‘FIXED FATE, FREE WILL’:
FATE, NATURAL LAW, NECESSITY, PROVIDENCE, AND CLASSICAL EPIC NARRATIVE IN *PARADISE LOST*

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis considers the allusive and narrative function of fate and its associated concepts of providence, free will, necessity, and natural law in *Paradise Lost*. It argues that the narrative function of these concepts is shaped by Milton's allusions to classical epic, and assesses their impact on the Christian theology of the poem. It identifies unnoted allusions to well-known epic models (Homer, Vergil, Lucan), and examines how Lucretius' account of natural laws and post-Vergilian representations of epic aftermath influence Milton's own depiction of transgression and its aftermath in *Paradise Lost*.

Chapter 1 considers Satan and other fallen angels' definition of fate as a materialist alternative for the personal rule of the Father. It traces several allusions to fate in cosmological and ethical settings, in Lucretius, Vergil, Lucan, and Statius, and analyses how these allusions interact with the Hesiodic mythical material in the opening books of Milton's epic.

Chapter 2 focuses on a pattern of previously unnoted allusions to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* in the narrative of the Fall, culminating in Book 9. It argues that in his temptation of Eve, Milton's Satan subverts Lucretian teachings about the boundaries governing the physical universe as he persuades Eve to transgress her natural state in Eden.

Chapter 3 discusses the appearance of the Father in an allusive epic council scene in Book 3. In the dialogue between Father and Son, I suggest, Milton evokes negotiations between the Homeric and Vergilian deities, depicting his God as surpassing his pagan epic counterparts who can only delay the fate of mortals, but not change them.

Chapter 4 suggests that Milton's depiction of the aftermath of the Fall is indebted to post-Vergilian epic narratives of 'aftermath'. The final Books of *Paradise Lost* and the portrayal of Adam and Eve's moral freedom as they leave paradise, with providence their guide, should be read, I posit, against the backdrop of scenes and imagery from Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and Statius' *Thebaid*.

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I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Tobias, who has accompanied me at every stage of the writing process. His careful readings and startling insights have improved and inspired my work in countless ways.

NOTE ON EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Unless noted otherwise, I have used the following editions and translations (sometimes adapted) throughout the thesis. For authors and texts not mentioned below, the reference is given in the relevant footnote.

Hesiod
Theogony

Text:		Solmsen (1970)
Translation:		Most (2006-7)

Homer
Iliad and *Odyssey*

Text:		Monro and Allen (1908-20)
Translation:	*Iliad*	Murray and Wyatt (1999)
	Odyssey	Dimock and Murray (1995)

Lucretius

Text:	Bailey (1922)
Translation:	Rouse and Smith (1992)

Milton
De Doctrina Christiana

Text and translation:	Hale and Cullington (2012)

Paradise Lost

Text:	Fowler (2007)

Statius
Thebaid

Text:	Klotz and Klinnert (1973)
Translation:	Shackleton Bailey (2003)

Vergil
Aeneid

Text:	Mynors (1969)
Translation:	Fairclough and Goold (1999)

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of ancient authors and works follow the abbreviations used in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and the Greek dictionary by Lidell/Scott/Jones. Journals in Classics are abbreviated according to *L'Année philologique*, other journal titles are given in full. In addition, I have employed the following abbreviations:

BC Bellum Civile

DDC De Doctrina Christiana

DRN De Rerum Natura

PL Paradise Lost

INTRODUCTION

What is and is not within human and divine control? This question has been of crucial importance in epic poetry. Fate, providence, necessity, natural law,[1] and how they are fulfilled, delayed, or broken are key narrative[2] features of classical epic. They are the plot-driving forces and are often explored in further typically epic narrative features such as prophecies or divine councils. The narrative of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is enclosed by two prominent occurrences of divine providence.[3] In the poem, the question of what is in divine or human control is explored in different narrative episodes that develop the concepts inherited from classical heroic and didactic epic. This thesis argues that Milton's conception of fate in *Paradise Lost* can be read through the lens of classical allusions as they evolve in various narrative sequences of the poem. Fate in *Paradise Lost* cannot be understood without the related terms of natural law, necessity, free will, and divine providence, each providing discrete aspects of Milton's engagement with the classical idea of fate in *Paradise Lost* in distinct narrative units in the narrative of the Fall, in its lead-up and aftermath.

The rebellion of Milton's fallen angels, the subject of chapter 1 of this thesis, begins with an attempted re-definition of fate as a materialist alternative to the will of the Father. The language of fate which the fallen angels use in this section of the poem, I suggest, serves as an attempt to break not only from the Father's divine authority in heaven, but also from the fated outcome of events. Their attempt to write a new result of their rebellion through a second attempt on heaven, ironically, is contained within a 'fated' narrative of failure known to the reader through Hesiodic as well as biblical allusions. The free will of Adam

[1] I intend 'natural law' to refer to the 'laws' or 'pacts of nature' (*foedera naturae*) behind the natural order expounded in Lucretius' epic of knowledge, the *DRN*, and their early modern reception: on this topic, and its link to 'fate', see further below, section 'Materialist and divine accounts: ancient and early modern backgrounds on free will and natural order', and Chapter 2, section 2.3 (for a possible confusion to be avoided, see esp. n. 252).

[2] I use the term 'narrative' to refer to the story and plot elements in epic. Much has been made of the term in the study of classical epic (including, but by no means limited to, Barchiesi 1984, Gransden 1984, Toohey 1992, Lowe 2000, Minchin 2001, Jong 2014), and Barchiesi's *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and other Latin Poets* (2001) uses it in an inclusive way very similar to its employment in the present thesis. In examining Milton's engagement with 'classical epic narrative' within his transformation of the concepts of fate, providence, necessity, and natural law, I will be particularly interested in classical epic narrative features such as alternative cosmologies (Chapter 1), the breaking of boundaries (Chapters 2 and 4), and prophecies and divine councils (Chapter 3).

[3] *PL* 1.24-5 ('That to the height of this great argument / I may assert the eternal providence, / and justify the ways of God to men.') and *PL* 12.646-7 ('The world was all before them, where to choose, / Their place of rest, and providence their guide').

and Eve in eating the fruit in Book 9, the subject of the second chapter, is shown, through its allusions to Epicurean teaching on the laws of nature (*foedera naturae*), as a violation of natural laws already existing in Eden before the Fall. The limits governing divine action – including the will of the Father – and the paradox of the Father's constraint in foreseeing yet not being in a position to prevent the Fall of Adam and Eve, the subject of chapter 3, are expressed through allusion to key Homeric and Vergilian passages. Finally, the experience of Adam and Eve's separation from the Father after their Fall in light of their imminent expulsion from Eden, the subject of the fourth chapter, is expressed by links to narratives of aftermath in post-Vergilian epic, especially Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* and Statius' *Thebaid*. Milton imitates the post-Vergilian technique of an ending serving also as a beginning. At the same time, the action of the poem fulfils a providential outcome – Adam and Eve leave paradise with 'providence their guide' (*PL* 12.647), an action that realigns them with the divinely ordained narrative of the poem. Thus, ways of expressing human and divine freedom present in classical epic interact with Milton's portrait of fate, providence, natural law, and free will in his Christian narrative of human sin and salvation.

Fate: Multiple Perspectives in the Poem

Of the concepts Milton employs to come to grips with what is and is not within human and divine control fate is the most pervasive. References to fate in *Paradise Lost* are frequent. They appear at key stages in the narrative, and are voiced by a number of speakers.[4] In Book 2, Milton's fallen angels debate questions of '[f]ixed fate, free will, [and] foreknowledge absolute' (*PL* 2.560) after they gather following the council in Pandaemonium. In planning a spiritual attack on the newly created humans, Satan had encouraged the fallen legions in hell by reassuring them that their resolve, '[w]ill once more lift us up, in spite of fate' (*PL* 2.393). Disguised as a serpent in Book 9, Satan entices Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and, like him, to obtain 'life more perfect […] than fate / Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot' (*PL* 9.689-90). Fate in *Paradise Lost* is also invoked by unfallen speakers. In Book 3, the Father refutes the idea that humans are destined by fate to sin: he describes the free actions of humans in creating their own destiny, 'without least impulse or shadow of fate, /… They trespass' (*PL* 3.120-2, and also

[4] I have isolated the following 23 references to 'fate' in the poem, and identified the speaker in brackets: *PL* 1.116 (Satan), 1.133 (Beëlzebub), 1.448 (narrator), 2.17 (Satan), 2.197 (Belial), 2.232 (Mammon), 2.393 (Satan), 2.550 (narrator), 2.559 and 60 (narrator), 2.610 (narrator), 2.809 (Sin), 3.113 (Father), 2.120 (Father), 5.527 (Raphael), 6.869 (Raphael), 7.173 (Father), 9.689 (Satan-as-serpent), 9.885 (Eve), 9.927 (Adam), 10.265 (Death), 10.480 (Satan), 11.181 (narrator).

PL 3.112-3, 'nor can [they] justly accuse / … their fate'). In the retrospective narrative of creation, which the archangel Raphael relates to Adam and Eve in Book 7, the Father identifies fate with his own divine will ('necessity and chance / Approach not me, and what I will is fate', *PL* 7.172-3). Fate also appears as a quasi-personified presence in the narrative: in Raphael's account of the last moments of the war in heaven, the poet depicts 'strict fate' as having 'cast too deep / Her dark foundations' (*PL* 6.869-70), and preventing personified hell from fleeing '[a]ffrighted' (*PL* 6.869) and receiving the rebel angels as they fall from heaven. Fate, finally, prohibits Adam and Eve from remaining in Eden after the Fall, and announces their expulsion from paradise ('So spake, so wished much-humbled Eve, but fate / Subscribed not', *PL* 11.181-2).

Despite repeated uses of the word, however, there has been no sustained scholarly treatment of fate or the many meanings it evokes in the poem. Already in 1947, Ben Lumpkin observed that '[c]ritics […] have paid little attention to [Milton's] numerous references to Fate and the two opposed meanings of the word in *Paradise Lost*'.[5] No separate study of fate and its role in the poem has appeared since. Brief discussions of fate appear in Dennis Burden's 1967 monograph *The Logical Epic*, and in Francis Blessington's 1979 study *Paradise Lost and the Classical Epic*, which, importantly, considers this concept in the light of Milton's engagement with classical epic.

For Burden, however, references to classical epic and tragic conceptions of fate in *Paradise Lost* are evidence of Satan's erroneous reasoning, as opposed to the Father's providence: in Milton's poem, he argues, '[t]he enemy is classical tragedy and epic'.[6] For Blessington, too, Milton's hell resembles what he refers to as the 'futureless world of classical epics' where 'fate rules'.[7] Yet Blessington does not consider fate as it appears in other areas of the poem, nor does he explore the duality which fate implies with the Father's providence.[8] The question of what this engagement means for our understanding of the nature and role of fate and its associated concepts of natural law and free will in

[5] Lumpkin (1947), 56.
[6] Burden claimed that references to fate in the poem align 'satanic philosophy' with 'satanic literature'. See Burden (1967), 72.
[7] Blessington (1979), 3. How far the world of epic is in fact futureless can, however, be disputed, with examples ranging from the *Iliad*, with its anticipation of future events within the Trojan cycle, to the *Aeneid*, whose narrative is shaped by its prophecy of the future Roman empire.
[8] Perhaps the closest we have come to such a treatment in recent times is in Drews (2009), who discusses the concept of human free will and divine foresight in Augustine, Proclus, Apuleius, and John Milton.

Paradise Lost remains unanswered,[9] as does the larger question of the impact Milton's reception may have on our interpretation of fate in ancient epic.

Studies of Classical Allusion in *Paradise Lost*

In contrast to this relative neglect of the subject of fate in Milton scholarship, there have been many studies on the poet's relationship to the Classics, and particularly to ancient epic. The practice of identifying Milton's allusions to classical authors in *Paradise Lost* dates back to the first scholarly commentary on the poem: Patrick Hume's annotations on *Paradise Lost*, published in 1695, consisted largely of etymological discussion of Milton's Latinate vocabulary, and identified some of the key and much-discussed allusions in the poem, most prominently to the *Aeneid*. In recent decades, there have been numerous articles and a number of monographs devoted to the subject of classical allusion in *Paradise Lost*. These have included full-length surveys, such as those of Davis Harding, Charles Martindale, and William Porter,[10] as well as more focused studies on particular authors, such as Ovid and Lucan, previously neglected in Miltonic scholarship.[11] These studies have done much to illuminate Milton's relationship with the Classics. Perhaps due to the history of literary commentary and annotation, however, studies of allusion have given only limited scope for investigating the thematic implications of these allusions. In the case of the *Aeneid*, for example, Craig Kallendorf has commented that '[i]t is common knowledge that fragments of the *Aeneid* are embedded in *Paradise Lost*, but surprisingly, over 300 years of critical activity has yet to clarify either the full extent of the relationship or what it might mean for our understanding of the two poems.'[12]

Several monographs on Milton's classical allusions in recent years, however, have followed a thematic pattern. Colin Burrow's 1993 *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* considered the development of the romance hero by tracing a tradition of reinterpreting the Homeric epics, beginning with Vergil's *Aeneid* and culminating in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

[9] A partial exception to this is Danielson (1982), esp. 131-64, and Danielson (1999), who, although he does not consider fate explicitly, examines the interplay between Milton's depiction of human free will and divine foreknowledge and determisim, particularly in the Father's defense of Adam and Eve's free will at the beginning of Book 3. See Chapter 3 of the present thesis for a further consideration of this issue.

[10] See Harding (1962), Porter (1993), and Martindale (2002). See also Bowra (1945), chapter 5: 'Milton and the destiny of man', 194-247, and Verbart (1995), 253-302, who identifies a number of fascinating parallels between the *Aeneid* and *Paradise Lost*.

[11] For Ovid, see Harding (1946), DuRocher (1985), Green (2009), and Kilgour (2012). For Lucan, Norbrook (1999), 433-96. See further discussion in Chapter 4, section 4.1 below.

[12] Kallendorf (2006), 67.

Craig Kallendorf's *The Other Virgil* (2007) suggested that Milton stands among other early modern 'pessimistic' readers of the *Aeneid*, as evidenced in the structural and allusive patterns in *Paradise Lost*.[13] Mandy Green's 2009 monograph *Milton's Ovidian Eve* has offered a sustained treatment of Ovidian allusion as it functions in developing a full episode in the poem – the Edenic sequence of Book 9 – and the character of Eve. In her 2012 monograph *Milton and the Metamorphosis of Ovid*, moreover, Maggie Kilgour has considered how Ovidian themes and motifs of change, possibility, and creativity are central to the creative themes explored not only in *Paradise Lost* but throughout Milton's poetic career. In *Inside Paradise Lost* (2014), finally, a study which follows on from the overtly thematic concerns of his 1993 monograph *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*, David Quint suggested that Milton uses allusion as a narrative device to 'construct and unify the fiction of the poem'.[14]

Reading Allusions in *Paradise Lost*

In this thesis, I suggest that this idea of allusion applies not only to the organization of the narrative of *Paradise Lost*, but also, importantly, to the unfolding of its themes. My study aims to fill a gap in scholarship by employing the study of allusion to illuminate a core, yet neglected theme in the poem: to address consistently the role of fate and its associated concepts of providence, necessity, free will, and natural law in Milton's epic. Unlike previous studies, which have largely focused on identifying literary allusions in the poem in order to illuminate Milton's engagement with ancient authors, I will consider allusion to the classics as illuminating Milton's own thematic concerns in *Paradise Lost*. Fate and its related concepts, I will argue, appear as allusive phenomena in the poem, indebted to classical epic texts which Milton rereads and transforms in light of his Christian narrative. Depictions of fate, free will, and natural law in ancient epic, I will further suggest, are not only confronted with the Christian message of the poem through allusion; rather, Milton's engagement with these concepts in the ancient epics actively shapes the theology, philosophy, and literary nature of his own poem. In turn, Milton's classical allusions, I will argue, develop and enrich our understanding of fate and free will as they function in ancient epic, through the eyes of a creative reader.

[13] Kallendorf (2007), 138-213. See further below, n. 393.
[14] Quint (2014), 2.

Contemporary studies of modes of imitation in the early modern period are indebted to Thomas Greene's seminal work on Renaissance imitation, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*.[15] Greene's study has shed light on the various ambivalent relationships of early modern authors to the classics their texts appropriate, and includes discussion of various terms to describe these relationships.[16] Greene's approach, however, places a conscious emphasis on authorial intentionality: a tendency whose assumptions Stephen Hinds has rightly interrogated in his 1998 study *Allusion and Intertext*, highly influential in literary criticism in the field of Classics.[17] In my tracing of allusion in *Paradise Lost*, I follow Hinds' argument against 'philological fundamentalism', the tendency to favour the study of allusion that could directly be mapped onto the author's intention to 'correct, reject, or pay homage to his antecedents'.[18] Instead, I consider the presence of allusion on many levels, across a wider spectrum of what we consider authorial intentionality: from Milton's many etymological allusions to the Latinate origins of words, and his deliberate signalling of allusion in a manner akin to the 'Alexandrian footnote' practice of the Roman poets,[19] to subtle allusions which rely on the readerly awareness of, and complicity with, the ancient contexts evoked in a passage in order to unveil its richness. Throughout my study I identify and discuss several examples which fall into the first two categories, in which cases I will often use the verbs 'allude' and 'signal'. At times in my discussion, I situate Milton's allusions in *Paradise Lost* within the context of his contemporary reading practice, by comparing Milton's reading of an ancient source, through allusion, with existing discussions in ancient and early modern commentaries which he is likely to have consulted. I will also consider how Milton's allusions to ancient texts are at times mediated through the poetry of his contemporaries, opening up the possibility of examining double or multiple levels of allusion, evoking not only the ancient source of the allusion, but also its reception in intermediate texts.

[15] For further discussion of the significance of Greene's work for Milton studies, see Kilgour (2012), ix-x.
[16] Greene (1982), 38-43 uses the works of Petrarch to illustrate the techniques of *imitatio* ('imitation'), *contaminatio* (which he defines as 'eclectic imitation'), and *aggiornamento* ('defined through rewriting or modernizing of a text'). For a discussion of *aemulatio* ('emulation'), see also Greene (1982), 46.
[17] Greene describes intertextuality as 'a universal literary constraint', insofar as 'a literary text that draws nothing from its predecessors is inconceivable', but favours the discussion of texts that possess evidence of 'historical self-consciousness' and 'insist on their own intertextual composition'. See discussion by Greene (1982), 16-19. I favour the term 'allusion' in the sense that Hinds allows it, that is, to include an 'enlarged definition': see Hinds (1998), 50, where he incorporates the idea that there are interpretative possibilities in a text beyond traceable authorial intention.
[18] Hinds (1998), 18.
[19] See Ross (1975), 78, with further discussion in Hinds (1998), 1.

My primary interest, however, is in the third category of allusion. I interpret Milton's allusion to a 'fit audience … though few' (*PL* 7.31) as appealing to readers capable not only of identifying the rich sources embedded in the poem, but of employing their knowledge of ancient texts in creative and innovative ways. At all times I am interested in how an additional layer or, indeed, layers of meaning are unlocked in this process. In these cases, I will often prefer to use the words 'evoke', 'echo', 'elicit'. Rather than relying on verbal affinities, these examples evoke scenarios and associations with ancient narratives – for example, the serpent's reassurance to Eve against her fear of death could evoke, to a reader familiar with *De Rerum Natura*, the aim of the poet Lucretius to allay Memmius' and the poem's readers' fear of death. Such points of contact between *Paradise Lost* and the ancient texts under discussion can be intertextual, without necessarily involving the author's conscious verbal allusion. These echoes and intertextual links allow the reader to uncover further levels of meaning in reading *Paradise Lost*.

Such readings also carry an ethical significance in the poem: the 'fit reader' is able to recognize scenarios Milton evokes, particularly in the Satanic rhetoric, which add additional layers to the Genesis account. Like Eve, who can be read as an erroneous student of Epicurean teachings (as I will argue in Chapter 2), the reader is led through various ancient epic scenarios which appear to veer from the Christian providential narrative. Particularly in the temptation scene, with its use of Lucretian rhetoric (explored in chapter 2), and in the aftermath of the Fall and its evocation of epic aftermaths (explored in chapter 4), classical allusion can lead the reader to encounter a radical extension of the theology of Christian providence.[20] The way in which these readings are brought together in the narrative of salvation, and these paradoxes explored and resolved, is the subject of my fourth chapter.

