives" (72).

A final twist in critical analysis of the paradox of time and eternity brings us back to the Christian view of history: prophetic "types" and their fulfillment. William Madsen's From Shadowy Types to Truth: Studies in Milton's Symbolism explores how biblical types and antitypes operate in the poem, placing Milton's technique in "the context of theories of biblical interpretation that were current in his day" and arguing against a looser typology based on "theories of metaphoric or mythic structure and Neoplatonic allegoria" (2). John Morris similarly, in a traditional study, explores how typology brings "the weight of history--past or future--to bear on a single moment of time," thus "investing historical reality with . . . moral significance . . ." (652, 654): eternity, that is, impinges on time. In an imaginative study at once placing the typology of Paradise Lost in the historical context of the Renaissance and relating it to the modern critical theories of Roman Jakobson, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Jacques Lacan, Edward Taylor in his Milton's Poetry: Its Development in Time argues the traditional view that "Time reveals through types . . . because shaped by Eternity" (72) but extends the principle into the style where, for example, puns yield up two levels of meaning essentially like types and antitypes. Once more, the key question is not what time is so much as what it does in Milton's poem, and in chapter 6 I shall

explore how types operate in the treatment of time in the fallen world.

A common thread in almost all critical assessments of time in Paradise Lost is the connection between time and motion, a connection suggested by the poem itself when Raphael remarks to Adam that "Time, though in Eternity, appli'd / To motion, measures all things durable / By present, past, and future" (5.580-82). Raphael's comment is echoed in The Christian Doctrine where Milton, following Aristotle, remarks that time is "the measure of motion" (CPW 6: 313).² Though application and emphasis vary tremendously, examinations of time in the poem deal with three kinds of motion or nonmotion: cycles, linear movement, and stasis. In a study of "Edenic Time," for example, Leslie Brisman refers to "the depiction of stasis," "the linear sequentiality of present moments," and "the cycle of days in heaven" (149, 159). Carnes refers to the "cyclic patterns of order broken with the Fall of Eden" (538) and remarks that "Satan sees times [sic] as essentially static" (527). Elizabeth Jane Wood implicates Satan in a pattern of "circularity" connected to fatalism (50). John Shawcross examines "two basic myths" of time, that which "doubles back on itself" and that which "goes constantly in one direction," and he contrasts both with stasis as a "stopping" of time, a concept Shawcross believes Milton found largely meaningless ("Stasis" 3, 14). S. K. Heninger, Jr., remarks that while dramatic elements in Paradise Lost

give "the impression of passing time" (a linear concept), the action occurs "within the stasis of eternal providence," and, unlike Shawcross, he sees the completed poem as a "happy stasis" mirroring God's sabbath after the Creation (87, 95).

Thus, despite great variety in interpretation, critics consistently see time in Paradise Lost in relation to motion or lack of motion. Even a cursory look at some of Milton's earlier works suggests that he did indeed frame the subject in these terms. Time in the well known sonnet on his twenty-third birthday, for example, is ambiguous: a "subtle thief" that steals the poet's youthful years, it makes--much like Marvell's winged chariot--his "hasting days fly on with full career" as if on a race course, but time is also a collaborator with the "will of Heav'n" in leading the poet to his "lot" in life ("How Soon Hath Time" 1, 3, 12, 11). Time here seems primarily linear--moving rapidly ahead toward some undefined goal--though the cyclical image of "late spring" (4) perhaps softens the linear surge. As this early sonnet suggests, a sense of time as linear movement--a sense of "long choosing, and beginning late" (Paradise Lost 9.26)--pervaded Milton's life and poetic career, so much so that Edward LeComte suggests that as "man and . . . artist" Milton was "obsessed with time" (5). At the very least, Milton shows an acute sense of passing time and its potential for destruction. In "On Time," for example, time is unambiguously threatening; it is "envious," even

ravenous, glutting itself on "mortal dross" (1, 6). And in the early "Naturam Non Pati Senium (That Nature Is Not Subject to Old Age)," "insatiable" time threatens to "devour the heavens and gorge the vitals of his own father"; the young poet seems unsure if even Jupiter can "fortify his citadels against . . . the harm of time" and "endue them with perpetual revolutions" (Hughes 33). For Milton, therefore, time as linear movement is ambiguous, consuming life and threatening the order of nature on the one hand and working out the the Will of Heaven on the other.

Milton's refuge from time as destructive change takes two forms. One of these lies in cycles and rhythms--the "perpetual revolutions" cited above in "Naturam." "[T]he Prime Wheel of the universe turns in daily rotation," thus making "every individual thing in the cosmos to hold to its course forever"; hence, "the righteous sequence of all things shall go on perpetually" (Hughes 34-35). In other poems, Milton finds similar reassurance in the cycles of nature. Elegy V, "On the Coming of Spring," written when Milton was twenty, begins, "Now, in the growing warmth of the spring, Time--as it turns in perpetual cycle--is calling back the Zephyrs afresh" (Hughes 37) a theme repeated much later in Sonnet 20, lines 5-8:

Time will run
 On smoother till Favonius re-inspire
 The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
 The Lily and Rose, that neither sow'd nor spun.

Such lyrical celebrations of the cycles of nature anticipate the blissful rhythms of Paradise in Paradise Lost where the readers, like Eve, "forget all time," so that "All seasons and thir change, all please alike" (4.639-40).

Along with the rhythms of nature as a refuge from gluttonous and thieving time, Milton sometimes glances at a future state where even these rhythms will be subsumed in a final stasis. In "On Time," when time has consumed all, including itself, then the "heav'nly-guided soul" (19) will quit the earth, ascend to Heaven, and "forever sit" (21) triumphant over death and "thee / O Time" (22-23), with "sit" suggesting rest or stasis after the movement of time. Similarly, in his defense of song in "Ad Patrem (To His Father)" Milton alludes to the time when we will "return to our native Olympus and the everlasting ages of immutable eternity are established" (Hughes 83) or, as the Columbia edition translates it, "time shall stand still" (1: 270). One thinks also of Adam's vision of the future in book 12 of Paradise Lost, where Michael's prediction measures "this transient World, the Race of time, / Till time stand fixt" (12.554-55). The ultimate escape from time seems to be a vaguely defined stasis.

For Milton, therefore, time moves (or does not move) in three ways: in a line, in a circle, or not at all. Before tracing these ideas and their related images through Paradise Lost, however, I should indicate clearly what Milton meant and what I mean by "time."

Cornelius Benjamin, in surveying "Ideas of Time in the History of Philosophy," remarks that among philosophers there is a "conflict between lived time apparently understood and the idea of time as an entity which when critically examined is found to be replete with obscurities and unsolved problems" (3). Augustine's famous comment in the Confessions reflects the same distinction: "I know what it is if no one asks me what it is; but if I want to explain it to someone who has asked me, I find that I do not know" (267). Unlike Augustine, who prayerfully persists in his attempt to understand and state what time is, Milton's interest in time as a philosophical concept seems perfunctory: of three statements of definition that I am aware of, two occur in parentheses and the other as an illustration of another philosophical term. The first parenthesis occurs in Raphael's description of Heaven to Adam in Paradise Lost:

(For Time, though in Eternity, appl'd
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future). (5.580-82)

Raphael is here following Aristotle, who in his Physics says, "For time is just this--number of motion in respect of 'before' and after'" (372). The second parenthesis occurs in The Christian Doctrine where Milton, explicitly invoking Aristotle, refers to "time, which is the measure of motion" and argues that both time and motion existed before the Creation (CPW 6: 313). The illustration occurs in Milton's

Logic: in defining a particular kind of "adjunct," that of "circumstances," Milton says, "Here belongs time, namely, the past, present and future duration of things." He adds, however, that "it does not belong to logic to philosophize about time is, but about the genus of argument in which it is to be placed--here, namely, among the adjuncts" (CPW 8: 248).

While Milton seems more interested in the poetry or theology of time than in a philosophy of time and while his pithy definition of time as duration or the measure of motion may seem little more than a parroting of Aristotle, for Milton's purposes in Paradise Lost, and also for our purposes in reading the poem, the definition is adequate. Milton surely assumes, for example, that the motion being measured is regular--that is, proceeding at a constant velocity--and, like Aristotle, that it is cyclical. (Piero Ariotti carefully traces Aristotle's thought on time, observing that for him "time must be the number or measure of continuous motion," that only "circular motion is continuous and uniform," and that, for Aristotle, therefore, "Time . . . is properly the number or measure of circular locomotion" [527].) Furthermore, if Milton's definition is reversible--if motion can measure time no less than time can measure motion--Milton in his humorous poetic tribute to Old Hobson shows he is aware of this fact. In "Another on the Same," working out the conceit that as long as the old man kept moving, his "time" could not stop, the poet says,

Time numbers motion, yet (without a crime
 'Gainst old truth) motion number'd out his time.
 (7-8)

And if, finally, Milton's equation of time with duration seems circular, a mere interchange of terms, one can only remark that modern dictionaries do likewise. Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 2nd College Edition, for example, defines time as "duration, continuance," duration as "continuance in time," and continuance as "the time during which an action, process, or state lasts; duration." We have a neat circle: time is duration is continuance. Defining "time" is not an easy task, and Milton's adaptation of Aristotle, as I shall demonstrate, works well for his poetic and theological purposes.

If Milton's interest in the "idea" of time was limited, his sense of "lived" time was acute. His two most famous sonnets, "How Soon Hath Time" and "When I Consider," begin "How soon . . ." and "When . . .," and both end with the necessity of waiting; "Lycidas" opens with a complaint of "Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear" (6), the poet being forced to begin before he is ready; and the poet of Paradise Lost (the third word of which is "first," indicating temporal sequence) is "long choosing, and beginning late" (9.26). One would expect, therefore, that a sense of time, no less than an idea of time, would figure

prominently in Paradise Lost. As I shall demonstrate, that is precisely the case.

My subject, then, is the connection between time and motion in Paradise Lost or, to put the matter differently, three kinds of time in Paradise Lost: time as linear, often destructive, change; time as rhythmical, often blissful, recurrence; and time as demonic or heavenly stasis. My thesis is that these different kinds of time interact in complex and varied ways to embody the major themes of the poem. As will be seen, time as linear change is associated most frequently with Satan, the other fallen angels, fallen humanity, and the fallen world; this is true although linear time is also the medium in which Eternal Providence operates. Failing to recognize this ambiguous quality of linear time in the poem, some critics have tried to force it into the mold of "good" or "bad." Time as rhythmical recurrence, a kind of dynamic changelessness, is associated with Paradise and prelapsarian humanity, with Heaven and its perpetual praises, and--as a symbol of grace--with natural rhythms in the fallen world. Most critics agree on the connection of grace or praise and cyclical imagery in the poem although some--reading Augustine rather than Milton and confusing Milton's graceful rhythms with the endless repetitions of a pagan view of history--fail to see that grace, and therefore salvation, in Paradise Lost depends ultimately on cycles or rhythms. Time as stasis is associated with God the Father and with a vaguely defined

future state in which God will be "All in All" (3.341), somewhere beyond time where, as Adam remarks to Michael, "is all abyss, / Eternity, whose end no eye can reach" (12.555-56). Critics rightly, I think, see Milton as uncertain or uncomfortable with rest as a static rather than a dynamic condition.

Time thus conceived functions in the poem in numerous and complex ways. It is, in one sense, a simple element or principle in the fictional world of a narrative poem. It is also an image or cluster of images and an idea or concept. It is a structural component or pattern in the poem. It is an experience and therefore a perspective. Above all else, I think, the creative tension between linear, cyclical, and static time in the poem--their interaction and configuration--embodies the pervasive themes and conflicts of the poem: praise and self-absorption, obedience and rebellion, grace and sin, permanence and change, order and disorder, creation and destruction, humility and vaunting ambition. Furthermore, the different characters' experience of time in the poem reflects their spiritual status; one's sense of time is a barometer of one's spiritual health. In this sense, time in all its movements in the poem is meaning.

For convenience, I shall divide the study primarily according to place, following the order of the poem. Chapter 2 examines time in Hell, where a painful sense of linear, irreversible change is the prevailing sense of time,

but where restless wanderings betray the loss of earlier rhythms and where Satan's futile attempt to "fix" his mind and resist change reflects his general attempt to supplant God. Chapter 3 examines time in Heaven, specifically God's inclusive vision of all time as a fixed landscape. Chapter 4 examines the rhythmic experience of time by the angels in Heaven. Chapter 5 explores time in Paradise, where rhythm and balance in nature as well as in Milton's verse reflect the spiritual harmony of prelapsarian human existence. Chapter 6 examines time in the fallen world, where linear change painfully similar to that of Hell supplants the blissful rhythms of Paradise but where linear time becomes itself a vehicle of divine grace. Chapter 7 concludes by exploring time in the world of the narrator, who perforce must contain within his vision all of the experiences of time in the poem.

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Chapter 2

Change Hideous and Dire: Time in Hell

Paradise Lost begins in medias res, but the opening invocation says a great deal about the "things" the narrative begins in the middle of. Here the narrator is at pains to fix the main action of the narrative, the Fall of Man, within a larger temporal frame. He begs the muse to sing of man's "first" disobedience (1.1), the Fall, the effects of which will be felt "till one greater Man / Restore us" (4-5). The first five lines, therefore, leap from the primeval Fall to the Second Coming of Christ. The reference to Moses, "That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed" of the Creation "In the beginning" (8-9), moves the scope of the narrative before the Fall to the beginning of the human world. Meantime, references to the narrator and the reader--"our woe" (3), "Restore us" (5), "Delight thee more" (11), "my advent'rous Song" (13)--create a rhetorical present tense connecting the action of the narrative to the moment of telling or reading the story. The references to Moses and Israel, along with Sinai, Siloa's brook, and the Genesis account of the Creation, evoke Old Testament history as the line of connection between "first" things, contemporary things, and future things. The reference to Satan's fall ("what time his Pride / Had cast him out from Heav'n" [36-37]) and the rebellion that preceded his fall ("impious War in Heav'n and Battle proud" [43]) moves the narrative yet further back in time,

before the "beginning" of earth and man's "first" disobedience. For most modern readers any attempt to recount first things is inherently mythological--and Milton, of course, freely laces his narrative with references to Mulciber, Pandora, and other characters he himself regards as mythological--but for Milton the events of his narrative exist in a chronological framework that includes the distant past, the rhetorical present, and a confidently imagined future. In evoking from this framework widely different times simultaneously, Milton achieves in Paradise Lost what Robert Kellogg has called a "harmony of times": "Historical, legendary, mythological figures are organized and understood in one grand intellectual and poetic scheme" (262). The poem's opening invocation evokes this grand scheme and serves notice that the narrator will range freely over it.

The "things," therefore, that Paradise Lost begins in the middle of are, quite simply, all history, human and divine. And the story begins in Hell. A study of time in Hell focuses primarily on books 1 and 2 of the poem, but it also follows Satan, as he carries hell within him, to his meeting with Uriel near man's world in book 3, his invasion of and departure from Paradise in book 4, the corruption of the human couple in book 9, and, finally, his return in ironic triumph to Hell in book 10.

The narrative proper begins when, with the clear time indicator "now" and with a shift from the past tense of "reserv'd" to the dramatic present tense of "torments," the

reader is plunged not only into Hell but also into Satan's tormented consciousness of time:

for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him. (1.54-56)

Satan is experiencing what the reader recognizes well enough--the radical difference between a painful present and a happy past. In these lines and in those that follow before Satan's first speech, the narrator identifies the essential elements of time in Hell. First, there is an overwhelming sense of change and loss: Hell is "O how unlike the place from whence they fell!" (75). There is also an exaggerated sense of duration, of how "long" time is: pain is "lasting" (55), torture is "without end" (67). There is deep and constant restlessness: in these regions "peace / And rest can never dwell" (65-66). And, finally, there is ironically no hope of change: here, as in Dante's *Inferno*, "hope never comes / That comes to all" (66-67). A painful present, bitter memories of a happy past, and despair over a future that stretches forward with unremitting sameness constitute the experience of time in Hell. Time, however, is not the cause of misery in Hell but only its symptom. "Sin, not Time" (9.70), the narrator later explains--the rejection of rightful obedience and praise through pride and ambition--causes such changes. But an altered experience of time is a pervasive symptom of the rebels' fallen state, and in examining by turn the elements

of their sense of time, as well as their futile attempts to escape from time, one necessarily examines their spiritual condition.

The first element of this altered sense of time is a painful and unwavering sense of change. MacCaffrey has remarked, "The denizens of Hell are obsessed with time and the heavy change of their condition" (77). From a heavenly experience where, in joyful praise, one day is not unlike other days, the rebels have fallen into a sense of irrevocable loss. Change rings like a refrain among the inhabitants of Hell. Satan's first words in the poem are an exclamation to Beelzebub, "If thou beest hee; But O how fall'n! how chang'd" (1.84). "Is this the Region, this the soil, the Clime . . . this the seat," he adds, "That we must change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom / For that celestial light?" (242-45). When Satan moves, his "uneasy steps / Over the burning Marl" are "not like those steps / On Heaven's Azure" (295-97). The other rebels lie on the burning lake "Under amazement of thir hideous change" (313); they were "Far other once beheld in bliss" (607). In addressing his followers, Satan refers to "this dire change / Hateful to utter" (625-26), language he echoes later to his daughter Sin when he refers to heavenly joys "Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change / Befall'n us unforeseen" (2.820-21). The word "change," precisely the thing time measures, becomes synonymous with spiritual fall or loss of grace when Satan says of Adam and Eve, for

example, "Ah gentle pair, yee little think how nigh / Your change approaches" (4.366-67), or when Death is drawn to earth because he sniffs "the smell / Of mortal change" (10.272-73).

The demonic experience of time is essentially linear: point A is joyful, and point B (the result in this case of a deliberate choice) is painful; memory of A, therefore, is ironic and bitter. One way of coping with such change is to resist it or to deny that it has occurred. This is the attempt to "fix" or arrest time--to create a stasis--and it is best illustrated by Satan himself. Unwilling to consider the cause of his painful change--his proud refusal to honor and praise the Creator--he attempts by dint of will alone to arrest and even reverse time. Acknowledging that he is "chang'd in outward luster," he yet insists he will not "repent or change," but will maintain his "fixt mind / And high disdain" (1.96-98). "All is not lost"; he still has "the unconquerable Will, / And study of revenge, immortal hate, / And courage never to submit or yield" (106-08). He later claims, therefore, "A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time," avowing his mind is "its own place" which he can turn into Heaven if he chooses (253-54). Satan claims, in other words, that with adequate strength of will he is immune to the effects of time; he can not only resist further change, but he can also recapture the heaven that was lost.

Unfortunately for him, however, his premise--"What matter were I be still the same" (256)--is false: he is decidedly, irrevocably, and by his own choice not the same. Ironically, therefore, what he fixes in his own mind by pride and will power is only his bitter sense of loss: the only thing that does not change is his painful sense of change. Thus "fixed," his mind becomes the hell that goes with him wherever he goes. Approaching Paradise in book 4, he feels

The Hell within him, for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step no more than from himself can fly
By change of place. (4.20-23)

Even out of Hell, he continues to suffer "the bitter memory / Of what he was, what is, and what must be / Worse" (24-26), cursing the sun for bringing to his "remembrance from what state / [he] fell, how glorious once above [its] Sphere" (38-39). The one avenue for changing his sense of the past--repentance or submission, changing what he is--he rejects, so he becomes his own private hell, constantly oppressed with what he has lost. His attempt to fix time fixes only his sad consciousness of a time irrevocably lost.

As "change" in Paradise Lost often indicates the inexorable linear working of time, "fix" often connotes a blind and futile resistance to time. When the lesser fallen angels move to music, "Breathing united force with fixed thought" (1.560), the reader knows this may "[charm] / Thir

painful steps o'er the burnt soil" (561-62) for a while, but it will not alter the great sense of change their rebellion has wrought. In ironic justice, the devils who have fixed their minds against God are bound in ice "there to pine / Immovable, infixt, frozen round, / Periods of time" (2.601-03). Similarly, in the reader's last view of Hell, the devils have ironically experienced yet another "change" (10.548) into serpents, and their eyes are "fix'd" on the fruit that turns to ashes in their mouths (553). Satan's nostalgia, as Foley points out, is not merely for a lost past but for "the condition of goodness itself" (53); his attempt at stasis, therefore, is sadly misguided. So much, Milton seems to say, for those who ignore grace and try to stop time and control their destiny by force of will.

For Satan, "lasting pain" no less than "lost happiness" (1.55) is an essential element of his new sense of time. If remembrance of the past is bitter for him and his followers, the future is no less strange and painful since in Heaven they presumably had little occasion to think of the future and even less occasion to be responsible for it. This uncertainty is reflected, for example, by Belial in phrases such as "who knows . . . whether" (2.151-52), "what if" (170), and "in time may" (210) in his attempt to plot strategy. Satan claims he and his forces are "in foresight much advanc't" (1.119), excusing their past failure since no "power of mind / Foreseeing or presaging from the Depth / Of knowledge past or present" could have predicted the outcome

of their revolt (626-28). His prediction, "Here at least / We shall be free" (258-59), hardly shows foresight, however, and his claim that the rebel angels "shall . . . re-ascend / Self-rais'd, and repossess thir native seat" (633-34) is mere rhetoric to raise weary hopes.

Despite the obvious fallacy of "self-rais'd," in the Council in Hell both Belial and Mammon offer versions of the same false hope that time apart from grace will change the plight of the fallen angels. Belial suggests that the devils may be "chang'd at length" so that Hell will not be so bad; he draws hope from what "the never-ending flight / Of future days may bring, what chance, what change / Worth waiting" (2.217, 221-23). He does not realize that since time did not cause their fall it will not remedy it. Mammon similarly suggests the devils will "Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain / Through labor and endurance" (261-62). The devils wish, the narrator says after Mammon's speech,

To found this nether Empire, which might rise
By policy, and long process of time,

In emulation opposite to Heav'n. (296-98)

The rebels' faith in the "long process of time" is, of course, futile. Although they decide to do something, Beelzebub's description of their plan as "revenge though slow, / Yet ever plotting" (337-38) is in effect a parody of Providence, of grace working in time. Once more, the devils

are condemned to mimick, however futilely, the good they have rejected.