In my addressing of the question of classical allusion in *Paradise Lost*, I am also indebted to Hinds's discussion of 'reversing the trope' of allusion and vehicle.[21] Hinds identified the critical assumption that allusion functions as the 'underlying idea or tenor', and is served, in turn, by a metaphorical vehicle.[22] Hinds offers the example of Ovid's description of Ariadne's act of remembering at *Fasti* 3.471-6, which, as Gian Biagio Conte has

[20] On which see further below, section 'Augustine and Milton on Fate and Divine Providence' of this Introduction.
[21] See discussion in Hinds (1998), 10-16.
[22] Hinds (1998), 11.

programmatically argued, functions allusively to evoke the text of the famous Catullus 64 (130-5 and 143-4).[23] Hinds asks, 'why assume that in *Fasti* 3.471-6 *memory* is really a way of talking about *allusion*, rather than *allusion* really being a way of talking about *memory*?'.[24] A movement in both directions, allowing what Hinds describes as the 'vehicle' – in this case, memory – to become the 'tenor' or 'idea' is particularly fruitful in discussions of fate in *Paradise Lost*. Whereas, on the one hand, fate functions as an allusive 'vehicle' in the poem, drawing attention to its earlier incarnations in classical epic, allusion, on the other hand, can itself function as a vehicle to illuminate the idea of fate in the poem. Milton's allusions to ancient authors, I further suggest, play a part in shaping his Christian narrative also on a theological level. By reversing the relationship between the Hindsian concept of vehicle and idea, I suggest that allusion to ancient texts, with their pagan theological systems, serve – rather than undermine – the Christian themes of the poem. Milton's 'narrative of fate' in *Paradise Lost* – the gradual thematic shape that fate and its associated concepts take in the course of the poem – is played out in consistent though shifting patterns of classical allusion. It is in the allusive setting of classical epic, I will argue, with its negotiation of personal autonomy and divine agency, that Milton retells the biblical story of the Fall, and addresses core questions for his Christian theodicy.

Ancient *contra* Christian Theology

The idea that ancient, pagan texts can inform Milton's Christian themes need not be idiosyncratic: as Thomas Greene has shown, the theological gulf between ancient texts and their predominantly Christian Renaissance readers produced a number of creative patterns and methods of imitation. The tradition of Christianizing readings of Vergil, for example, dates back to late antique responses to the *Eclogues* and the *Aeneid* especially – the most emblematic of which is the reading of the 'Messianic' *Eclogue* 4 as announcing the birth of Christ.[25] As Craig Kallendorf has shown, however, Renaissance humanists engaged with this tradition, and attempted to translate *theologia prisca* – the pagan theology of the ancients – with Christianity, *theologia nostra*, in subtle and original ways.[26] One of these readers of Vergil, Kallendorf argues, is Marco Girolamo Vida, whose *Christiad* (1535), a Neo-Latin retelling of the Gospel account of the Passion of Christ, is a known epic model

[23] See Conte (1986), 60-2.
[24] Hinds (1998), 11 (italics in the original).
[25] See discussion in Benko (1980). For further references to important scholarship on the 'Messianic' *Eclogue*, see Hardie (1998), 21, n. 56. For a wide study of the medieval reception of Vergil (primarily the *Aeneid*) in England, see Baswell (1995).
[26] See Kallendorf (1995).

for *Paradise Lost*. In Vida's allusions to *Eclogue* 4 throughout his epic, Christian readings of Vergil are given a kind of 'fictional legitimacy' by being spoken in the narrative situation of the Gospels.[27]

Milton's employment of classical allusion to forward his Christian message, moreover, has been convincingly demonstrated: see, for example, William Porter's discussion of Milton's transformation of the image of Zeus defeating the Titans in his portrait of the Son, discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. Milton, as has also been shown (see further discussion in Chapter 3 of my study), employs scenes from classical epic as positive *exempla* for his own theological discussions, including in his treatment of predestination in *De Doctrina Christiana*. In my study, I will show how, far from producing a clash of theological systems (the pagan and the Christian), Milton's allusions to epic 'pre-scenes' in *Paradise Lost* reflect readings of ancient texts by several of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries who found Christian truths in pagan texts.

In terms of the role of fate in the poem, Milton is, of course, guided by Scripture, which permeates the theological preoccupations and narrative structure of the poem. An obvious case in point is the Genesis account of the Fall, recreated in Book 9.[28] At the same time, however, the narrative of *Paradise Lost* is situated in the epic genre: Milton's choice of genre, his turning away from an earlier draft of the poem as a tragedy,[29] affects not only the style and the poetic conventions he uses, from invocations to the Muse to speech-framing devices, but also, as I suggest, shapes the key thematic concerns of the poem. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton casts his human and divine actors in an allusive environment inhabited by their pagan epic counterparts. While fully functioning as biblical characters within the narrative of the Fall, Milton's Adam and Eve, and the fallen and unfallen angels, also echo the dilemmas and anxieties of the human actors in ancient epic. The transgression of Satan, and later of Adam and Eve, I will demonstrate, are depicted against the backdrop of ancient epic narratives of struggle between the worlds of gods and humans. Questions relating to free will and divine authority over human action, raised in classical epic, are evoked in Milton's narrative, and shared with the concerns of his Christian theodicy. The role of the divine, and its relation to human action, as well as the

[27] 'The tradition of *theologia poetica*', Kallendorf notes, 'had long recognized that Vergil's poetry had theological content, limited to a greater […] or lesser […] extend by the fact that Virgil was not a Christian. Imitation of Virgil's words by a Christian poet, however, creates the opportunity to remove any and all sense of limits' (Kallendorf [1995], 61).

[28] There are many studies of the numerous biblical echoes and allusions in *PL*, but see esp. Sims (1962), Sims and Ryken (1984), and Radzinowicz (1989).

[29] See further below, Chapter 4, section 4.4.

idea of what is and is not within human control, is central to Milton's Christian theology and theodicy in *Paradise Lost* – and for this, Milton engages with similar questions as they arise in classical epic and its tradition of commentary by ancient and Christian authors alike.[30]

Augustine and Milton on Fate and Divine Providence

The concept of fate in *Paradise Lost* gains depth through allusions to classical authors, and builds on the role of fate within Latin epic. Milton evokes the meanings and modalities of fate in his theological treatise *De Doctrina Christiana* by drawing on its etymological and allusive functions, as well as in the language of the Father in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost* (see below).

It is worthy of note that Milton's Christian re-casting of fate is different from influential other Christian positions before him. The most instructive case in point is perhaps Augustine's providentialism – different in his dealings with the Stoic concept of fate than Milton. Unlike Augustine, Milton – probably closer to Boethius' view – does not consider fate as an entirely pagan concept.[31] Augustine, in his defence of divine providence and human free will against Cicero, had expressed deep mistrust (*abhorremus* – 'we abhor') about the ancient term: *abhorremus praecipue propter vocabulum, quod non in re vera consuevit intelligi*, 'This is a view which we abhor, particularly because of the word fate, which is usually not understood in its true context'.[32] While Augustine can endorse the Stoics at least for their belief in a deity, Cicero's position (which emerges from his *De Natura Deorum*) must be strongly resisted – as Augustine points out, it 'denies … divine providence' (*quod vero negat omnium causarum esse certissimum et dei praescientiae notissimum, plus eum* [i.e. *Ciceronem*] *quam Stoici detestamur*, 'But when Cicero denies that the pattern of all causes is wholly fixed and wholly known in the foreknowledge of God, we detest him more than do the Stoics').[33] Boethius, on the other hand, does not reject the term *fatum* outright, and plays a significant role in the Christianisation of the term.[34] If Boethius provides a philosophical Christian development of 'fate', Milton, in

[30] The idea that Milton reads classical epics as theodicies is suggested in Blessington (1979), 47.
[31] See Poppi (1988) for an overview of the early modern philosophical discussions about 'fate', 'fortune', and 'providence' and the role of Boethius.
[32] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.13 (text and translation: Walsh 2009). On Augustine's opposition to the concept of predetermined 'fate', see further Drews (2009), vol. 1, 143-52 and 167-85.
[33] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.13.
[34] See Poppi (1988), 642.

Paradise Lost, provides one exploration of the literary possibilities of the concept for his Christian theology.

In *De Doctrina Christiana*, a work now commonly attributed to Milton,[35] he expresses his view that neither *natura* nor *fate* can be the highest forces:

> Nonnulli naturam aut fatum supremum quoddam in rebus esse argutantur: sed natura natam se fatetur aut proprie rem nullam significat, sed vel rei essentiam, vel communem illam legem, qua nascuntur omnia atque agunt …
>
> Some people babble that nature or fate has supremacy over events, but nature [*natura*] declares that it was born [*nata*]—or else, strictly, it means nothing except the essence of a thing, or the universal law governing the birth and action of everything …
> (*DDC* 1.2, 'de Deo', 24)

What follows from this passage, Friedemann Drews summarises,[36] is that fate cannot be a force external to God the Father; rather, he suggests, it is a name given to his will. This view would be close to Augustine's. In his work 'On Free Choice of the Will' (*de libero arbitrio*),[37] Augustine puts to the following question to his interlocutor Evodius, describing the view which one ought to avoid:

> Nonne igitur caves ne tibi dicatur etiam ipsum quaecumque facturus est non voluntate sed necessitate facturum, si omnia quorum praescius deus est necessitate fiunt, non voluntate?
>
> Then are you not worried that someone might raise this objection to you: "Whatsoever god is going to do, he too is going to do not by will but by necessity, given that everything god foreknows happens by necessity and not by will"?
> (*lib*. *arb*. III.24)[38]

This is a good example of Augustine's position: there cannot be any higher necessity than God's will and providence.[39] This position is picked up, Drews further points out, by

[35] The debate about Milton's authorship of *De Doctrina Christiana* has a long history, beginning shortly after the discovery of the manuscript. William Hunter reopened this debate in 1991. In 2007, a research group consisting of Gordon Campbell, Thomas Corns, John Hale, and Fiona Tweedie published findings pointing to the Miltonic provenance of the manuscript. See Campbell, Corns et al. (2007) and further discussion in Hale and Cullington (2012), 1, xxviii-xxix.
[36] For this and the following passages from Augustine, see the discussion by Drews (2009), vol. 2, 740-2.
[37] For a detailed analysis of this dialogue's place within Augustine's philosophical and theological thought, see Harrison (2006).
[38] Text follows Green (1956); translation by King (2010), whose numbering for the passage is 3.3.6.24.
[39] The problem of Augustine's theodicy lies beyond the scope of my brief remarks in this Introduction; for an influential theological study, see Hick (1966). The links between Augustine's and Milton's free will discourses are discussed by Danielson (1982), 62-6 and 99-101.

Milton, who, as we have seen above, not only points out that God's 'will' is above any necessity, but also defines his providence as another 'name' for his 'knowledge/wisdom':

> Praecognitio enim Dei, mutato solum nomine, sapientia eius est, sive illa rerum omnium idea quam, ut humanitus loquar, prius in mente habuit quam quicquam decerneret.
>
> For God's foreknowledge *is* his wisdom, with only its name changed, or that idea of all things which, to speak in human terms, he had in mind before he could decree anything.
> (*DDC* 1.3, 'de Divino decreto', 54)

While points of contact between Augustine's and Milton's theology of free will and providence should not be overlooked, we shall see in the present thesis that Milton's literary construction in *Paradise Lost* goes further, and is not guided – or restricted – by the theological models alone.[40] His use of ancient narratives of fate in the poem can be seen as a radical extension of Christian providentialist theology such as Augustine's.[41]

Moreover, fate, as a literary vehicle, is not only part of Milton's Christianising project, but also central to his poetic aspirations. Fate and prophecy, as Alessandro Barchiesi has shown, are meta-literary phenomena which function both within and 'beyond' the text: insofar as they 'pertain to the ideas of transmission and interpretation', they 'act as good vehicles for transferring intertextuality into narrative plots', and evoke a sense of continuity between texts which span the epic tradition.[42] In the *Aeneid*, 'a story so deeply bound to tradition,' Barchiesi observes, 'the level of Fate tends to coincide with the constraints imposed by the epic tradition and the legendary plot'. As a result, Vergil's epic 'tends to produce a story in which tradition, reworked by the narrator, becomes Fate, and in turn uses Fate as the compasses and necessary curb on the meandering path of tradition and literary influences'.[43] This tradition, Barchiesi further suggests, is developed by Ovid, whose Jupiter, in describing fate to the goddess Venus in *Metamorphoses* 15 evokes the speech by Vergil's Jupiter about the fate of Aeneas and his prophecy of the Roman race (*Aen*. 1.257ff.): ' ... *legi ipse animoque notaui / et referam, ne sis etiamnum ignara futuri*, 'I have myself read these, and marked them well in mind; and these will I relate, so that

[40] On Augustine's significant influence on Christian Renaissance epic, see the detailed study by Warner (2005).
[41] The exact role of Augustine's providentialism for Milton's literary construction lies beyond the scope of the present study: but cf. Drews (2009), vol. 2, 697-778 for a detailed account, and Danielson (1982), 104-6 on the Father's 'free will speech' (*PL* 3.98-113; see below, Chapter 3 for my discussion of this speech).
[42] Barchiesi (2001), 130.
[43] Barchiesi (2001), 131.

you are no longer ignorant of what is to come', *Met*. 15.814-15).[44] Milton, I argue, continues this tradition of critical readings of fate in the epic genre. In his discussion of the nature of the Christian God, Milton traces the etymology of 'fate' to the Latin verb of speaking *fari*, drawing on Vergil's wordplay in the depiction of his Jupiter foretelling the fate of Aeneas and of the Roman people at *Aen*. 1.261-2.[45] For Milton, it appears, just as the etymology of nature (*natura*) implies a creator (from the verb *nascor*, 'to bring forth'), so, too, fate implies a speaker: … *et fatum quid nisi effatum divinum omnipotentis cuiuspiam numinis potest esse?* ('And what can fate [*fatum*] be but the divine decree [*effatum*] of some almighty deity?').[46]

At the same time as it is expressed in recognizably allusive epic scenarios, fate fulfils a distinguishable theological function in Milton's biblical narrative of the Fall. As Dennis Danielson has shown, the interplay between Milton's depictions of human free will and of divine providence functions within the core narrative of salvation and is central to Milton's theological concerns.[47] References to fate, furthermore, particularly by the Father in Book 3 (discussed above) and by Raphael in Book 5 (line 527), raise the question, key to the poem's theodicy, of what is ordained and what is subject to free will in the Genesis narrative of the Fall. This close relationship between classical epic and Christian theology for Milton is particularly noticeable in his discussion of predestination in *De Doctrina Christiana*. Milton's defence of creaturely free will is illustrated by an example from the first divine scene in the *Odyssey*, where Zeus complains of humans inflicting sufferings upon themselves 'beyond that which is ordained' (ὑπὲρ μόρον, *Od*. 1.34, see further discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.2). This parallel has been widely noted as evidence for Milton's debt to Homer in *Paradise Lost*, and of the fruitfulness of reading *De Doctrina* as a gloss upon *Paradise Lost*, but there is further scope for considering how Milton constructs his theological conception of fate in the poem around readings of ancient epic scenes of divine and human interaction.

[44] All references to the text of the *Metamorphoses* are from Tarrant (2004). English translations are adapted from Miller and Goold (1977).
[45] See my more detailed discussion of this below, Chapter 3, section 3.4.
[46] *DDC* 1.2, 'de Deo', 24-5. See also Blessington (1979), 42, with further discussion at n. 71 below.
[47] See Danielson (1982) and Danielson (1999).

Fate in Classical Epic: **An Outline**

The English term 'fate', via the Latin *fatum*, is itself derived from the verb of speaking, revealing, or uttering oracles, *fari*.[48] Though linked to the Greek term for fate as an utterance of a god, θεσφᾶτος (from φημί, a Greek verb of speaking),[49] *fatum* and *fata* in the *Aeneid* appear more often to evoke the Homeric concept of μοῖρα/μόρος, etymologically linked to μέρος, meaning a 'share or 'portion' (from the verb μείρομαι, 'to receive as one's portion', or, impersonally, 'allotted'),[50] or αἶσα, one's 'lot' or 'portion'. Understood in this way, fate signifies something broader than merely a term to define human death and catastrophe – as *fatum* is often used – and more a way of expressing all that is common to human life, what is inherent in the human condition, and controlled by superhuman powers.[51] In this sense, it accords also with the Vergilian concept of *fortuna*, used at times interchangeably with fate in the *Aeneid*, as we see in a speech by the Arcadian king Evander, who refers to 'all-powerful *fortuna* and ineluctable *fatum*' (*Fortuna omnipotens et ineluctabile fatum*, *Aen*. 8.334).[52] Evander's statement, it has been argued, supports the idea that Vergil presents a Stoic account of fate in the *Aeneid*, expressed in the contrast which is drawn in the poem between divine *fatum* and human *labor*.[53] Such readings, however, present problems for depictions of the divine in the *Aeneid*, not least since Vergilian *fatum* is not unequivocally linked to the will of Jupiter (see below), and is at times also associated with Juno.[54]

Fate pertains to divine as well as human actors in Homeric and Vergilian epic. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* the 'fates', Μοῖραι (see *Il*. 24.49, though otherwise referred to as a singular goddess) or Κῆρες function also as personifications, goddesses who govern the span of

[48] See *OLD*, s.v. 'for', meanings 2 and 4, and s.v. 'fatum', meaning 1.
[49] We see this term used in the phrase θἐσφατόν ἐστι(ν), 'it is ordained', at *Iliad* 8.477 and *Odyssey* 4.561 and 10.473.
[50] See Chantraine (1999), s.v. μείρομαι.
[51] Although *fatum* often refers to one's 'doom' in terms of one's death, like the Greek μόρος: see Janko (1992), 5. See *OLD*, s.v., 6. For a study of the meaning of *fatum* in the *Aeneid*, going through all the occurrences, see Pötscher (1977).
[52] See discussion in Jenkyns (2013). For a further discussion of *fatum* and *fortuna* as virtually 'indistinguishable' at times in the *Aeneid* (such as we see at *Aen*. 5.709-10, 6.683, and 8.334-6), see Hardie (2013) and also Bailey (1935), 234-41.
[53] See Colish (1990), 232-3, with further bibliography at n. 29. Otis, however, notes that 'we must not exaggerate [Vergil's] Stoicism. […] Vergil's failure wholly to assimilate Jupiter to εἱμαρμένη plus πρόνοια is not simply the necessity of his Homeric plot: it is also his sense of the complexity of fate, its emergence as the final results of all that both the sub-fates and human beings can do. In the last analysis, the *Aeneid* is anything but simply Stoic': see Otis (1964), 226.
[54] Otis (1964), 223 and 233 discusses the occurrence of a 'counter-fate' in Juno's actions, whereas Bailey (1935), 205 notes that 'Virgil speaks often of the *fata deum*, *fata dei* or *fata Iovis*' but *fata* are also assigned to Juno'.

human life, and are equivalent to the *Parcae* in the *Aeneid*. The fates seem to function independently of the Olympian deities, with their relationship to Zeus or Jupiter unclear. In the *Aeneid*, the *Parcae*, like Jupiter himself, are associated with the action of unraveling the fates, an image that evokes the unrolling of a scroll or the spinning of a wheel (*uoluere*, *Aen*. 1.22).[55] We see the *Parcae* spinning the thread of life at *Aeneid* 10.815, an image that, as Stephen Harrison has noted, is likely to have been modeled on *Theocritus* 1.139-40.[56] It is also an image for the action of the fates, αἶσα, at *Iliad* 20.127-8, as well as the image of the *Parcae* in Catullus 64.307-83. Milton's familiarity of this action of the fates, as Robin Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard have noted, is evidenced in his 1637 poem *Lycidas*. There, the poet depicts the 'blind Fury', associated with *Atropos*, one of the personified Fates in Plato's account in the *Republic*, who comes 'with th'abhorred shears, / And slits the thin-spun life' (*Lycidas* 75-6).[57]

The role that Zeus and Jupiter play in administering the fates is further emphasized in the image of the scales (see below), which Milton recreates both in an early poem and in *Paradise Lost*. In *Naturam Non Pati Senium*[58] Milton had described the Father as establishing the 'scales of destiny with a definite weight':[59] *At Pater omnipotens fundatis fortis astris / Consuluit rerum summae, certoque peregit / Pondere fatorum lances …* ('But the omnipotent Father has taken thought for the sum of things by fixing the stars more firmly, and has established the scales of destiny with a definite weight …)'.[60] At the end of *PL* 4, Satan faces Gabriel, surrounded by an army of angels – a narrative moment which threatens a renewed conflict and destruction on a cosmic scale (*PL* 4.990-5). The Father intervenes, hanging forth his 'golden scales … / Wherein all things created first he weighed' (*PL* 4.997-9), and weighs up the fates to decide the outcome of the duel ('in these he puts two weights / The sequel each of parting and of fight', *PL* 4.1002-3). The words of Gabriel at *PL* 4.1012 ('… thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak'), moreover, echo words of Scripture, describing the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast

[55] See Jenkyns (2013).
[56] Harrison (1991), ad loc.
[57] Nisbet and Hubbard (1978), ad *Odes* 2.3.16. See also *Arcades* 63-72, which, as Carey (2007), ad loc. has noted, borrows its imagery of fate and necessity from Plato's *Republic* 10.616-17.
[58] For the speculative dating of the poem, most likely between 1628 and 1632, see Carey (2007), 63.
[59] See Lumpkin (1947), 59-60.
[60] *Naturam Non Pati Senium*, 33-4. Text and translation from Haan and Lewalski (2012).