Refusing to learn from the past, the devils cannot hope to deal effectively with the future, and after their Council the narrator remarks that their hopes are "false presumptuous" (522) and "fallacious" (568). In fact, they have no hope, and their policy of seeking revenge is based on despair, not quite the "flat despair" that Belial ascribes to Moloch (143) but despair nonetheless. Satan sees clearly as he approaches Paradise that "All hope [is] excluded" and proceeds with the famous "farewell Hope" speech (4.105, 108). In Paradise before the Fall, he reminds himself that he is not brought hither by "hope / Of Paradise for Hell" but by the pleasure of destroying (9.475-76).

Undiverted, thus, by any hope of change, the inhabitants of Hell think of the future primarily as long, with time proceeding unremittingly along an unending line. Satan sees his lot as "endless pain" (2.30). Moloch expects "pain of unextinguishable fire . . . without hope of end" (88-89). Belial imagines that renewed war may gain the rebels "everlasting groans, / Unrespited, unpitied, unrepriv'd, / Ages of hopeless end" (184-86). The goblin Death sees that Satan and his followers are condemned "To waste Eternal days in woe and pain" (695). Even their perception of less grand matters betrays that for the devils time is inexorable duration. The Council in Hell, Beelzebub

says, is "long debate" (390), and Satan says of his corruption of mankind, "Long were to tell / What I have done" (10.469-70). Satan's prediction for Adam and Eve is riddled with images of linear time:

Live while ye may,
 Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed.

(4.533-35; emphasis added)

The devils imagine that even in Heaven time is experienced as duration and is therefore long. Satan, for example, wonders "how long / Before" the Creation God "had been contriving" humankind's world (9.138-39). Of the "warbl'd Hymns" of Heaven, Mammon says, "how wearisome / Eternity so spent in worship paid / To whom we hate" (2.242, 247-48), where "spent" betrays a linear sense of time. And even in his private thoughts Satan cannot imagine himself paying to God "Endless gratitude, / So Burdensome" (4.52-53). Such is the future for those who face "torture without end" (1.67).

If for the fallen angels, then, the past is bitter and irrevocable loss and the future is at once vague, long, and hopeless, the present is inevitably miserable; in Hell, "peace / And rest can never dwell" (1.65-66). The devils' thoughts are "restless" and their hours "irksome" (2.526-27), unlike the "happy hours" of Heaven (3.417). They suffer, like their cohort Sin, "perpetual agony and pain" (2.861). They seek, therefore, "what best may ease / The present misery, and render Hell / More tolerable" (458-60).

Satan is being both guileful and unwittingly honest when he tells Gabriel he has left Hell to seek "whatever place / Farthest from pain, where [he might] hope to change / Torment with ease" (4.891-93).

The rebels would obviously like to suspend or transcend time, but two avenues by which this might be done are shut off to them. One is the loss of oneself in contemplation of something good or beautiful. Satan comes near this experience when he views Adam and Eve's world for the first time. In a scene that evokes God "High Thron'd above all highth, [bending] down his eye, / His own works and their works at once to view" (3.58-59), Satan from the stairs below Heaven's gate "Looks down with wonder at the sudden view / Of all this World at once" (542-43); like a scout discovering "The goodly prospect of some foreign land / First seen," he is with "wonder seiz'd" (548-49, 552). The moment is fleeting, however, for Satan is "much more" with envy than with wonder "seiz'd / At sight of all this World beheld so fair" (553-54), and "without longer pause" (561) he flings himself down the spheres. Unable to escape his own envy and view the new creation with selfless wonder and praise, Satan cannot transcend the linear experience of time: his momentary transport is a "pause" that cannot be "longer." Satan again loses an opportunity for selfless wonder the first time he views Paradise, whose "purer air . . . to the heart inspires / Vernal delight and joy, able to drive / All sadness but despair" (4.153-56). Later, as he

admires Paradise and particularly Eve, Satan is in fact drawn out of himself:

That space the Evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remain'd
Stupidly good, of enmity disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.

(9.463-66)

Satan is "with what sweet / Compulsion thus transported to forget" his mission (473-74) and his sad lot, but such escape from self and therefore time is very brief: it is "for the time" (464). "Soon / Fierce hate he recollects" (470-71), and thus the "hot Hell that always in him burns" ends "his delight, / And tortures him now more, the more he sees / Of pleasures not for him ordain'd" (467-70).

Similarly, the devils Satan leaves in Hell seek "Truce to [their] restless thoughts" (2.526) until he returns. Some find this briefly in the harmony of heroic song: "Thir Song was partial, but the harmony . . . Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment / The thronging audience" (552-55). Such song, the narrator remarks, "charms the Sense" (556), including, he might have added, the sense of time. Others seek with "discourse more sweet" or "Eloquence" to charm the soul, but in their high reasoning they find "no end, in wand'ring mazes lost" (555-56, 561). Such "pleasing sorcery [can] charm / Pain for a while or anguish, and excite / Fallacious hope" (566-68), but it cannot undo change or stop the heavy march of time. Failing of the legitimate loss of

self in some worthy object or action, the devils can only parody the experience of transcending time, hoping "with one small drop [from Lethe] to lose / In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe, / All in one moment" (607-09). They learn by painful experience that only those who are transported-- i.e., carried outside themselves--can lose their sense of time; having rejected praise, they have locked themselves into a painful sense of passing time.

A second avenue for transcending time is likewise shut off to the fallen angels: rhythmically recurring experience. Having rejected the order and graceful rhythms of Heaven, they experience time as unbroken duration. As John Knott has observed, "There is no real repose for the inhabitants of hell"; since they have "no way at all to mark the passage of time, there can be no natural rhythm" for their activity (Milton's 94-95). Satan, for example, ironically observes time as a dance as he descends through the spheres of the world: below the sun, the constellations

Thir Starry dance in numbers that compute
Day, months, and years, towards his all-cheering Lamp
Turn swift thir various motions. (3.580-82)

He, of course, cannot participate in this dance and has not come from Hell to admire it. What is experienced in Heaven and Paradise as balance and rhythm becomes in Hell a painful alternation of opposites. Hell contains both fire and ice. In a parody of alternating seasons, "At certain revolutions" the damned "feel by turns the bitter change / Of fierce

extremes, extremes by change more fierce" (2.597-99). From "Beds of raging Fire" they are brought "to starve in Ice" for "Periods of time" and then "hurried back to fire" (600-03) in a painful parody of Heaven, where "light and darkness in perpetual round / Lodge and dislodge by turns," making "Grateful vicissitude" (6.6-8). In the same kind of unremitting repetition, Sin's hell-hounds are "hourly conceiv'd / And hourly born" (2.796-97). Similarly, in contrast to the "sweet interchange / Of Hill and Valley, Rivers, Woods, and Plains" (9.115-16) in Paradise, Satan is tormented by "the hateful siege / Of contraries" (121-22), seeking in his destructive mission "ease / To [his] relentless thoughts" (129-30). In the poem's last view of Hell, the devils are said (by "some") to undergo an "annual humbling certain number'd days" which is "Yearly enjoin'd" (10.575-76); this parody of time as rhythm, however, does not save the devils from "Famine long" and "ceaseless hiss" (573). Time in Hell is at once unchanging and relentlessly repetitious. It fulfills exactly the Elder Brother's prediction in Comus that evil

on itself shall back recoil,
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last
 Gather'd like scum, and settl'd to itself,
 It shall be in eternal restless change
 Self-fed and self-consumed. (593-97)

Looked at from different angles, time in Hell is static, cyclical, or linear. Carnes, for example, in a

study that connects characters' language with their perception of time, sees Satan's "apprehension of time as static and as encompassing only the present, the immediate past and the immediate future" (528). Having "lost the redemptive powers of memory and of foresight alike, Satan sees times [sic] as essentially static" (527). Joseph Summers similarly suggests that Satan "fails to comprehend the vital movements of the universe and of God," seeming "to imagine an order which is static except for his own aspiration" (252). And Sister Agnes Veronica McLaughlin, citing and echoing MacCaffrey, says that Satan "in rejecting time rejects change; claiming to be still a denizen of Changeless Heaven" (131). There is indeed something static about time in Hell; nothing really changes there. But, as McLaughlin's "Changeless Heaven" suggests, this static or fixed quality of Hell is at once an outward expression of the fixed pride and disdain of the fallen angels in emulation of God's absolute and unchanging character and also an ironic judgment from Heaven whereby the painful sense of change itself becomes fixed. The static aspect of time in Hell, therefore, reflects the static--i.e., proud and unrepentant--character of Hell's inhabitants.

From another angle, time in Hell is cyclical, though not essentially so. Laurie Zwicky claims that "the most important quality of Satan's time is its cyclicism," connecting Satan with "the kind of circles St. Augustine had said that pagans opposed to the 'right way'" (274-75).

Elizabeth Jane Wood argues similarly that "circularity . . . is characteristic of Satanic motion in general" (48). Conceding that cycles in Paradise Lost are sometimes positive, she yet connects "Satanic, circular movement" with fatalism and with St. Augustine's attack on the "false doctrine" that "time . . . and history move according to a rigidly cyclical pattern" (49-50). As with stasis, Hell certainly has its punishing repetitive cycles, but, as I shall show in the next two chapters, both Heaven and Paradise experience time primarily as graceful rhythms. Joseph Summers is nearer the truth, therefore, when he sees the cycles of Hell as a parody of those of Heaven: "all the motion of Hell," he says, "is but a perversion of creative movement" ("Grateful" 252). The "fierce" hot and cold cycles of Hell for "Periods of time" (2.599, 603) are not so much Milton's attack on a pagan conception of time and history as they are Heaven's ironic justice on those who reject the graceful rhythms of praise, what MacCaffrey calls "the circles of the angelic dance" (74). Those who reject goodness are condemned to parody it.

From yet another angle--and in its deepest sense, I think--time in Hell is linear. As MacCaffrey points out, the devils experience "perpetual contrasts between present misery and a happy past," and they face an "unknowable future" (77, 79). "Time," in its basic sense, John Shawcross observes, "is associated only with man and Satan"; "it is one of the negative qualities of life which have come

into existence because of Satan's rebellion" ("Stasis" 12). Thus, time in its most common (i.e., linear) sense is a product of sin. While it is true, therefore, as Wood claims, that Satan shows "a disregard for the importance of time as lived duration" (51), this is merely another way of saying he experiences time without grace. Unrepentant, foiled in his attempt to fix and even reverse the change he has precipitated, condemned with his fellow rebels to parody in "fierce extremes" the cycles of Heaven, facing a dark future where destruction is his only pleasure, Satan experiences time without grace, and that is by definition Hell--irrevocable, dire, and hideous change.

Chapter 3

Prospect High: God's View of Time

The reader of books 1 and 2 in Paradise Lost, like Satan, escapes "the Stygian Pool" (3.14), travels through "Chaos and Eternal Night" (18) where "time and place are lost" and "Eternal Anarchy" stands (2.894, 896), and moves up to Heaven where "holy Light" has dwelt with God "from Eternity" (3.1, 5). Unlike Satan, however, who leaps downward into the newly created human world, the reader passes into Heaven itself, where Milton must somehow render the relationship of God's eternity to the temporal experience of his creatures.

He does this differently from earlier Christian thinkers, in part no doubt because in a narrative poem characters must act, whether in Hell, Earth, or the "eternal Regions" (349); a sequence of events must occur, and action or motion implies time. Beyond the exigencies of the poem, however, Milton's view of eternity differs from that of Augustine and Boethius, who represent the norm in Milton's time. Augustine in the Confessions, for example, distinguishing sharply between "time and change" on the one hand and "true eternity" on the other (263), remarks that God's years do not "go and come" but "stand still all together"; God's "today is eternity," a constant present (267). God is "before all the past in the sublimity of [His] ever-present eternity," and he is "above all future things" (267). Of God before the Creation, Augustine says

we cannot meaningfully ask, "What were you doing then?" because "when there was no time, there was no 'then'" (266). For Augustine, thus, God experiences all time as a constant present. He is outside time, and questions about what happened "before" the Creation, when time began, are meaningless.

Similarly, Boethius sees eternity as "the whole, perfect, and simultaneous possession of endless life." "Whatever is subject to the condition of time," he says-- even if these things had no beginning and no end--"cannot rightly be thought eternal." Eternity is "always present to itself" and holds "the infinity of moving time present before itself" (115). "It is one thing to live an endless life," he adds, "and another for the whole of unending life to be embraced all at once as present, which is clearly proper to the divine mind" (116).

Milton scholars agree, I think, that this view of time and eternity derives ultimately from Plato's Timaeus, where time is seen as "an eternal moving image of the eternity which remains for ever at one," created by the "eternal Living Being . . . when he ordered the heavens" (50-51). Days, nights, months, and years are "all parts of time, just as past and future are also forms of it"; these, however, cannot be rightly attributed to "the Eternal Being," who "is eternally the same and unmoved" (51). Though Plato differs from his Christian successors in claiming that time continues indefinitely "in its measurable cycles" (51), he

agrees with them that eternity is still, time moves, and the two are quite different.

Milton departs sharply from this view, minimizing the distinction between time and eternity and extending time into what had been regarded as timeless eternity. In explaining "Eternity" as an attribute of God in The Christian Doctrine, he says all agree that "nothing can properly be called eternal unless it has no beginning and no end," adding that "both these are true of God" (CPW 6: 143). Satan in Paradise Regained understands this sense as he ponders Christ's kingdom, not knowing what it is "Nor when, [though] eternal sure, as without end, / Without beginning" (4.391-92). In Paradise Lost God is sometimes referred to simply as "the Eternal" (2.46, 3.2, 4.996), as "Eternal King" (3.374, 6.227), as the "Eternal eye" (5.711), or, a favorite appellation, as "the Eternal Father" (5.246, 6.96, 7.137, 7.517, 10.32). In this strict sense only God is eternal, having no beginning and no end.

Even in God's case, however, Milton does not equate eternity with timelessness but rather with endless duration. In his Logic, for example, eternity is not clearly distinguished from endless time: "to God," he says, "is usually attributed aevum or eternity, and not time. But what properly is aevum if not perpetual duration?" (CPW 8: 248). Further, he says explicitly, "not all times are present to God, as is commonly believed, for He can change the present though not the past" (CPW 8: 328), thus agreeing

with Adam in Paradise Lost, who says after the Fall, "But past who can recall, or done undo? / Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate" (9.926-27). With even less distinction between eternity and linear time, Milton remarks in The Christian Doctrine that "all the words which the scriptures use to mean eternity often mean only earthly times, or antiquity" (CPW 6: 143).

In keeping with this essentially linear definition of eternity, in Paradise Lost "eternal" often means without end or simply very old. The rebel angels, having sought vain glory in Heaven, are consigned to "Eternal silence" (6.385); their punishment is "Eternal misery" (904); Raphael chooses not to name many of these and so "Eternize" their names on earth (374). Similarly, immortality without happiness serves only to "eternize woe" (11.60). In contrast, the faithful angels in the War in Heaven perform "deeds of eternal fame" (6.240). In Chaos--clearly not eternal since it had a beginning--there is "Eternal Anarchy," as well as "endless" wars (2.896-97); and "Eternal Night" (3.18) is clearly the same as "eldest Night," "ancient Night," and "old Night" (2.894, 970, 1002). For Milton, therefore, eternity and time, or duration, are not mutually exclusive. In fact, Babb says, "I have found no instance in [Milton's] works in which eternal clearly means 'timeless,' 'not subject to duration'" (121). Lewalski observes similarly, "Milton nowhere proposes the classic and almost universally accepted formulation of God's eternity as an eternal present

. . . in which measures of time are irrelevant" ("Time" 52). Since, as Milton says, "there is no inherent force or efficacy in time or eternity, any more than there is in the concept of number" (CPW 6: 307), the qualitative distinction between time and eternity does not seem to matter a great deal to him.

One corollary of Milton's view is that for him--unlike Augustine and even Plato--time existed before the Creation. Williams observes that Milton "markedly disagrees" with the orthodox doctrine "that time began with the creation of the world" (159). Patrides remarks similarly that "Milton was one of the few great writers of the Renaissance to depart from the traditional view of time," since he denied "that eternity was timeless prior to the creation of the world" ("Renaissance" 410). Milton's statements are unequivocal on the matter. In The Christian Doctrine he denies the "popular belief that motion and time, which is the measure of motion, could not, according to our concepts of 'before' and 'after,' have existed before this world was made" (CPW 6: 313-14). Although Milton says that anyone "who asks what God did before the creation of the world is a fool; and anyone who answers him is not much wiser" (CPW 6: 299), he does not, like Augustine, regard the question as nonsensical, and he speculates freely about "when"--i.e., in what sequence--such events as the creation of the Son, the origin of matter, the creation of angels and of Heaven, the

fall of angels, and the creation of the world might have occurred.

In Milton's scheme, time as the measure of motion presumably had a beginning, though to my knowledge Milton nowhere specifies what that beginning is and critical attempts to do so are labored, rather like Satan's attempt to gain a footing in Chaos. If God alone is in the strict sense eternal and if, as he tells Adam in book 8 of Paradise Lost, he is "alone / from all Eternity" (405-06), then time must have begun with his primal act of creation when, as Adam phrases it, God is "Mov'd . . . in his holy Rest / Through all eternity . . . to build" (7.91-92). Time begins, that is, with God's first creation or "motion." Both Babb and Whiting suggest this primal act in Milton's scheme is the creation of matter. In commenting on Milton's view of creation, Whiting says, "It seems to have been agreed that as there was no matter before creation so there was no time or measure of time" (174). Babb says, "The beginnings of both time and space correspond logically with the effluence of matter from God, when 'things durable' first came into being" (121). In The Christian Doctrine, however, Milton argues that matter must either have "always existed, independently of God" (clearly an absurdity in Milton's thinking) or (more reasonably) it "originated from God at some point in time" (CPW 6: 307). Thus, if the creation of primal matter occurred "at some point in time,"

then in Milton's view time already existed and the creation of matter does not mark the beginning of time.

The imagination staggers here, trying to conjure up a "time" when there was no "time" (for, of course, to speak of what God did "first" begs the whole question by assuming a time frame larger than God and his eternity), but by the logic that time "began" with creation--when, presumably, God first "moved"--time in Milton's scheme may have begun with the creation of the Son, who is, according to The Christian Doctrine, "called first born . . . not just as a title of dignity, but to distinguish him from other men for the chronological reason that through him all things which are in the heavens were created" (CPW 6: 303). The Son was "produced . . . before all things" (6: 211) and is thus "the first of the things which God created" (6: 303). Accordingly, the angelic chorus in Paradise Lost praises the Son as being "of all Creation first" (3.383). In arguing in The Christian Doctrine against the "eternal generation of the Son," however, Milton places the creation of the Son within time: "So God begot the Son as a result of his own decree. Therefore it took place within the bounds of time, for the decree itself must have preceded its execution" (CPW 6: 206, 209). This passage, as Lewalski observes, "pushes back the beginnings of the process of creation, and therefore the production of motion and time, to some point before the generation of the Son" ("Time" 52).

Although according to Milton's definition of time as the measure of motion it is logical to fix the beginning of time at God's first act of creation, that is, the creation of the Son, I think we must live with some ambiguity here. First of all, Milton simply does not distinguish sharply between time and the eternity out of which it somehow emerges; the passage cited earlier from Milton's Logic makes clear that in his view the "aevum or eternity" of God is "properly" nothing more than "perpetual duration" (CPW 8: 248), and duration, of course, is synonymous with time. Duration, along with succession--what Milton calls "our concepts of 'before' and 'after'" (CPW 6: 313)--exists in Milton's eternity: time operates, as Raphael tells Adam, "in" eternity in Paradise Lost (5.580). Furthermore, although in Milton's view time and motion measure each other, the absence of motion does not mean time does not exist. Aristotle, whom Milton is following, is quite explicit about this in his Physics. "Since time is the measure of motion," he says, "it will be the measure of rest too. For all rest is in time." Time, he says again, "is the measure of motion and rest" (375). Conceivably, then, time in the sense of duration extends even to God's "holy Rest / Through all Eternity" (Paradise Lost 7.91-92). Such a mixing of time and eternity is supported by Michael Lieb's convincing argument that "essential to Milton's understanding of holy rest is the paradoxical idea that, as part of the divine union, there is constant movement. Rest

is symbolically depicted through motion" (248-49). Lieb specifically addresses the ultimate union of God with his creatures, but his argument undermines any pat assumption that God's "rest" before creation is completely static. He points out, for example, that in Paradise Lost God's holy rest "is characterized by the fact that His 'unsleeping eyes' never 'rest'" (5.647; Lieb 249n). Milton, therefore, not only extends past time into eternity as a measure of God's "motion" of creation, but also seems to imagine time as pure duration even in God's rest, perhaps even before there was motion to measure the duration.

Such a view of time, according to W. H. Newton-Smith, is an "absolutist or substantialist" view in which time exists independently of its "contents" (27): time is something in which events succeed one another or, as I have suggested, rest occurs. Sir Isaac Newton, probably the most famous proponent of absolute time, described it thus: "Absolute time . . . flows equably without relation to anything external, and by another name is called duration." He said at another point, "The duration or perseverance of the existence of things remains the same, whether the motions are swift or slow, or none at all; and therefore this [absolute] duration ought to be distinguished from what are only sensible measures thereof" (qtd. in Trusted 100). Without showing great philosophical or scientific interest in the subject, Milton assumes something very much like this absolute view, as opposed to the "reductionist" view

(Newton-Smith 26) espoused by Leibniz, who held that time is the successive order of events rather than something in which they occur: "instants apart from things are nothing, and . . . they only consist in the successive order of things" (qtd. in Trusted 90). Milton's epic, for obvious reasons, fits more comfortably into Newton's absolute universe than into Leibniz's world which anticipates modern relativity. In any case, when the action of Paradise Lost begins--at the first exaltation of the Son--time already exists, reaching back into a vague, undefined past. On the "day" when the Son is exalted, Raphael explains to Adam, the "glittering Tissues" of the angels' standards "bear imblaz'd / Holy Memorials, acts of Zeal and Love / Recorded eminent" (5.592-94). These acts suggest an indefinite heavenly past that shades imperceptibly into God's "eternity" before creation. In thus avoiding "a sharp disjunction between man's time and God's eternity," Lewalski observes, Milton implies that "perceptions of time on earth and in heaven are more alike than on earth is thought" ("Time" 51).