(Dan. 5:27, 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting').[61] At the same time – as Martindale notes – the scales have a 'double ancestry', also evoking the image of Homer's Zeus weighing the fates of mortal heroes at climactic moments in the narrative (*Il*. 8.69-77, and in the duel between Achilleus and Hektor at *Il*. 22.208-13), and of Vergil's Jupiter weighing the fates of Aeneas and Turnus: *Iuppiter ipse duas aequato examine lances / sustinet et fata imponit diuersa duorum*, 'Jupiter himself holds up two scales in even balance, and lays in them the diverse destinies of both' (*Aen.* 12.725-6).[62]

Instances where fate appears as an abstract concept in the Homeric epics have often raised the question among commentators as to how far fate accords with the divine will of the presiding epic deity. A classic and much-discussed example of this occurs in Book 16 of the *Iliad*, where the will of Zeus appears to be challenged in his exchange with Hera. The goddess rebukes Zeus for wishing to intervene on the human plane and saving his son, 'doomed long since by fate' (*Il*. 16.441). For a number of scholars, as I will discuss in the third chapter of this thesis, Zeus' yielding to the arguments of Hera reveals the supremacy of the narrative over the momentary will of the father of the gods: it is not Zeus, it seems, but fate which appears to govern the unfolding of events, including the actions of the gods. How far fate can be considered to be established by Zeus is one of the problematic questions in this exchange, insofar as the sequence of events had already been foretold by Zeus, in Book 15 – including the death of his son.[63] This idea, that the supreme god is himself bound by his own pronouncement, is, according to Richard Heinze, reflected in the *Aeneid*, where Jupiter himself cannot change *fatum*, even if it is of his own making.[64] This paradox of the father of the gods who establishes the fates which he himself must subsequently obey, is captured, as Heinze notes, in Seneca's discussion of fate in his Stoic treatise *De Providentia*: *Inreuocabilis humana pariter ac diuina cursus uehit: ille ipse omnium conditor et rector scripsit quidem fata, sed sequitur; semper paret, semel iussit*, 'An unchangeable course carries along the affairs of men and gods alike: the great creator

[61] Martindale (2002), 101. See also Fowler (2007), ad *PL* 4.1012, who points out, however, that Gabriel's words are 'Not fully compatible with iv 1002-4', insofar as the weights used by the Father appear to relate to two events, rather than representing Gabriel and Satan.
[62] Note the parallel with Milton's *fatorum lances* in the passage from *Natura Non Pati Senium*, discussed in the main text above. Martindale (2002), 101 argues that '[t]his motif [*i.e*. in ancient epic] is corrected by Milton in accordance with the authority of Scripture'.
[63] See Janko (1992), 375, ad 431-61, and further discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.6.
[64] Heinze (1976) first establishes that *fatum* is identical with Jupiter's pronouncements ('Virgil läßt keinen Zweifel darüber, daß in Wahrheit das Fatum nichts anderes ist als des höchsten Gottes Wille', 293), and then emphasizes that even Jupiter himself cannot change *fatum* once it is uttered. See Heinze's discussion at 295.

and ruler of the universe himself wrote fate's decrees, it is true, but he follows them; he obeys for ever, but made his decrees only once' (Sen. *Dial*. 1.5.8).[65]

Following Heinze's discussion, Oliver Lyne argued that Vergil 'differs radically from Homer' in his depiction of fate,[66] insofar as Vergil's Jupiter, as we see in his dialogue with Venus in *Aeneid* 1, appears to identify fate with his own will. At the same time, however, there are obvious problems in Lyne's explicit identification of fate with Jupiter.[67] In the opening of the poem, Aeneas is described as *fato profugus*, 'exiled by fate'. Whose 'fate' does this accord with? Is it that of Jupiter? Or Juno? Or fate dictated by the narrative itself?[68] Jupiter's prophecy about fate appears to resolve the doubt sowed in the opening action of the poem about the divine sanctioning of events: Jupiter's prophecy is incited by a direct reproach from Venus (*Aen*. 1.229-41), itself echoing the series of questions posed by the poet to the Muse in the proem of the *Aeneid* (1.1-8), referring to Juno's actions, and culminating in the reproach *tantaene animis caelestibus irae?* ('Can heavenly spirits cherish resentment so great?', *Aen*. 1.11). Before Jupiter appears in the narrative of the *Aeneid*, the action of the first book is dominated by Juno's involvement in inciting the storm. In the opening sequence of Vergil's epic, it seems that Jupiter suffers Juno's will momentarily to unfold – he appears belatedly to reassert control over events only at *Aeneid* 1.223. Like 'the will of Zeus', Διὸς βουλή (*Il*. 1.5), which suffers the wrath of Achilleus to last unchecked, causing countless Greek deaths, and the punishment inflicted by Apollo (*Il*. 1.8ff.),[69] fate appears in the opening of the *Aeneid* as something that the father of the gods tolerates, rather than incites, and it appears as part of the unfolding of a wider narrative. Finally, the etymological link between *fatum* and *fari*, I would argue, only hints

[65] Quotation from Seneca's *Dialogues* is from Reynolds (1977). Translation by Davie (2007).
[66] Lyne (1987), 73, with further references (the bibliography on Vergil's concept of fate in the *Aeneid* is too large to list in full).
[67] Jenkyns (2013) observes that 'if we think of *fata* as divinely willed determinations, some otherwise puzzling usages occur', such as we see in the death of Dido *nec fato merita nec morte peribat* at *Aen*. 4.696.
[68] Servius' comment on *Aen*. 1.2 attempts to find a middle ground, identifying Aeneas as being exiled by fate both because he is fleeing Troy, and because he is seeking Italy ('*fato ad utrumque pertinet, et quod fugit et quod ad Italiam venit*'). According to Servius, Aeneas is described as exiled by fate 'so that he does not appear to have abandoned his native land due to an offence, or from a desire for a new empire' (*et bene addidit fato, ne videatur aut causa criminis patriam deseruisse aut novi imperii cupiditate*): Servius, ad *Aen*. 1.2. The important role of fate as a pervasive motif that functions as a cohesive narrative device for the plot is emphasized by Buchheit (1963), 12 ('das Fatum ist als umgreifendes Motiv gleich einem roten Faden durch die Aeneis gezogen und trägt seinerseits wesentlich zur äußeren wie inneren Einheit bei'), with references to previous scholarship at n. 6.
[69] According to Kirk, who cites the ancient commentator Aristarchus, Διὸς βουλή at line 5 is likely to refer to the plan 'implied by Zeus' promise to Thetis at 1.524-30 to avenge the slight on her son Achilleus by favouring the Trojans'. See Kirk (1985), 53, ad *Il*. 1.5.

at Jupiter's governing of fate – it does not make the relationship explicit. Jupiter's supremacy over fate, even in his speech in *Aeneid* 1, can only be 'read into' the poem or inferred, and elements of the Homeric relationship to the fates remain: in the same speech where he announces his prophecy, Vergil's Jupiter declares that he will 'move the secrets of the fates': ... *(fabor enim, quando haec te cura remordet, / longius et uoluens fatorum arcana mouebo)*, ' … for, since this care gnaws at your heart, I will speak and, further unrolling the scroll of fate, will disclose its secrets' (*Aen*. 1.261-2). This may imply that Jupiter is moving or reading the scrolls of fate which have already been written. According to Jenkyns, the participle *uoluens* implies that Jupiter is 'revealing or interpreting rather than determining fate'.[70]

Fate in *Paradise Lost*

When Milton's God declares in Book 7, 'necessity and chance / Approach not me, and what I will is fate' (*PL* 7.172-3), he appears to dispel the ambiguity present in the Homeric and Vergilian depiction of fate and its relationship to the divine will.[71] At the same time, I argue, it is a statement that continues a tradition in post-Vergilian epic of alluding to the speech of Vergil's Jupiter in the *Aeneid*. Jupiter's 're-reading' of the fates to Venus in Book 15 of the *Metamorphoses*, as we saw, alludes to the fates already announced by Vergil's Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1 (*legi ipse ... et referam*, 'I have myself read these … and these will I relate', *Met.* 15.814-15). In his *Thebaid*, Statius also evokes the relationship between fate and speaking as it is depicted in the person of Jupiter in the *Aeneid*: in the first divine council scene of the poem he depicts his Jupiter as he speaks among the gods 'and the fates follow his voice' (… *et vocem fata sequuntur*, *Theb*. 1.213).[72]

But the Father in *Paradise Lost* is not the only speaker to claim a relationship to fate. Fate, as Ben Lumpkin has rightly pointed out, also appears in other guises in the poem, and is voiced by other, fallen, speakers. If Milton had wanted straightforwardly to resolve the

[70] See Jenkyns (2013). For Bailey '[i]t is clear that *fabor* and *fata* are meant to suggest the etymology of the word, but are the *fata* here the "spoken word" or will of Iuppiter himself, which he now intends to declare, or is Iuppiter here rather in the position of a prophet to the other gods, declaring, like an earthly prophet, the destiny laid up for Aeneas? Probably the latter, but this does not preclude the thought that that destiny itself is divinely willed.' (Bailey [1935], 206).

[71] See Blessington's comment on this passage: 'The mystery of fate served Satan well when he had to rouse his troops in hell, but the idea is dispelled in *Paradise Lost*, when the Father bluntly states, "Necessity and Chance / Approach not me, and what I will is Fate" (VII, 172-3). Indirectly the Father reminds us of the original meaning of "fatum", "that which is said" […], pointing out the philological truth behind the theological one: fate is the word of God' (Blessington [1979], 42).

[72] See further discussion, including Servius' comment on this passage, in Chapter 4, section 4.7.

ambiguity present in the epic depiction of fate, why did he not only put fate in the mouth of the Father, but also of Satan and other fallen speakers? Lumpkin dealt with the question of the multiple meanings of 'fate' – which he limits to occurrences of the word itself – in the poem. Central, in his study, is the idea that 'the meaning of the word depends on the speaker', since 'the nature and attitude of the speaker is as important as what he says'.[73] When considered in an allusive setting, moreover, Lumpkin's idea that meaning is shaped by the speaker creates further interpretative possibilities. In my discussion of fate in this thesis, I will consider how fallen and unfallen statements about fate at times function beyond the sense which can be inferred as the speaker's intention, creating separate levels of meaning. We can go further than interpreting the intention of the speaker, however, and consider the specific context of the Father's words here, opening up the possibility of fate as referring to a range of associated ideas. The Father's statement about fate in Book 7, I suggest, should not be considered in isolation, but examined rather in light of his disavowal of the materialist alternatives of 'necessity and chance'. These alternatives, I will suggest, signify the materialist forces that the fallen angels claim to govern Milton's epic universe. The Father's discarding of necessity and chance, I suggest, is as important in its distancing from these alternatives as it is in establishing his personal relationship to fate. At this key juncture in the narrative, Milton's God defines his relationship to fate in opposition, I will argue, to Satan and the fallen angels' rhetoric in the opening books of the poem.

Apart from discussing references to 'fate' as a word in the poem (as Lumpkin does, and as we saw in the instances listed above), therefore, I will consider fate within its wider allusive context in this thesis. Fate, I will argue, incorporates a range of narrative, theological, and literary meanings in the poem. In negotiating two opposed languages of fate – the fallen and the unfallen – I will suggest that Milton evokes the philosophical and metaphysical functions of fate in classical epic, setting them against the backdrop of his Christian narrative. Consequently, I will attempt to illuminate Milton's narrative development of fate and its related concepts – providence, necessity, and natural law – by considering how he contextualizes this idea within wider readings of these concepts in ancient epic, in scientific-didactic contexts as well as in traditional heroic epic scenarios.

[73] Lumpkin (1947), 57.

Materialist and Divine Accounts: Ancient and Early Modern Backgrounds on Free Will and Natural Order

Milton, as someone who in the later part of his career appears to have been a monist, resists separation between soul and body in *Paradise Lost*.[74] Part of the misguidedness of Satan's rhetoric, as Stephen Fallon has shown, lies in his attempt to separate the material from the spiritual/divine, suggesting that fate, and other forces such as strength and chance, are in opposition to the personal authority of the Father.[75] Milton resists this idea in the narrative of *Paradise Lost*: God's creation is material, such as we see in the substance of the angels.[76]

This thesis will argue that Milton's 'materialist' and 'divine' narratives in *Paradise Lost* rely, in part, on a series of allusions to the Roman Epicurean poet Lucretius (as we will see in the second chapter of this thesis). But the debate about materialism and questions of free will is much older than Lucretius. The Greek materialist philosopher Democritus was the first to formulate a strictly determinist position, according to which everything is made of atoms and controlled by natural law.[77] The materialist Leucippus, Democritus's teacher, had formulated the supremacy of necessity like this, 'Nothing occurs in vain, but everything for a reason and by necessity' (οὐδὲν χρῆμα μάτην γίνεται, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἐκ λόγου τε καὶ ὑπ' ἀνάγκης).[78]

Building on this materialist determinism, Epicurus developed a position according to which the atoms, moving through the void, would at times 'swerve' from their otherwise determined fixed course. Thus, questions of human freedom and free will become pre-eminent, since, in the Epicurean view, not everything is deterministically caused. The question of whether Epicurus can thus be considered the inventor of the 'free will' discourse in antiquity is still a live debate in scholarship. While Pamela Huby argued for

[74] See Fallon (1991), *passim*, but especially Chapter 3, 'Material Life: Milton's Animist Materialism', 79-111. Fallon argues that 'by the end of the 1650s Milton had worked his way to the unequivocal materialist monism of the *Christian Doctrine* (c. 1656-60) and *Paradise Lost*' (Fallon [1991], 96).

[75] In *PL*, Fallon suggests, this shows, for instance, in Satan displaying an 'infernal Cartesianism' in Book 1, separating the inner mind from the outer body (cf. *PL* 1.97) and in Beëlzebub's statement that 'the mind and spirits remains / Invincible, and vigor soon returns, / Though all our glory extinct' (*PL* 1.139-40): see Fallon (1991), 203.

[76] See Fallon (1991), 194-5.

[77] What can be gained from the fragments about Democritus' atomic theory is summarised in Bailey (1928), 117-37.

[78] Text and English translation from Taylor (1999), 2-3.

Epicurus as the originator of the debate,[79] a view that is also taken by Anthony Long and David Sedley,[80] Susanne Bobzien has more recently called Epicurus' status as the discoverer into question.[81]

From the specific perspective of Milton's intervention in the debate and his literary construction, however, it is first and foremost Lucretius' position and its early modern resonance that need to be considered. The Lucretian didactic epic, 'On the Nature of Things' (*De Rerum Natura*), is a poem about natural law (the 'contracts of nature', *foedera naturae*). The term 'fate' appears only four times in Lucretius (2.254 and 257, 5.110 and 309). Two striking instances of this usage, at 2.254 (*fati foedera*) and at 5.309 (*fati ...finis*), appear to be associated with the concept of *foedera naturai/naturae foedera*.[82] Don Fowler describes *foedera naturae* as the 'contracts' or 'treaties' between atoms. He points out, moreover, that 'these are not only the *foedera* between the atoms which constitute the workings of *natura*, they are also metaphorically the pacts between Nature and the compounds which govern their behaviour and literally the creative unions between the atoms which physically constitute the *rerum natura* and the *natura* of each individual compound'.[83]

Chance and Natural Law: Some Early Modern Background

Lucretius' account of atomic motion in *DRN* 2 (216-50), against the view that the world was created providentially for humans, considers the *clinamen* ('swerve') as one of the four corollaries of the basic Epicurean theory. The fact that Lucretius' account of the swerve is the only extended extant treatment of the phenomenon 'has helped', as Fowler observed 'make it one of the most discussed parts of the *De rerum natura*'.[84] Lucretius' account of contingency and necessity in the *De Rerum Natura* was a central issue for early modern readers of the poem. The question of how far Lucretius presents his readers with a world governed by chance has produced polarized responses, also in contemporary scholarship. Stephen Greenblatt's 2011 study, a prominent example in recent years, focused on Lucretius' depiction of the 'swerve', already suggested by Harold Bloom as a

[79] Huby (1967), 353. On the possible implications of the atomic swerve for human volition, cf. also Bailey (1928), 435-7.
[80] Long/Sedley (1987), vol. 1, 107.
[81] Bobzien (2000). See esp. 287-8, n. 3 for an overview of the extensive scholarship on the question.
[82] See the discussion by Fowler (2002b), 342-3.
[83] Fowler (2002a), ad *DRN* 2.302, 377.
[84] Fowler (2002b), 408.

metaphor for literary influence. For Greenblatt, the renewed interest in *De Rerum Natura* following Poggio Bracciolini's rediscovery of the poem in 1417 was a catalyst for a broad range of intellectual, social and political changes beginning in the early modern period, from the secularization of society to the advance of modern science.[85]

Such readings of the role of chance in *De Rerum Natura*, however, do not account for the full subtlety of the Lucretian cosmology – as a number of scholars have recently shown – nor do they provide the full picture of early modern readings of the poem and its philosophical underpinnings. This includes Milton's own complex reading of the poem, as evidenced in his employment of Lucretian allusion in *Paradise Lost*.[86] Milton's account of Chaos in Book 2, for example, a passage noted for its Lucretian allusion (see chapter 2), draws attention to the inherent paradoxes present in an attempt to map a purely aleatory cosmos: the poet, paradoxically, uses language of order to depict the disorder of the region between heaven and hell where 'Chaos umpire sits' and 'Chance governs all' (*PL* 2.907-10).[87]

The currency which the Lucretian contest between contingency and necessity had in the latter half of the seventeenth century is also evidenced in the title of Lucy Hutchinson's epic poem, *Order and Disorder*, which was published in 1679, four years after her Lucretius translation. A poem inspired by the story of creation in the book of Genesis, its title, Norbrook argued, 'reveals a deep longing for a coherent order in the universe' – something that, on the surface, Hutchinson does not appear to have found in Lucretius.[88]

[85] In such readings, as Norbrook has observed, 'Lucretius gains a Nietzschean inflection and becomes a prophet not so much of modernity as of postmodernity, or of a revisionist "aleatory" materialism, with attention focused on the play of contingencies introduced by Lucretius' swerve or *clinamen*'. See Norbrook (2016a), 1, with further bibliography (including reference to Bloom, mentioned above).

[86] See, most recently, Palmer (2014), Norbrook (2011 and 2016), and Hardy (2016). See esp. Norbrook (2016a), 10, who observes that the advent of the printing and, with it, the wider circulation of the *DRN* 'did not necessarily mean an immediate wave of subversion', as Greenblatt has suggested. Rather, '[e]ditions of the *DRN* tended defensively to displace ideological concerns on to Epicurus and to absolve Lucretius of personal responsibility for the ideas that he adorned poetically'.