Milton suggests also--unlike Plato and, of course, like Augustine--that time will have an end, though here too he is rather vague about the nature of eternity that ensues. At the "World's great period" (12.467), Adam says, this "transient World, the Race of time" will have been measured and time will "stand fixt"; beyond this end of time "is all abyss, / Eternity, whose end no eye can reach" (554-56). Even though time is "fixt," the eternity that is "beyond"

has no "end" and is therefore conceived in linear terms: it is not quite clear how such eternity differs from time.

Other passages in Paradise Lost that describe these last things mingle images of stasis with those of linear movement. One such passage is God's summary--"foreseen"--in book 3:

Hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile
The World shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New Heav'n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell
And after all thir tribulations long
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With Joy and Love triumphing, and fair Truth.

(332-38)

Here the balanced action verbs "burn" and "spring" mark a clear end of the old world of time and the beginning of the new world of eternity, and the relatively static verbs "dwell" and "see" that follow minimize action and help to evoke an "eternal" state. This new, eternal state comes "after . . . tribulations long," i.e., at the end of linear time. Woven into God's speech, however, are such temporal markers as "Thenceforth" (that is, from this time forward) and "Meanwhile" (during the same time), and as beautifully balanced as the "golden days" and "golden deeds" of eternity are, they are yet "days." Once more, eternity is not substantially different from time.

Michael similarly instructs Adam in book 12; Christ shall return in judgment

to dissolve

Satan with his perverted World, then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,
New Heav'ns, new Earth, Ages of endless date
Founded in righteousness and peace and love,
To bring forth fruits Joy and eternal Bliss.

(12.546-51)

Here the word "then," emphasizing temporal sequence, marks the border between the old world and the new, and the participle "Founded" emphasizes stability and minimizes motion in the new world. The phrase "Ages of endless date," however, betrays a paradoxical linear conception where "Ages" (suggesting duration, the passage of time) is balanced with "endless"; eternity is conceived here in linear terms.

The nearest Milton comes to rendering a future stasis in Paradise Lost occurs in two passages from the Son and the Father. In a highly metaphoric speech just before he ends the War in Heaven, the Son says to the Father:

in the end

Thou shalt be All in All, and I in thee
For ever, and in mee all whom thou lov'st.

(6.731-33)

The emphatic "in the end" marks the farthest reach of the temporal order, and the single linking verb "be," along with

the repetition of "in" (four times), creates a sense of stasis--a total absence of motion. The mysterious union of God with his creatures, so that he becomes "All in All"--echoing the Father's own prediction in the opening scene in Heaven (3.341)--seems static. It is, according to Milton in The Christian Doctrine, "an unchanging state with God for ever" into which all but the damned will enter at the end of time (CPW 6: 299). Both in the Son's speech cited above and in Milton's theological treatise, only the word "ever" hints of temporal duration.

Thus, while Milton's view of the end of time seems clear enough, he renders it somewhat cursorily and with no attempt to resolve tensions and ambiguities similar to those I have pointed out in his view of the beginning of time. Patrides, in a traditional vein, observes that in Paradise Lost the "time when time itself is to stand fixed" is the "telos" toward which "all events are alike propelled" (Grand 131). Babb remarks that the "eschatology of Paradise Lost is very clearly based on the New Testament," being in fact "a succinct and relatively complete review of scriptural revelations concerning last things" (132). Stapleton sees "nothing unusual in Milton's recapitulation of traditional ideas" on the subject, but he expresses "some disappointment that [Milton] attempts no elucidation of the mysterious text, 'God shall be all in all,' which its place in Paradise Lost reinvests with imaginative splendor" ("Milton's" 21). Lewalski remarks similarly that for Milton the end of time

is succeeded by "a condition of full perfection and consummation." She adds, however, that Milton "never attempts in theology or poetry to describe such a condition of stasis" ("Time" 53). For whatever reason, therefore, Milton does not explore details of the end of time. Shawcross sees the idea of "eternity as the end of time" as illogical, an expression of the "pernicious goal of unchangeableness in life." Milton, he argues, rejected such notions for this life and the next, finding "stasis in heaven" to be "a meaningless concept"; Milton, he says, did not view "eternity as the equivalent of stasis" ("Stasis" 16). While Shawcross's view may be more rationalistic and confident than most readers of Paradise Lost would grant, it does underscore Milton's reworking of traditional ideas of time's relation to eternity, minimizing elements of stasis and asserting linear duration even in eternity. In Paradise Lost Milton often thinks of final "eternal Bliss" in linear terms--in the words of Michael, "Ages of endless date" (12.551, 549)--as in the early poem "On Time" he imagines "long Eternity shall greet our bliss" (11) when time ends. For Milton eternity may succeed time, but it, like time, is "long."

Paradise Lost thus minimizes the difference between time and eternity, suggesting the difference lies more in length than in kind. Despite this fact, however, God is eternal while his creatures are not, and Milton still has the problem I began this chapter with: how to render God's

eternity in relation to his creatures' time in a narrative poem where God is a character. Almost everyone agrees that Milton does this by creating a double perspective in which God is at once "in" time--so that one may speak of "when" God did or will do such and such--and "above" or "outside" time. Rosalie Colie calls this "the paradox of eternity and time" ("Time" 128). S. K. Heninger has remarked that while Milton uses dramatic techniques in Paradise Lost as "the best mode for giving the impression of passing time," yet a reader must remember that the action "transpires . . . within the stasis of eternal providence" (87). Albert Cirillo points out that while a narrative poem "must have the order of sequence, an arrangement of before and after," Milton "transforms this restriction into . . . a seeming simultaneity of events sub specie aeternitatis" ("Hail'" 45). Having shaded past time and future time into eternity along the horizontal line of history, Milton yet asserts a vertical and largely traditional distinction between God's eternity and human time. God in Paradise Lost both experiences time as a sequence of events and sees from above, as a completed whole, the time human beings experience as a flow of past, present, and future.

This double perspective is suggested clearly at the first appearance of God in book 3:

Now had th' Almighty Father from above,
From the pure Empyrean where he sits
High Thron'd above all highth, bent down his eye,

His own works and their works at once to view.

(56-59)

The temporal indicator "now" locates this scene in the chronological sequence of the narrative--i.e., during Satan's journey from Hell to Paradise--and the helping verb "had," suggesting a past completed action, suspends the verb ("bent down his eye" comes two lines later) for a present-tense image of God that emphasizes how "high" he is above his creatures: "from above, / From the pure Empyrean . . . High Thron'd above all highth" (56-58). The intransitive "sits" and the reflexive "bent down his" minimize action; the phrase "His own works and their works" suggests the inclusiveness of God's vision; and the phrase "at once to view," with the explicit temporal modifier "at once" and the infinitive form of the verb "to view," doubly emphasizes the instantaneousness of God's acts. The passage illustrates perfectly what Raphael later explains to Adam: "Immediate are the Acts of God, more swift / Than time or motion, but to human ears / Cannot without process of speech be told" (7.176-78). In the opening scene in book 3, therefore, God apparently acts in temporal sequence: he "bent down his eye" (58) on his creation, "first beheld" (64) Adam and Eve, "then survey'd" (69) Hell and Chaos, and finally "spake" (79). But he also rises above time: "from his prospect high" he "past, present, future . . . beholds" (77-78).

This opening scene in Heaven, in fact, epitomizes the way Paradise Lost evokes an eternal God acting in the

temporal world of his creatures. The poem achieves this primarily by associating God's eternity with his throne--on which God "sits," relatively unmoving except to see or speak--and with the mount on which the throne rests; the angels, and more particularly the Son, as God's agents perform his acts in time. God sits, as book 3 indicates, "above," in "the pure Empyrean . . . High Thron'd above all highth" (56-58). His throne, which sits on "that high mount of God" (5.643) or "holy mount / Of Heav'n's high-seated top" (7.584-85) or "holy Hill" (5.604) or "sacred Hill" (619) or simply "the Hill" (6.57), is variously "the sovran Throne" (5.656), the Father's "throne supreme" (11.82), "the seat supreme" (6.27), "th' Imperial Throne / Of Godhead, fixt for ever firm and sure" (7.585-86), or, in God's own words, "This inaccessible high strength, the seat / of Deity supreme" (141-42). Satan claims he and the rebel angels "shook [God's] throne" (1.105); Moloch is less vaunting but still deluded, however, when he hopes to "Alarm, / Though inaccessible, his fatal Throne" (2.103-04). In fact, as Raphael explains to Adam, under the Son's chariot at the end of the War in Heaven, "The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout, / All but the Throne itself of God" (6.833-34). The loftiness of God's "mount" in Paradise Lost evokes, of course, Olympus as well as Sinai where, Michael explains to the fallen Adam, God will descend "In Thunder, Lightning and loud Trumpet's sound" to ordain Israel's laws (12.229). Beyond that, however, in the poem itself God's being

"invisible / Amidst the glorious brightness where [he sits] / Thron'd inaccessible" (3.375-77) suggests the paradox of his eternity: "invisible" and "inaccessible" even as he is encircled by his saints. God's "transcendent Seat the Saints among" (10.614) similarly captures the paradox, where "transcendent" and "among" are counterpoised.

The interplay of light and cloud around God's throne further suggests the paradox of his eternity among his creatures. Clearly linked to the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day that led the children of Israel in the wilderness, the brilliant light of God's throne at once reveals God's glory and blinds creatures to its fulness, and the cloud marks the throne and, paradoxically, enables God's creatures to see his glory. God dwells with "holy Light, offspring of Heav'n first-born, / Or of th' Eternal Coeternal beam" (3.1-2); it perhaps is eternal like God. At the first exaltation of the Son he speaks "Amidst as from a flaming Mount, whose top / Brightness had made invisible" (5.598-99). Himself "invisible" (3.375), he can be approached only when he shades "The full blaze of [his] beams" with "a cloud / Drawn round about [him] like a radiant Shrine" (378-79); in a paradox that pushes the limits of language and sense, his "skirts appear" "Dark with excessive bright" (380). As "the most High / Eternal Father," he speaks "from his secret Cloud, / Amidst in Thunder" (10.31-33). Clouds of incense "Fuming from Golden Censers [hide] the Mount" of God (7.600). The golden

incense and light suggest, of course, the mysterious Holy of Holies in the temple of the Old Testament, but this association merely confirms the sense that God is at once mysteriously remote and ever present among his people.

Milton's God is certainly not static, but despite his power (suggested, for example, by thunder around his mount), his actions from the lofty throne are primarily intransitive; mainly he sees and speaks. When Satan first draws away the conspirators in Heaven,

th' Eternal eye, whose sight discerns
 Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy Mount
 And from within the golden Lamps that burn
 Nightly before him, saw without thir light
 Rebellion rising. (5.711-15)

Nothing, the narrator remarks after the Fall, "can scape the Eye / Of God All-seeing, or deceive his Heart / Omniscient" (10.5-7). Even Belial in Hell knows that "from Heav'n's highth" God's "eye / Views all things at one view" (2.189-90). From his "transcendent Seat" God sees Sin and Death approaching the human world (10.614). After the Creation God returns "Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns his high abode" to behold the new world, "how it show'd / In prospect from his Throne" (7.553, 555-56). The omniscience of God, like his eternity, is ultimately a mystery which symbols can only suggest, and the narrator remarks cryptically as the Son returns after the Creation that the Father "also went / Invisible, yet stay'd (such privilege / Hath Omnipresence)"

(588-90). Mainly, however, Milton evokes God's extra-temporal point of view by associating it repeatedly with the loftiness, stability, and radiance of his throne and his mysterious mount; since God from this lofty vantage point repeatedly sees all in Paradise Lost, a reader can believe--to return to the opening scene in Heaven in book 3--that from his "prospect high" in eternity he can see "past, present, future" (77-78). In a phrase aptly suggesting the great difference between God's eternal, unblinking vision and the temporal rhythms of his creatures, Raphael says that in Heaven the coming on of "grateful Twilight" and "roseate Dews dispos'd / All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest" (5.645-47). Paradoxically, he who dwells "in his holy Rest / Through all Eternity" (7.91-92) neither has nor requires, from his creatures' point of view, any "rest."

From the relative rest or stasis of eternity, God exercises his providence through his agents. Uriel and six other archangels "in God's presence, nearest to his Throne / Stand ready at command, and are his Eyes / That run through all the Heav'ns, or down to th' Earth" (3.649-51). Raphael is sent to warn Adam and Eve, Michael to tell Adam "what shall come in future days" (11.114). Most importantly, of course, the Son accomplishes the will of the Father. He is "alone / [God's] word, [his] wisdom, and effectual might" (3.169-70). In him "all his Father [shines] / Substantially expressed" (139-40). He is

Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,

In whose conspicuous count'nance, without cloud
 Made visible, th' Almighty Father shines,
 Whom else no Creature can behold. (384-87)

In him the Father sees his "glory . . . In full
 resplendence" (5.719-20). On him the Father shines "full,"
 "with Rays direct," so that the Son expresses "all his
 Father . . . Ineffably into his face receiv'd" (6.719-21).
 As the expression of the inexpressible mystery of the
 Father, the Son is the Father's agent in the temporal world.
 My aim here is not to explore the theology of the Son
 directly, but to suggest that primarily in the poem he acts
 for the Father. He defeats the rebel angels. He creates
 the world. He judges the fallen Adam and Eve. And, of
 course, he agrees to save the fallen human race. As
 Patrides remarks, he acts "both continually and
 continuously" in the poem (Grand 87). Babb, I think, does
 not overstate the case when he says, "The Son is God in time
 and space" (123). Thematically, of course, the Son's role
 in the poem reflects the Christian doctrine of the
 Incarnation, (eternal) God becoming (temporal) flesh. My
 point, beyond that, is that Milton's approach allows him
 largely to separate the actions of God, ascribing these to
 the Son in the world of time, and the mysterious being of
 God, removed largely from the world of motion and time to
 God's mount and his throne. The mystery of providence,
 therefore, is the same as the paradox of time and eternity.

I have pointed out that in defining eternity in essentially linear terms (without beginning or end) and in extending time into eternity Milton differs from Boethius and Augustine. In dramatizing God's eternity in Paradise Lost, however, by associating eternity with height and images of rest, stasis, or intransitive action, Milton in fact comes close to the traditional view. Augustine says to God, "Your years stand still all together . . . the going years are not thrust out by the coming years, since there is no passing from one state to the other"; God, he says, is "above all future things" (267). Boethius similarly remarks that providence "resides above all inferior things and looks out on all things from their summit." Time, he says, trying to imitate eternity, "cannot remain still, it hastens along the infinite road of time, and so it extends by movement the life whose completeness it could not achieve by standing still" (116). Milton cannot, of course, directly dramatize God "in his holy Rest / Through all Eternity" (7.91-92) or "alone / From all Eternity" (8.405-06). But he can, and does, remove him largely from the world of time and motion by placing him repeatedly amid a cluster of evocative symbols--light, cloud, thunder, throne, mount--always distanced from the world of time. The resulting paradox--an "inaccessible" eternity "amid" the world of time, with the Son mediating the two worlds--is itself an image of divine providence, the eternal God somehow acting in the world of John Milton and his readers.

Of course, Milton's placing of God "above" time raises the tangled problem of foreknowledge and free will. Patrides reflects somewhat wistfully that Milton might have presented "like Dante, the silent eloquence of God" or something like what "we find in the Book of Job" rather than the "garrulous deity" that we get in Paradise Lost (Christian 196). Given Milton's purpose, however--to "assert Eternal Providence" (1.25)--and his Puritan and humanistic faith in the power of language, it is not surprising that he not only asserts but expounds providence. In any case, in rendering the foreknowledge of God, Milton agrees essentially with Boethius: from a "height" God "foresees" things that occur "freely." "Lady Philosophy" tells Boethius that providence "resides above all inferior things and looks out on all things from their summit" (116). "There is no doubt," she adds, "that all things will happen which God knows will happen; but some of them happen as a result of free will" (118). God thus "looks down from above, knowing all things, and the eternal present of his vision concurs with the future character of our actions" (119). God's foreknowledge is "not a foreknowledge of future events, but a knowledge of a never changing present" (116). While Milton does not speak of an "eternal present," he does turn time into space so that "from his prospect high" God sees "past, present, future" (3.77-78). When God speaks, he does so "foreseeing" (79) things that from a creature's point of view have not yet occurred. Unlike the

devils in consult who must guess what "in time may" happen (2.210), God of course speaks of the future as a matter of fact; he "sees" it: Satan "shall pervert" the man and woman, who "will heark'n" to his lies and thus "will fall" (3.92-95). In the War in Heaven when the rebel angels cause "horrid confusion heapt / Upon confusion" with their artillery, God has "foreseen / This tumult, and permitted all"; he does this from "where he sits / Shrin'd in his Sanctuary of Heav'n secure, / Consulting on the sum of things" (6.668-74). Because he sees all, God is able to enlighten Michael so he can "reveal / To Adam what shall come in future days" (11.113-14). God's "high foreknowledge," however, creates no necessity: if he "foreknew, / Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault, / Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown" (3.116-19). According to Milton and Milton's God, all creatures--angels no less than human beings--are "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (99).

Not everyone, of course, accepts the paradox of foreknowledge and free will as Milton renders it in Paradise Lost. Milton's impatience with those who inquire into the matter too particularly is reflected in the well known passage in book 2 where the fallen angels

reason'd high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate,
Fixt Fate, Free will, Foreknowledge absolute,

And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.

(558-61)

Free will, God says in his opening speech in book 3, was ordained by a "high Decree / Unchangeable, Eternal" (126-27). The theological argument over foreknowledge and free will is not likely to be settled neatly or soon--Patrides says flatly that "no definitive solution is possible" (Christian 196)--but arguments against freedom in Paradise Lost often depend on a misunderstanding of the term (which for Milton meant the freedom to make moral choices, not freedom from all external influences) and the transposition of a modern idea of scientific causation into the poem's moral and theological context. Savage, for example, biases his case from the start when, drawing heavily on Augustine, he defines moral freedom to include the power to choose good but not the power to choose evil, the latter being possible only when temporal circumstances "cause" one to forfeit one's freedom (293). As Danielson points out, however, one must distinguish between "sufficient" causes or reasons for human actions and "necessary" causes (Milton's 146); the former are quite compatible with human freedom while the latter are not. It is better, I think, to grant Milton the paradox that God sees in effect as stasis what creatures experience as duration or process, and to concede that in the poem God's foreknowledge does not determine Adam and Eve's actions.

Whether Milton does, or can, dramatize his idea effectively is another matter. Danielson, on the one hand, who defends Milton's theory of foreknowledge, says that to render the actual experience of foreknowledge is an impossibility, with the attempt being a risky one: "In being so bold as to give both his reader and Adam an experience of foreknowledge, Milton did risk their being tormented by the worry that what will be must be" (Milton's 163). Bedford, on the other hand, argues that Milton has little choice since, as part of a narrative, God can hardly be a "timeless stasis" (71); in its presentation of God, Bedford says, the poem creates "the impression of timeless meditation by a being whose knowledge comprehends many different temporal perspectives and who is not himself 'in' any of them" (73). Bedford seems to me to be right: Paradise Lost embodies a richly ambiguous overlapping of God's lofty eternity and the long succession of human days and years.

Despite breaking with tradition by extending linear time into eternity and even conceiving of eternity in linear terms, Milton in fact renders in Paradise Lost an image and sense of eternity much closer to the timelessness of Augustine and Boethius than his prose comments would suggest. He does this by putting God "above" his creatures on his throne which is on a mountain, by enveloping these in light and cloud rendering God invisible and inaccessible, and by minimizing the transitive actions of God, transferring these to angels and especially to the Son. In

keeping with Milton's idea of providence, God is very much "among" his creatures, but as from "prospect high" (3.77) he views the spectacle of time and change among them, he has, after all, a "transcendent seat" (10.614). His human and angelic creatures, for their part, are entirely free to choose the obedience and praise that are inseparable from eternal bliss.

Chapter 4

Grateful Vicissitude: Angelic Time

In book 5 of Paradise Lost Raphael is commissioned to visit Adam in Paradise, converse with him, "advise him of his happy state" (234) and its dependence on free will, and warn him of Satan's insidious mission in Paradise. Based on the events of books 5-7, however--Raphael's account of Satan's rebellion, the War in Heaven, the expulsion of the rebel angels, and the creation of the human world--Raphael might have been told to explain to Adam the importance of time in Heaven and its intimate connection with praise and divine grace. Time, Adam learns, is an inseparable element of the angels' "happy state" no less than his own.

The opening of Raphael's account of events in Heaven indicates the importance of time in what is to follow: "As yet" the world was not created, and Chaos reigned where the heavens "now" roll and where Earth "now" rests, when "on a day" God called a great convocation of the angels (5.577-79). Not only are the temporal markers pervasive--here and in the particular chronicling of morning, evening, and numbered days in the entire account of conflict in Heaven--but Raphael repeatedly offers explicit comment to Adam on the nature of time in Heaven. In a key, well known passage, he explains at the beginning of his narrative that "Time, though in Eternity, appl'd / To motion, measures all things durable / By present, past, and future" (580-82), and he later remarks, "For wee have also our Ev'ning and our Morn,

/ Wee ours for change delectable, not need" (628-29).

"Change delectable" is, of course, far different from the "hideous change" (1.313) of Hell, and I will return to that later; the point here is simply that Raphael is at pains to explain how time works in Heaven.

No one will argue that Raphael's account of the War in Heaven is entirely literal, for he himself wonders how he can "relate / To human sense th' invisible exploits / Of warring Spirits" (5.564-66), remarking to Adam that "what surmounts the reach / Of human sense" he will describe "By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms, / As may express them best" (571-74). He actually minimizes such accommodation, however, suggesting the earth may well be "but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein / Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought" (575-76). Shawcross, arguing for a heavily linear concept of time in Paradise Lost, minimizes the importance of time in Heaven, observing that book 6 is the only one in which the word "time" does not occur, "because it recounts the War in Heaven" ("Stasis" 11). Despite the absence of the word, however, Book 6 is in fact laced with signifiers of time, such as "the circling Hours" (3), "That selfsame day" (87), "that day" (246), the "course" of night (406), "fair Morn Orient" (524), "the third sacred Morn" (748), and a number of references to days as one computes "the days of Heav'n" (685). Williams, I think, is accurate when he observes that Milton rejected the "orthodox tenet" that time began with the creation of the

world, positing an "elder state" before the Creation similar to that suggested by Basil. In Milton's case, however, the elder state is "not extra-temporal, but has a distinct time." "In this state take place Satan's defection, the war in heaven, the expulsion of the angels, and, presumably, the events in Hell leading up to Satan's plot for tempting mankind." Despite Raphael's tempered remarks about accommodation, therefore, Williams argues convincingly that "Milton clearly intends his celestial time to be taken literally" (159). And if "day" does not necessarily mean a twenty-four hour period--since, of course, there is no diurnal rotation in Heaven--the reader no less than Milton's God must leave the matter vague, content with the Father's reference to "Two days, as we compute the days of Heav'n" (6.685): whatever their length in human terms, there is rhythmic interchange of day and evening. Similarly, the "great Year" (5.583) of Heaven may evoke the Great Year of Plato's *Timaeus*, or it may suggest merely that when compared to earthly years those of Heaven are of great magnitude; in either case, the angels experience some kind of annual rhythm. There is time in Milton's Heaven.

One difficulty of Milton's view is that if time is, as he claims in The Christian Doctrine, the "measure of motion" (CPW 6: 313), what motion does time measure before the creation of the world with its planetary orbits? Milton's imaginative solution of this problem in Paradise Lost is profoundly important, for the graceful movements of time in

Heaven embody the deepest values of praise, order, and grace against which Satan's rebellion is seen to be a gross breach of the natural order. The key passage in Paradise Lost that establishes the temporal order of Heaven comes at the beginning of book 6 as Raphael is about to narrate the first morning of the War in Heaven:

There is a Cave
 Within the Mount of God, fast by his Throne,
 Where light and darkness in perpetual round
 Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through
 Heav'n
 Grateful vicissitude, like Day and Night;
 Light issues forth, and at the other door
 Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
 To veil the Heav'n. (4-11)

For what seem to me obvious symbolic reasons, Raphael adds that darkness in heaven "might well / Seem twilight here" (6.11-12): total darkness would simply be inappropriate so near the throne of God.

Far more important, I think, are the phrases "in perpetual round," "by turns," and "Grateful vicissitude." In opening his study of Adam and Eve's morning hymn in book 5, Summers remarks on this passage that, despite the word's modern negative connotations, in Paradise Lost "vicissitude" is always "grateful": "it is change, variety, movement, the mark of vitality and joy characteristic of both the divine and the human master artist's work" (251). Actually, Milton

only uses "vicissitude" one other time in Paradise Lost, in a very similar context, but Summers is right that the connotations are positive. On the fourth day of Creation, Raphael explains to Adam in book 7, God made "two great Lights . . . the greater to have rule by Day, / The less by Night altern" (346-48); these, along with the stars, God set in the heavens "To illuminate the Earth, and rule the Day / In thir vicissitude, and rule the Night" (350-51). The explicit "altern," along with the balance of "by Day" and "by Night" and of "rule the Day" and "rule the Night," makes clear that "vicissitude" in the prelapsarian human world is indeed "grateful," as it is in the celestial order.

In both instances of "vicissitude" cited above, Milton by-passes negative seventeenth-century meanings listed in the OED--"change, mutation, mutability," "change or alteration in condition or fortune"--and exploits another, favorable meaning for his poetic purposes: "alternation, mutual or reciprocal succession of things or conditions; esp. alternating succession of opposite or contrasted things." The phrase "alternating succession" captures the temporal paradox, with "succession" suggesting linear movement and "alternating" suggesting cyclical movement. In Heaven, light and darkness "Lodge and dislodge by turns"; they move "in perpetual round" (6.6-7). Rhythm or cycle, therefore, is intrinsic to time in Heaven.

In this context, Raphael's repeated references to morning and evening do more than provide a familiar temporal

framework for events in Heaven; they evoke and sustain the spiritual order that Satan and the other rebels are rejecting. A graceful sense of order is established at evening on the day of the Son's first exaltation. "Now," Raphael says,

. . . ambrosial Night with Clouds exhal'd
 From that high mount of God, whence light and
 shade
 Spring both, the face of brightest Heav'n had
 chang'd
 To grateful Twilight (for Night comes not there
 In darker veil) and roseate Dews dispos'd
 All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest.
 (5.642-47)

Here "chang'd," though deeply negative in the experience of time in Hell, echoes Raphael's "change delectable" (6.629) of a few lines earlier, and "grateful Twilight" is a concrete anticipation of the "Grateful vicissitude" (6.8) to come later. "Evening," Griffin argues, "is throughout [Paradise Lost] directly associated with the beneficent [sic] creativeness in the universe, as expressed through creation itself, human love, and God's love for man" (270). I believe this is true. I would only add that in the scenes in Heaven morning works much the same way, reflecting no less than evening God's beneficence, his goodwill, and his harmony with creation.

In Raphael's account of the War in Heaven these associations are particularly strong. On the first day, for example, as Abdiel returns to the mount of God having rebuked Satan and turned his back on the rebels,

now went forth the Morn

Such as in highest Heav'n, array'd in Gold

Empyreal, from before her vanisht Night,

Shot through with orient Beams. (6.12-15)

Such splendor anticipates the heavenly army with its "Squadrons bright, / Chariots and flaming Arms, and fiery Steeds / Reflecting blaze on blaze" (16-18) and also the "Golden Cloud" (28) before which Abdiel receives his exalted commendation. The ease with which morn banishes night, along with the directness and power of "Shot through," suggests the ease with which divine light and power can banish Satan and his followers. For the moment, however, the natural spiritual order evoked by the regular appearance of morning is threatened by the Satanic rebellion:

nor stood at gaze

The adverse Legions, nor less hideous join'd

The horrid shock: now storming fury rose,

And clamor such as heard in Heav'n till now

Was never, Arms on Armor clashing bray'd

Horrible discord, and the madding Wheels

Of brazen Chariots rag'd; dire was the noise

Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss

Of fiery Darts in flaming volleys flew,

And flying vaulted either Host with fire.

(205-14)

The cacophony is obvious, and so are words like "discord," "dire," and "dismal," evoking the aura of Hell. More deeply ominous, however, is the phrase "till now / Was never," suggesting a rupture between present and past--between the repeated "now" and an implied "then": a rupture alien to the rhythmic existence of Heaven and in fact, as I have shown, characteristic of Hell itself. But the reader knows, as Michael does, that Satan cannot really "trouble Holy Rest" and that "Heav'n the seat of bliss / Brooks not the works of violence and War" (272-74). The good angels prevail on the first day, of course, and time, in the form of night, renews order:

Now Night her course began, and over Heav'n
Inducing darkness, grateful truce impos'd,
And silence on the odious din of War.

(406-08)

"Course" suggests regularity and order, and "grateful" echoes the "grateful vicissitude" of Raphael's earlier explanation of morning and evening and the "grateful Twilight" of the evening before. The good angels, appropriately, place "in Guard thir Watches round," where "round" suggests both order and cycle, while the rebels are "in the dark dislodg'd, and void of rest" (412, 415), little knowing they have forever murdered "rest."

The second morning rises more cursorily--"Now when fair Morn Orient in Heav'n appear'd / Up rose the Victor Angels, and to Arms / The matin Trumpet Sung" (524-26)--but the direct syntax and firm movement of the verse evoke the order and firm purpose of the good angels as they, like the morning, stand "in Arms . . . Of Golden Panoply, refulgent Host" (526-27). Significantly, no description of evening ends the disastrous second day of the war, with its horrendous tossing of hills and promontories. Raphael calls it "horrid confusion heapt / Upon confusion" and adds that "all Heav'n / Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread" had not the "Almighty Father" intervened (668-71). The Father's statement to the Son shows how intimately time in Heaven is connected with the spiritual order. Left to themselves, he says, the good and bad angels "in perpetual fight . . . needs must last / Endless, and no solution will be found" (693-94). "Perpetual fight" echoes ironically the "perpetual round" of light and darkness that constitutes "grateful vicissitude" in Heaven, and "last / Endless" clearly belongs to the inexorably linear movement of time in Hell. Creatures without the grace of the Creator, Milton suggests, merely endure; they "last." And in a double sense such creatures have no "end" to their life, no *telos*, or goal, and no stop. In contrast to this "endless" existence is that of the Son, who finds "all [his] bliss" or "happiness entire" (729, 741) in doing the Father's will; he, therefore, envisions an "end" when the Father will be

"All in All" (731, 732). Paradoxically, those who accept the "end" of their existence, obedience and praise, live in blissful, uninterrupted rhythm; those who refuse or disrupt the rhythms of praise and obedience lead an "endless" life of unmitigated duration--what Raphael at the conclusion of his narrative calls "Eternal misery" (904).

The temporal as well as the spiritual order of Heaven depends on divine grace, and appropriately the colloquy between Father and Son designed to end the War in Heaven replaces evening in the rhythm of Raphael's narrative. Only after the Son's role is assigned and accepted does the "third sacred Morn [begin] to shine" (748)--clearly alluding to the Resurrection on the third day. A further detail, however, in the Son's vision of last things is relevant to the connection of time and rhythm in Heaven. When, in the end, the Father becomes "All in All," the Son says,

Then shall thy Saints unmixt, and from th' impure
Far separate, circling thy holy Mount
Unfeigned Halleluiahs to thee sing,
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.

(742-45)

Song and circular dance around the Father's throne reflect the same rhythmic order as the grateful alternation of light and darkness in Heaven.

In his description of the festival following the exaltation of the Son in book 5, Raphael firmly establishes images of cycle and rhythm as the order of Heaven:

That day, as other solemn days, they spent
 In song and dance about the sacred Hill,
 Mystical dance, which yonder starry Sphere
 Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheels
 Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
 Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular
 Then most, when most irregular they seem:
 And in thir motions harmony Divine
 So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear
 Listens delighted. (618-27)

Upon this rhythmic celebration of variety and order, evening descends "for change delectable" (629): the connection between song and dance on the one hand and temporal rhythm on the other is unmistakable. From dance to "sweet repast" the angels "turn" (630), as if in one more graceful sweep of the dance. They stand "all in Circles" (631) as they feast, and during the feast, Raphael reminds Adam and the reader, "ambrosial Night" changes the face of Heaven to "grateful Twilight" (642, 645), linking yet again the rhythmic movement of time in Heaven with the rich and graceful praise of the angels. After feasting, Raphael says, most of the angels retire to restful sleep, "save those who in thir course / Melodious Hymns about the sovran Throne / Alternate all night long" (655-57). "In thir course" and "Alternate" reflect once more that "vicissitude" which Raphael will describe to Adam in his account of the Creation in book 7: "the greater [light] to have rule by Day, / The less by

Night altern"; "To . . . rule the Day / In thir vicissitude, and rule the Night" (347-51).

This "Heav'nly Choir" (3.217) the reader has already met in their hymn to Father and Son in book 3 when "thir gold'n Harps they took, / Harps ever tun'd" and "with Preamble sweet / Of charming symphony they introduce / Thir sacred Song" (365-69). Although the cyclical nature of these hymns is not emphasized in book 3 as it is in books 5 and 6, the narrator yet links the praise and happiness of the angels with their experience of time: "Thus they in Heav'n, above the starry Sphere, / Thir happy hours in joy and hymning spent" (416-17). That "song" is so important in Heaven will not surprise the reader of Paradise Lost, since the narrator confesses that he himself is "Smit with the love of sacred Song" (29). Nor will it surprise a reader of Milton's "Ad Patrem (To His Father)," for there the younger Milton defends "divine song," which he says is loved by the "gods on high" and will be practiced by the saved "When we return to our native Olympus and the everlasting ages of immutable eternity are established" (Hughes 83). What is remarkable in books 5-7 of Paradise Lost, however, is the link between spiritual and temporal order: joyful hymn and dance merge imperceptibly with the cycle of day and night, reflecting spiritual order and angelic bliss.

Patrides remarks that the perfection of the world is symbolized by circles and musical harmony (Christian 40), and Ann Gossman finds in Paradise Lost a "ring pattern" that

is "both Biblical and Platonic" (327) wherein all goes out from God and returns to him, with Christ ultimately being the "Ring Pattern par excellence" (339). Heninger notes similarly that the "idea that day and night in their endless repetition signify eternity is an ancient one, widely promulgated in the literature of alchemy and hieroglyphics," the idea being in fact "ubiquitous in the Renaissance" (73). Mircea Eliade in The Myth of the Eternal Return observes that "all dances were originally sacred," deriving from an "extrahuman model" and commemorating, through ritualistic repetition, a "mythical moment" outside of linear, historical time (28-29). For my purposes here, Milton's sources are irrelevant; the point is simply that circles and cycles were available to Milton as positive images and that in the aesthetic of Paradise Lost circles and cyclical movement do in fact embody, particularly in Heaven, the deepest values of the poem: obedience, praise, order, grace, joy, plenitude, variety, and bliss.

Satan can and does pervert these cycles, creating what Gossman calls "the anti-type of the ring, the circular and serpentine maze of error" (328). Woods also sees a "sort of self-referential circularity that . . . is characteristic of Satanic motion" (48). The important point, however, is that Satanic cycles are either a perversion and parody of heavenly ones or an ironic justice imposed by heaven. Satan's fatal error is his denial that he is created, claiming that he and the other angels are "self-begot, self-

rais'd / By [their] own quick'ning power, when fatal course
 / Had circl'd his full Orb" (5.860-62). Here is the error
 already seen in the Council in Hell, the assumption that
 time itself works change, that it is a "fatal course," not
 the dynamic and varied dance of praise. In a curious way,
 therefore, Satan's mentality is static or "fixt" (1.97), so
 that the announcement that he and other angels must honor
 the Son as God comes as "new Laws" (5.679), "new commands"
 (691) that justify in him and the other rebels "new minds"
 and "new Counsels" (680-81). As so often is true in
Paradise Lost, Satan's line, "We know no time when we were
 not as now" (859), has a double meaning; it is his arrogant
 claim that if he cannot remember being created he must
 therefore be self-created, and, ironically, it is his
 nostalgic farewell to a rhythmic existence where nothing
 ever changes: he will never again "know no time when [he
 was] not as now."

Abdiel, the foil to Satan, understands time much
 better. It is not a "fatal course" but rather a medium in
 which grace operates; he urges Satan to repent "While Pardon
 may be found in time besought" (848). And in resisting
 Satan and his faithless crew, Abdiel is described in words
 that ironically echo Satan's claim in Hell never to "repent
 or change" (1.96): "Nor number, nor example with him wrought
 / To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind / Though
 single" (5.901-03). Satan may mock the good angels after
 their retreat from the rebels' artillery, claiming they

"chang'd thir minds" (6.613), but he is the one who changes his loyalty to the Creator; he is, as Michael says to him, the "Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt" (262), where the phrase "unknown till" evokes the new (linear) temporal order Satan has created for himself and his followers. Already his armor has been stained, "erewhile so bright" (334), and even to his own troops he must acknowledge pain "Till now not known" (432). In fact, Satan's entire speech to his followers after the first day of war is riddled with the word "now"--"O now in danger tri'd, now known in Arms" (418), "till now / Omniscient thought" (429-30), "Till now not known" (432), "Since now we find" (433)--dramatizing the sharp break between "now" and an implied "then" that characterizes the linear time of Hell. To a loyal angel like Raphael, war in Heaven seems "strange," since he and the other angels are "wont to meet / So oft in Festivals of joy and love / Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire / Hymning th' Eternal Father" (91, 93-96). "Wont," "So oft," and the reference to hymning all suggest the blissful rhythmic recurrence--the "grateful vicissitude"--of life in Heaven before Satan's rebellion. Ironically for Satan and others who reject "change delectable" (5.629) even while they boast that they remain unchanged, they must face the Son, whose countenance, Raphael says, "into terror chang'd" (6.824) before he expels the rebels to Hell where their "Eternal misery" (6.904) includes a painful sense of linear time. Raphael's message to Adam is clear: in Heaven, as on

earth, time is "grateful vicissitude" only for those who remain obedient.

Chapter 5

Variety Without End: Time in Paradise

Whatever vagueness there may be about chronology in books 1 and 2 of Paradise Lost--exactly how long, for example, the Council in Hell or Satan's journey through Chaos takes or exactly when in relation to events in Hell the Creation occurs--the temporal sequence of events in Paradise after Satan's arrival there in book 4 is very clear. Satan lands on Niphates at noon when "the full-blazing Sun" sits "high in his Meridian Tow'r" (4.29-30), arrives in Paradise sometime before evening when "the Sun / Declin'd was hasting . . . with prone career / To th' Ocean Isles" (4.352-54), observes Adam and Eve through their evening ritual, generates Eve's disturbing dream after Adam and Eve retire to the Bower, is discovered sometime after nine o'clock, when night "had . . . measur'd with her shadowy Cone / Half way up Hill this vast Sublunar Vault" (4.776-77), and flees at midnight, with the "shades of night" (4.1015).

Book 4 thus recounts one day in Paradise; books 5-8 recount another, with Adam and Eve waking, discussing Eve's troublesome dream, saying their morning prayers, and entertaining Raphael through a leisurely afternoon while he tells them of war in Heaven and he and Adam exchange creation stories. Before re-entering Paradise at midnight in book 9 ("By Night he fled, and at Midnight return'd" [58]) for the final temptation, Satan rides with the car of

night "the space of seven continu'd Nights" (63), a time during which, presumably, Adam and Eve continue their daily ritual and take to heart Raphael's warning. Satan's return is on "th'eighth" day (67) from his departure from Paradise and thus on the ninth from his first arrival. The events of books 9 and 10 occur on this day and the night following: the Temptation and Fall, with Adam and Eve's afternoon orgy and the recriminations that follow--a time, appropriately, made of "fruitless hours" that seem to have "no end" (1188-89)--and the Son's tempered judgment at evening when "the Sun [was] in Western cadence low / From Noon" (10.92-93). During the evening of the reader's ninth day in Paradise the angels adjust the world to reflect the Fall (as Adam watches "though hid in gloomiest shade" [10.716]), and through the evening and a "sleepless Night" (11.173), Adam and Eve move haltingly from recrimination to repentance and prayer. This is, of course, their dark night of the soul.

On the tenth day in Paradise, soon after dawn breaks "To resalute the World with sacred Light" (11.134) and morning "begins / Her rosy progress smiling" (174-75), Michael is sent to show Adam the future and to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden. The Expulsion is at noon, as Michael's reference to "the hour precise" (12.589) and the reference to "torrid heat" (634) suggest. Adam and Eve leave Paradise on the tenth day after Satan's arrival in Paradise in book 4. Thus, as Gardner remarks, "as soon as Satan arrives in the universe . . . a time scheme comes into

operation" (38) or, as Stapleton puts it, "From [Satan's arrival] until the end of the poem, the chronology is definitely established" ("Perspectives" 740).

There is, therefore, linear time in Paradise: one day succeeds another; Adam and Eve have a past they remember, and they expect a future when "more hands" will aid them in their work (9.207-08). This future is naturally vague, since their experience is limited, but Raphael suggests that it may include more open commerce with Heaven:

time may come when men
 With Angels may participate, and find
 No inconvenient Diet, nor too light Fare:
 And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
 Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
 Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend
 Ethereal, as wee, or may at choice
 Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell.

(5.493-500).

Raphael's hopes for prelapsarian humans are well founded, for at the Creation God has said the new race of men will dwell on earth "till by degrees of merit rais'd / They open to themselves at length the way / Up hither," so that "Earth [will] be chang'd to Heav'n, and Heav'n to Earth, / One Kingdom, Joy and Union without end" (7.157-59, 160-61).

In both these passages time is decidedly linear, as the phrases "at last," "tract of time," "at length," and "without end" clearly suggest. In neither case, however, is

time a force within itself; change in both cases is wrought by love and obedience, not mere time. Raphael makes clear that the open commerce with Heaven that he envisions can occur only "If ye be found obedient, and retain / Unalterably firm his love entire / Whose progeny you are" (5.501-03). Similarly, "th' Omnipotent / Eternal Father from his Throne" (7.136-37) says human beings can rise from earth to Heaven only after they are "under long obedience tri'd"; they will be raised, not by time itself, but by "degrees of merit" (7.159, 157). Such dependence on "merit" contrasts sharply with Satan's dependence on the power of his own mind to "make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (1.255), and the phrase "by degrees of merit rais'd" in God's speech casts ironic light on the opening of book 2, where Satan sits "High on a Throne of Royal State," being "by merit rais'd / To that bad eminence" (2.1, 5-6). Raphael's and God's affirmations of merit rather than time as the agent of change also cast in ironic light the fallen angels' hope in the Council in Hell that by "long process of time" as well as by policy they might rise "In emulation opposite to Heav'n" (2.296-98). Adam and Eve look to a future state even better than the happy present, but the agent of change is their own steady love and obedience rather than time.

Adam and Eve also have a past in Paradise, although it is not clear just how long that past is. McColley cites from biblical commentators a number of estimates of how long

Adam and Eve were in Paradise before the Fall, with numbers varying from twelve hours, the time "between the deliverance of Christ to Pilate and His removal from the Cross," to thirty-three years, the number of years Christ lived "as man" (159). The two "most authoritative interpretations" of when the Fall occurred, he says, are the first day and the eighth, and he suggests Milton combines the two in having Eve tempted first (by Satan's dream) on the night of the day of Creation, with the Fall occurring seven days later (160). Thus, for McColley the reader first sees Adam and Eve in book 4 of Paradise Lost on the day of their creation.

Stapleton argues more reasonably, however, that "we are not to imagine that the first day of action in Paradise in the poem is the first day of their existence there." On the contrary, he points out, Adam and Eve are "at home in Paradise, not transients" (740), citing, among other things, Eve's statement that she does "oft remember" the day of her creation (4.449) and Adam's reference to hearing celestial voices "how often" (680). Stapleton leaves the matter undefined, saying merely that before the reader sees them Adam and Even have lived "some length of time, though we do not know how long" (741). Babb concedes Adam and Eve's tenure in Paradise is "indefinite" but argues for "the impression that they have lived [there] for some time, certainly for weeks, perhaps for months" (129). He cites the fact that Adam and Eve offer their prayers "each Morning . . . In various style" (5.145-46), that Eve has learned

certain fruits gain firmness "by frugal storing" (5.324) and drying, and that Adam has "so oft beheld" the face of "God or Angel" (9.1081-82). I would add that Adam awakes in book 5 as "custom'd" (3), that Satan in Eve's dream appears like "one of those from Heav'n / By us oft seen" (55-56), and that Adam explains to Eve they may dream of things "long past or late" (113). Gardner similarly feels "the sense of a long Paradisal time for [the] sinless pair" (39).