[87] For the opposite view of Chaos, see Quint (2004), and Sugimura (2009). Sugimura (2009), 237 claims that 'Chaos's momentary acts of arbitration [in *Paradise Lost*] are distinctly un-Lucretian'. Quint (2004), 860-1 argued that Satan's fall through Chaos, as a type of Icarus' in Book 2, 'corrects the Lucretian vision of a universe ruled by chance', suggesting that 'Milton uses the Christianized Icarus-figure of Ulysses as depicted by Dante and Tasso to counter the unbelief of Lucretius […] Like the Dantesque Ulysses, Satan is on his own, without God, and hence gives himself up to chance. Having cut himself off from the divine source of meaning and creative order, Satan's fall into the confused meaninglessness and random disorder of Chaos is both the result and the emblem of his sin'.

[88] Norbrook (2001), xxxii argues in fact that '[t]o this extent the poem is a conscious reversal of what she found in Lucretius'.

Yet her epic poem is infused with passages from *De Rerum Natura*, whose use cannot be confined only to serving the purpose of *recusatio* or a single-minded attempt to separate the 'honey' of poetic expression from the 'wormwood' of Epicurean doctrine. Hutchinson, as Norbrook observes, 'had shown especial interest in pagan poems whose subject-matter was in some ways closest to the creation story: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and […] Lucretius's *De rerum natura*.'[89] Among references to Lucretius in the poem, Norbrook draws attention to Latinisms such as 'fragor' and 'congression', and to Lucretius' descriptions of the world's end.[90] In its engagement with the interplay between contingency and necessity in *De Rerum Natura*, Hutchinson's epic shares many of the preoccupations of Milton's narration of the Fall in *Paradise Lost*.[91] In the account of the Fall, I will argue, Eve's transgression is figured as a violation of the natural order in Eden, and is indebted to Lucretian images which rely on shifting points of reference: Satan subverts Lucretian materialist teachings about natural laws and boundaries more often than he appears to enact them, reflecting Milton's awareness of the role of necessity in Lucretian cosmology and ethical teachings.[92]

Materialism and Providentialism, Ancient and Early Modern

Despite Lucretius' significance, the ancient materialist debate and its early modern intellectual afterlife are not only influenced by Epicureanism. The Stoic school of philosophy combined a materialist view of physics with a divine providentialism. In the Stoic theory of fate and causation, this dualism gains particular currency.[93] The first-century Roman philosopher Seneca the Younger summarises the Stoic view:

> Dicunt, ut scis, Stoici nostri duo esse in rerum natura ex quibus omnia fiant, causam et materiam. Materia iacet iners, res ad omnia parata, cessatura si nemo moveat; causa autem, id est ratio, materiam format et quocumque vult versat, ex illa varia opera producit. Esse ergo debet unde fiat aliquid, deinde a quo fiat: hoc causa est, illud materia.

[89] Norbrook (2001), xxvi.
[90] See Norbrook (2011), xxvi.
[91] For views on Hutchinson's reaction to *Paradise Lost* in *Order and Disorder*, see discussion in Norbrook (2001), xxv. Norbrook argues that Hutchinson is in fact 'closer to Du Bartas than to the more allusive Milton in the degree of her reference to classical genres'.
[92] See further Chapter 2. Existing evidence of Milton's knowledge of Lucretius has been recently summarized in Hardie (2009), 264. According to Fletcher (1956), 460, Milton would have studied Lucretius in his fourth year at Cambridge (following the Cambridge curriculum described by Richard Holdsworth). In his *Life of Milton*, Milton's nephew Edward Phillips related that his uncle had taught Lucretius alongside Manilius, a point that is corroborated in Milton's mention of Lucretius among other Latin didactic poets, Vergil and Manilius, in his treatise *Of Education*. See Darbishire (1932), 60.
[93] For a bibliography on the question of Stoic causation and 'fate', cf. Long/Sedley (1987), vol. 2, 505.

> Our Stoic philosophers, as you know, say that there are two things in nature from which everything is produced – cause and matter. Matter lies inert, an entity ready for anything but destined to lie idle if no one moves it. Cause, on the other hand, being the same as reason, shapes matter and directs it wherever it wants, and from matter produces its manifold creations. Hence a thing must be made *from* something, and *by* something. The latter is its cause, the former its matter.
> (Sen. *Ep*. 65.2)

The basic distinction that Seneca draws between what Long and Sedley term an active 'causal operation of the active principle god' and 'the passive principle of matter' underlies Stoic theories of fate,[94] which have been argued to have influenced Vergil's depiction of fate in the *Aeneid*, one important model for Milton's dealings with fate and providence in *Paradise Lost* (see further Chapter 3).[95]

In Milton's early modern intellectual context, it was the French scholar Pierre Gassendi who was of utmost importance for the integration of atomist materialism with divine providentialism.[96] An eminent scholar in touch with a 'wide circle of English royalists in exile in Paris [...] notably Thomas Hobbes',[97] Gassendi published his *Animadversiones* on Diogenes Laertius' life of Epicurus in 1649 and his *Syntagma Philosophicum* in 1658. Gassendi's intervention, 'detoxify[ing] Epicureanism through a very learned exposition and a demonstration of common grounds with more conventionally acceptable philosophies',[98] was one of the prime factors enabling more wide-spread Lucretian reception in the mid-seventeenth century,[99] possibly including Milton's readings of Lucretius. In *Paradise Lost*, the dichotomy between materialism and divine providentialism is mobilized, for example, in the fallen angels' rhetoric. As Stephen Fallon has argued, our reading of the fallen angels' rhetoric should take into account the strong possibility of resonances coming from the pervasive seventeenth-century debates about materialism, particularly by Descartes and Hobbes. For Fallon, 'the theological and ethical stakes of the philosophical debates were so high that it would be surprising had Milton not

[94] Long/Sedley (1987), vol. 1, 341. For the Stoics drawing this disctinction between the active divine principle and passive matter, see also Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.75-6 (SVF 2.311); other important sources for what can be known about the Stoic theory of causation and fate are collected at Long/Sedley, 333-40. For a more detailed account of Stoic causation, which lies beyond the scope of my thesis, see Frede (1980).
[95] For further discussion of the early modern reception of Stoicism, see Chapter 1.
[96] See now Norbrook (2016b), 225-9.
[97] Norbrook (2016b), 225.
[98] Norbrook (2016b), 225. On Gassendi's wide range of cultural influence see further Murr (1997).
[99] Another important figure, 'a pioneer of English atomism', was Walter Charleton: see Poole (2016), 193-4. He published his *Darkness of Atheism Dispelled* in 1652 and his *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charletoniana* in 1654. For further discussion of Gassendi, Charleton, and early modern materialism, see below, Chapter 2, esp. section 2.2.

followed them with interest'.[100] In particular, there is a need to read Milton's literary construction of his fallen angels against the backdrop of materialist philosophy, which was 'feared', Fallon continues, 'by many as threats to the incorporeal soul, and, by extension, to theism. Many observers thought that the sort of mechanism propped by Descartes and others would lead to materialism and eventually to atheism. [...] The philosophical foundations of freedom of the will in particular were threatened by the growing authority of mechanist explanations of phenomena'.[101] I will examine materialist echoes in the rhetoric of Milton's fallen angels and their further implications in Chapter 1 of my study.

Summary of Chapters

In the first chapter of this thesis, I will focus on the influence of Stoic materialism on Satan and other fallen angels' rhetoric in the opening books of *Paradise Lost*. Having dismissed the option of a second war in heaven at the beginning of the poem's action, Milton's fallen angels engage in a rhetorical – rather than an armed – conflict, in which they consider 'fate' as a materialist force, alongside 'strength and chance', instead of naming the personal authority of the Father. Milton's Vergilian allusions in these opening sequences evoke Stoic readings of the *Aeneid*.[102] In the mouth of Satan and other fallen speakers, however, references to Stoic philosophy seek to undermine rather than affirm the Father's providential authority over the narrative. Satan, in these opening books I will argue, acts as a spokesman for a disembodied, materialist view of fate as a cosmic force separate from the Father. The fallen angels' rhetoric, I will further suggest, evokes methods of reasoning associated with the Epicurean as well as Stoic schools of philosophy, which provide a further materialist alternative to providence as they speculate on the origins of the universe.

As we have seen, the fallen angels' rhetoric had a contemporary resonance in the context of seventeenth-century philosophical debates about materialism, particularly in the materialism proposed by Descartes and Hobbes.[103] At the same time, debates and

[100] Fallon (1991), 3.
[101] Fallon (1991), 3-4.
[102] Materialist accounts of fate are embedded in existing, Stoic readings of the *Aeneid*. We see these, for example, in Anchises' cosmology given to Aeneas in the underworld (*Aen.* 6.724-886), where the idea of a 'fiery force' (*igneus vigor*) lies at the origin of creation and of life. See further discussion in Schafer (2013). Further important studies on Stoicism in the *Aeneid* include Bowra (1933), Braund (1997), and Gill (2006), 435-61.
[103] Fallon (1991), 3.

dilemmas which the angels face are set within epic narratives of divine struggles, or theomachies, evoking Hesiodic memories with fit readers. On a further allusive level, the language of Satan, Beëlzebub, and Mammon echoes the metaphysical uncertainty of causes in Lucanian and Statian epic, and its contemplation, in the case of Lucan, of a cosmos without the divine. Fate here ceases to be associated with the providence of the Father and begins to be part of the fallen angels' own view of the past – and of the future. This reading of fate, moreover, has a literary significance for the narrative of *Paradise Lost*: in denying that fate belongs to the Father, the fallen angels also attempt to rewrite the epic tradition in which the narrative is contained, suggesting alternative views of their past and of their future.

In my second chapter, I consider the influence of Lucretian ideas of natural laws as they are evoked and transgressed in Satan's fallen rhetoric to Eve in Book 9. Satan's temptation functions as a further attempt to deny a divine, providentialist conception of fate in the poem. Whereas some readings of *De Rerum Natura*, both in the early modern period and in recent scholarship, as we have seen, emphasized the elements of contingency advocated in the poem, I will argue that Milton is sensitive to necessitarian aspects of the poem's message, and especially the collision between ethical and cosmic ideas about natural laws, the boundaries of what is permitted to arise in nature. Lucretius' didactic hexameter poem may seem to be an unexpected choice in the line-up of epic ideas of fate, but the influence of Lucretius on *Paradise Lost* has been recognized as complementing Milton's interest in Homeric and Vergilian epic.[104] Lucretian allusion in the narrative leading up to the Fall and its aftermath, as has been noted, moreover, not only imbues Milton's account of the Fall with narrative detail absent from the book of Genesis, but serves to signpost the didactic function of Milton's Edenic sequence.[105] Much remains to be done in tracing Milton's specific use of Lucretius, and no scholarly treatment so far has analysed how Lucretius may influence Milton's narrative of fate, natural order, and free will in *Paradise Lost*. Miltonic allusions to *De Rerum Natura* in the Fall sequence, I argue, confront the materialist rhetoric of the fallen angels (which had included Lucretian imagery) with a

[104] See Fallon (1991), for example, who considered *Paradise Lost* a Lucretian epic, as much as a Homeric and Vergilian one, arguing that '[h]aving settled on an epic of Genesis, Milton could hardly have failed to include a Lucretian dimension in his poem'. Fallon, moreover, observes of Milton's enterprise that 'in setting out to write on heaven, the world, and hell, [Milton] committed himself to an expansion of Genesis and an exploration, in the tradition of Lucretius, of the way things are' (Fallon [1991], 15). See further discussion in Chapter 2 of this thesis.
[105] See Hardie (2009), 264-79 and further discussion in Chapter 2.

view of the alignment of natural and divine law, violated by Adam and Eve's transgression, and prefigured in what I will suggest is an 'anti-Lucretian' language of Satan. Building on Stanley Fish's influential reader-response analysis of the poem,[106] and applying it to Milton's use of allusion, I will argue that Milton illustrates the difference between appearance and reality on an epistemological and ethical level precisely by means of allusion: the recognition of Satan's misappropriation of Lucretian language and reasoning in his temptation of Eve is part of the didactic experience for the reader. Lucretian teachings about the boundaries dictated by nature, and the ethical consequences of their transgression, I will further argue, are integral to the entire narrative of the Fall, as well as to Adam and Eve's psychological experience in its aftermath. Lucretius is a materialist, but not a fatalist: his subtle message on what is necessary is governed by the idea of *foedera naturae*, of what can and cannot arise in nature. Milton, I argue, aligns this account of natural laws within the divine order in Eden, as a prelapsarian order that predates fate in the poem.

In my third chapter, I will consider the language of the Father as he makes his first narrative appearance in Book 3 of the poem. The delayed appearance of the Father, following the council of the fallen angels in Pandaemonium, I will argue, mirrors the delayed appearance of Jupiter in Book 1 of the *Aeneid*, where Jupiter asserts his authority over fate and the shape of the narrative by foretelling the end of Aeneas' wanderings and the eventual foundation of Rome. The Father's prophecy of the Fall of Adam and Eve, by contrast, appears to challenge Milton's theodicy, his 'goodness' and his 'greatness' (*PL* 3.165) in the narrative, insofar as the Father's foretelling of the Fall implies that their actions may be preordained. The Father's defence of the free will of Adam and Eve, as has been discussed, echoes a scene in Book 1 of the *Odyssey*, where Zeus complains about humans blaming the gods for their misfortunes. Zeus's speech, I will argue, is key not only for Milton's theodicy, but also for the narrative of fate. Council scenes in classical epic and the questions they explore about fate, I will argue, serve as an allusive backdrop to Milton's scene, adding a new dimension to his Christian theodicy, his apology of free will and his depiction of the theology of the Atonement. Apart from my discussion of the noted

[106] Fish argued that 'only by forcing upon his reader an awareness of his limited perspective can Milton provide even a negative intuition of what another would be like […] The reader who falls before the lures of Satanic rhetoric displays again the weakness of Adam, and his inability to avoid repeated that fall throughout indicates the extent to which Adam's lapse has made the reassertion of right reason impossible' (Fish [1967], 60).

example from the *Odyssey*, and its relevance to Milton's narrative of fate in this scene, I will also consider how the exchange between the Father and Son as they negotiate the terms of salvation is influenced by the dialogue between Hera and Zeus in *Iliad* 16: this scene, key to epic ideas of fate, enters Milton's narrative through its creative re-workings in Vergil's *Aeneid* and Vida's *Christiad*, as well as through discussions of this scene in the ancient and early modern commentaries. Whereas the dialogues between the Olympian deities highlight the divisions between the gods and the limitations imposed by fate, Milton's dialogue in heaven, I will show, reveals the unity of the Father and Son, and serves as a vehicle to reveal the Father's providential plan of salvation.

In my fourth and final chapter, I discuss Milton's postlapsarian narrative of fate and providence through the narrative structures of post-Vergilian depictions of aftermath, most strikingly in Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* and in Statius' *Thebaid.* These post-Vergilian epics need to be given closer attention when reading the final books of *Paradise Lost*. Milton, in these final books, recreates the atmosphere of aftermath present in these epic narratives. At the same time, the Christian poet of *Paradise Lost* fulfils his aim to 'assert the eternal providence' (*PL* 1.25): divine providence, overseeing the fate of Adam and Eve, and the shape of human history, replaces the personal communion with God which Adam and Eve had previously enjoyed. As the Miltonic narrator depicts Adam and Eve leaving Eden with 'providence their guide' (*PL* 12.647), he evokes the post-Vergilian technique of an 'ending as beginning' as they negotiate the first post-Edenic chapter in the history of salvation. Milton's depiction of human alienation from God, expressed in an echo of Statius' own image of literary distance from the *Aeneid*, finally, demonstrates the possibilities of literary allusion for expressing the spiritual themes of the poem. Milton's transformation of the language of hereditary guilt in the Son's intercession for fallen Adam and Eve, moreover, transforms associations with the cursed house of Oedipus and the tragic tale of the *Thebaid*. What emerges in the ending of Milton's epic is a providentialism that runs counter to the tragic narratives from classical epic that had been evoked earlier – including their allusive presence in the speeches by the fallen angels in the first narrative sequences of the poem.

Chapter 1.

'Strength, … Chance, or Fate': Mythical Narratives and Materialist Alternatives

In this chapter, I focus on the speeches of the rebel angels, beginning with Satan and including statements by other fallen speakers during the council in Pandaemonium. As they contemplate their memories of the war in heaven and consider their future actions, Milton's fallen angels engage in warring narratives of the past and conflicting cosmic explanations of the present. The world of Milton's hell, I will suggest, is rich and confusing, and the uncertainty around fate and other materialist forces mirrors the intellectual experience of the rebel angels.[107]

I first turn my attention to the language of Satan in his first speech to Beëlzebub after awakening on the burning lake in chaos. In this speech (*PL* 1.116-26), Satan refers to 'fate' in a well-known subversion of Aeneas' reassurance to his men after the storm in *Aeneid* 1 (198-209). Unlike Aeneas, who consoles his men that Jupiter will bring an end to their present sufferings, Satan presents fate as an alternative to the Father's personal rule in heaven. His rejection of the authority of the Father at this key juncture in the narrative, I argue, reflects his wider rejection of the Father's divinity in the opening sequence of the poem. Satan's undermining of the Father, I suggest, begins with his refusal to 'deify' (*PL* 1.87) him through a formal act of supplication. This (in)action, and refusal to acknowledge the divinity of Milton's God, is in intertextual dialogue with the ordering of narrative in the *Iliad*, whose divine action begins with the goddess Thetis' supplication of Zeus. But whereas Thetis' supplication establishes the authority of Zeus over the Olympian gods and the divine and human narrative of the *Iliad*, Satan's non-supplication functions to destabilize the epic narrative upon which Milton builds his biblical story. Satan attempts this by drawing allusive parallels between the war in heaven and the Hesiodic account of the theomachies, the wars of the gods, which underlie the Olympian order of the divine in Homeric and Vergilian epic.[108] Milton's narrative debt to Hesiod for the war in heaven has been acknowledged, but I will suggest that Satan, as a fallen speaker, deliberately signals moments of perceived

[107] Dennis Danielson has recently shown how Milton's cosmology, like that of his contemporaries, was 'not binary but multiple' (see Fallon [2015], 991 on Danielson [2014]), oscillating between a variety of models, including the Copernican heliocentric view and Galileo's refutation of Ptolemy. This multifaceted view of Milton's account of the universe, I suggest, manifests itself also in the rhetoric of the fallen angels.

[108] For a wide-ranging treatment of theomachy in Greek and Roman epic, including its early modern reception, see Chaudhuri (2014b).

weakness of the Father in the war in heaven in language that evokes memories of divine conflict in the openings of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*. Satan's attempts, however, are reversed in Milton's own evocation of a Vergilian precedent for his portrait of the Father and Son in Book 5, a speech that recasts the image of Jupiter *metuens*, fearing the release of the winds in *Aeneid* 1.61, into the smiling, providential deity who reassures Venus of the safety and security of Aeneas' fate and the fate of the Roman people. Milton's scene has the Son re-enact and resolve any tension felt in the portrait of Jupiter in Book 1 of the *Aeneid*, with its reminder of the theomachic stories that lie behind his present rule, replacing the Vergilian tension with a Christian providential narrative.

Satan's undermining of the divinity of the Father serves as a preface to offering alternative, materialist explanations for his power in heaven. In the next part of the chapter I consider the rhetoric of Satan's fellow fallen speakers in the council of Pandaemonium, Beëlzebub and Mammon. In their respective speeches to the council, they offer the alternatives of 'strength' and 'chance' in addition to fate, to account for the rule of the Father. This enumeration of alternatives, and its focus on denying divine origins, may allude to the mode of scientific reasoning in Lucretian didactic epic. Far from making his fallen angels straightforward spokesmen for Epicurean philosophy, however, Milton evokes the narrative context of these allusions in post-Lucretian, heroic epic. In Statius' *Thebaid*, for instance, Pramit Chaudhuri has identified the enumeration of materialist alternatives for the cause of the earthquake that swallows Amphiarus in *Thebaid* 7 (809-16) in a structure that 'alludes to the philosophical, especially Epicurean, practice known as the *pleonachos tropos*, according to which a writer offers multiple plausible explanations for phenomena while remaining agnostic about the correct one.' [109] Statius' theomachic hero, Capaneus, moreover, is an important model for Milton's fallen angels in the council in Pandaemonium: their attempt to deny their divine origins and defy the Father's rule in heaven charts the reception of Lucretian argumentation in heroic epic scenarios in the *Aeneid* and *Thebaid*, in moments where the transgressive heroes, Vergil's Mezentius and Statius' Capaneus, rebel against the authority of the gods.[110] The imagery of Gigantomachy as expressing the conflict between materialist and idealist views of the world, as Chaudhuri has recently discussed, is a trope that goes back as far as Plato's

[109] Chaudhuri (2014b), 281.
[110] For a fuller consideration of Statius' possible influence on Milton, see below, Chapter 4, and the Appendix for Milton's likely knowledge of Statius.