Despite some vagueness about how long Adam and Eve have lived in Paradise before they appear in book 4, they clearly have a past. Both Adam and Eve, for example, remember the day of their creation. "That day" Eve does "oft remember" (4.449): Adam's hand seized hers, and "from that time" she understood that "manly grace / And wisdom" excel beauty (489-92). Leslie Brisman is essentially accurate, I think, in saying that the voice Eve hears "introduces time [into Eve's experience] when it introduces Adam" (156); as the phrase "from that time" suggests, much of Eve's sense of herself dates from this encounter with Adam. Adam, similarly, remembers his primal awakening and his naming of creatures, but the change wrought in his life by the appearance of Eve is his greatest temporal marker, creating in him a clear sense of "before" and "from that time." In its very pleasant "now" (in the garden with Eve) contrasted with a less pleasant past (without Eve), it is a kind of reversal of demonic "change": whatever had "seem'd fair in all the World" seemed "now / Mean, or in her summ'd up";

"from that time," Adam says, echoing Eve, her looks "infus'd / Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before" (8.472-75). Adam awakens from his sleep either to find Eve or, in a phrase that suggests time in Hell, "for ever to deplore / Her loss" (479-80). Adam's sense of time in effect begins with Eve.

Adam and Eve's sense of linear time, however, is a minor note in Paradise. The overwhelming sense of most readers is that prelapsarian Adam and Eve live in a kind of blissful, dynamic timelessness where their days are gracefully ordered by movements of sun and moon and by their daily domestic and religious rites. Change in Paradise, MacCaffrey observes, "is limited and bound by recurrence; it is a cycle . . . where nothing is ever lost" (74). In such a world, she adds, "the length of time becomes unimportant" (75). In Paradise, Ferry says, "we feel the unending recurrence of unfallen nature's changes": "In Eden each rosy dawn introduces the same day; each evening the sun slips into the ocean ushering in the same twilight, the same coolness, the same birds' songs" (156). John Knott, in exploring the "pattern of [Adam and Eve's] daily activity," notes similarly, "The constant repetition of this pattern, in harmony with the cyclical movement of the 'Wheele / Of Day and Night,' gives a sense of timelessness to life in the prelapsarian world" ("Pastoral" 168).

Milton's art is subtle and profound, and to say how he creates a sense of timeless bliss in Paradise is to trace delicate weavings with blunt finger, but some of the

techniques are nonetheless plain: explicit phrase, images of motion, dance, cycle, rhythm, balance, repetition of key words, and modulation of syntax and meter for effect.

Satan's first view of the Garden from his perch on the Tree of Life is a case in point. Looking "with new wonder," he sees "In narrow room Nature's whole wealth, yea more, / A Heaven on Earth," a "blissful Paradise / Of God" (4.205, 207-09). The river that waters Paradise is described in a sentence that sweeps gracefully across two dozen lines of verse, enacting--largely through strategically placed action verbs--the rhythm it describes. After a line and a half that seem to give the whole statement--"Southward through Eden went a river large, / Nor chang'd his course" (223-24), where "Nor chang'd" has clear implications for resisting time--the sentence pushes ahead like the river it describes: the river passes "through the shaggy hill [of Paradise] . . . underneath ingulft," is "through veins / Of porous Earth with kindly thirst up-drawn," rises "a fresh Fountain," waters "with many a rill . . . the Garden," and "thence united" falls "Down the steep glade" to meet the "nether flood" (223-31). The rising and descending movement anticipates, in the Morning Hymn of book 5, the description of the sun in its "eternal course" ("both when thou climb'st, / And when high Noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st" [173-74]) and of the mists ("that now rise / From Hill or steaming Lake" to "deck with Clouds th' uncolor'd sky, / Or wet the thirsty Earth with falling showers, /

Rising or falling still advance his praise" [185-86, 189-91]).

The graceful rising and falling rhythm of the river (like that of the sun or the mists) mirrors the "Grateful vicissitude" (6.8) of Heaven where opposites alternate successively with the effect that a cycle is completed and nothing is really changed. A variation of the principle balances rather than alternates the opposites. In the description of the river in Paradise just cited, for example, the river that is drawn up as a "Sapphire Fount" (4.237) into Paradise feeds flowers that "[pour] forth onto Hill and Dale and Plain"; it does this

Both where the morning Sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierc't shade
Imbrown'd the noontide Bow'rs. (243-46)

Syntactically, "Both where" and "and where" perfectly balance; the enjambment of "smote / The open field" and "the unpierc't shade / Imbrown'd the noontide Bow'rs" suggests the energy of nature's flowers as they (according to the previous line) "Pour'd forth profuse," even as the pivotal "and where" forces a pause, like a graceful dance movement, in the middle of the line. "[M]orning Sun" with its warmth and "noontide Bow'rs" with their shade complete the balance, but they also evoke the daily cycle of life in Paradise, assuring--like the upward and downward flow of the water being described and the profuse vitality of the flowers--

that balance in this "happy rural seat of various view" (247) is dynamic rather than static.

Balance continues as a pervasive principle in the description that follows. Between the fruit groves of Paradise are "Lawns" or (in a series of balancing opposites) "level Downs" "Or palmy hillock" or "the flow'ry lap / Of some irriguous Valley" (252-55). The murmuring waters fall down the slopes "disperst" or "in a Lake" (261). The vernal breezes breathe the odor of "field" and "grove" (265). The fall of the waters, the singing of birds, and the blowing of "vernal airs" (264) render the scene dynamic. In a climactic poetic image, the narrator says all this occurs "while Universal Pan / Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance / Led on th' Eternal Spring" (266-68). Nature in Paradise turns out to be a graceful dance in which time participates.

The image of the dance has profound implications for the nature of time in Paradise. In The Myth of the Eternal Return, Eliade Mircea says that all dances "were originally sacred . . . they had an extrahuman model"; as a repetition, a dance imitates or commemorates or reactualizes "an archetypal gesture or . . . a mythical moment" (28-29). In Paradise Lost one does not have to look far to find the "mythical moment" that the dance of prelapsarian nature imitates: it is the Creation. The image is explicit on the third day of Creation, when "Rose as in Dance the stately Trees, and spread / Thir branches hung with copious Fruit:

or [in a balanced alternative] gemm'd / Thir Blossoms"
 (7.324-26). Woods, valleys, and rivers then dance through
 three parallel inverted clauses:

with high Woods the Hills were
 crown'd,

With tufts the valleys and each fountain side,

With borders long the Rivers. (326-28)

Following the graceful verse, a reader is prepared for
 Raphael's judgment of the newly created world: "Earth now /
 Seem'd like to Heav'n, a seat where Gods might dwell" (328-
 29).

The creation of heavenly lights on the fourth day
 provides another example of the dance of Creation and its
 connection with the rhythms of time. These lights, the
 Almighty says, are "to divide / The Day from Night," to "be
 for Signs, / For Seasons, and for Days, and circling Years"
 (340-42). "[C]ircling Years" here, like the "circling
 Hours" in Heaven (6.3), provide a sense of graceful
 recurrence, and sun and moon here provide for earth that
 pleasing, balanced alternation of opposites that Milton
 calls "vicissitude":

And God made two great Lights, great for thir use
 To Man, the greater to have rule by Day,
 The less by Night altern: and made the Stars,
 And set them in the Firmament of Heav'n
 To illuminate the Earth, and rule the Day
 In thir vicissitude, and rule the Night,

And Light from Darkness to divide. (346-52)

The balance of "the greater" and "The less," day and night, "rule the Day" and "rule the Night," and light and darkness, along with the explicit "altern" and "vicissitude," mirrors precisely the "grateful vicissitude" that Raphael describes in Heaven, where "light and darkness in perpetual round/ lodge and dislodge by turns" (6.6-7).

Like the narrator's opening description of Paradise in book 4, Raphael's account of the Creation mingles images of rhythm, cycle, and balance with those of dance:

First in his East the glorious Lamp was seen,
 Regent of Day, and all th' Horizon round
 Invested with bright Rays, jocund to run
 His Longitude through Heav'n's high road: the gray
 Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danc'd
 Shedding sweet influence: less bright the Moon,
 But opposite in levell'd West was set
 His mirror, with full face borrowing her Light
 From him, for other light she needed none
 In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
 Till night, then in the East her turn she shines,
 Revolv'd on Heav'n's great Axle, and her Reign
 With thousand lesser Lights dividual holds.

(7.370-82)

The verse itself is a dance celebrating heavenly lights and heavenly order. The moon, "opposite in levell'd West," is balanced with the glorious sun in the east; at night,

"Revolv'd on Heav'n's great Axle," the moon "in the East her turn she shines." All moves, alternates, balances. Echoing but elaborating scripture, Raphael concludes the dance:

then first adorn'd
With thir bright Luminaries that Set and Rose,
Glad Ev'ning and glad Morn crown'd the fourth day.

(384-86)

For a full line and a half "adorn'd" hovers between verb (as in "Rose as in Dance the stately Trees") and participle before the verb "crown'd" releases it as modifier. Within this suspension "Set and Rose" and "Glad Ev'ning and glad Morn" are at once balanced opposites and active cycles. The sentence and the day and the dance come to emphatic and majestic rest with "crown'd the fourth day," where the forceful "crown'd," with its connotations of height and royalty, gains force by occurring after a natural pause and at the normally unstressed seventh syllable in the verse; in fact, "crown'd the fourth day" stresses three of the last four syllables, bringing to emphatic conclusion the dancelike movement of forty-eight lines of verse celebrating the creation of heavenly lights.

The ultimate archetype for the dance of nature, already seen in chapter 4, is the angelic dance around the throne of God; this is, in Eliade's terms, the "mythical moment" (28) that sanctifies all natural and human dance that is not diverted to profane ends. The Heavenly dance

"about the sacred Hill" (5.619) celebrating the exaltation of the Son, Raphael says to Adam, is

Mystical dance, which yonder starry Sphere
Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem:
And in thir motions harmony Divine
So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear
Listens delighted. (620-27)

In an analysis of dance imagery throughout Paradise Lost, Catherine Cox argues persuasively that this Heavenly dance, with its reconciliation of divine order with mazes and things irregular and eccentric, "images and reveals the providential care of God and the harmony of his divine mind" (159). Beyond that, the verse describing the Heavenly dance is laced with images of balance ("our Ev'ning and our Morn" [628]), graceful movement ("Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn" [630]), and cycle or rhythm (all night the circling angels "in thir course / Melodious Hymns about the sovran Throne / Alternate" [655-57]). The dance is also linked explicitly with time, in the references to evening and morning and to the coming on of "grateful Twilight" (645), and with the dance of "yonder starry Sphere / Of Planets" (620-21). This Heavenly dance is clearly the archetype for the dance of Creation and the dance of prelapsarian nature in Paradise. Such a dance, Cox remarks,

emphasizes "harmony and joy as mutual and reciprocal actions," replicates "the love and grace of God," and through "rhythm and graceful movement" joyfully expresses "the freedom of life" (160, 167, 184). In its terrestrial form, she says, "the dance of the stars and planets celebrates temporal measure and generation" (169).

Satan himself feels the beauty and attraction of what is in effect the prelapsarian dance of time. As he approaches Adam and Eve's world for the first time, he sees the sun and the "vulgar Constellations thick" (3.577) that

as they move

Thir Starry dance in numbers that compute
Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering Lamp
Turn swift thir various motions, or are turn'd
By his Magnetic beam. (579-83)

Aristotle said that time is the "number of motion" (372); the motion that time numbers or measures here is clearly a "Starry dance"; the numbers "compute / Days, months, and years." Satan is drawn particularly to the brilliant sun which "above them all . . . in splendor likest Heaven / Allur'd his eye" (571-73), but in rejecting obedience and praise, Satan has rejected dance and the graceful rhythms of time. Within the shut gates of Hell, Raphael explains to Adam, he and his cohorts heard "Noise, other than the sound of Dance or Song, / Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage" (8.243-44). There is no graceful dancing in Hell. Lighting on Niphates, therefore, Satan merely exclaims that

he hates the sun's beams "That bring to my remembrance from what state / I fell, how glorious once above thy Sphere" (4.38-39); his linear sense of time, the emphatic break between "now" and "before," contrasts sharply with the rhythms of Paradise and the dance of the constellations.

Similarly, when Satan returns to Paradise in book 9, he sees the earthly heavens as "danc't round by other Heav'ns / That shine" (103-04), and he feels nostalgia for a balanced, rhythmic existence where he could "[walk] thee round" and joy in "sweet interchange / Of Hill and Valley, Rivers, Woods and Plains, / Now Land, Now Sea, and Shores with Forest crown'd" (114-17): "sweet interchange" here not only describes the pleasantly varied landscape, but in its alternation of opposites it is synonymous with the "Grateful vicissitude" (6.8) of Heaven. In the hell Satan carries with him, balance and rhythm have given way to "the hateful siege / Of contraries" (121-22), and he finds little "ease" to his "relentless thoughts" (129-30). For Satan, time has irrevocably ceased to be a dance; vicissitude, the pleasing alternation of opposites, has given way to what, in a grim pun, he calls "dark durance" (4.899), a prison of unmitigated duration.

In Paradise time's rhythms are a medium for God's love and bounty and for Adam and Eve's praise and love to God and their love to one another. Time structures their joyful existence but does not change it. At dawn they arise with "sacred Light" when "all things that breathe, / From th'

Earth's great Altar send up silent praise / To the Creator," joining "thir vocal Worship to the Choir / Of Creatures wanting voice" (9.192-99). Morning prayers done, they work in the garden till midday and then in some "Bow'r or shade" retire from "the heat of Noon . . . To respite [their] day-labor with repast, / Or with repose" (5.230-33). In the afternoon they renew "thir sweet Gard'ning labor," but no more than suffices to "recommend cool Zephyr, and [make] ease / More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite / More grateful" (4.328-31), after which they dine on "Supper Fruits . . . Nectarine Fruits which the compliant boughs / Yielded them" (331-33). The day ends with perfect balance and peace:

the Sun

Declin'd was hasting now with prone career
To th' Ocean Isles, and in th' ascending Scale
Of Heav'n the Stars that usher Evening rose.
(352-55)

As "still Ev'ning" and "Twilight gray" come on (598), Adam and Eve talk and reminisce freely until Adam at "th' hour / Of night" reminds Eve that "God hath set / Labor and rest, as day and night to men / Successive" so that "the timely dew of sleep" now presses upon them (610-14). At the door of their bower they offer evening prayer, implicitly celebrating the divine balance of nature:

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

[We shall] extol

Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep.

(733-35)

"Handed," they enter their "inmost bower" (4.739, 738), the "Nuptial Bow'r," into which Adam first led Eve "blushing like the Morn" and at whose entrance "all Heav'n, / And happy Constellations on that hour / Shed thir selectest influence" (8.510-13), evoking, Cox suggests (173), the dance of Creation when "the Pleiades before him danc'd / Shedding sweet influence" (7.374-75). After the "Rites / Mysterious of connubial Love" (4.742-43), Adam and Eve sleep "imbracing," "lull'd by Nightingales" (771), guarded by angels who, Adam has explained to Eve, "walk the Earth / Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep" and "with ceaseless praise [God's] works behold / Both day and night" (677-80).

A daily routine of activities based on the natural cycle of morning, noon, evening, and night thus shapes Adam and Eve's experience of time before the Fall, largely nullifying all sense of linear time. They naturally think and speak of time in terms of the daily cycle. The most famous example of this, and of its effect, is Eve's love song, which Earl Miner calls "a version of prelapsarian lyricism" (16) that rises above the narrative flow of time. "With thee conversing," she says to Adam, "I forget all time, / All seasons and thir change, all please alike" (639-

40). In her own version of the dance of time she then traces the day from the sweet "breath of morn" to the sweet "coming on / Of grateful Ev'ning mild, then silent Night / With this her solemn Bird and this fair Moon," and, in a perfect repetition, she retraces the day in detail to show that not even this grateful cycle, as she says to Adam, "without thee is sweet" (641-56). Of Eve's song, MacCaffrey remarks, "The repetition, almost word for word, of her speech, enacts a timeless recurrence that is confirmed both in the sense of the words and in Milton's picture of Paradise as a whole" (77). Eve's "forgetting" here is exactly the suspension of time the devils seek in Hell from Lethe, where they hope "with one small drop to lose / In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe, / All in one moment" (2.607-09). Such an experience requires, however, a going out of oneself--as Eve does unself-consciously in her love for Adam--and the devils are left with "No rest" (618), no forgetting of time. Eve forgets time because she loves Adam, but also because the blissful rhythms of Paradise lift her outside time. Her beautiful poem is itself a response to Adam's reference to the next day in terms of "fresh Morning," "Our walk at noon," and "Night [that] bids us rest" (4.623, 627, 633). Adam no less than Eve experiences time as a cycle.

Thus, time in prelapsarian Paradise is a paradox: it is constantly changing (in cycles), and (in linear terms) it never changes. Like the four elements celebrated in Adam

and Eve's morning prayer in book 5, time runs "Perpetual Circle" (182) and thus (in linear terms) goes nowhere; "ceaseless change" (183) in fact works no change. As Malabika Sarkar says, "To Adam and Eve the 'diurnal round' exists, but exists as part of an eternal cycle" like the "'change delectable' of evening and morning in Heaven" (5). This dynamic changelessness is inseparable from the love, obedience, and praise of Adam and Eve; like the grateful interchange of morning and evening in Heaven and the song and dance of angels about God's throne, the movements of time before the Fall are appropriated as vehicles of praise to the bountiful creator. Like the "multiform" elements that "mix / And nourish all things," Adam and Eve "Vary to [their] great Maker still new praise" (5.182-84). As Summers in his analysis of the morning hymn says, Milton's image of song in Paradise Lost "does insistently celebrate the 'ways,' the motions of God. In movement is praise" ("'Grateful'" 260). The timelessness of Paradise, therefore, is dynamic rather than static. In permeating and structuring the experiences of Adam and Eve, it is like the fruits of the Garden that Raphael describes to Adam, showing "Variety without end" (7.542). This is not the stale "imperishable bliss" of Stevens's "Sunday Morning" where ripe fruit never falls and "the boughs / Hang always heavy in that perfect sky, / Unchanging" (68-69). In Milton's Paradise "store, / All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk" (5.322-23), the trees yield "freely all thir pleasant

fruit for food" (7.540), and the eternal season is spring no less than autumn: "Spring and Autumn here / Danc'd hand in hand" (5.394-95).

I am puzzled, therefore, when Carnes says of "the unbroken order of prelapsarian time," "There seems little doubt that, for the eye of the poet at least, the color of time was infinitely more pleasing than the relative blankness of the prelapsarian world" (538, 539), or when Hyman says, "Surely it is understandable that Satan, like Adam and Eve, should prefer a world of change, of motion, of growth, and even of danger, to the static, predetermined universe that existed before the Fall" (224). Ignoring for the moment that "predetermined" begs the question of free will and that the love of danger for its own sake moves rather wide of central issues in Paradise Lost, "change . . . motion, [and] . . . growth" are precisely what one gets in great abundance in the prelapsarian world of Paradise Lost. Gardner more justly sees Milton as "imagining even the landscape of Paradise as not a static picture of arranged beauties but a living vital organism, its rivers seeming to act of their own volition, its sun 'smiting' the fields, its trees weeping their odorous gums and balms, its beasts frisking in their play" (35). Summers agrees when he says, "No static vision would fulfill 'all delight of human sense' (4.206)," or again, "In contrast to our world, 'fulfillment' in Paradise never implies a cessation of motion or action,

but continuous and fruitful motion" (253). Griffin, in his exploration of "Milton's Evening," argues similarly:

Like Eden, evening represents both a delicate and precarious balance between day and night . . . and at the same time a moving moment, never static (just as Eden offers not stasis and stultification, but an opportunity for moral decision and gradual ascendance from body up to spirit). (270)

Prelapsarian time in Paradise Lost is not static or heavy or colorless or dull; quite the contrary, it is rich, luscious, moving, dancing, endlessly varied. And inextricably bound with the bliss of life in the Garden are the unceasing rhythms of time.

The dynamic quality of time and life in Paradise is supported by the complex notion of "rest" in the poem. In Hell, "rest can never dwell" (1.66); there roving bands of devils find "No rest" (2.618). Sin can find no "rest or intermission" from the hell hounds she has conceived (802). In Paradise, however, Adam tells Eve, "Night bids us rest" (4.633). Similarly, Adam invites Raphael "To rest" during the heat of noon (5.368). Paradise is like Heaven, where after feasting, song, and dance all the angels retire "to rest" (647). Once Adam and Eve sin, they will be "not at rest or ease of Mind" (9.1120), will learn through suffering to "earn rest from labor won" (11.375), will hope ultimately for an "eternal Paradise of rest" (12.314), and at the end of the poem, in words rich at once with homely, spiritual,

and eschatological connotations (Pecheux 74), will wander from their beloved Paradise to seek in the nether world "Thir place of rest" (647).

"Rest" in these instances means sleep and repose, ease of mind, spiritual well-being. The OED validates all of these meanings: "the natural repose or relief from daily activity which is obtained by sleep"; "spiritual or mental peace; quiet or tranquillity of mind." But the OED also recognizes that rest can mean "absence, privation, or cessation of motion; continuance in the same position or place." Adam apparently takes rest in this sense when he wants to know from Raphael "what cause / Mov'd the Creator in his holy Rest / Through all Eternity" to create the world (7.90-92). I suggested in chapter 3 that time in Milton's sense of measure of motion must have begun when the creator was first so "moved." Considered abstractly, therefore, the "rest" of prelapsarian Paradise might seem to have this static quality. In fact, however, as Michael Lieb has shown, neither man's rest nor God's is entirely static. "Essential to Milton's understanding of holy rest," Lieb argues, "is the paradoxical idea that, as part of the divine union, there is constant movement. Rest is symbolically depicted through motion," particularly the motion of song and dance ("'Holy'" 248-49). As God rests on the seventh day of Creation, for example, "the Harp / Had work and rested not" (7.594-95). "Symbolically," Lieb further points out, "Adam and Eve's morning song of praise to God is one

which sets the entire unfallen universe in motion" (249). Eve's love song celebrates the "motions" of Paradise that are "an emblem of the changelessness of the First Mover." Lieb concludes that all things emanate from, and return to find their rest in, "the seated figure at the center [in this case, the transcendent throne of God] . . . Such is the rhythm of holy rest: perpetual return to the source of all motion" (250). Lieb's words, of course, echo and are supported by Raphael's explanation to Adam of the chain of being: "O, Adam, one Almighty is, from whom / All things proceed, and up to him return, / If not deprav'd from good" (5.469-71). Lieb's argument has implications for Milton's larger view of time, but here it demonstrates that the tranquillity of Paradise is far from static. God, paradoxically, is at once in his "holy Rest" (7.91) and "unsleeping" (5.647). For human beings, however, as Adam explains, "God hath set / Labor and rest, as day and night to men / Successive" (4.612-14). Far from being static, therefore, rest in Paradise is a graceful and dynamic rhythm that mirrors in important ways the holy rest of God.