Sophist (Pl. *Soph*. 246a–c). The tradition, Chaudhuri shows, is inherited by Lucretius at *DRN* 5.113-21, where the philosophical enterprise of the Lucretian poet is likened to a Gigantomachy.[111]

As a result, the narrative contexts of the allusions, which Milton evokes in *Paradise Lost*, highlight the fallen angels' misuse of Lucretian reasoning to describe the divine universe of Milton's epic. Finally, I discuss Milton's allusion to the Homeric account of the fall of Mulciber – and its echoing of Lucretian language – as the poet reinstates the epic authority of the Father over the pagan narratives of the Hesiodic and Homeric gods. At the same time, I will hint at Milton's complex engagement with Epicurean physics and ethics at the outset of the poem, which lays the groundwork for the Lucretian imagery that emerges in the narrative of the Fall in Book 9, to be examined in the next Chapter of my study.

1.1 Hesiodic Memories

In this section, I turn attention to Milton's use of Hesiod as providing a mythical and cosmic background for his own epic narrative. Memories of the divine conflicts narrated in the *Theogony*, I will argue, are a key backdrop to Milton's allusions to the opening of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, and specifically to Satan's attempt to undermine the power and stability of the Father's rule in heaven. This leads him to suggest an alternative, materialist genealogy of the foundation myths upon which Milton builds the narrative of the angels' rebellion by imitating the materialist rhetoric of Lucretius' epic. After evaluating evidence for Milton's likely familiarity with Hesiod's *Theogony*, [112] and the reputation and circulation of the poem in the early modern period, I will suggest that Milton's Satan reverses attempts by the narrator in the war in heaven to 'correct' the behaviour of Hesiod's Zeus in his defeat of the Titans. Instead, Satan refuses to acknowledge the divinity of the Father through an act of supplication, thereby activating a series of theomachic memories of the opening books of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*.

[111] See Chaudhuri (2014b), 60-1.
[112] See e.g. Feyerabend 2016, 109-10 on the 'materialism' of the *Theogony*, which he describes as central but 'different from later materialistic theories. [...] The materialism in *Theogony* is only one *side* of the primordial powers; it occasionally guides the creation process, but it is not their *essence*' (italics in original).

In beginning the narrative of the Fall, the subject announced in the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*, Milton turns to a far older story. It is the fall of Satan,[113] not of Adam, that dominates the opening action of his epic, and, for the depiction of this event, Milton turns to the foundation myths of the Graeco-Roman epic. Scholars have long commented on the use and function of the theomachic myths narrated in Hesiod's *Theogony* for Milton's apocryphal account of the rebellion, war, and expulsion of Satan and his legions from heaven.[114] An account outside the linear action of the poem, these events are recalled both by the narrator in the proem and by Raphael as part of his account of the war in heaven to Adam and Eve in Books 5-7.

Milton's use of the *Theogony* as an ancient model for his epic should not be taken for granted: as William Porter and, more recently, Stephen Scully have shown, the *Works and Days* (Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι), Hesiod's didactic and philosophical poem on farming and surviving life on the land, was considered the more important Hesiodic work in the early modern period, and was more widely circulated.[115] The *editio princeps* of Hesiod, appearing in 1480, contained only the *Works and Days*,[116] which, moreover, was translated into English over a century before the appearance of an English *Theogony*.[117] The prominent French humanist translator of and commentator on Homer, Jean de Sponde, prepared an edition of Hesiod in 1592 containing only the *Works and Days*,[118] while the Marshall and Winterton edition of 1635, though it contained the *Theogony* alongside the *Works and Days* and *The Shield of Herakles*, counted Hesiod among other 'minor' Greek poets, and also included the Hellenistic poets Theocritus, Moschus, and Callimachus. In Milton's treatise *Of Education* (1644), a list of authors similar to that in the Marshall and Winterton edition appears among

[113] Quint (2004) examines the complex network of allusions behind Milton's depiction of Satan's Fall, which he traces through Vergil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Dante's *Inferno*, and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Quint highlights the parallels between Satan's falling and Icarus', and ultimately reads Milton as polemically engaging with Lucretius and his Epicurean universe.

[114] Stella Purce Revard (1980) situated Milton's use of Hesiodic allusion among a polyphony of Renaissance genres in *Paradise Lost*. Porter (1993), 53-67 provides a comprehensive account of historical parallels noted by Henry Todd and Thomas Newton within a compelling analysis of Milton's transformation of *Theogony* 720-43 and finally of *Theogony* 687-9. Within the ambitious scope of his book on the reception of Hesiod's *Theogony*, Scully (2015), 171-83 has recently built on Porter's discussion of the same Milton passages.

[115] See Porter (1993), 53 and 184, n. 18.

[116] Contrast with the *Theogony*, which first appeared in print in 1495.

[117] George Chapman's *Works and Days* appeared in 1618, whereas the first translation of the *Theogony* into English, by Thomas Cooke, appeared in 1728. See further discussion in Scully (2015), 169-70.

[118] But contrast this with Henri Estienne's 1566 edition, which featured Homer and Hesiod as heading the list of 'the first Greek poets of heroic song' (*Poetae Graeci principes heroici carminis*). Scully (2015), 169 further points to the omission of any discussion of the *Theogony* by Philip Melanchthon in his 'Praefatio in Hesiodum', where he 'profusely praises the *Works and Days* for its philosophic wisdom, moral precepts, and useful guidelines for virtuous living [but] says not a word about Hesiod's other poems'.

the Greek authors recommended. There, Milton advocates reading Hesiod among poets who 'now counted most hard' may instruct the student in 'nature & mathematicks', thereby placing the *Theogony*, with its cosmological and aetiological content (if he intends it to be included along with the *Works and Days*)[119] within the tradition of scientific-didactic poetry: '… those Poets which are now counted most hard, will be both facil and pleasant, *Orpheus, Hesiod, Theocritus, Nicander, Oppian, Dionysius*, and in Latin *Lucretius, Manilius*, and the rural part of *Virgil*'.[120] Milton's own familiarity with Hesiod's *Theogony*, the Hesiodic work less known to his contemporaries, is thus remarkable. The difficulties that the *Theogony*'s polytheistic cosmos posed to Christian readers[121] is probably one of the reasons why the *Works and Days*, rather than the *Theogony*, was more widely read. The same objection to the pagan theology of Hesiod's epic, however, did not hinder Milton's reception of the poem. Rather, it provided him with a catalyst for expressing the conflict between the fallen and unfallen spheres of the poem.

Allusions by the narrator relate primarily to the actions of the fallen angels, as we see most prominently in the account of the fall of the Satanic legions from heaven. William Porter demonstrated how the account of the rebel angels' fall from heaven owes its imagery to Hesiod's account of the depth of the Titans' fall into Tartarus:

> [τόσσον γάρ τ᾽ ἀπὸ γῆς ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα.]
> ἐννέα γὰρ νύκτας τε καὶ ἤματα χάλκεος ἄκμων
> οὐρανόθεν κατιὼν δεκάτῃ δ᾽ ἐς γαῖαν ἵκοιτο·
> …
> ἐννέα δ᾽ αὖ νύκτας τε καὶ ἤματα χάλκεος ἄκμων
> ἐκ γαίης κατιὼν δεκάτῃ δ᾽ ἐς Τάρταρον ἵκοι.

[119] For Porter (1993), 53, Milton's 'recommendation […] appears to have been directed at the *Works and Days* specifically.' Dorian (1959), 394, n. 116 compares Milton's reference to Hesiod with the account of Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, who confirms that he studied Hesiod under his uncle's tutelage (though he did not specify either the *Works and Days* or the *Theogony*). For Dorian, the wider availability of the *Works and Days* also in facing Latin translations as we see in the Strassburg edition of ca. 1515, would point to it being read 'thus early' in Phillips' schooling. See also references to Milton's teaching of Hesiod in John Aubrey's account (in Darbishire [1932], 12). Milton himself is likely to have encountered Hesiod as a schoolboy (see Clark [1948], 27 and 121).

[120] *Of Education*, in Bush et al. (1959), 393-4.

[121] Desiderius Erasmus had criticized the gods worshipped by the pagans, using language similar to the ancient critic Xenophanes' condemnation of Homer and Hesiod's depiction of the gods: '[U]nder such deities […] it is permitted without recrimination to wench, to commit adultery, to deceive, to thieve, to have a tyranny and to stir up revolution as Jupiter is said to have done when he seized power […] and just as the rest of the gods did when they raised a mutiny and drove out Jupiter along with his supporters' (Erasmus, *Lingua* 705, cited and translated by Scully [2015], 167). Cf. Xenophanes, fr. B11 (as well as B12): Homer and Hesiod are condemned for making their gods resemble humans behaving badly, for depicting 'all things that are shameful and a reproach among mankind, that is the thefts, adulteries, and mutual deceptions': πάντα θεοῖσ᾽ἀνέθηκαν Ὅμηρός θ᾽Ἡσίοδός τε, ὅσσα παρ᾽ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν, κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν (text from Diels/Kranz [1934-7]). See further discussion of this parallel in Scully (2015), 167.

> For it is just as far from the earth to murky Tartarus: for a bronze anvil, falling down from the sky for nine nights and days, on the tenth day would arrive at the earth […] and again, a bronze anvil, falling down from the earth for nine nights and days, on the tenth would arrive at Tartarus.
> (*Th*. 721-5)

Just as the Titans fell as far below the earth 'as a bronze anvil would fall from the sky for nine days', so, in Milton's account, as Porter shows, the falling angels crash down 'Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night' (*PL* 1.50), and 'nine days they fell' (*PL* 6.871).[122]

Allusions to the actions of Zeus, moreover, highlight the dissimilarity of Milton's God from his Hesiodic counterpart. In the final scene of the war in heaven, as Porter shows, the Son is depicted in contrast to Zeus, routing the rebel angels with less than 'half his strength'. The arrows of the Son

> … withered all their strength,
> And of their wonted vigour left them drained,
> Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n.
> Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked
> His thunder in mid-volley …
> (*PL* 6.850-4)

The detail of 'half his strength', Porter observes, contrasts with the *aristeia* of Zeus in the *Theogony*, which in its climax depicts Zeus who, 'no longer checked his might, but … showed forth all his strength' (*Th.* 687-9). By echoing and revising the Hesiodic account, Milton, according to Porter, 'invites one to meditate on the contrast between the Greek god, exerting himself to the limit against no one in particular and succeeding in the end only with the aid of the monstrous hundred-handers, and the Christian Messiah, who faces the entire rebel army and defeats them almost without trying.'[123]

In his first speech in the poem, however, Milton's Satan also invites his fallen listener to draw a parallel between the war in heaven and the theomachic myths.[124] Theomachic

[122] See Porter (1993), 54. For a recent discussion of the generally Hesiodic nature of this episode, see Scully (2015), 173, with n. 27.
[123] Porter (1993), 66-7.
[124] Here, I believe, Milton's Satan, as a fallen speaker in the poem, inverts what Porter (1993), 63 described as 'Milton's poetic revision of Hesiod' through his allusions in Book 6, whereby he 'explode[s] the analogy [between Zeus and the Son] by contravening the reader's facile inference that, just because the rebel angels resemble the titans, Messiah must resemble Zeus'. Satan's speech, by contrast, is aimed at achieving the opposite effect.

'memories' lie behind Milton's allusions to Homeric and Vergilian epic in the first speech of Satan, destabilizing the epic narrative which serves as an accommodated image for the rule and stability of the Father in heaven. At the same time as the Miltonic narrator recalls the opening of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, in introducing the epic universe of *Paradise Lost*, Satan as rebel speaker discards the validity of the Olympian divine narratives that such a comparison implies by rejecting the epic as well as the theological authority of God in Milton's own epic narrative. Insofar as the image of the Father's rule in heaven re-appropriates the divine machinery of Homeric and Vergilian epic into Milton's Christian story, it is, for Satan, I will suggest, an unstable image of his authority over the rebel angels in the first books of Milton's epic, due to its Hesiodic background.

1.2 Satan's (Non-)Supplication

Satan's refusal to supplicate the Father in Book 1 constitutes the beginning of the action – or inaction – of Milton's epic. It begins the process by which Satan undermines the divinity of the Father, and is instrumental in leading to his eventual embracing of fate as a materialist alternative for the Father's rule. As he awakens in Chaos, Satan gives a speech to Beëlzebub in which he describes their shared defeat, and resolves to continue his defiance of the Father:

> … into what pit thou seest
> From what heighth fallen, so much the stronger proved
> He with his thunder: and till then who knew
> The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
> Nor what the potent victor in his rage
> Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
> Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind
> And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,
> That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
> And to the fierce contention brought along
> Innumerable force of spirits armed
> That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
> His utmost power with adverse power opposed
> In dubious battle on the plains of heaven,
> And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield:
> And what is else not to be overcome?
> That glory never shall his wrath or might
> Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
> With suppliant knee, and deify his power
> Who from the terror of this arm so late
> Doubted his empire, that were low indeed,
> That were an ignominy and shame beneath

This downfall …
(*PL* 1.91-116)

Satan rejects the act of submission to the Father through an act of supplication ('To bow and sue for grace / with suppliant knee … / that were low indeed', *PL* 1.111-14). Previous studies of Milton's allusion to scenes of supplication in classical heroic epic have focused on scenes that take place on the human plane, with the physical image of the 'suppliant knee' at *PL* 1.112, evoking the act of ἱκετεία ('supplication') in the beginning with an act of self-abasement, often followed by the suppliant kneeling before the person supplicated.[125] There are many such instances on the Homeric battlefield, such as, for example, Adrastos' supplication of Menelaos at *Iliad* 10.454-9, or Lykaon of Achilleus at *Iliad* 22.338-404.[126] Satan's speech, however, I argue, is closer to the divine than the human contexts of supplication. Thetis' supplication of Zeus in Book 1 of the *Iliad* is an instructive model for comparison. The implication that Satan's act of supplication contains for him, of 'deify[ing] his [*i.e*. the Father's] power', highlights the equivalent and equally programmatic role, I suggest, that Satan will play, not unlike Homer's Thetis in the first Homeric supplication scene. In the first book of the *Iliad*, Achilleus had asked his mother to sit beside Zeus and take his knees, reminding him of the favour performed for him in the past. Achilleus' speech recalls the episode of the attempt by the Olympian gods to put Zeus in chains. This episode then serves as leverage in Thetis' negotiation with the father of the gods:

πολλάκι γάρ σεο πατρὸς ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἄκουσα
εὐχομένης ὅτ᾽ ἔφησθα κελαινεφέϊ Κρονίωνι
οἴῃ ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι,
ὁππότε μιν ξυνδῆσαι Ὀλύμπιοι ἤθελον ἄλλοι
Ἥρη τ᾽ ἠδὲ Ποσειδάων καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη·
ἀλλὰ σὺ τόν γ᾽ ἐλθοῦσα, θεά, ὑπελύσαο δεσμῶν,
ὦχ᾽ ἑκατόγχειρον καλέσασ᾽ ἐς μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον,
ὃν Βριάρεων καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δέ τε πάντες
Αἰγαίων᾽, ὃ γὰρ αὖτε βίην οὗ πατρὸς ἀμείνων–
ὅς ῥα παρὰ Κρονίωνι καθέζετο κύδεϊ γαίων·
τὸν καὶ ὑπέδεισαν μάκαρες θεοὶ οὐδ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἔδησαν.
τῶν νῦν μιν μνήσασα παρέζεο καὶ λαβὲ γούνων,

[125] For an in-depth discussion of the physicality of Thetis' supplication of Zeus, see Gould (1973), 75-7. See also Blessington (1998) and, most recently, Whittington (2014). The former acknowledges Thetis' supplication of Zeus among a series of supplications which drive the action of the *Iliad*, but reserves closer discussion for scenes taking place on the human plane: 'Much of the action of the *Iliad* may be seen as a chain of supplications both for revenge and for mercy, linked in a chain of causation, beginning with Chryses who asks for his daughter back from Agamemnon; Agamemnon then takes Briseis away from Achilles; Achilles then asks Thetis to punish the Greeks; Thetis then supplicates Zeus to honour Achilles, and so on, till the patter ends with Achilles yielding up Hector's body' (Blessington [1998], 85). See also Revard (2002), 22.

[126] For a comprehensive list of supplication scenes in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, both on and off the battlefield and including divine actors, see M. Aldeen, s.v. 'Supplication', in Finkelberg (2011). On the early modern reception of supplication scenes see now esp. Whittington (2016).

αἵ κέν πως ἐθέλῃσιν ἐπὶ Τρώεσσιν ἀρῆξαι …

> Often I have heard you boasting in the halls of my father, and declaring that you alone among the immortals warded off loathsome destruction from the son of Cronos, lord of the dark clouds, on the day when the other Olympians were minded to put him in bonds, Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athene. But you came, goddess, and freed him from his bonds, when you had quickly called to high Olympus him of the hundred hands, whom the gods call Briareus, but all men Aegaeon; for he is mightier than his father. He sat down by the side of the son of Cronos, exulting in his glory, and the blessed gods were seized with fear of him, and did not bind Zeus. Remind him now of this and sit by his side and clasp his knees, in the hope that he may be minded to help the Trojans ...
> (*Il.* 1.396-408)

The episode recalled by Achilleus, and reiterated by Thetis, places her at a diplomatic advantage in her supplication.[127] The relative sway that Thetis holds over Zeus, as Kevin Crotty has noted, lies behind her gesture of submission in her supplication at *Il.* 1.499-505: 'having once rescued Zeus […], she is now in a position to negotiate with him'. Thus, Crotty argues, 'to the extent that supplication is expressive of subjection and domination, […] Thetis' use of it is ironically distanced from the underlying reality that Zeus owes his kingship to her and will seek to avoid her displeasure or distress':[128]

καί ῥα πάροιθ᾽ αὐτοῖο καθέζετο, καὶ λάβε γούνων
σκαιῇ, δεξιτερῇ δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀνθερεῶνος ἑλοῦσα
λισσομένη προσέειπε Δία Κρονίωνα ἄνακτα·
"Ζεῦ πάτερ εἴ ποτε δή σε μετ᾽ ἀθανάτοισιν ὄνησα
ἢ ἔπει ἢ ἔργῳ, τόδε μοι κρήηνον ἐέλδωρ·
τίμησόν μοι υἱόν, ὅν ὠκυμορώτατος ἄλλων
ἔπλετ᾽·

> So she sat down in front of him, and laid hold of his knees with her left hand, while with her right she clasped him beneath the chin, and she spoke begging lord Zeus, son of Cronos: 'Father Zeus, if ever among the immortals I aided you by word or deed, fulfill for me this wish: do honor to my son, who is doomed to a speedy death beyond all other men; …'
> (*Il.* 1.500-6)

Although Homer's Thetis may be a suppliant in gesture more than in the reality of her request, it is precisely this gesture, enacted at the beginning of the divine narrative of the *Iliad*, that announces the Olympian stability and authority of Zeus.[129] Thetis' supplication

[127] The source for the episode is unknown. See Kirk (1985), 93, ad 399.
[128] Crotty (1994), 22.
[129] Kirk (1985), 94, ad 399 describes Thetis' reminiscence as 'unusual', and it caused debates among scholiasts as to its authenticity and its appropriateness for the Homeric narrative. Laura Slatkin, moreover, notes that 'the ability to λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι ['ward off destruction'] is shared exclusively by Achilles, Apollo, and Zeus', who are 'efficacious in restoring order to the world of the poem'. Among these, however, 'Thetis alone […] is credited with having had such power in the divine realm' (Slatkin [1991], 65-6).

serves to forward and indeed shape the ensuing narrative, eliciting a promise from Zeus that defines both the human and divine action of the *Iliad*. It is through an act of supplication that the divine action of Homer's *Iliad* begins – and the shape of the human story is decided.

Milton's Satan, by contrast, rejects the divinity of the Father in relation both to the divine narrative of the *Iliad* and to the biblical narrative of *Paradise Lost*. A defining gesture of supplication, kneeling is impossible for Milton's Satan to enact, because it grates with the memory of the past war in heaven, and the perceived weakness of the Father in the face of the angelic rebellion.

1.3 Vergilian Memories (*PL* 5.711-37)

But Satan's is not the last word. The event which Satan recalls in his earlier speech, the war in heaven, and the Father's perceived weakness within it, is replayed in Raphael's account in Book 5. This episode, narrated by the archangel as he visits Adam and Eve in Eden, is, for William Empson, a direct enactment of the event that Satan alludes to at *PL* 1.110, namely of the Father 'doubting his empire'.[130] As Satan incites the revolt in heaven in Raphael's account, the Father turns to the Son, in a speech that Empson regarded as a self-inflicted challenge to both the omnipotence and omniscience of Milton's God:

> Meanwhile the 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 their light
> Rebellion rising, saw in whom, how spread
> Among the sons of morn, what multitudes
> Were banded to oppose his high decree;
> And, smiling, to his only Son thus said.
> Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
> In full resplendence, heir of all my might,
> Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
> Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
> We mean to hold what anciently we claim
> Of deity or empire, such a foe
> Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
> Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north;
> Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
> In battle, what our power is, or our right.
> Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
> With speed what force is left, and all employ
> In our defense; lest unawares we lose

[130] See Empson (1965), 96: 'Here we are actually shown God "doubting his empire"'.

> This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.
> To whom the Son with calm aspect and clear,
> Lightning divine, ineffable, serene,
> Made answer. Mighty Father, thou thy foes
> Justly hast in derision, and, secure,
> Laughest at their vain designs and tumults vain …
> (*PL* 5.711-37)

This image of the Father, wary of losing his heavenly empire, I suggest, evokes a paradox present in the depiction of Olympic deities in classical epic, whose current authority is founded on the suppression of a past uprising. We see an example of this in an early depiction of Jupiter in the *Aeneid*, in the account of his past imprisonment of the winds (*Aen*. 1.60-3). Vergil's account in particular rereads the Hesiodic antecedent, emphasizing the element of instability in Zeus' defeat of the Titans. Hesiod's account of the imprisonment of the Titans at *Th*. 729-35 had presented a scene in which Zeus establishes his authority over the natural as well as the supernatural world. The Titan gods are imprisoned 'by the plan of the cloud-gatherer Zeus' (βουλῇσι Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο):

> Ἔνθα θεοὶ Τιτῆνες ὑπὸ ζόφῳ ἠερόεντι
> κεκρύφαται βουλῇσι Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο
> χώρῳ ἐν εὐρώεντι, πελώρης ἔσχατα γαίης.
> τοῖς οὐκ ἐξιτόν ἐστι, θύρας δ᾽ ἐπέθηκε Ποσειδέων
> χαλκείας, τεῖχος δὲ περοίχεται ἀμφοτέρωθεν.
> ἔνθα Γύης Κόττος τ᾽ ἠδὲ Βριάρεως μεγάθυμος
> ναίουσιν, φύλακες πιστοὶ Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο.
>
> That is where the Titan gods are hidden under murky gloom by the plans of the cloud-gatherer Zeus, in a dank place, at the farthest part of huge earth. They cannot get out, for Poseidon has set bronze gates upon it, and a wall is extended on both sides. That is where Gyges, Cottus, and great-spirited Obriareus dwell, the trusted guards of aegis-holding Zeus.
> (*Th.* 729-35)

Though relating to a different episode than the imprisonment of the Titans,[131] Vergil's account of the cave of the winds guarded by Aeolus at *Aeneid* 1.56-63 evokes certain features of Hesiod's account.[132] Philip Hardie notes that 'Vergil, too, stresses the providence of Jupiter in arranging the imprisonment of the winds'.[133] But this image of a providential Jupiter is not easy to reconcile with the description of the father of the gods as *metuens* – 'fearing' the release of the winds as he enclosed them beneath the mountains:

> … celsa sedet Aeolus arce

[131] Vergil's immediate source would be Homer's brief description of the island of Aeolus at the beginning of *Odyssey* 10. See discussion and further bibliography in Hardie (1986), 90-1, including n. 17.
[132] Buchheit (1963), 66, n. 252.
[133] See Hardie (1986), 92, with the discussion of further parallels.

sceptra tenens mollitque animos et temperat iras.
ni faciat, maria ac terras caelumque profundum
quippe ferant rapidi secum uerrantque per auras;
sed pater omnipotens speluncis abdidit atris
hoc metuens molemque et montis insuper altos
imposuit, regemque dedit qui foedere certo
et premere et laxas sciret dare iussus habenas.

> In his lofty citadel sits Aeolus, scepter in hand, taming their [*i.e*. the winds'] passions and soothing their rage; did he not so, they would surely bear off with them in wild flight seas and lands and the vault of heaven, sweeping them through space. But, fearful of this, the father omnipotent hid them in gloomy caverns, and over them piled high mountain masses and gave them a king who, under fixed covenant, should be skilled to tighten and loosen the reins at command.
> (*Aen*. 1.56-63)[134]

For Philip Hardie, Vergil's depiction of the potential destructiveness of the winds at lines 58-9 (*ni faciat, maria ac terras caelumque profundum / quippe ferant rapidi secum verrantque per auras*, 'did he not [do] so, they would surely bear off with them in wild flight seas and lands and the vault of heaven, sweeping them through space'), 'imagines potential cosmic catastrophe in violation of a providential world-order',[135] kept in check by a conditional construction (*ni faciat* ...). Yet, the participle *metuens* is jarring, and all the more so as it is used in a similar position of Juno, who, at *Aen*. 1.23, is described as 'fearing' for her empire, Carthage:

Progeniem sed enim Troiano a sanguine duci
audierat Tyrias olim quae uerteret arces;
hinc populum late regem belloque superbum
uenturum excidio Libyae; sic uoluere Parcas.
id metuens ueterisque memor Saturnia belli,
…
arcebat longe Latio …

> She had heard that a race was springing from Trojan blood, to overthrow some day the Tyrian towers; that from it a people, kings of broad realms and proud in war, should come forth for Libya's downfall: so rolled the wheel of fate. The daughter of Saturn, fearful of this and mindful of the old war … kept them [*i.e.* the Trojans] far from Latium … (*Aen*. 1.19-31)

[134] Cf. also John Dryden's translation of *Aen*. 1.60-2, who emphasizes the fear by prominent placement, reflecting the Latin: 'In fear of this, the Father of the Gods / Confin'd their fury to those dark abodes, / And lock'd 'em safe within, oppress'd with mountain loads'. Cf. also Ovid's description of the warring winds in his account of the creation of the world, and the tenuous hold of the 'creator of the world' (*mundi fabricator*) over them at *Met*. 1.57-60: *his quoque non passim mundi fabricator habendum / aera permisit. (uix nunc obsistitur illis, / cum sua quisque regant diuerso flamina tractu, / quin lanient mundum; tanta est discordia fratrum*. This parallel is also noted in Hardie (1986), 93, n. 23.

[135] Here, as Hardie shows, Vergil transforms a Lucretian antecedent passage (*DRN* 1.277-9), which describes the ravages caused by strong winds, a passage that 'describes actual violence in the natural world' (Hardie [1986], 93).

Vergil's ancient commentator Servius attempted to align Juno at this moment with Jupiter, pointing to their shared genealogy: by naming Juno as 'Saturnia' here, Servius points out, Vergil evokes the 'cruelty' connected to the old god.[136] Moreover, Juno's fearfulness here (*metuens*) also aligns her with the supreme god, who, as we have seen, in his first mention in the linear narrative of the poem, is also presented as 'fearing' (*metuens*, *Aen*. 1.61, above). There, Servius is keen to emphasise a particularly Iovian quality of *metuens*: as he suggests, the fear which Jupiter displays should be understood as an exercise in caution – and a demonstration of the same providence which he will share with Venus in his first, providential appearance in the poem. Servius thus explains the verb *metuens*, 'fearing', with *providens*, 'foreseeing'. But whereas Jupiter *metuens* could, according to Servius, be read as foreseeing, Juno's description as *metuens* does not prompt any comment on Servius' part about divine providence – she is indeed fearful.[137] The Spanish Jesuit commentator Juan Luis de La Cerda, whose commentary on the *Aeneid* (first published in 1612) Milton is likely to have consulted,[138] reiterates Servius's explanation about Jupiter *metuens*, emphasizing that the participle *metuens* cannot be considered as it is commonly understood (i.e. 'fearing'), since it would not befit the dignity of Jupiter, who is omnipotent (*enim, vt vulgo accipitur, non esset è dignitate Iouis, qui omnipotens*).[139]

In *Paradise Lost*, I suggest, Milton's speech of the Father related in Raphael's narrative of the war in heaven, may, on closer inspection, recreate the paradox of Vergil's Jupiter as he is depicted in these separate moments in *Aeneid* 1. In the speech, and its introduction, the roles of Jupiter, the fearful establisher of his Olympian rule at *Aen.* 1.60-3, and later the smiling and foreseeing deity of *Aen*. 1.254-5, are enacted in a dialogue between the first and second persons of the Trinity, the Father and Son.[140] The concern expressed by the Father, 'lest

[136] 'SATVRNIA autem nomen quasi ad crudelitatem aptum posuit; Vergilius enim, ubicumque Iovi vel Iunoni Saturni nomen adiungit, causas eis crudelitatis adnectit' (Servius, ad *Aen*. 1.23). All citations of Servius' commentary are from Rand (1946).
[137] 'HOC METVENS providens. ergo Iuppiter timet non sibi, sed elementis, ne turbentur eruptio ventorum, ut si bellorum tempore dicas virum fortem timere non sibi, sed liberis suis' (Servius, ad *Aen*. 1.61).
[138] Martindale (2002), 108, with n. 8 observes that in Milton's time La Cerda's commentary 'was in regular school use […] with the famous commentary of Servius and Thomas Farnaby's *Notes on Vergil*' and is mentioned by Milton's correspondent, Carlo Dati.
[139] La Cerda (1612), ad loc.: 'Explicui, prouidens, & cauens. Metuere enim, vt vulgo accipitur, non esset è dignitate Iouis, qui omnipotens. (…) Inde est, vt metuo saepe capiatur prouideo, nam tum locus est prouidentiae cùm remotiores à malo sumus, quod de verbo timeo dici nequit. … de loco, in quo sum, Seruius ex fragmento Danielis ita: [Metuens, prouidens, cauens]'.
[140] How far this dialogue supports or undermines Milton's professed anti-Trinitarian views can be considered in light of a key dialogue scene between the Father and Son, which I will explore in Chapter 3.

unawares we lose, this high sanctuary, this hill' (*PL* 5.731-2), voices both the anticipated comments of Servius and La Cerda on the description of Jupiter at *Aen*. 1.60-3, comments centring on his fear and his (lack of) foresight.[141] The paradox of the two depictions of Vergil's Jupiter is expressed by the two speakers in Milton's scene. Like Jupiter, who responds to Venus 'smiling … with a look wherewith he clears sky and storms' (*subridens … uultu, quo caelum tempestatesque serenat*, *Aen*. 1.254-5), the Son responds to the Father with a 'calm aspect and clear' (*PL* 5.733). The professed fear and concern of the Father collapses, as does the implicit comparison with Venus: the speech of the Father, and the fear expressed within it, is itself framed by a smiling (*PL* 5.718) and all-discerning (*PL* 5.711) Father. Rather than undermining the seriousness of the speech, as Fowler suggests,[142] however, the Father's smile at line 718 and his fear at lines 731-2 reflect the way that both appearances of Jupiter coexist in the opening of the *Aeneid*. These two paradoxical sides of Jupiter are resolved, moreover, in Milton's account, by the two separate, yet harmonized persons of the Trinity. The Son's reminder is of something that has already recurred, a reflection of the Father's actions rather than a challenge to his authority. 'God's joke' at this moment, as Empson described it, functions as an allusion.[143] Milton, furthermore, is thus able to take full advantage of the time-shifts possible in the retrospective narrative of the war in heaven by recreating the first divine scene of the *Aeneid* later on in his poem, where it is contained within Raphael's narration.[144]

1.4 Satanic (Re-)Creations

The parallel between Jupiter and Juno *metuens* may signal a deeper irony in the passage: the hypothetical construction of *Aen*. 1.58-9 (*ni faciat, maria ac terras caelumque profundum / quippe ferant rapidi secum uerrantque per auras*) belies the fact that the winds will indeed be released, by the action of an equally fearful Juno, fearing the overthrow of Carthage. The

[141] Milton captures this paradox in *Naturam Non Pati Senium*, in the description of 'unforeseeing Jove', who, in Milton's rhetoric, foresees the revolt of the Giants – yet this image falls in the poem, yielding to an image of the Christian God, *pater omnipotens*, in an ambiguous balancing of pagan and Christian allusion that is explored more deeply in the dialogue between the two persons of the Trinity in *Paradise Lost*.

[142] Fowler (2007), ad 718: 'Indicating the speech is not meant in simple seriousness; despite Empson (1965) 96, one need not take God's anxiety at face value, or share Satan's disbelief in his omnipotence […] God's laughter shows omnipotence'.

[143] Empson (1965), 96. The 'laughter' and 'derision' of God, apart from biblical resonance, may, in its repetition, also capture two ways of interpreting the verb *subridens* at *Aen*. 1.254: the indulgence that Jupiter shows towards Venus (cf. Dryden's translation: 'To whom […] / Smiling with that serene indulgent face') as well as the derision that his prophecy implicitly demonstrates towards the plans of Juno.

[144] An earlier revisiting in *PL* of the dialogue between Jupiter and Venus in Book 1 of the *Aeneid* is found in the interaction of the Father and Son at the beginning of Book 3, a scene I discuss at greater length in Chapter 3.

Vergilian description of Jupiter *metuens* occurs at the section when Juno visits Aeolus, asking him to release the winds against the ships of Aeneas. The action that Juno proposes will in fact enact what Jupiter fears: the account of Jupiter's fear (or foresight) is timely, and the present tenses in the account are not only metrically expedient, as Austin points out,[145] but also proleptic, making present what is about to be present: the winds are about to be released in the action of the poem, through the actions of Juno. The Hesiodic narrative of the imprisoning of the winds, far from a distant memory, is about to be re-enacted in the storm that Juno sends. The epithet *Saturnia* for Juno has a Hesiodic force in the narrative of the *Aeneid*, and is used to denote the wrath of the children of Saturn,[146] as well as the particular wrath of Juno following the judgement of Paris.[147] Vergil's Juno, as Maggie Kilgour has pointed out, serves as a model for certain aspects of Milton's depiction of Satan in the first books of *Paradise Lost*. Kilgour argues that Satan and Juno 'are both associated with confusion, transgression, and boundary breaking'.[148] As a result of this comparative analysis, Kilgour concludes that 'Milton appropriates the antithetical principles that structure Virgil's cosmos for his own representation of cosmic conflict.'[149] In portraying Satan in both human and divine roles, Milton foreshadows the intimate relationship between the causes and the effect that Satan's actions have on the fate of man long before the temptation of Eve takes place.

As in Juno's visit to Aeolus in the *Aeneid*,[150] Satan initiates his action against the human sphere by visiting an Aeolus-type figure, Sin, who, along with their mutual offspring Death,

[145] Austin (1971), ad 58: 'the vivid present suggests that the catastrophe might happen at any minute, were it not for Aeolus […], but the construction is metrically advantageous too'. The vivid present, I argue, reflects the imminence of the catastrophe that *is* about to happen.
[146] Hera is the only one to address Zeus as αἰνότατε Κρονίδη in Homer, e.g. at *Il*. 16.440 (six times in total: see Walsh [2005], 36-7).
[147] The wrath of Juno is of course prominently written into the proem of the *Aeneid*, at lines 4-5, where Aeneas, still unnamed, is said to be tossed about 'because of the mindful wrath of Juno' (*saeuae memorem Iunonis ob iram*), and in the Vergilian narrator's theodicial question *tantaene animis caelestibus irae?* (*Aen*. 1.11; cf. also Dryden's translation of the Vergilian theodicy in his rendering of lines 10-11, 'Can Heav'nly Minds such high resentment show, / Or exercise their Spight in Human Woe?', in turn influenced by Miltonic reminiscence: cf. *PL* 1.3, '... and all our woe', my emphasis). The causes of Juno's anger – the judgement of Paris, the hated people, and Jupiter's seizing of Ganymede – are given at *Aen*. 1.25-8. As Levitan (1993) suggested, Juno's first words in the poem, *mene incepto* (1.37), through elision of *mene* and *incepto* forming *menin* (the Greek accusative for 'wrath', and the opening word of the *Iliad*), may also recall her wrath.
[148] Kilgour (2008), 654.
[149] Kilgour (2008), 654.
[150] Note the irony in the depiction of Juno, who, at *Aen*. 1.48-9, asks resentfully, 'and will any[one] still worship Juno's godhead or humbly [*i.e.* as *supplex*] lay sacrifice upon her altars?' (*et quisquam numen Iunonis adorat / praeterea aut supplex aris imponet honorem?*), yet herself acts as *supplex* before Aeolus at *Aen*. 1.64.

guards the gates of hell and the entrance into the upper world. Satan persuades Sin to open these gates for him, and she, in turn, swears an oath which resembles the oath of Aeolus to Juno:

> Aeolus haec contra: 'tuus, o regina, quid optes
> explorare labor; mihi iussa capessere fas est.
> tu mihi quodcumque hoc regni, tu sceptra Iouemque
> concilias, tu das epulis accumbere diuum
> nimborumque facis tempestatumque potentem.'
>
> Thus answered Aeolus: 'Your task, O queen, is to search out your desire; my duty is to do your bidding. To your grace I owe all this my realm, to your grace my sceptre and Jove's favour …'
> (*Aen*. 1.76-80)

Compare Sin's oath of allegiance to Satan:

> Though art my father, though my author, thou
> My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
> But thee, whom follow? ...
> (*PL* 2.864-6)[151]

Like Aeolus, who misguidedly acknowledged Juno as the supreme divine ruler, and who himself is erroneously elevated in the rhetoric of Juno to the position given to Neptune,[152] Sin hails Satan as her father, and also as a ruler who will build a new kingdom where she too will reign alongside him (*PL* 2.866-70).[153] Whereas Juno persuades Aeolus to release the winds, in *Paradise Lost* it is Satan himself who is released from the gates of hell. Having broken his dialogue with personified Chaos (a creation itself indebted to Hesiod and Vergilian imagery),[154] Satan appears as a destructive, quasi-natural force:

> He [*i.e*. Chaos] ceased; and Satan stayed not to reply,
> But glad now that his sea should find a shore,
> With fresh alacrity and force renewed
> Springs upward like a pyramid of fire
> Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
> Of fighting elements, on all sides round
> Environed wins his way …
> (*PL* 2.1010-16)

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[151] The promise of a future kingdom where Sin will be the 'queen' is signalled here, and will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 2 ('Though wilt bring me soon / To that new world of light and bliss, among / The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign / At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems / Thy daughter and thy darling, without end', *PL* 2.867-70).

[152] See discussion in Buchheit (1963), 66-7. After the storm, Neptune sends a message to remind Aeolus that 'not to him, but to me were given by lot the lordship of the sea and the dread trident', *non illi imperium pelagi saeuumque tridentem, / sed mihi sorte datum*' (*Aen*. 1.138-9).

[153] Again, see Chapter 2, section 2.5 of this thesis for further discussion of Sin's oath to Satan.

[154] Cf. the court of personifications at Hes. *Th*. 116ff. and Verg. *Aen*. 6.268-81.

Here too, as in the case of the Vergilian *ferant* at *Aen.* 1.59 (above), and in the account of the release of the winds by Aeolus at *Aen*. 1.81-3 (*Haec ubi dicta, cauum conuersa cuspide montem / impulit in latus; ac uenti uelut agmine facto, / qua data porta, ruunt et terras turbine perflant*, 'So he spoke and, turning his spear, smote the hollow mount on its side; the winds, as if in armed array, rush forth where passage is given, and blow in storm blasts across the world'), the tense switches to the present ('Springs upward') as the 'Satanic storm' begins in Milton's epic.