The depth and richness of prelapsarian bliss, and its inextricable connection with temporal rhythms, are also suggested by the pervasive recurrence of the word "sweet" and its variants. Often in the poem the word is literal, as when "from sweet kernels prest / [Eve] tempers dulcet creams" (5.346-47) in preparation for Raphael's visit or, more generally, when angels in Heaven or Adam and Eve in

Paradise enjoy "sweet repast" (5.630; 8.214; 9.407). In this sense, ironically, the creature in Eve's dream says to the forbidden tree, "Deigns none to ease thy load and taste thy sweet" (5.59), and again, "O Fruit Divine, / Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt" (67-68), words Eve will echo when she finally succumbs to temptation: "Taste so Divine, that what of sweet before / Hath toucht my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh" (9.986-87).

Literal taste and odor merge into figurative usage as "this Paradise / of Eden" is said to be superior to "that sweet Grove / Of Daphne by Orontes" (4.272-75) or Adam and Eve's "Gard'ning labor" is "sweet" (328). Raphael, in fact, on arriving in Paradise, finds it "A Wilderness of sweets" where nature

Wanton'd as in her prime, and play'd at will
Her Virgin Fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above Rule or Art, enormous bliss.

(5.294-97)

As "Wilderness," "Wanton'd," "play'd," "pouring," "Wild," and "enormous" suggest, this is no passive or static bliss.

Repeatedly, moreover, "sweetness" in Paradise Lost is connected with temporal rhythms. In their morning prayer Adam and Eve praise God "While day arises, that sweet hour of Prime" (170). In contrast, the blind narrator does not experience "the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn, / Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose," but rather "ever-during dark" (3.42-45). Adam and Eve hasten to their morning's

"rural work . . . Among sweet dew's and flow'rs" (5.211-12). Noon is "the hour of sweet repast" (8.214). Eve's love song ("Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet" [4.641]) deeply interweaves sweetness and temporal rhythms. In contrast, the devils in Hell are unable to achieve "sweet forgetfulness" (2.608); ironically, their temporary pleasure at having formed a plan of action is likened to "the radiant Sun with farewell sweet / [Extending] his ev'ning beam" (492-93). In Paradise, therefore, Adam and Eve enjoy "a mode of existence free from time's pressures" (Quinones 460). This leisured existence, which Adam calls simply "the sweet of Life" (8.184), is closely bound to the temporal rhythms of the Garden. As in Heaven, time moves in gracious cycles that change nothing, providing a rich medium for God's bounty to his creatures and of their praise and obedience to him.

In concluding this chapter, I wish to return to the notion of linear time in Eden, the fact that one day does in fact follow another and Adam and Eve remember a past and expect a future. Brisman, in a provocative if densely woven analysis, argues for a more prominent role for memory in Paradise, saying that a remembered past gives both Adam and Eve a basis for choice: "alternatives [are] taken out of dictated sequentiality into the indeterminate order of memory" (161); choice is "dependent upon an awareness of remembered days and a remembered other self" (155). In fact, Brisman suggests, the larger purpose of Raphael's

visit is to provide "the memory of the fall of the angels that allows the two alternatives 'fall' and 'no fall' to be simultaneously present to the choosing consciousness" (158). Adam indeed expresses surprise that creatures can "want obedience" to God (5.514) and acknowledges that Raphael has related "what was done / Ere my remembrance" (8.203-04), and Raphael's climactic warning after his account of the War in Heaven is couched in terms of memory: "firm they might have stood, / Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress" (6.911-12). In effect, therefore, Raphael does enlarge Adam and Eve's memory and provide them a firmer basis for choice.

In the cases of Adam's and Eve's personal memories, however, I would reverse Brisman's causality: the fact or consciousness of having chosen strengthens memory and fosters the sense of linear time. In Eve's memory of her creation, for example, she says, "there I had fixt / Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire, / Had not a voice . . . warn'd me" (4.465-67); her word "fixt" ominously echoes Satan's "fixt mind" (1.97) and the later "Fixt on the Fruit she gaz'd" (9.735) of the fatal temptation, where she will choose less wisely. Here, however, she follows the "voice" and Adam's urgent appeal and chooses rightly, and the wording of her narrative to Adam shows the connection between choice and her sense of time: "I yielded, and from that time . . ." (4.489). Eve's disquieting dream also threatens to disrupt her timeless happiness ("Such night till this I never pass'd," suffering "offense and trouble,

which my mind / Knew never till this irksome night" [5.30-31, 34-35]); the iterated "till this" threatens a new sense of time even as "irksome night" ominously echoes the "irksome hours" (2.527) of Hell, but after Adam's explanation "all [is] clear'd" (5.136), and the dream does not occupy a prominent place in memory. The "change" (89) she dreams of, as Adam explains, is fanciful, not real, and evil came into her mind and left "unapprov'd" (118), so the dream has no lasting effect and can be dismissed; choice works no change that can become a temporal marker.

Adam's case is more ambiguous, but the effect is much the same. His "vision" of Eve at her creation marks a clear change in his sense of the world: "what seem'd fair in all the World, seem'd now / Mean" (8.472-73); "her looks . . . from that time infus'd / Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before" (474-75). "Now" is clearly different from "before," and "from that time" marks the beginning of something new. Waking, he must find her or "for ever . . . deplore / Her loss" (479-80), a condition not unlike that of Hell. He confesses indeed that Eve alone works "change" in his mind (525): "transported I behold, / Transported touch"; with a clear linear sense, here he felt passion "first" (529-30); he confesses that he is "weak / Against the charm of Beauty's powerful glance" (532-33). Knowing the event--that Adam will choose the "sweet Converse and Love" of Eve over his duty to God (9.909)--a reader may argue that Adam has in fact already succumbed to passion and become a fallen

creature and that his strong sense of linear time here betrays that fact. But this view is hardly consistent with the Adam we see in books 4-8, as he prays at morning or evening or talks to Raphael, and Adam's "transport" here may be simply a deep love similar to that which makes Eve "forget all time" when she is with Adam. Thus Adam speaks of "our delightful task / To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flow'rs, / Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet" (4.437-39). This view accords with the tenor of Adam's love for Eve--and his worship to God--in books 4-8, with the narrator's tribute to wedded love as "Perpetual Fountain of Domestic sweets" (4.760), and with Adam's response to Raphael's stern warning about passion: what delights him most about Eve are

those graceful acts,
 Those thousand decencies that daily flow
 From all her words and actions, mixt with Love
 And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
 Union of Mind, or in us both one Soul.
 (8.600-604)

At the least, however, as Raphael's "contracted brow" (560) suggests, Adam's attraction pushes the limit of lawful affection, and--once again to reverse Brismann's argument--Adam's "choice" of Eve dominates his memory and, more than anything else, creates his sense of a linear past.

Book 8 of Paradise Lost ends with delicate poise. What has been on other days "the coming on / Of grateful Ev'ning

mild" (4.646-47) is evoked by Raphael's reference to "the parting Sun / Beyond the Earth's green Cape and verdant Isles / Hesperian," but here it is a sign that time has run out: "I can now no more"; the setting sun is "Signal to depart" (8.630-32). In a linear response, Adam will honor Raphael's gentle and affable condescension "ever / With grateful Memory" (649-50), though this is balanced with the hope that Raphael will "oft return" (651). Raphael's parting advice is cast in balanced terms:

to stand or fall

Free in thine own Arbitrement it lies.
 Perfet within, no outward aid require;
 And all temptation to transgress repel.
 (640-43)

Poised thus between the balanced, rhythmic world of Paradise and a fallen, linear world, book 8 ends:

So parted they, the Angel up to Heav'n
 From the thick shade, and Adam to his Bow'r.
 (652-53)

Chapter 6

A Long Day's Dying: Time in the Fallen World

As Satan descends like a dark shadow on the innocent rhythms of Eden in book 4 of Paradise Lost, he brings with him a sense of time possible only for a fallen creature. His "bitter memory / Of what he was, what is, and what must be / Worse" (4.24-26) is familiar enough to the reader, but it contrasts sharply with the temporal innocence of Adam and Eve, who in the daily rhythm of Paradise feel little sense of change or duration and no anxiety about the future. In extolling "Him first, him last, him midst, and without end" (5.165) who made them, they also express their own sense of timelessness. Satan brings what MacCaffrey calls "the poison of time" (80), a sense of unrhythmic and irredeemable change. His mission is to introduce Hell's time into Paradise.

A number of critics have noted that the Fall is, among other things, a descent into time. Quinones comments, "Not only do the protagonists experience the hard edge of time, but time itself and history begin with their sin" (461). Time, Shawcross says, "is associated only with man and Satan; it is one of the tribulations that man must endure because of the fall" ("Stasis" 12). Sarkar sees "the intrusion of Satan into Paradise" as "the intrusion of time into eternity" (5). "From the timeless simultaneity of the heavenly aevum," Kellogg says, "Adam is expelled into a world of time, of history, of story" (260). Strictly

speaking, time exists for Milton before the Fall, since, as I have shown, it exists not only in Paradise but even in eternity. What changes with the Fall is the form of time and the human sense of time. Lecomte, therefore, is more precise when he speaks of "the Fall into history (linear time versus circular time)" (5). Since by definition the Fall creates death as an end to life, time begins to move in a line rather than simply in cycles as it does in Heaven and in Paradise. At first, this fallen, linear time is indistinguishable from the time of Hell. As I will show, however, hope for the future creates important differences between fallen time on earth and the time of Hell. In exploring fallen time, I shall look briefly at premonitions of change in books 4 through 8 and the first part of book 9, analyze in some detail from books 9 and 10 the effects of the Fall both on Adam and Eve and on their world, and examine from one particular angle the extension of time into history described in books 11 and 12.

From a reader's standpoint, the bliss of Paradise is mixed from the beginning with an awareness of what is to come. Such reminders come from Satan's consciousness and speeches and from comments and similes injected by the narrator. Satan intends to wrest a part of God's kingdom from him, "As Man ere long, and this new World shall know" (4.113). He sits on the Tree of Life "devising Death / To them who liv'd" (197-98). Next to the Tree of Life, the narrator says, is "Our Death the Tree of Knowledge" (221),

where the pronoun "Our" explicitly identifies the world into which Adam and Eve will fall as the world of the poet and the reader. In the midst of the idyllic description of Adam and Eve surrounded by frisking animals, the terse parenthesis, "since wild" (341), to describe the animals, again yokes Paradise to the fallen world of the reader. Similarly, the narrator's apostrophe to "dishonest shame" which "banisht from man's life his happiest life, / Simplicity and spotless innocence" (313, 317-18) or his description of Eve as "More lovely than Pandora" and "O too like / In sad event" (714-16) graphically evokes the fallen world: for the reader, timeless innocence and fallen time exist at once. Two passages from Satan's soliloquies summarize the foreboding which repeatedly intrudes itself into the description of Paradise:

Ah gentle pair, yee little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish and deliver ye to woe,
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy;
Happy, but for so happy ill secur'd
Long to continue. (366-71)

Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed.
(533-35)

Satan's language--"Long to continue," "while," "Yet," "till," "Short," "long," "succeed"--betrays his own bitter

experience of time as linear change contrasted with what Quinones calls the "delighted leisure . . . appropriate to the world before the Fall, before time and history" (466). Dramatically, of course, such a juxtaposition is at once poignant (to love that well which one must leave ere long) and grimly ironic. Thematically, however, it sets in bold contrast the cyclical and linear experiences of time, the one felt by creatures who live in love and obedience to God, the other by those who in pride and self-love rebel against God.

This ironic contrast between timeless Eden and time-ridden Satan intensifies at the beginning of book 9: as the narrator announces (with all the word's heavy temporal connotations) that he must "change" his notes to tragic (5); as the reference to twilight ("short Arbiter / Twixt Day and Night" [50-51]) recalls the "grateful Twilight" of Heaven (5.645) and the "grateful Ev'ning mild" (4.647) of Eve's love song; as Satan observes the earthly heavens "danc't round by other Heav'ns" and views nostalgically the "sweet interchange" (9.103, 115) of Paradise; and, finally, as "sacred Light [begins] to dawn / In Eden" with the flowers sending up "silent praise / To the Creator" (192-93, 195-96).

Premonitions of the Fall culminate, of course, in the famous separation scene between Adam and Eve. My interest here is not in the total argument--a large and complex matter indeed--but in two attitudes toward time expressed in

the argument. While Eve's modest proposal shows a sense of the rhythms of Paradise, with work "by day" balanced with nightly rest (209) and "till Noon" (219) preserving midday repast and repose, she yet shows an uncharacteristic urgency about time and work: "One night or two" (211), "all day" (220), "draw on" (223), and "though begun / Early" (224-25) reflect an odd sense of duration, and work becomes a quantity ("Our day's work brought to little") by which is "[earn'd]" "th' hour of Supper" (224-25) rather than merely "thir sweet Gard'ning labor [that] suffic'd / To recommend cool Zephyr, and made ease / More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite / More grateful" (4.328-31). To be sure, Eve is responding to Adam's explanation, the first night the reader sees them in Paradise, of why they need rest: they must get up early; the overgrown arbors and alleys where they walk at noon "mock [their] scant manuring, and require / More hands than [theirs]" (628-29); and certain blossoms and gums "That lie bestrown unsightly and unsmooth" must be moved if Adam and Eve mean to "tread with ease" (631-32). Perhaps this fully accounts for Eve's suggestion. Adam's call to rest in book 4, however, is rooted in their daily rhythms ("Labor and rest" and "day and night" [613]), in contrast to the idle beasts that rove "all day long" (616), and the work he envisions is "our pleasant labor" (625). Quinones remarks that Eve's suggestion reflects the new Renaissance attitude that regards time as "a commodity that could be profitably or unprofitably spent." His judgment that Eve's "arguments

before the Fall introduce an alien ethic into the true leisure of the earthly paradise" may be overstated, but he is right to question the degree of "temporal management" that she proposes (464-65). Adam's initial response (whatever one thinks of his later argument that mere temptation besmirches its object) is in the right--that is, timeless and cyclical--vein. Adam and Eve are made "not to irksome toil, but to delight" (9.242):

not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd
Labor, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles. (235-39)

In any case, Adam thinks they can jointly do the necessary work "till younger hands ere long / Assist [them]" (246-47), though he concedes that solitude might be incorporated into the rhythms of their "converse" (247): "short retirement urges sweet return" (250), where "short" and "sweet" balance phonetically and metrically and "return," at the end of the line and of the sentence, brings to rest a cycle that is at once semantic (going away and coming back) and implicitly temporal as well as metrical and syntactical. Although Eve is not "wrong" (and hence fallen) in her proposal that she and Adam divide their labor, her interest in time management jars, anticipating a linear sense of time as something to be saved and not wasted that will be the human lot after the Fall. The repeated "oft" of "Oft he to her his charge . . .

Repeated" and "shee to him as oft engag'd" (400-01) is tinged with irony here, suggesting urgency rather than the pleasant recurrence of earlier usages where Eve has "oft" remembered the day of her creation (4.449), where "oft in bands" Adam and Eve have heard angels "Singing thir great Creator" (684), where Eve "oft [has been] wont" to dream of Adam (5.32), and where the angels in Heaven have been "wont to meet / So oft in Festivals of joy and love / Unanimous" (6.93-95). The balanced "Noontide repast, or Afternoon's repose" (9.403) for which Eve promises to return suggests once more the grace and leisure of Eden, but it is undercut immediately by the narrator's apostrophe to Eve in unmistakably linear terms that she "never from that hour" will find "either sweep repast, or sound repose" (406-07): "that hour" will initiate an irrevocable linear change forever destroying the grateful balance and alternation of "repast" and "repose."

My interest is not primarily in the symbolism of particular times of day, but a good deal has been said about the fact that Eve eats the fruit as "the hour of Noon drew on" (9.739). Cirillo remarks that as "the mid-point between the ascent and descent of the sun, noon is an hour of stillness, a timeless moment during which the course of nature is interrupted" ("Noon-Midnight" 380). In Eve's temptation, Cirillo argues, Milton taps into a tradition in which noon is at once a symbol of eternity and, through its connection with the noon-day devil and with the sins of

acedia and luxuria, "morally the most dangerous time of the day" (380). Apart from "the heat of Noon," however, from which Adam retires, as God says to Raphael, "To respite his day-labor with repast, / Or with repose" (5.231-33) and by which Eve promises Adam to return for "Noontide repast, or Afternoon's repose" (9.403), Milton does not seem to associate noon with evil. Knott, in responding to Cirillo, points out that in Milton's "treatment of the temptation, there is none of the play on light and darkness normally associated with the conception of noon as a time of sin" ("Pastoral" 175n). The primary significance of noon as the time of Eve's fall, therefore, is dramatic (by this time she is hungry) and ironic (she sins in broad daylight and at the precise hour she has promised to meet Adam); noon is symbolic mainly in being the hour of the Crucifixion.

The time of her eating is, in any case, an "evil hour" (9.780), for it destroys forever, for Eve, the daily rhythm of Paradise of which noon has been a leisurely and restful part. The narrator's description of Eve as "Satiated at length" (792) ironically echoes Satan's earlier "Sated at length" (598) in his account of eating the fruit, even as Eve's ominous reference to her "change" (818) mirrors Satan's "Strange alteration" (599). Change here is the "dire change" (1.625) of Hell, an irrevocable alteration of one's condition, and "at length" (9.792) betrays a linear sense of time further illustrated by Eve's response to Adam when they meet: her "stay" has been "long"; she has felt

"agony of love till now / Not felt" (856-59). Eve's intent to honor the tree with "Song, each Morning, and due praise" (800) is ironic not only because the tree has replaced God in morning prayer, but also because "each Morning" evokes a harmonious rhythm that is irrevocably lost. Adam, similarly, when he responds to Eve "at length" (894) has in a long pause already entered fallen time, for he has decided to die with Eve.

Adam's and Eve's senses of time change markedly with their sin. Time, Aristotle said, is the measure of motion "in respect of 'before' and 'after'" (372). In Heaven and in Paradise, where days pass in graceful cycles, the sense of before and after is not pronounced; although praise and festival are richly varied, each day is much like every other. Only unique events stand out as time markers, creating a sense of change. In Paradise Lost such change is likely to be destructive. Satan's rebellion creates the painful linear sense of change that characterizes Hell, and Adam's and Eve's disobedience brings the same sense of change to earth.

At first, however, Adam's and Eve's change disguises itself as something good. Eve feels "new Hopes, new Joys, / Taste . . . Divine"; so pronounced is her sense of change, she says, that "what of sweet before / Hath toucht my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh" (985-87). Adam shows the same marked sense of "then" and "now." He has not known "till now / True relish, tasting" (1023-24); he finds Eve

"fairer now / Than ever" (1032-33). Soon, however-- following an afternoon of untimely lovemaking--their new sense of change shapes itself for what it really is, painful loss. After they are "Confounded long" (1064), Adam "At length" (1066) expresses the demonic sense of change as he thinks of "God or Angel, erst with joy / And rapture so oft beheld" (1081-82). "Now" (1083) has become painfully different from "erst." The narrator's exclamation at Adam and Eve's meager covering, "O how unlike / To that first naked Glory" (1114-15), explicitly echoes his response to Hell, "O how unlike the place from whence they fell!" (1.75). The microcosm, lapsing into disorder as passion overrules reason, was "calm Region once / And full of Peace, now toss't and turbulent" (9.1125-26). Adam is "estrang'd in look and alter'd style" (1132), echoing ironically the "Strange alteration" (599) Satan claims the fruit worked in him. Love and respect for one another and praise and obedience to God are gone for Adam and Eve, and their new sense of time is the symptom, though not the cause, of the painful change. In mutual blame they spend "fruitless hours," and "of thir vain contest appear'd no end" (1188-89), much like the War in Heaven where, as God says, "in perpetual fight they needs must last / Endless" (6.693-94) unless he intervenes: without the experience of grace--i.e., God's providence--fallen creatures are locked into the experience of time as heavy and unbroken duration; without grace, time is inexorably linear.

My aim is not to trace all the motions of grace in Adam and Eve during the long night after the Fall, but rather to clarify how their experience of time is altered in their fallen state. The profound sense of change already cited continues unabated through much of book 10. The Son, noting that Adam was "wont with joy to meet / [His] coming seen far off," inquires of him, "what change / Absents thee?" (103-04, 107-08); the narrator says that the air too "Must suffer change" (213); and Death "[snuffs] the smell / Of mortal change on Earth" (272-73). Adam's sense of change laces all his perceptions with irony; he is "so late / The Glory of that Glory" but now "Accurst of blessed" (721-23). Fallen humans, like fallen angels before them, view their blissful past with bitter irony.

And they view their future--again like the devils before them--as painfully long. Adam thinks of his descendants as "all Ages to succeed" (733). He fears "lasting woes" (742); he laments the "sense of endless woes" (754). He is "mockt with death, and length'n'd out / To deathless pain" (774-75). He fears "Wrath without end" (797), "endless misery / From this day onward," which will "last / To perpetuity" (810-13). Even death, he says, may prove "a slow-pac't evil, / A long day's dying to augment our pain" (963-64). He sees no "hope / Of refuge" and concludes himself "miserable / Beyond all past example and future, / To Satan only like both crime and doom" (838-41). In all senses, Eve takes a shorter view of the future than

does Adam. They may, she says, have "scarce one short hour" to live (923). She suggests they should not stand "longer shivering under fears" (1003); rather they should "at once" (999) try to free themselves, "make short" (1000) and seek death, "Of many ways to die the shortest choosing" (1005). Eve's tactic, based on despair, is an attempt to avoid the "long" torture that Adam envisions. Adam and Eve, of course, are acting and speaking in character; they have no experience to teach them what death is or how to project their changed status into the future. Their changed status, however, includes their experience of time. The past has become ironic and the future hopeless and painfully long. Never again will they be able to forget all time and lose themselves in the temporal rhythms of the Garden. Time now stretches in a line before them.

Only divine grace redeems the bitter march of time. With the descent of "Prevenient Grace" (11.3), Adam's and Eve's hearts are softened, first in Eve's moving appeal (she "his life so late and sole delight, / Now at his feet submissive in distress" [10.941-42]) and then in Adam's response, till Adam forms "better hopes" (1011) for a future that has appeared hopelessly dark and long: with faith and composure they expect to "end / in dust, [their] final rest and native home" (1084-85). Their hope to "pass commodiously this life" is naive, but the provision "sustain'd / By him" (1083-84) anticipates "Providence thir guide" of the ending (12.647), and in both cases "rest"

indicates not only sleep and peace of mind but also that "eternal Paradise of rest" (314) that in Adam and Eve's contrition and repentance has already begun to shape itself as a "paradise within" (587) that Michael will explain to them the next day.

In foreseeing the Fall in book 3, God pronounces that man "shall find grace" (131). Accordingly, Adam and Eve's heavy fall into linear time during the afternoon and long dark night following their eating of the fruit is broken by God's grace. Their acceptance of their lot and their shaping of hope for the future, the Son says to the Father, are the "first fruits" of the Father's "implanted Grace in Man" (11.22-23). By the beginning of book 11, therefore, the reader sees the direction grace will take in Adam and Eve: through their sighs, prayers, and lowly penitence, their painful sense of time as heavy change and unmitigated duration will be subsumed into a cycle by which they regain not exactly their original Paradise but something like it. Grace operates within linear time to save Adam and Eve from its heavy burden.

In Paradise Lost, however, Adam's and Eve's particular experience of sin, time, and grace occurs in an epic context; in working out their salvation, therefore, the poem extends the temporal effects of the Fall into the entire physical universe.

Time itself--no less than Adam's and Eve's perception of time--changes at the Fall because the motions of the

earth change. These changes are rendered in Paradise Lost both poetically (through personification) and scientifically. At the Creation the orderly motions and balance of the world are implicitly linked with a personification of Earth:

Now Heav'n in all her Glory shone, and roll'd
 Her motions, as the great first-Mover's hand
 First wheel'd thir course; Earth in her rich attire
 Consummate lovely smil'd; Air, Water, Earth,
 By Fowl, Fish, Beast, was flown, was swum, was walkt
 Frequent. (7.499-504)

"[R]oll'd" and "wheel'd" suggest graceful motion; "thir course" suggests regularity; the three elements "Air, Water, Earth" are doubly balanced with "Fowl, Fish, Beast" and "was flown, was swum, was walkt"; and in the midst of all, like a bride in "rich attire," "Earth . . . smil'd." In such a world, each morning the very flowers in Eden "[breathe] / Thir morning incense"; in fact, "all things that breathe, / From th' Earth's great Altar send up silent praise / To the Creator, and his Nostrils fill / With grateful Smell" (9.193-97). In this prelapsarian world, temporal rhythms become sacraments in a universal chorus of praise, so that the light of dawn becomes "sacred" (192). A reader, then, is not surprised at the effect when Eve eats the forbidden fruit:

Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
 Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe,

That all was lost. (782-84)

At Adam's eating of the fruit "Nature gave a second groan" (1001), echoing St. Paul's statement that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8.22).

Nature's spontaneous reaction foreshadows the pervasive changes wrought by the Fall at God's command, altering the rhythmic movement of time and rendering earth strikingly similar to Hell. Having embodied prelapsarian harmony in the orderly motions of heavenly bodies, Milton methodically charts the breakdown of these rhythms after the Fall. Cirillo observes, "When the earth shifts from its axis, reflecting the internal disruption of the passions in Adam and Eve, time and its accompanying decay begin" ("Noon" 387). The oblique orbit of the sun, whether from the altered axis of the earth or from other cause, affects the earth "with cold and heat / Scarce tolerable," with "Decrepit Winter" and "Solstitial summer's heat" (10.653-56). Such extremes of "pinching cold and scorching heat" (691) parallel the fire and ice of Hell, "the bitter change / Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce" (2.598-99). They also parallel the "hateful siege / Of contraries" (9.121-22) that are Satan's internal hell. In prelapsarian Eden, days have been equal, twelve hours each, and spring and autumn have "Danc'd hand in hand" (5.395), providing at once "Flow'rs of all hue" (4.256) and "various fruits" that "All seasons, ripe for use [hang] on the stalk"

(5.390, 323). After the Fall, however, the sun's annual progress through the zodiac brings

change

Of Seasons to each Clime; else had the Spring
Perpetual smil'd on Earth with vernant Flow'rs,
Equal in Days and Nights. (10.677-80)

"Spring / Perpetual" clearly echoes the dance of "th' Eternal Spring" (4.268) in Paradise, now lost. On Satan's first approach to man's world, Uriel explains that the "neighboring Moon" (3.726)

her aid

Timely interposes, and her monthly round
Still ending, still renewing through mid Heav'n,
With borrow'd light her countenance triform
Hence fills and empties to enlighten the Earth,
And in her pale dominion checks the night.
(727-32)

The passage celebrates the moon's participation in cyclical order: "Timely" is elaborated as a "monthly round"; "Still ending, still renewing" and "fills and empties," as alternating opposites, represent another instance of prelapsarian "vicissitude." After the Fall, the "blanc Moon," with no hint of balance, cycle, continuity, or helpful light, merely has her office "prescrib'd" (10.656-57). The five planets that once moved "In mystic Dance not without Song" and resounded God's praise (5.178) are now "Of noxious efficacy" and join in "Synod unbenign" (10.660-61).

The postlapsarian "influence malignant" (662) of the stars contrasts with the dance of the Pleiades at Creation "Shedding sweet influence" (7.375), with the "selectest influence" of the "happy Constellations" at Adam and Eve's entrance into the nuptial Bower (8.513, 512), and with the "Starry dance in numbers that compute / Days, months, and years" (3.580-81) that Satan observes on his approach to the human world. The orderly dance of time, represented primarily by the cycles of heavenly bodies, ends with the Fall.

The breakdown of rhythmical, cyclical time at the Fall is part of a more general breakdown of order, for Uriel explains to Satan that at the Creation "order from disorder sprung" (3.713). Stapleton says that "time, like creation, is necessarily an aspect of order" ("Perspectives" 739), and Carnes points out even more specifically, "Prelapsarian time in the poem (Books I-VIII) is consistently defined and re-defined in terms of the idea of order, while postlapsarian time is defined in terms of disorder" (518). In this context even the winds, which in Adam and Eve's morning prayer "Breathe soft or loud" and cause the pines "in sign of Worship [to] wave" (5.193-94) but are unruly now "with bluster to confound / Sea, Air, and Shore" with "sideral blast" and "rend the Woods and Seas upturn" (10.665-66, 693, 700), are allied to the loss of temporal rhythm after the Fall. Reference to the confounding of the elements of "Sea, Air, and Shore" recalls "Air, Water, Earth" at the Creation,

when Earth "Consummate lovely smil'd" (7.502) and also the "Elements the eldest birth / Of Nature's Womb" of Adam and Eve's morning prayer that in "quaternion run / Perpetual Circle" and with "ceaseless change / Vary to [the] great Maker still new praise" (5.180-84). Similarly, the inner rhythms of Adam and Eve--temperance and love, for example--break down as Adam is "in a troubl'd Sea of passion tost" (10.718). With the Fall, therefore, the harmony of the world, including the harmonious rhythms of time, is lost: Nature sighs "through all her Works" (9.783).

A central paradox of Paradise Lost is that divine grace or providence operates in time to save fallen creatures from time. As part of their early experience of grace after their first dark night, for example, Adam and Eve see that the curses of childbearing and labor are also part of their redemption. The pains of childbirth for Eve will be "recompens't with joy" (10.1052), and Adam's curse of labor is better than idleness and will in fact "sustain [him]" (1056). Experienced with grace, the pains of fallen time become the means of rising above time. Similarly, the collapse of heavenly order into a succession of seasons becomes a blessing as well as a curse. True, the "still Night" during Adam's bitter lament is "not now, as ere man fell, / Wholesome and cool and mild, but with black Air / Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom" (846-48). The "inclement Seasons" will bring "Rain, Ice, Hail and Snow," and the winds will "Blow moist and keen, shattering the

graceful locks / Of these fair spreading Trees," so that Adam and Eve will need fire "ere this diurnal Star / Leave cold the Night" (10.1063-70). But time will move in orderly cycles: day and night, heat and cold, spring and fall, summer and winter. These orderly rhythms survive from the Creation, where the heavenly lights were made to "divide / The Day from Night; and . . . be for Signs, / For Seasons, and for Days, and circling Years" (7.340-42). They survive from the prelapsarian "Starry dance" that moves "in numbers that compute / Days, months, and years" as the stars "Turn swift thir various motions" (3.580-82). The heavens constitute, as Raphael explains to Adam before the Fall, "the Book of God . . . Wherein to read his wond'rous Works, and learn / His Seasons, Hours, or Days, or Months, or Years" (8.67-69).

Paradoxically, therefore, in the fallen world those motions used to measure linear time are in their cyclical movements symbols and reminders of the timeless rhythms of Paradise. The narrator's description of dawn, for example, after Adam and Eve's long dark night signals (along with Easter, of course) a restoration of grace and spiritual harmony: "Meanwhile / To resalute the World with sacred Light / Leucothea wak'd, and with fresh dews imbalm'd / The Earth" (11.133-36). Eve rightly sees ironic contrast between "the Morn, / All unconcern'd with our unrest" and the "sleepless Night" they have spent, but the morning in its "rosy progress smiling" (173-75) nonetheless symbolizes

and strengthens the new hope she shares with Adam. The world is quite changed, of course; the air is "suddenly eclips'd / After short blush of Morn" (183-84), and at Michael's approach Adam and Eve see in the east--as if at the Crucifixion--"Darkness ere Day's mid-course" (204) and morning light shining in the western sky. Despite these changes, however--wherein the balanced, alternating opposites of Paradise threaten to become the fierce extremes of Hell--the regular movements of time in the fallen world are constant reminders of divine grace that ultimately redeems fallen creatures from the world of time. Anticipating Genesis, Michael explains to Adam that temporal cycles are vehicles of God's covenant with his fallen creatures:

Day and Night,
Seed-time and Harvest, Heat and hoary Frost
Shall hold thir course, till fire purge all things new,
Both Heav'n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell.
(11.898-901)

The balanced opposites--"Day and Night, / Seed-time and Harvest, Heat and hoary Frost"--along with the regularity suggested by "hold thir course," are vestiges of the "vicissitude" of Heaven and of Paradise. In the uncertain future of Adam and Eve and their descendants, the natural rhythms of time will recur as a symbol of divine grace and harmony, like the echo of a distant chorus.

In Paradise Lost the effects of the Fall extend not only into the structure and rhythms of the physical universe, but also into human history. A great deal has been written about Milton's view of history in the poem. Kelley argues, as I indicated in chapter one, that the central theme of the poem is in fact "the Christian theory of history" (3), and Patrides regards Paradise Lost as "the most successful attempt in poetry to fuse the essential aspects of the Christian view of history into a magnificent whole" (Grand 86). By "Christian" these authors mean "linear" in the Augustinian sense, where time has a beginning and moves, according to a divine plan, toward an end. Zwicky sums up the idea well: "Milton's scheme of history is Augustinian, Christian, hence, straight line" (272).

Milton's view of history in Paradise Lost, however, is not so simple as these critics indicate. In fact, history in the poem is linear in three senses: one neutral, one very bad, and one immensely good. In the neutral sense, history is linear in the same way time is: it moves, it has duration, and its segments succeed one another. It is shaped by what Milton in The Christian Doctrine calls "our concepts of 'before' and 'after'" (CPW 6: 313). One might argue that to call history in this sense linear is tautological since history follows, in the words of the OED, the "order of time"; this is true whether we take history as events or as a record of events. Day follows day, year

follows year, ruler follows ruler, kingdom follows kingdom, and age follows age; in all its guises history marches to time's beat. Accordingly, Michael's account of human history in books 11 and 12 of Paradise Lost is laced with linear terms. Human life may be "long or short" (11.554). The men of the plain do not wait "Long" till they are joined by seductive women (581). Noah arises "at length" (719). After the Flood, the race lives "Long time in peace" (12.23). A "long succession" of kings must follow David (331). After the Resurrection, Michael says, "at length" (504) the apostles die; wolves then "succeed" as teachers (508). By its nature, then, history moves in a line as one event follows another. As Colie says, "Books XI and XII express the long, continuing process of history, the succession of event upon event that is the lot of fallen mankind" ("Time" 132). The linear quality of history in this sense is neither good nor bad nor Christian; it simply is.

If, however, a marked sense of linear time is one effect of the Fall--engendered by the ironic contrast between present and past--then the linear quality of history depicted in books 11 and 12 is not by any means an unmixed good. In a world of linear change, Michael says, Adam may live "Till many years over [his] head return" and with moderation he may gain some "ease" (11.534, 536), but old age and death await him:

thou must outlive

Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
 To wither'd weak and gray; thy Senses then
 Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forgo,
 To what thou hast, and for the Air of youth
 Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
 A melancholy damp of cold and dry
 To weigh thy Spirits down, and last consume
 The Balm of Life. (538-46)

As with Adam, so with the race: all move along time's line toward death, whose "many shapes" (467) described by Michael are so "dismal" (469) that Adam exclaims, "O miserable Mankind, to what fall / Degraded, to what wretched state reserv'd!" (500-01). Disabused of the naive faith that "peace would have crown'd / With length of happy days the race of man," Adam inquires of Michael whether "here [in its wickedness before the Flood] the Race of man will end" (781-82, 786). One important element of Adam's history lesson in books 11 and 12 is precisely what the devils in their Council in book 2 do not understand: that in a fallen world the "long process of time" (2.297) improves nothing; rather, "the World [goes] on, / To good malignant, to bad men benign, / Under her own weight groaning" (12.537-39). Left to itself, history in such a world is linear, but only because it moves along a line of decay toward death. Apart from divine grace, Milton's rendering of history in books 11 and 12 of Paradise Lost is virtually indistinguishable from

that of Hell in books 1 and 2; in both cases, fallen creatures groan under a heavy sense of loss unrelieved by hope of change.

The third sense in which Milton views history as linear is indeed Christian. It grows out of God's purpose to send the Son as redeemer and out of God's view of all time at once. It is the divinely enjoined end of time that makes human history "linear" in a sense larger than the linear quality of time itself. The Son implicitly acknowledges this double sense of "linear" when, on the one hand, he concedes mankind's "days / Number'd, though sad, till Death, his doom," but, on the other hand, he envisions a "better life" for mankind after death, "where with mee / All my redeem'd may dwell in joy and bliss, / Made one with me as I with thee am one" (11.39-44). The Father similarly distinguishes "Life / Tri'd in sharp tribulation"--the heavy experience of linear time wrought by sin--and the "second Life" in "Heav'n and Earth renew'd" (62-66). This larger vision of history is precisely what Michael comes to "intermix" (115) for Adam with Adam's own experience of fallen time. In terms that agree with the view of the Son and the Father, Michael shows Adam at once the "perverted world" (12.547) that goes from bad to worse, "Under her own weight groaning" (539), and a new world, "New Heav'ns, new Earth, Ages of endless date / Founded in righteousness and peace and love," where redeemed creatures may live in "eternal Bliss" (549-51). Adam's assurance that fallen,

linear time ("this transient World, the Race of time") will have an end or "stand fixt" and his faith that "Eternity" lies "beyond," though vaguely as an "abyss," show that Adam has learned well; seeing the end of history, he is "Greatly instructed" (554-57).

For Milton, then, history is linear in the most important sense because it moves always toward a far off divine event, and the duty of fallen humans like Adam is to discern the mysterious workings of providence in the apparent linear decay of the fallen world. One obvious way to discern such workings is through types and figures. As Michael explains to Adam, the laws and rites of the Old Testament were designed to teach God's people "by types / And shadows, of that destin'd Seed to bruise / The Serpent" and thus achieve "Mankind's deliverance" (232-35). Moses bears to the chosen people "in figure" the high office of mediator that the Son will ultimately bear (241). In leading the chosen people into the Promised Land, "Joshua whom the Gentiles Jesus call" prefigures him whose "Name and Office" he bears (310-11). Seen in this way, history disciplines the chosen people, as well as the student of their experiences, "From shadowy Types to Truth" (303), from a prefiguring of an event to the event itself. For Milton, of course, such a reading of history was firmly biblical, for St. Paul saw in the laws and rituals of the Old Testament "a shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2.17), and he saw Adam as "the figure of him that was to come"

(Romans 5.14), that is, Christ. The writer of Hebrews regarded "the first tabernacle" with its priestly rituals as "a figure for the time then present" that found its fulfillment in Christ and his priesthood (9.8,9). Critics such as Madsen, Morris, and Tayler have thoroughly explored elements of typology in Paradise Lost. I need only emphasize that a belief in temporal correspondence between a historical person, event, or structure and a later person, event, or structure depends on a "whole" view of history, something God in Paradise Lost has naturally but human beings like Adam must gain by revelation and by the study of history with eyes of faith. "Time," in this view, is not only chronos, which Lewalski describes as "the ongoing sequence of minutes, years, or events," but kairos, "a particular moment or occasion" ("Time" 50) when all circumstances are right for some fulfillment of the divine plan. As Zwicky observes, "For the Christian, each of God's manifestations makes a kairos [sic], a significant moment in history" (272). In this sense, Michael tells Adam, God will resign the chosen people "in full time / Up to a better Cov'nant" (12.301-02), and Abram will in "due time" be called Abraham (152). Thus, history in Paradise Lost is linear not only in its intrinsic temporal nature and in the heavy process of decay initiated by the Fall, but also in the mysterious movement of providence toward a divinely established "end."

But history in Paradise Lost is also cyclical. This is true, not in the strict sense of what Zwicky calls "cyclicism, the recurrence of everything" literally, so that the future and the past are identical and "no single event [can] have universal significance" (271), but in the broader sense that patterns of recurrence do appear in history in the poem. Knoespel notes the "cycles of degeneration and generation surveyed in Books 11 and 12" (28). Miller says similarly that a "cycle of corruption and renewal" is established in these books (18). Rogers states more categorically, "Milton delineates in these last books the patterns of sin and punishment that come to comprise the rest of human history" (281). The recurring pattern is one of sin, or fall, and redemption. As Michael shows to Adam, the men "on the Plain / Long [have] not walkt" before they fall prey to a "Bevy of fair women" (11.581-82), a drift into evil ended only by the Flood. The Flood, however, marks not only a "world destroy'd" but also a "world restor'd" (12.3), and the cycle of good and evil begins once more. After the descendants of Noah "dwell / Long time in peace" (22-23), Nimrod and his ambitious crew arrogate to themselves rule over their brothers and build the proud tower of Babel:

Thus will this latter, as the former World,
 Still tend from bad to worse, till God at last
 Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
 His presence from among them, and avert

His holy Eyes. (105-09)

The chosen descendants of Abraham illustrate the same pattern. In the Promised Land they prosper for a "Long time" till "sins / National" disrupt their peace and "raise them enemies"; God "as oft saves them penitent" (316-19). After King David, they fall into "foul Idolatries, and other faults" (337) until God is incensed and gives them up to seventy years of Babylonian captivity. Then God "brings them back" (345), and "for a while" they "live moderate," but this lasts only "till grown / In wealth and multitude, factious they grow" (350-52). Similarly, after the Resurrection the apostles die "at length" (504); in their place, "Wolves . . . succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves" who turn all to their selfish advantage (508).

Arising paradoxically from conflict between two linear conceptions of time--the heavy movement of fallen time toward death and the movement of the divine plan toward an appointed end--these historical cycles of fall and return are complex and richly ambiguous. From one point of view, they are ironic, with cycles having been associated with blissful prelapsarian "vicissitude" but now being connected with the repeated waywardness of the human creature. In this view, the cycles enact the same futility represented by the "fierce extremes" of Hell (2.599) and the "annual humbling certain number'd days" of the devils (10.576): they parody the motions of divine grace. Thus, for Satan, as Lewalski suggests in an analysis of time in Paradise

Regained, the "cyclical movement of time" is a "dreary round of historical recurrence" ("Time" 67). From another point of view, suggested by Hyman, the repeated movement from innocence to guilt in Paradise Lost is "the inevitable rhythm of the poem's action" (227) because dualistic opposites such as light and darkness and rising and falling symbolize "the cyclical rhythm of all man's experience" (226), a "pattern which we recognize as inherent in our lives" (228). For Hyman, the cycles of Paradise Lost grow inevitably out of the human experience of opposites; he does not distinguish between the pleasing experience of such opposites, which Milton calls "vicissitude," and the "fierce extremes" of Hell. Similarly, in a provocative reading of books 11 and 12, Rogers suggests the cycles of history are deeply and finally ambiguous. Granting that Scripture provides Milton with a "cyclical history of human sin and divine punishment" (295), Rogers nonetheless sees in Michael's account of human history a "historiographical dialectic" (296) that is finally "insoluble" (301). For Rogers, the poem's dialectic is between two views of providence--one ordinary or naturalistic and the other special or anthropomorphic (295-96)--and he concludes that Milton "attempts to impose a linear resolution on the insoluble contradictions inherent in his dualistic sense of providence" (301). Although Milton, I think, would be puzzled at the idea of choosing between two things he saw as complementary--the natural consequences of evil and the

special operation of providence--Rogers's notion of a historical dialectic, like Hyman's suggestion of a mythical pattern, is apt and useful. Whatever one makes of the phenomenon, history in Paradise Lost shows a repeated re-enactment of the Fall: every time God draws human beings to him, they wander away.