At the same time as he is the cause and agent of the Fall, so too Satan, in his strivings, is figured as its victim in the opening of the poem. After awakening on the fiery lake following his expulsion from heaven, Satan reassures his men in a speech which ends in a well noted Vergilian allusion:

> ' … since by fate the strength of gods
> And this empyreal substance cannot fail,
> Since through experience of this great event
> In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
> We may with more successful hope resolve
> To wage by force or guile eternal war
> Irreconcilable, to our grand foe,
> Who now triúmphs, and in the excess of joy
> Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven.'
> So spake the apostate angel, though in pain,
> Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair …
> (*PL* 1.116-26, my emphasis)

The narrative aside of lines 125-6, which ends the speech of Satan ('So spoke the apostate, though in pain, / Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair'), was first compared by Patrick Hume to Vergil's description of Aeneas reassuring his men after the storm at *Aen.* 1.208-9, *Talia uoce refert curisque ingentibus aeger / spem uultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem*, 'Such words he spoke, while sick with deep distress he feigns hope on his face, and deep in his heart stifles his anguish'.[155] Satan deflates the rhetoric of Aeneas, and specifically the Vergilian hero's confidence in an overseeing deity, bringing an end to their present sufferings. Aeneas reassures his men that 'god will give an end to these sufferings' (*dabit deus his quoque finem*, *Aen*. 1.199) and 'the fates will show us peaceful homes' (*sedes … fata quietas / ostendunt*, *Aen*. 1.205-6).[156] Satan, by contrast, invokes fate as a concept that is entirely divorced from the will of the Father, and reassures the rebel angels of their own

[155] See Hume (1695), ad loc. for the parallel.
[156] The English translation here is my own.

success beyond and, indeed, in spite of the Father's wishes. The fallen angels, 'In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced' (*PL* 1.119), in turn, seek, in their rhetoric, to assume the place of the foreseeing God in Milton's narrative.

Milton, I suggest, does more with the Vergilian passage than merely drawing a parallel between Satan's pretence and the feigned hope of Aeneas. Satan's speech in fact parodies Aeneas' reassurance of his men on an etymological level. In the description of Satan 'racked with deep despair', the narrator confuses the 'deep' pain of Aeneas with the 'hope' that he shows to his companions, as the hero exercises Stoic virtue in an action that suggests the actions of Jupiter himself.[157] Satan experiences an unfeigned loss of hope (recalling the etymology of the Latin *de-sperare*) and the suppression of his pain is an act of hypocrisy: the heights of his 'vaunting' match only the depths of his despair. Milton utilizes the double meaning of the Latin term *alta* to indicate both height and depth, fitting for Satan who must venture upwards to the gates of hell, and who in Book 4 describes himself as 'adore[d] … on the throne of Hell', but falling '[t]he lower still' and 'only supreme / In misery' (*PL* 2.46-92).[158]

As he subverts Aeneas' demonstration of Stoic ethics, Milton's Satan also subverts the reassurance that Aeneas offers of a benevolent Stoic deity who 'will give an end to these sufferings' (*dabit deus his quoque finem*, *Aen*. 1.199). His words foreshadow the delayed appearance of Jupiter at the end of the storm, echoing the words anticipated by Aeneas, *et iam finis erat*, '[n]ow all was ended' (*Aen*. 1.223).[159] Aeneas is the first human spokesperson in the *Aeneid* for a Jovian fate and part of the realignment of the Olympian order in the poem, anticipating the appearance of Jupiter as authoritative deity after the cosmic storm of Book 1.[160] For Milton's Satan, however, fate functions as a new alternative to the divine will

[157] Aeneas' suppression of his pain deep in his heart, *premit altum corde dolorem*, anticipates the pain that he will suppress in Book 4, in responding to Dido's entreaty, where his steadfastness recalls the 'unmoved purpose' of Jupiter himself (to whom he turns his gaze): *ille Iovis monitis immota tenebat / lumina et obnixus curam sub corde premebat* (*Aen*. 4.332). Williams (1972), ad loc. notes the parallel between the two reoccurring verbs, *premit* at 1.209 and *premebat* at 4.332.

[158] Cf. also Book 2, the description of Satan as lord of Pandaemonium: 'Satan exalted sat, by merit raised / To that bad eminence; and from despair / Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires / Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue / Vain war in heaven…' (*PL* 2.5-9).

[159] Denis Feeney (1991), 137 notes that '[f]rom the beginning Jupiter is associated with the end', and draws a parallel between Aeneas' hope in god to put an end to their suffering at line 199 and Venus' opening question to Jupiter at line 241: *quem das finem, rex magne, laborum?*.

[160] See Hardie (1986), 205, who notes that '[s]upreme divine power in the *Aeneid* is often described in meteorological terms. We first see Jupiter seated in the upper air (1.223), and Venus addresses him as lord of the thunderbolt (230); he smiles the smile that calms the storm (254f.)'. The parallel that Milton creates

of the Father. The fallen angels are upheld in their rebellion by a nature that may have been created by the Father (though Satan will deny this in Book 5), but is now upheld independently 'by fate' and 'empyreal substance': 'since by fate the strength of gods / And this empyreal substance cannot fail' (*PL* 1.116-17). Fate functions as the governing force of the universe, and the 'empyreal substance' of their bodies is figured as part of the primal Stoic element, fire – an element recruited to undermine the divine rule – and will – of the Father.[161] Milton's use of elements pointing to Stoic philosophy to illustrate Satan's fallen actions, and fallen reasoning, is consistent with his depiction in *Paradise Regained* of the follies of Stoic philosophers, who

> … to themselves
> All glory arrogate, to God give none;
> Rather accuse him under usual names,
> Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
> Of mortal things.
> (*Paradise Regained*, 4.314-18)

Milton's condemnation of the activities of Stoic philosophers would have carried an added relevance due to the rise in interest and more direct knowledge of Hellenistic philosophies in the early modern period,[162] and the ongoing debates about the relative merits of Stoic ethics by Christian thinkers. The Neo-Stoic movement, epitomized in Justius Lipsius' treatise *De Constantia* (1584), continued the ancient debates around Stoic physics and ethics which had themselves been revived for over two hundred years earlier, in the discussion by Petrarch in his *Remedies for Good and Bad Fortune* (1366).[163] Petrarch's treatise, as Jill Kraye notes, continued the tradition of the Church Fathers by defending Stoic ethical doctrines through their resemblance to Christianity.[164] Yet Stoic conceptions of fate continued to present a considerable obstacle to Christian readers, despite Lipsius' attempt to equate the Stoic

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between the appearance of the Father in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost* and that of Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1 will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3.

[161] Note that, in breaking through the gates of hell, Satan himself appears as a 'pyramid of fire' (*PL* 2.1013). Alastair Fowler (2007), ad loc. identifies this phrase as an etymological allusion, pointing to the Greek word for fire, πῦρ.

[162] The term 'Hellenistic' is not used until the nineteenth century. See discussion in Kraye (2007).

[163] Other key writers of the neo-Stoic movement are Guillaume du Vair and Pierre Charron, whose books 'did much to systematize and popularize this Stoic current in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries' (Brooke [2012], 13).

[164] Kraye notes the example of Job and, above all, Christ as 'heroic figures who had endured tribulation and excruciating pain more stoically than the Stoics themselves' (Kraye [2007], 100). At the same time, however, the resemblances between Stoicism and Christianity had been challenged by early modern thinkers such as Lorenzo Valla, who rejected the validity of the forged correspondence between Seneca and St Paul. The Stoic classification of pity as a vice, moreover, was condemned by John Calvin and Michel de Montaigne. See discussion in Kraye (2007), 100-1.

conception of fate with divine providence. Milton's condemnation of fate in *Paradise Regained* continues the line of thought of Augustine, as we have seen in the Introduction.[165]

Debates surrounding Stoic ideas of fate could have been deepened by the rise of interest in the rivalling Epicurean philosophy, with the rediscovery of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* in 1417 and the appearance of a Latin translation of the extant writings of Epicurus, preserved in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, published in 1430 (later followed by Gassendi's 1649 *Animadversiones in Decimum Librum Diogenis Laertii*).[166] If Stoic ideas of fate had presented a problem to Christian readers, then the Lucretian denial of a divine creator, and the emphasis on contingency in the establishment and continued state of the universe, would have been very hard to reconcile with Christian doctrine. Milton would have witnessed the Epicurean revival in England in the 1650s and the debates between Royalist and Republican intellectual circles around the topic of Lucretian atomism, and the implication it created of a godless universe not governed by divine providence.[167] The Republican Lucy Hutchinson was working on her translation of *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius' scientific-didactic poem expounding the philosophy of Epicurus, at this time, and her dedication to the poem shows an awareness of these philosophical systems. In the preface to her translation, published in 1671, she denounces not only the philosophy of Epicurus, but all 'Pagan Poets and Philosophers', including recognizably Stoic ones, who sought the truth 'in vaine', and 'wandred in a Maze of Error'.[168] The phrasing of Hutchinson's preface resembles Milton's own description of the fallen angels' philosophical

[165] See above, Introduction, section 'Augustine and Milton and Fate and Providence', and cf. Brooke (2012), 2: 'Insofar as Augustine was critical of Stoic fate, it was to attack their [*i.e.* the Stoics'] fondness for astrology, an argument best understood as a component part of the more general attack on pagan superstition […] Insofar as he was sympathetic, it was to uphold the notion of a universe under the benign governance of an omnipotent deity in possession of perfect foreknowledge, an argument directed against both Cicero and the Pelagians, who worried that the chains of causation that God foreknew were incompatible with the possession of a truly free will be human beings'. In Chapter 3, I will consider Milton's own treatment of the question of free will and divine foreknowledge through his readings of epic scenes.

[166] For humanist reactions to Epicurean philosophy, see Jones (1989), 142-65, who argues, however, that despite the availability of these texts 'the most expansive humanist treatment of Epicurean teaching, Lorenzo Valla's *De voluptate*, was composed without reference to Lucretius' poem or to Ambrogio Traversari's Latin translation of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives*' (Jones [1989], 145). For a discussion of Gassendi, see Chapter 2, section 2.2

[167] This interest in Epicurean philosophy, following Gassendi's *De vita et moribus Epicuri* in 1647 and his *Animadversiones* in 1649, was, as Norbrook notes, 'spearheaded by Royalist exiles who had spent time in Paris': Thomas Hobbes (whose conversations with William Cavendish and about Epicurean philosophy are said to have influenced Margaret Cavendish's 'Epicurean' *Poems and Fancies*) and the poets Abraham Cowley and Sir William Davenant. John Evelyn was at work on a translation of Lucretius at the same time as Lucy Hutchinson. See Norbrook (2011), xxviii-xli, and the recent discussion in Hardy (2016). The extent to which the cosmos is 'ruled' by chance in Lucretius will be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

[168] All passages from Hutchinson's translation of Lucretius are from Barbour, Norbrook, and Zerbino (2011).

activities following the council in Pandaemonium, where they specifically debated Stoic and Epicurean ideas of 'fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute, / And found no end, in wandering mazes lost' (*PL* 2.560-1, my emphasis).[169]

Satan's first allusion to fate as a force existing in opposition to the will of the Father contributes to the impression that Stoic or materialist conceptions of fate cannot be comfortably identified with Christian cosmology in Milton's epic. Satan's reassurance to his fallen companions becomes a statement about a new cosmology at the outset of Milton's narrative: a new order that is rhetorically aimed at undermining the existing order of Milton's theistic universe. For this, the fallen angels depart from Hesiodic-theogonic myth into the realm of scientific-natural philosophy and its reception in Latin heroic epic.

1.5 Beëlzebub's Materialist Explanations

Although the memories of the fallen angels in the opening of *Paradise Lost* relate to a past war, the action that they resolve will not result in a similar action. Satan's memories of the war in heaven at *PL* 1.111ff. attempt to replace the divine cosmology of the poem with a materialist one; and a second armed rebellion is ultimately rejected in the council in Pandaemonium, where a rhetorical alternative is proposed, a battle in which 'force' is replaced by 'guile' (*PL* 1.121). This constitutes a significant break from the past-focused narrative leading to the introduction of Satan and his first speech to Beëlzebub, moving on to the future focus that emerges as the council in Pandaemonium progresses and various speakers voice their positions. This progression is, in turn, reflected in a shift in Milton's use of classical allusion from allusions to the theogonic and heroic epics of Hesiod, Homer, and Vergil to evoking the language of Lucretius' Epicurean epic of knowledge, the *De Rerum Natura*.

Satan's Stoic-tinged account of creation given at *PL* 1.116-17 (see above) is expanded to include an Epicurean alternative by the second fallen speaker in the poem. Like Satan, Beëlzebub recalls the war in heaven and, like Satan, undermines the divine nature of the Father's rule. But his verbal challenge extends further, and departs from these origins altogether: at line 133 (below), Beëlzebub proposes a materialist account of the universe as

[169] On the motif of wandering, as Milton casts it in his epic, see further discussion in Chapter 4.

an alternative explanation for the status of the Father in heaven, and places fate, as the source of his 'high supremacy', alongside the options of 'strength' and 'chance':

> Oh Prince, Oh chief of many throned powers,
> That led the embattled seraphim to war
> Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds
> Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King;
> And put to proof his high supremacy,
> Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate …
> (*PL* 1.128-33, my emphasis)

In aiming to provide alternative explanations for the success of the Father, Beëlzebub's enumeration of options – strength, chance, or fate – recalls methods of reasoning in ancient schools of philosophy. The method of multiple explanations came to be employed by Lucretius at several points in *De Rerum Natura*, for speculating about phenomena beyond sensory perception or knowledge of the speaker, or generally beyond human knowledge.[170] What makes this feature specifically Epicurean in Beëlzebub's argumentation in *Paradise Lost*, I would argue, is not the rhetorical aspect on its own, but its function as the deliberate avoidance of a supernatural explanation. Satan and his fellow fallen speakers now adopt the rhetoric associated with scientific-didactic poetry, using the technique of 'demythologization' associated with Lucretius' treatment of mythical material in *De Rerum Natura*.[171] Within the allusive strategy of demythologization, Lucretius alludes to earlier texts that could be seen as in opposition to his Epicurean rationalism and contain mythical stories while at the same time rejecting their literal truth. He either presents a rationalized alternative or transforms the mythical contents into allegory. Thus, the didactic poet attempts, through the poem, to allay the fear of death in its addressee, Memmius.[172] One of the techniques lies in deconstructing the accounts of the gods by the philosophers and the poet through the use of multiple explanation.

The collocation 'strength and chance', which Beëlzebub echoes at *PL* 1.133, appears in the account of the philosopher Epicurus' achievement in the opening of *De Rerum Natura* 6, the closest we find to a heroic narrative in Lucretius's 'heroic' dactylic hexameter. The

[170] Contrast the works of Philodemus, where, as James Allen (2001), 239 observes, the Epicurean technique of multiple explanation is conspicuously absent. See the recent discussion on Lucretian multiple explanations in Hardie (2009), 231-63, with the overview of ancient traditions of multiple explanations and a discourse of uncertainty in Loehr (1996), esp. 174-90. See also Hankison (2013). For a separate consideration of Milton's enumeration of options within the argument for a wider 'poetics or incertitude', see Herman (2005).
[171] On Lucretian demythologization see Hardie (1986), 177-80 and 185-7, and Gale (1994), esp. 164-8 and 185-9.
[172] See e.g. Wallach (1976), esp. 83-91 on Lucretian allegorisation.

intellectual accomplishment of Lucretius's master, Epicurus, is expressed through the imagery of an exemplary heroic journey that rivals the mythical story of Hercules. The poet's praise of his master contains a speculative aside on the question of the origin of evil. In typically Epicurean terms, evil is here linked to human suffering, rather than a punishment of the gods, and can be traced either to those sufferings that are unavoidable in nature's force, *uis*, or the contingent sufferings brought by chance, *casus*, that befall humankind nevertheless:

> exposuitque bonum summum quo tendimus omnes
> quid foret, atque uiam monstrauit, tramite paruo
> qua possemus ad id recto contendere cursu,
> quidue mali foret in rebus mortalibu' passim,
> quod fieret naturali uarieque uolaret
> seu casu seu ui, quod sic natura parasset …
>
> He [*i.e*. Epicurus] put a limit to desire and fear, he showed what was that chief good to which we all move, and pointed the way, that straight and narrow path by which we might run thither without turning; he showed what evil there was everywhere in human affairs, which comes about and flies about in different ways, whether by natural chance or force, because nature had so provided …
> (*DRN* 6.26-31, my emphasis)

Lucy Hutchinson, however, in her full English translation of the poem, dedicated in 1675, renders *uis* as '*destined* force', inserting an element of fate absent from the Lucretian *uis*:

> [{He}] Reveald the Soveraigne good, w[hi]ch all affect,]
> Did easie paths to happinesse direct,
> And in a streight course guided lifes swift race;
> Disclosd what mischiefes lurkt in euery place.
> Howe, whither 'twere by Chance, or destind force,
> All natural things kept an vncertaine course;
> (By what ports men should issue forth to close
> With euery adverse fate, they would oppose)
> (Hutchinson's translation of *DRN* 6.26-31, my emphasis)

Hutchinson's translation of *uis* as 'destined force' may create the implication of a Stoic 'fate' in opposition to Epicurean chance, where Lucretius never makes the contrast explicit.[173] We should not be quick to see in this an endorsement of Stoicism: as I discussed above, both Hutchinson and Milton denounce the Stoic philosophers alongside the followers of Epicurus. Milton's portrayal of the fallen angels' shift from a mythical to a scientific perspective also describes one from a divine to a human perspective: by denying the divinity of the Father in heaven, and their own divine origins, the rebel angels deliberately adopt the perspective of

[173] See Furley (1966), who persuasively shows that Lucretius does not address the Stoic school directly.

an inquiring human subject in ancient didactic literature, ignorant of the invisible workings of the universe, whether perceived as the work of the gods or of nature beyond sensory perception. In the council of Pandaemonium, Milton's Beëlzebub employs a technique of demythologization, contained within an enumeration of options, in accordance with Epicurean aims, to deny a supernatural explanation for a phenomenon that exceeds sensory experience. In the context in which this device is employed, however, that is, in addressing questions of the source of divine power and the governing force of the epic world, Beëlzebub's speculation also recalls the absorption of Lucretian multiple explanation about the nature of the universe into Latin heroic epic. As Hardie has shown,[174] multiple explanations enter into the epics of Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan via Lucretius often in the context of traditionally epic questions – the wellsprings of heroic action and the role of the divine in human affairs – reframing traditional epic scenes with a philosophical flavouring. These are the epic contexts, I argue, in which Beëlzebub's Lucretian speculation occurs in the epic narrative of *Paradise Lost*. In Vergil's *Aeneid*, these moments can, however, betray an underlying supernatural explanation, such as we see in the options offered by the narrator at *Aen*. 12.320-2, in the account of Aeneas's wounding by an arrow: *incertum qua pulsa manu, quo turbine adacta, / quis tantam Rutulis laudem, casusne deusne / attulerit* ('launched by what hand, sped whirling by whom, none knows, nor who – chance or god – brought the Rutulians such honour').[175] The uncertainty announced there, at line 320, does not usually belong to the epic narrator, who has a privileged insight into the world of both the gods and men (as opposed to epic characters).[176] Richard Tarrant suggests that *incertum* announces the narrator's adoption of an alternative mode of discourse from the epic: the narrator adopts the position of a historiographer surveying his sources.[177] It is only in line 813 that readers may begin to suspect that the arrow neither appeared by chance nor issued directly from an Olympian god, but was sent by a lower goddess, Juturna, at the behest of Juno (Juno, fashioning the intervention as 'an act of mercy',[178] admits to Jupiter at *Aen.*

[174] See Hardie (2009), 237-63.
[175] The examples discussed by Hardie include, for instance, Nisus' question at *Aen*. 9.184-5, *dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt / Eurale, an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido?* The phrase *dira cupido* is, as Hardie observes, Lucretian (*DRN* 4.1090), and 'found in a context of the ruthless demythologization of desire, and coming shortly after a demonstration that Venus is nothing but a name for physiological processes.' But *dira* in the *Aeneid* is traced to the etymology of *dei ira*, and becomes a personification of Zeus' wrath in the figure of Dira. Cf. Feeney (1991), 182, who discusses Aeneas' speculation about the storm.
[176] The effect of the multiple explanation is all the more jarring when it is used by Jupiter himself in Book 10: *seu fatis Italum castra obsidione tenentur / siue errore malo Troiae monitisque sinistris* (*Aen*. 10.109-10).
[177] Tarrant (2012), ad loc.
[178] Tarrant (2012), ad loc.