From another angle, however--the divine point of view apprehended by faith--the cycle is reversed: every time human beings wander away from him, God draws them back. In this view--shared, Lewalski suggests, by Christ in Paradise Regained--"the historical sequence" shows "pattern but not mere repetitions" ("Time" 77). Types are fulfilled but also transcended as divine providence and human free will combine, unlike Satan in his blind rebellion, to respond to time "creatively" (69). In these terms, the historical cycle of fall and return is an embodiment or sign of divine grace, an assurance--like the natural rhythms of "Day and Night, / Seed-time and Harvest, Heat and hoary Frost" (11.898-99)--that divine goodness and grace operate in a fallen world. This is the view, of course, that Michael teaches and that Adam, under Michael's tutelage, comes to see. As Miller says, "The cycles of history, at least as Michael presents them, are neither endless nor fruitless." They "culminate" in the Incarnation, and they are "shattered" at the Second Coming (19). Time, with its historical cycles, will have an end; in Adam's words, it will "stand fixt" (12.555). In this view, however, the end

of time simply completes a large cycle of fall and return: as Michael says, the fallen, sinful world will be "purg'd and refin'd," to be replaced by "New Heav'ns, new Earth" filled with "eternal Bliss" (548-49, 551). Thus, a cycle is in fact the pattern of the entire poem, as the opening suggests: "Disobedience," "Death," "loss," "Restore," "regain" (1.1-5). What ends at "the World's great period" (12.467) is a particular chapter in human history, a chapter that--like many of the episodes recounted by Michael--follows the pattern of fall and return. Viewed with faith, the poem suggests, these cycles assert Eternal Providence no less than does the linear structure of history: they show God "with good / Still overcoming evil" (565-66). As Lewalski concludes, "The Paradise within now restored to man means--among other things--new possibilities for uniqueness and creativity within the domain of Time and History" ("Time" 81).

That the cycle will be completed and finally resolved at the end of time was for Milton, as for Adam in the poem, an article of faith. At the same time, given Milton's premise of free will and his ambivalence about temporal stasis in eternity, a sensitive reader may wonder if the cycle of fall and return finally can be broken, even in eternity. In any case, from Milton's point of view the ambiguity is functional: for a naturalistic or doubting reader, the cycles of fall and restoration in human history may seem futile, inevitable, or insoluble; for a reader

disposed, like Milton, to trust providence, these cycles embody and reflect divine grace as it turns evil to good and leads the faithful to a "far happier" paradise (12.464).

In Paradise Lost, the Fall radically alters the temporal experience of Adam and Eve, the physical structure of the world, and the course and shape of human history. The immediate effect of the Fall on Adam and Eve is heavily linear, plunging them into "the world of pressured temporality" (Quinones 466), as the present contrasts ironically with the past and time moves inexorably toward death; grace, however, redeems this linear movement of time to God's own purpose, so that Paradise, in a kind of cyclical movement, is by stages regained. The alterations in the physical world turn the order of the prelapsarian world into disorder and its rhythmic "vicissitude" into sharp extremes; but, paradoxically, the temporal movements measured by days, months, and years preserve and symbolize the motions of grace. Finally, the linear movement of history toward universal ruin is countered by a divine plan that is also linear; the result is a complex historical dialectic that promises, through the cyclical movement of fall and return, to be subsumed into a new and greater paradise.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Evil Days and Nightly Visitations: Time and the Narrator in Paradise Lost

If Paradise Lost contains within it demonic, divine, angelic, prelapsarian, and postlapsarian perspectives on time, all of these exist within the vision of the narrator, "whose imagination experiences simultaneously both historical time and a divine spirit in which all times are one" (Kellogg 270). The narrator has "both the limited knowledge of a man involved in the sequence of time and the omniscience of one resident in eternity. Thus, the narrator is both in time and outside it" (Northrop 87). As Ferry has argued thoroughly and persuasively, "Everything in the poem is contained within the circle of the narrator's vision, and it is the scope, the inclusiveness, and the complexity of that vision which give the epic its scope, inclusiveness, and complexity" (179). Thus, in presenting a story that occurs "before the birth of our world of time, change, loss, and death," the narrator is "the principal device in the poem for expressing its total meaning" (5, 15). As far as time is concerned, the total meaning of the poem emerges in a rich and creative tension between linear movement, cycles, and stasis. In this chapter I shall trace these ideas and images of time, particularly the tension between linear and cyclical time, in the experience of the narrator.

Although, as Ferry has demonstrated at length, the narrator's presence in Paradise Lost includes not only the

epic introductions to books 1, 3, 7, and 9, but also epic similes, "authorial" comments, and even "dramatic" elements such as the speeches of characters, the epic introductions are the fullest and most direct revelation of the narrator's experience in the poem. Although the narrator is best distinguished from "Milton" the author, it matters little for my purposes whether and in what sense the two are identical; it matters very much, however, that the perceptions and comments of the narrator are an integral part of the poem. McLaren's argument, for example, that the narrator sets himself an impossible task in dramatizing God is undercut by his comments that the epic invocations are "outside the poetic action" (24) and that the narrator's prayer for inspiration "is in formal terms which seem inspired by classical precedent rather than by any sense of inadequacy on the part of the author" (23), as if the narrator and his motives can be detached from the action and world of the poem. Much like his literary descendant, the blind Tiresias who "foresuffered all" (243) endured by characters in Eliot's The Waste Land, the narrator in Paradise Lost sees and suffers everything experienced by the characters in the poem. His seeing and suffering include a complex experience of time, and his invocations, self-revelation, and commentary bring together the important elements of time in the poem.

He shows, first of all, an acute and pervasive consciousness of time. This appears immediately in the epic

introduction to book 1: the narrator wishes to sing of man's "first" (1) disobedience, the effects of which will be felt "till" (4) Christ restores fallen mankind. In five lines he looks back to the first sin and forward to the Second Coming. The credentials of the Heavenly Muse derive in part from her temporal precedence. She "first" (8) taught Moses of the Creation, where the phrase "In the Beginning" (9) pushes the narrative back before the first sin to the Creation, where she was present "from the first" (19), bringing life and order out of primeval matter. The iteration of "first" in "Say first" (27), "say first" (28), and "Who first seduc'd them" (33) further establishes the narrator's concern with proper sequence in the events of his story. Thus, before the word "now" begins the narrative proper in line 54, the narrator creates a time frame reaching from the Creation to the end of time and shows a repeated concern for proper sequencing of past events. References to time here are consistently linear.

In later epic introductions, the narrator further emphasizes the temporal priority of his muse. In the opening of book 3, for example, he says Holy light was present at the Creation when it "at the voice / Of God, as with a Mantle [did] invest / The rising world of waters dark and deep, / Won from the void and formless infinite" (9-12). But the cosmic frame reaches back even farther than the Creation. Holy light existed "before the Sun, / Before the Heavens" (8-9); it is "offspring of Heav'n first-born, / Or

of th' Eternal Coeternal beam" (1-2), dwelling with God "from Eternity" (5). Similarly, in the introduction to book 7 Urania is said to be "Heav'nly born"; "Before the Hills appear'd, or Fountain flow'd, / [She] with Eternal Wisdom [did] converse . . . and with her [did] play / In presence of th' Almighty Father" (7-10). The narrator connects the authority of his muse with her antiquity, and he posits a temporal sequence in what Christian writers have traditionally regarded as timeless eternity. In the narrator's perception, therefore, time and eternity are not mutually exclusive; even in eternity, as Raphael explains to Adam, time "measures all things durable / By present, past, and future" (5.581-82). This view accords with Milton's claim in The Christian Doctrine that "motion and time, which is the measure of motion" existed "before this world was made" (CPW 6: 313-14), so that, for example, the angels "were, in fact, created at a particular time" before the creation of the human world (CPW 6: 312). In the expansive view granted to the narrator in the poem, eternity is in effect linear time imagined without beginning and without end; time past shades imperceptibly into God's eternal rest before he created anything out of himself, and time future shades once more into God's eternity when he will be "All in All" (3.341). Although the exact nature of eternity before and after time is vague--appearing to Adam, for example, as "all abyss" (12.555) and described in passing by Milton in The Christian Doctrine as stasis or "an unchanging state"

(CPW 6: 299)--it is not the eternal present of St. Augustine and Boethius, but rather pure duration, limitless sequence, or--to use the philosophical term--absolute time. In any case, the narrator imagines the action of the poem within a cosmic temporal, i.e., linear, frame, and within that frame the Muse who brings the narrator his vision and his song is of such antiquity and such close association with God that she is to be completely trusted.

Apart from the weight attached to antiquity, linear time in this absolute sense is neither good nor bad. The narrator is quite clear that "Sin, not Time, first wrought the change" in Paradise (9.70). "Long process of time" (2.297), the devils learn by painful experience, cannot by itself change anything for the better; creatures are "Improv'd by tract of time" (5.498) only through "degrees or merit" or "long obedience" (7.157, 159). This view accords with Milton's comment in The Christian Doctrine that "there is no inherent force or efficacy in time or eternity, any more than there is in the concept of number" (CPW 6: 307).

Within this cosmic time frame, the narrator's references to "all our woe" (1.3) and to things "unattempted yet" (16) in prose or rhyme evoke a historical present tense for narrator and reader, as the phrase "To mortal men" in "Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night / To mortal men" (50-51) evokes the diurnal world of narrator and reader. This world is, of course, a fallen world, filled with "woe." Ferry comments that, throughout the poem,

narrator and reader share a "sense of poignant loss" (36), and Kellogg observes that some of the narrator's similes, as well as the catalog of gods in book 1, create a "blend of history and myth" that suggests "the worst results of the fall" through "mythic and historical images of sin" (261). For example, the comparison of Satan's forces in Hell to the "barbarous Sons" of the North who descended "like a Deluge on the [Christian] South" (1.353-54) raises for narrator and reader a common historical past (262). Similarly, the identification of the fallen angels with false gods of the Old Testament who appeared "long after" (1.383) the events of book 1 reinforces the sense of a shared past. This world of history already known well by the narrator and reader will be explored at length in Michael's vision of the future in books 11 and 12, where history's linear thrust toward decay and ruin is in effect converted to a divine cycle by God's grace.

The narrator's experience of the fallen world of history, with its painfully linear, and in some ways static, experience of time, emerges clearly in the invocation and self-revelation that introduce book 3. The narrator feels a crucial tension between linear, fallen time, associated with darkness and blindness, and cyclical time, associated with light, song, and grace. As in Paradise and in Heaven, natural rhythms embody for the narrator a sense of grace and renewal; the absence of these suggests loss and desolation:

Thus with the Year

Seasons return, but not to me returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and for the Book of knowledge fair
 Presented with a Universal blanc
 Of Nature's works to me expung'd and ras'd,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.

(3.40-50)

The key phrase which suggests fallen, linear time is "ever-during dark"--unbroken duration without the rhythm and variety that light and natural cycles can provide. Satan echoes the phrase when he refers to Hell as "that dark durance" (4.899), where the word suggests at once imprisonment and unmitigated duration (from the Latin durare, to last). For the narrator, of course, as for Milton, blindness and darkness are literal, but in context they are also a metaphor for the fallen experience of time: as Jean-Francois Cane says of Milton's blindness, the "depths of . . . monotonous darkness" are unrelieved by the "pleasure of variety," by the "alternation of day and night and of seasons" (73). In the introduction to book 7 the narrator similarly associates evil with darkness:

though fall'n on evil days,
 On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;
 In darkness, and with dangers compast round,
 And solitude. (25-28)

Though "days" may be temporary, they suggest here a linear stretch of time that is "evil"; "darkness" is connected by proximity with "evil tongues" and by alliteration and stress with "dangers"; the repeated "fall'n"--with its inevitable theological overtones--suggests an ongoing, unchanging condition as well as an inability on the narrator's part to save himself. In the introduction to book 9 the narrator links evil forces explicitly with linear time: he may be "too late" to celebrate true heroism properly, and "Years [may] damp [his] intended wing / Deprest" (44-45). Though sin rather than time is the cause of destructive change in the narrator's world and though he himself remains morally "unchang'd" (7.24) amid evil days and evil tongues, his experience of blindness as unrhythmic, irreversible change--"ever-during dark" (3.45)--is much like Hell, where time is experienced both as absolute linear change and unrelieved stasis.

Precisely what is missing from the narrator's experience--to return to his poignant lament in the introduction to book 3--is the "return" of "Day," the "sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn," or the "sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose" (41-43): in short, the temporal cycles of nature. Ferry says of this passage that the "images of the

passing year, of the cycles of sunrise and nightfall, the seasonal changes of foliage and scenery" remind readers not only of pastoral poetry and "the pagan myth of the simpler and purer world at the origins of our history," but also of "existence in the Garden of Eden" described elsewhere in the poem (30). This accords with my own argument that in their purest form (as opposed to parodies) cycles in the poem are associated with innocence, order, and divine grace. In this context an observation of Ferry's takes on a deeper significance than she apparently realizes. She points out that many similes in the poem show, on the part of the narrator, "a preoccupation with particular times of day or year" (76)--from the "Autmnal" leaves (1.302) or "spring time" bees (769) Satan's armies are likened to or the wolf "Watching where Shepherds pen thir Flocks at eve" (4.185) that Satan is compared to in Paradise, to the "Ev'ning Mist" (12.629) that angels are compared to at the end of the poem. These references, Ferry suggests, reflect "the quality of experience which the narrator and the reader share" (78), that is, their time-bound existence in the fallen world. I would add that in some cases references to seasons or times of day in the similes evoke rhythms by which fallen creatures mollify or transcend their linear sense of time, often providing an ironic backdrop against which a reader views some "fallen" experience. An obvious example is the case of Mulciber, who fell "from Morn / To Noon . . . from Noon to dewy Eve, / A Summer's day" (1.742-44), where the

pastoral tone and cyclical imagery contrast ironically with the dark, unbroken, irreversible change of Hell. Therefore, the narrator's repeated references to temporal cycles in the similes reflect not only his time-ridden existence in the fallen world, but also--and even more--nostalgia for an ordered, rhythmic experience of time that was lost at the Fall. Without light, all visible symbols of this prelapsarian state are denied the narrator. In his "fall'n" (7.25) condition and in his blindness, he laments, "holy Light . . . Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain / To find [its] piercing ray, and find no dawn" (3.1, 23-24). He needs not only light, but also the rhythm implied by "Revisit'st" and "dawn."

If the narrator's blindness is, among other things, a metaphor for the fallen experience of time, the rhythms of his poem and of the visitations of his muse point the way to his redemption through time from time. "Nightly" (3.32) he visits the Muse's haunt, where he finds--in balanced and ordered alternatives anticipating the "vicissitude" of Paradise--"Clear Spring, or shady Grove, or Sunny Hill" (28). Despite evil days, the Muse "Visit'st [his] slumbers Nightly, or when Morn / Purples the East" (7.29-30); the Muse brings with her an implicit recovery of diurnal rhythm. Even when he must "change / [his] Notes to Tragic," his "Celestial Patroness . . . deigns / Her nightly visitation unimplor'd" (9.5-6, 21-22). She brings the poem "nightly to [his] Ear" (47). The repeated "nightly" sums up the

narrator's plight in the fallen world: it suggests, of course, the darkness connected with his blindness and by implication with the fallen state of the world, but it suggests also a daily rhythm that is a vehicle of redemptive grace.

In images of light, movement, and song, the narrator celebrates the recovery of graceful rhythm in his dark world, much as Adam and Eve discover a divine cycle of restoration-after-loss in their own experience and in the dark movement of history. Having escaped the darkness of Hell in books 1 and 2, the narrator will "revisit" holy Light "with bolder wing" (3.13). He is "Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down / The dark descent, and up to reascend, / Though hard and rare" (19-21), where the graceful downward and upward movement, tracing a rhythmic cycle, mirrors all the acts of humility and obedience in the poem, from Adam's "bowing low" to Raphael (5.360) to the descent of the Son "to assume / Man's Nature" (3.303-04). The narrator knows, however, that his poem, like all rhythmic movement, is a gift of grace. "Up led by [the Muse] / Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns [he has] presum'd, / An Earthly Guest" (7.12-14); lacking all the vaunting self-sufficiency of Satan, he prays he will be "with like safety guided down" to his "Native Element" (15-16). He can "raise" the name of true heroism and not allow these late, cold years to "damp [his] intended wing," he says, only if everything is not his, but hers "who brings it nightly to

[his] Ear" (9.43, 45, 47). Without proper dependence on grace, he may fall to earth like Bellerophon, "Erroneous there to wander and forlorn" (7.20); properly led by the Muse's voice, he can soar "above th' Olympian Hill . . . Above the flight of Pegasean wing" (3-4); he can "with no middle flight . . . soar / Above th' Aonian Mount" and pursue things "unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme" (1.14-16). It is from this high vantage point--much like Adam on the "top / Of Speculation" (12.588-89) with Michael's careful guidance--that the narrator can dramatize God's "prospect high, / Wherein past, present, future he beholds" (3.77-78), "foreseeing" (79) with God events to come. The attempt to see human time from the vantage point of eternity is a bold move indeed. The boldness, however, is tempered by the narrator's prayerful dependence on grace: he shows only what he is given to see by the heavenly Muse, who, readers are to imagine, sees and understands much more than the gifted but mortal narrator. Furthermore, balanced with the dramatizations of God, where some readers hear a shrill or defensive note in the divine voice or see a hopeless tangle of foreknowledge and free will, are the scenes of God's throne on the holy mount where the narrator suggests with evocative symbols of light and cloud the mystery of God's eternity beyond all human ken. In any case, the narrator can see time from the perspective of eternity only if he depends on the nightly visit of the Muse: if he has, as Northrop phrases it, "the omniscience of one resident in

eternity" (87), he has it only when he imparts his wing on that of the Muse, who in her temporally ordered visits brings grace, in all its aesthetic and theological senses, to the blind narrator.

Along with graceful movement within the sacred vision--rhythmic, dancelike cycles of rising and descending--the Muse brings light and song to the narrator. By a paradox analogous to the "paradise within . . . happier far" (12.587) available to Adam and Eve in the fallen world, the narrator asks "Celestial Light [to] Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers / Irradiate" so that he "may see and tell / Of things invisible to mortal sight" (3.52-55). His "ever-during dark," therefore--a "Universal blanc," with nature's works "expung'd and ras'd" and wisdom "at one entrance quite shut out" (3.45, 48-50)--is broken by an inner light, and this is brought to him, he says repeatedly, "nightly": even in his blindness, the diurnal rhythm is a vehicle of grace. From the first, therefore, he prays the Muse to "Illumine" what is "dark" in him (1.22-23). And with light also comes graceful and rhythmic song. In "the Muses haunt"--where the narrator finds "Clear Spring, or shady Grove, or Sunny Hill" similar to Paradise--the narrator is "Smit with the love of sacred Song" (3.27-29). Again, he is dependent; only the Muse can "drive far off the barbarous dissonance" and "savage clamor" of these evil days and "govern [his] Song" (7.32, 36, 30). The narrator's "advent'rous Song" (1.13), his "Heroic Song" (9.25), is

connected with the "sacred Song" (3.369) of the heavenly chorus after the Son volunteers to save fallen humanity and with the "Melodious Hymns" that angels "in thir course . . . about the sovran Throne / Alternate all night long" (5.655-57) after the Son's first exaltation. In the narrator's experience as in the larger world of the poem, song as rhythmic sound and dance as rhythmic movement are associated with order, grace, and heavenly or prelapsarian bliss or "vicissitude." The narrator's poem, therefore, is at once a gift of and medium for divine grace; his "nightly" visit to the Muse's haunt is a vehicle for his redemption from the unbroken darkness of life in the fallen world.

These, then, are the salient features of time in Paradise Lost. First, time in its broadest sense is intrinsically linear and virtually absolute, reaching back not only to the beginning of the human world, but also into God's "holy Rest / Through all Eternity" (7.91-92). Despite Adam's observation that time will eventually "stand fixt," giving way to the "abyss" of eternity (12.555), a reader is likely to remember Raphael's comment that even in eternity time "measures all things" (5.581) and to imagine sequential time for this blissful future. Although Fowler's comment that Milton "believed events in eternity to have sequence but no measure" (295n) seems to me overstated, it does place proper emphasis: in its broadest sense--especially in eternity--time in Paradise Lost carries with it a clear sense of sequence but little sense of duration.

Second, although time in the poem is neither good nor evil, one's experience of time is a clear index to one's spiritual health: such experience includes the characters, the narrator, and, by implication, the reader. For innocent and obedient creatures, such as the angels in Heaven and Adam and Eve in Paradise, time is almost totally cyclical. The rhythmic recurrence of morning, noon, evening, and night provides a dance-like alternation of opposites that is at once a vehicle of praise to God and a medium of God's beneficence to his creatures. This prelapsarian world experiences little change but infinite variety.

Third, for fallen angels and men, time is painfully linear--an ironic contrast of present pain and past bliss, a restless inability to lose oneself in a timeless present, and the prospect of an unchanging and unending future. Ironically, for a fallen creature this painful sense of irreversible linear change is at the same time a hopeless stasis, where one's condition is unchangeably fixed. This condition, untouched by grace, is Hell.

Finally, God in Paradise Lost enters fallen, linear time in history as well as in the experience of Adam and Eve and the narrator to save his creatures from sin and therefore from the heavy experience of linear change. For individuals and, by extension, for history, grace comes as a recovery of rhythm, cycle, song, dance--or "vicissitude." Such grace is mediated by the rhythms of the natural world ("Day and Night, / Seed-time and Harvest, Heat and hoary

Frost" [11.898-99]), by the rhythms of history (loss and recovery, fall and restoration) seen with eyes of faith, and by the "nightly" visits of the sacred Muse to the narrator. As Ferry says, "The story of the Fall of Adam and Eve, by being re-enacted in [the narrator's] epic, has become one with his private loss, and their hopeful restoration part of the pattern of his own recovery" (43).

"The basic problem of Paradise Lost," Quinones says, is, "How does man respond to the experience of time and change?" (474), that is, to linear time. In Milton's treatment of time in the poem, Quinones says further, he "differs profoundly from men like Dante and Petrarch, Spenser and Shakespeare, in whose quest for permanence one can detect the horror they experienced in their changeful existences" (461). Milton, of course, does not deny horror in the fallen world; however, rejecting "the modern [Renaissance] compulsion to control time" (460)--going beyond, for example, fame and succession as ways of dealing with the "temporal thrust that drives toward the future" (474)--Milton in Paradise Lost introduces "the sense of a more benign controlling divinity on whom man ought to rely," an ideal of "patient waiting" and "a more leisured existence" in which one "perceives his true relationship with divinity" (460). In these terms, Paradise Lost is an enduring tribute to a grace that, in the "evil days" (7.25) and "ever-during dark" (3.45) of a fallen world, comes to those who "stand and wait" (Sonnet 19).

Notes

¹John Milton, Paradise Lost, John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey, 1957). All references to Milton's poetry are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.

²John Milton, The Christian Doctrine, Complete Prose Works of John Milton, 8 vols., ed. Don M Wolfe et al. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1953-82). All references to Milton's prose are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.

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