12.813 that she had asked Juturna to intervene). The reader's suspicion, raised in the proem of the *Aeneid* 1, that all evils befalling Aeneas, starting with the storm of Aeolus in Book 1, come from Juno and her agents, may also lead one to conclude that his wounding in Book 12 was directly inflicted by Juno's agent Juturna directing the arrow in question. The narrator's speculation at *Aen*. 12.321 would then only appear as momentary doubt.

If the fallen angels had attempted to write themselves out of a heroic scenario, the very language they use places them more firmly in it, in the tradition of epic heroes who deliberately deny the authority of the divine. At the same time, Milton shows the voluntary ignorance adopted by the fallen angels as travestying the epistemological framework of philosophical epic: the seeking of knowledge in the absence of empirical phenomena. Satan and the fallen angels deliberately reject their own sensory, lived experience in favour of enacting a level of uncertainty associated with scientific reasoning, thus emptying the scientific approach of intellectual and, indeed, ethical meaning.

1.6 Lucretian (Mis-)Remembering

Unlike heroes who do not have access to divine insight (cf. the pathos of Aeneas's reproach to gods and men in *Aeneid* 2), or the narrator who momentarily suspends his divine inspiration or epic viewpoint, Milton's Beëlzebub deliberately renounces divine insight and empirical knowledge. It is first worth noting that he refers to the Father as 'heaven's perpetual king' (*PL* 1.131), hinting at the potentially finite nature of the Father's rule.[179] This is followed by his deliberate insertion of a moment of uncertainty into the memory of the war in heaven – and it is a misappropriation of the Lucretian aims for phenomena outside personal experience by leading away from the angels' previous knowledge of heaven. In Satan's words, in a debate with Abdiel in Book 5, an act of misremembering could be linked to more traditional Lucretian contexts: any debate over divine creation, a fact in Milton's theistic world, is denied by Satan by means of an argument that relies on a lack of sensory memory of one's birth:

> … who saw
> When this creation was? rememberest thou
> Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
> We know no time when we were not as now;

[179] Milton's eighteenth-century commentator Thomas Newton observed of this passage that 'Beëlzebub doth not say eternal king, for then he could not have boasted of indangering his kingdom: but he endeavours to detract as much as he can from God's everlasting dominion, and calls him only perpetual king, "king from time immemorial" or "without interruption"' (Newton [1795], ad loc.).

Know none before us ...
(*PL* 5.856-60)

Compare with *DRN* 3.670-3:

Praeterea si inmortalis natura animai
constat et in corpus nascentibus insinuatur,
cur super ante actam aetatem meminisse nequimus
[interisse et quae nunc est nunc esse creatam]
nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?

Besides, if the nature of the spirit is immortal and creeps into the body as we are born, why can we not remember also the time that has passed before, and why do we keep no traces of things done?

Satan's account gives prominence not to the idea of death that follows (*DRN* 3.674-8), but to challenge the idea of an *auctor*, a maker ('… rememberest thou / Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?', *PL* 5.857-8).[180] Rather than putting forward an argument against the immortality of the soul, as Lucretius does in the above passage, or providing a comfort against the fear of death, which, like one's birth, is not discernible with the senses, the rhetorical aim of a later Lucretian passage (*DRN* 3.819-61), Satan voices a direct challenge to God as creator and upholder of the universe. Satan argues that angelic souls are immortal – and presumes a kind of immortality that existed before any divine act of creation. But this, Milton may imply, is precisely Satan's 'misremembering', an error that he shares with Lucretius, evoked as a backdrop of Satan's account. In recognizing Satan's error and the Lucretian echo, then, readers can recognize a Miltonic criticism of Lucretius, a correction of his eternal universe without a divine act of creation. Satan, in his account, moves on from the Lucretian-tinged account of origins to a defiant statement about its implications both for his own power and for his future course of action; the conclusion is not to lose a fear of death, but to reinforce a belief in personal agency:

… self-begot, self-raised
By our own quickening power, when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native Heaven, ethereal sons.
Our puissance is our own; our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
Who is our equal …
(*PL* 5.860-6)

[180] Satan's disregard and ignorance of death in this example, contrasting with the emphasis on death in the Lucretian passage (the book ends with a statement about the great men who have died), is indicative of Satan's more general disregard for death, which, ironically, leads Satan to live through a spiritual death and in an state of 'endless misery' (*PL* 1.142). Further discussion in Chapter 2.

The conclusion to which Satan's Lucretian argument tends, however, moves the allusion from the world of Lucretian didactic into heroic epic. Satan voices the words of defiance associated with transgressive heroes in epic: the allusion to his 'right hand' recalls the words of Vergil's Mezentius at *Aeneid* 10.773-4, *dextra mihi deus et telum, quod missile libro, / nunc adsint!* ('May this right hand, my deity, and the hurtling weapon I poise, now aid me!').[181] Mezentius undermines the authority of the gods, and is the literary ancestor for Statius' Capaneus (*Theb*. 3.615-6).[182] Both Mezentius and Capaneus fail in their attempts to defy the gods, transgressing as much in their language as in their action. Mezentius' resemblance to the Giants has been noted.[183] His defeat in Book 10, moreover, has been seen as a way in which Vergil inverts the Epicurean attempt to fashion the Giants' rebellion as an image of the rightful resistance of *religio*, a superstitious belief in the gods.[184]

1.7 Mammon's Prophecy

The third fallen speaker in Milton's council in Pandaemonium, Mammon, recasts the conflict between the Father and Satan as a cosmic struggle between these two forces of 'fate and chance', forestalling the triumph of a materialist cosmology represented by chance over a divine order:

> Either to disenthrone the king of heaven
> We war, if war be best, or to regain
> Our own right lost: him to unthrone we then
> May hope, when everlasting fate shall yield

[181] Fowler (2007), ad 864-5 also notes a verbal parallel between Satan's statement and Psalm 45:4, 'Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things'.

[182] The link between Vergil's Mezentius and Statius' Capaneus had been noted by Lactantius, as Pramit Chaudhuri has observed. This literary transformation from the Vergilian Mezentius into Statius' Capaneus also informs the depiction of the hero Rodamonte's challenge to the Christian God in Boiardo's epic *Orlando Inamorato* (1482), at 2.3.22: see Chaudhuri (2014a), 534, n. 15. For the idea that Capaneus resembles a Giant, see also Chaudhuri (2014b), 290: 'Jupiter regards Capaneus' challenge [at *Theb*. 10.899-906] as another Gigantomachy and as an example of a lesson that has gone unheeded'.

[183] See Hardie (1986), 97, on *Aen*. 10.762-5, where Mezentius is described in language evoking both a giant and a storm, with the storm illustrating the primary image of the Giant.

[184] In Book 5, the Lucretian poet dismantles the idea that a lack of belief in the divine will result in divine punishment, using the example of the Giants (*DRN* 5.110-2) as an image of those who (like Epicurus, in language which, as Schrivers has noted, is reminiscent of Epicurus' own intellectual mission at *DRN*), 'with reasoning shake the walls of the world': *proptereaque putes ritu par esse Gigantum / pendere eos poenas inmani pro scelere omnis / qui ratione sua disturbent moenia mundi …* (*DRN* 5.117-19). See discussion in Hardie (1986), 210, and Gale (1994), 43-4. Some difficulty, however, presents itself in Aeneas' depiction as Aegaeon, the Giant who wars against Jupiter at *Aen*.10.565-70. Kronenberg (2005), 406 has attempted to address this issue by suggesting that Vergil, in his depiction of Mezentius and Aeneas in the closing episodes of the *Aeneid*, 'stretches the meaning of *impietas* by uniting a rejection of traditional religious behaviour with paternal piety', at the same time as 'Aeneas pushes the limits of *pietas* by associating *religio* with vicious behaviour.' Harrison (1991), ad *Aen*. 10.565-70 noted that 'the choice of a theomachic giant as a comparison for *pius Aeneas* seems darkly appropriate at a point where he is behaving most brutally.' Citing Williams (1983), 183, however, Harrison notes that through this simile, Vergil may depict Aeneas also as he appears to the Latins.

To fickle chance, and Chaos judge the strife
(*PL* 2.229-33)

In both the rhetoric of Mammon's speech and the options that are considered (a world governed by fate versus a world governed by chance), Mammon's prediction recalls the competing cosmologies enumerated in the prophecy of Lucan's Nigidius Figulus in Book 1 of the *Bellum Ciuile*,[185] an epic context in which accounts of necessitarian and contingent cosmologies vie for supremacy to replace the traditional divine order of epic. The Lucanian seer foresees a future in which the gods are conspicuously absent, one that depends on alternative materialist accounts, presenting the option of a world that subsists lawlessly (*nulla cum lege*), in which the stars move with 'uncertain motion' (*incerto motu*), or one that is moved by fate (*si fata mouent*):

'aut hic errat' ait 'nulla cum lege per aeuum
mundus et incerto discurrunt sidera motu,
aut, si fata mouent, urbi generique paratur
humano matura lues …'

'Either', said he, 'this universe strays for ever governed by no law, and the stars move to and fro with course unfixed; or else, if they are guided by destiny, speedy destruction is preparing for Rome and for mankind ...'
(Luc. 1.642-5)[186]

Lucan's speech of Figulus contains a Lucretian signifier, *aut hic errat*,[187] creating the expectation of Lucretian correction of mythical material. But Lucan's *errat* introduces a false account of Lucretian astronomy, in a wandering 'universe' (*mundus*), 'without any law' (*nulla cum lege*). Lucan's account of the 'wandering universe' can be compared with the song of the Vergilian bard Iopas, who sings of the 'erring moon' and the 'labouring sun' (*hic*

[185] Lucan has provided a persistent model for Milton's poem in Martindale's study. In particular, he points to a series of allusive debts to the *Bellum Ciuile* in *Paradise Lost*, including Raphael's echo of Cato's refutation of the notion of a 'local' deity at Luc. 9.578-80, echoed by Raphael at *PL* 11.335-8. Following William Blissett (1957), Martindale has argued that Lucan's Caesar inspired the creation of Milton's Satan, especially in the depiction of Satan's journey through Chaos and its debt to Lucan's depiction of Caesar's solitary night-journey across the Adriatic, a passage which 'illustrates […] Caesar's superhuman arrogance'. See Martindale (2002), 210-12. This influence has been further examined in Norbrook's reading, who suggests that Milton is more influenced by Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* than he is by the *Aeneid*, and excellently brings out the political impact of this: Norbrook (1999). See now also the further implications brought out by Paleit (2013), who examines the influence of Lucan on early modern English receptions from c. 1580 to 1650.

[186] The text of Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* is taken from Housman (1927). English translation by Duff (1928). Cf. also Christopher Marlowe's rendition of the passage from his 1600 translation of Book 1, which neatly captures the underlying dichotomy between fate and chance: 'The worlds swift course is lawlesse / And casuall; all the starres at random radge: / Or if Fate rule them, Rome thy Citizens / Are near some plague? …'.

[187] On *errare* in Lucretius see Fowler's note ad *DRN* 2.10: Fowler (2002), 58-9. Cf. also, as noted in Fowler's discussion, *DRN* 3.1051-2 (*ebrius urgeris multis miser undique curis* / *atque animi incerto fluitans errore vagaris*), where *errare* expresses uncertainty (rather than incorrectness).

canit errantem lunam solique labores, *Aen*. 1.742). Iopas's account is, on the one hand, closer to Lucretius, since the sun and moon are described in motion, but, on the other hand, it departs from Lucretius in the image of the 'falling' (i.e. poetic for 'setting') sun, displacing their settled movement, which is described by Lucretius as neither so heavy as to sink down nor light enough to float (*labier*) across the sky (… *neque tam fuerunt grauia ut depressa sederent, / nec leuia ut possent per summas labier oras*, 'they were neither so heavy as to sink down and settle, nor so light that they could glide through the uppermost regions', *DRN* 5.474-5), therefore maintaining a cosmic equilibrium. In Vergil, Iopas's poetic account of the daily setting – or 'fall' – of the sun may express a new type of epic poetry, occupied with questions of natural philosophy.[188] For Lucan, however, these terms are charged as the traditional epic order is undermined, and even the natural world appears to participate in its confusion.

But, where, in Lucan's vaticination of Figulus, the two possibilities are held in suspension, Milton's Mammon, while initially presenting two options, ultimately resigns one of the options presented: as becomes clear in the next line, the option that fate might yield to chance can only be a 'vain … hope' (*PL* 2.234). In Mammon's prediction, the triumph of a version of Epicurean physics would be the only condition for the success of a second war in heaven. The fallen angels' only hope of overthrowing the Father would be in a world where the Satanic (dis)order dominates the upper world as it does the lower: we catch a glimpse of this world through the gates of hell guided by Sin and Death in Book 2, where 'Chaos umpire sits', and 'Chance governs all' (*PL* 2.907, 910): a linguistic order, ironically, imposed on disorder.[189] Mammon's proposing the alleged triumph of Epicurean materialism over a Stoic or theistic order turns out to be an unreal option, and a rhetorical technique of breaking the news that a victory over the Father is impossible: 'The former, vain to hope, argues as vain / The latter' (*PL* 2.234-5).[190] The certainty of a relentless fate ruling the political landscape of Lucan's epic is emphasized in Thomas May's 1627 translation of Lucan, which aligns the evils that befall the Roman state, following Lucan's version, with the fulfilment of a Stoic conception of fate and a punishment for the excesses of Rome:

> Either no laws direct the world, quoth he,

[188] On the way in which Vergil's Iopas diverges in his song from the Homeric bards Phemius and Demodocus, see Hardie (1986), 52-66.
[189] See further discussion in Sugimura (2009), 237.
[190] This could be read as another point of similarity with Figulus' prophecy. See the discussion in Roche (2009), ad loc., who argues that Figulus' alternative options are meant to soften the blow of the actual prophecy delivered.

> And all the starres doe moue uncertainly;
> Or if Fates rule, a swift destruction
> Threatens mankind, and th'earth ...
> (T. May, *Pharsalia*, 1.642-5)

As Edward Paleit has recently argued, May later transposes the same idea onto the social unrest of England on the eve of the Civil War, and within a wider narrative of 'relentless fate' that governs the rise and fall of empires – including England – for May's elusive political alignments.[191] The cosmic contest that Mammon proposes, it turns out, is an atavistic one: ironically, it leads to a return to Hesiodic chaos – the point which Satan attempts both physically (at the end of Book 2) and allusively (in his opening speech) to depart from at the beginning of the poem's narrative action.

1.8 Chaos Revisited

According to the biographical account in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives*, Epicurus is said to have turned to philosophy when his teachers were unable to explain the origins of Hesiod's concept of chaos. This account would have been familiar to Milton and to his intellectual circles from Pierre Gassendi's widely circulated 1649 *Animadversiones*, an extensive commentary on Book 10 of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives*, which sought to elucidate Epicurean physics and ethics (Gassendi dedicated a separate volume to each question).[192] In the rhetoric of Milton's fallen angels, however, the adoption of Epicurean argumentation leads, ironically, to a frustration of its aims, that is, to a proposed return to chaos and a subversion both of Epicurean physics and, as we will see in the next chapter, of Epicurean ethical teachings. In the opening of Milton's epic, Lucretian-Epicurean reasoning takes the fallen angels further away from their lived experience of a theistic order with the divine authority of the Father. Whereas mythical material offered unreal explanations for natural phenomena for the didactic poet of *De Rerum Natura*, in Milton's Christian epic Lucretian reasoning is subverted insofar as materialist explanations are themselves false explanations for the reality of divine revelation and of Milton's theistic cosmogony.

The relationship between mythical and scientific material, pursued in two divergent directions of the Satanic rhetoric of the opening books of *Paradise Lost*, collides in the

[191] Paleit (2013), 241-2.
[192] In his *Divinae Institutiones*, moreover, the early Christian writer Lactantius had complained about Hesiod's neglect to show what came before chaos (see *D.I.* 5.1.8).

narrator's account of the architecture of Pandaemonium in the closing of Book 1. Milton narrates the story of Mulciber and his fall from heaven:

> ... and in Ausonian land
> Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
> From Heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
> Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day; and with the setting sun
> Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
> On Lemnos the Aegean isle: thus they relate,
> Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
> Fell long before …
> (*PL* 1.739-48)

Milton's account has been identified as a 'close imitation' of *Iliad* 1.589-94, where the god Hephaistos (who is called Mulciber, or Vulcan, in Latin) relates his punishment by Zeus.[193] His relaying of an account that 'they fabled' evokes a tradition of mythical stories relating of divine transgression and punishment:[194]

> … ἀργαλέος γὰρ Ὀλύμπιος ἀντιφέρεσθαι·
> ἤδη γάρ με καὶ ἄλλοτ᾽ ἀλεξέμεναι μεμαῶτα
> ῥῖψε ποδὸς τεταγὼν ἀπὸ βηλοῦ θεσπεσίοιο,
> πᾶν δ᾽ ἦμαρ φερόμην, ἅμα δ᾽ ἠελίῳ καταδύντι
> κάππεσον ἐν Λήμνῳ, ὀλίγος δ᾽ ἔτι θυμὸς ἐνῆεν·
> ἔνθα με Σίντιες ἄνδρες ἄφαρ κομίσαντο πεσόντα.
>
> … [F]or a hard foe is the Olympian to meet in strife. For another time before this, when I was eager to save you, he caught me by the foot and hurled me from the heavenly threshold; the whole day long I was borne headlong, and at sunset I fell in Lemnos, and but little life was left in me. There the Sintian people promptly took care of me after my fall.
> (*Il*. 1.589-94)

Both Richard Jenkyns and Alastair Fowler identified Milton's correction of this myth with the Lucretian *errat* at *DRN* 1.391-3 (where the poet corrects a misguided idea about the

[193] Martindale (2002), 72 notes that '[i]t is comparatively rare for Milton to translate freely his predecessors' work in the common Renaissance way [...] – but in this passage he does so'. On Milton's imitation of Homer here, also Fowler (2007), ad loc.: 'Magnificently emulating Homer's description of the daylong fall – then casually dismissing it (i 746–8; cf. *Il*. 591–5)'. Note further that, in typically Miltonic fashion of imitative conflation of Latin and Greek, the Greek god Hephaistos is introduced by the Latin name 'Mulciber', whereas the name for Italy is given in its Greek version, 'the Ausonian land' (1.739).

[194] Martindale (2002), 73 suggests that Milton was drawn to the 'cosmic grandeur' of the Homeric account of a divine being expelled from heaven. He further points to Milton's use of the Hephaistos myth in *Naturam non pati senium*, 23-4 and in *Elegy* 7.81-2 (also noted by Fowler [2007], ad 738-40).

absence of void),[195] linking it to the prominent enjambed positioning of Milton's 'Erring' (*PL* 1.747), which mirrors Lucretius's own enjambment of *errat* (1.393).[196] Martindale further notes the recurrence of the phrase *ut fama est* in Lucretius, such as in the Lucretian account of a 'war' between moisture and heat at *DRN* 5.392-415 (according to Martindale, 'perhaps the closest [rhetorical] analogy to the Mulciber passage'),[197] which contains Lucretius' correction of the myth of Phaethon as a false story told by the Greek poets (*DRN* 5.405-6).[198] The Lucretian distancing phrase, allusively introducing his correction of myth, may be echoed in Milton's 'thus they relate' and 'they fabled'. Unlike Lucretius, however, who dismisses and rationalises mythical accounts of the origin of natural phenomena, in his technique of 'demythologization',[199] Milton refutes pagan myth only to replace accounts of the Greek poets with an older account of the fall of Satan from the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The story of Satan's fall predates the Homeric and Hesiodic myths and is the assumed back-story behind the action of the Genesis account of the fall of Adam and Eve. Milton's correction of both Hesiod and Lucretius in this passage is not a straightforward rejection or rationalisation of myth, in the manner that is employed by the didactic poet in *De Rerum Natura*, but is in fact a shifting of the Homeric and Hesiodic timelines to make his story antedate the foundation myths of Graeco-Roman antiquity, thereby inserting a Judaeo-Christian timeline into the stream of epic mythology. For Milton, Mulciber is a name accommodated to his Christian *aetion*,[200] the far older story of the fall of the rebel angels. The Hesiodic gods *are* fallen and Jupiter who 'usurping reigned' is named among the catalogue of devils at *PL* 1.514. But what for Lucretius is a false aetiology – a divine theogonic myth – is for Milton a biblical reality, closer to the truth than Lucretius' epic of

[195] *quod si forte aliquis, cum corpora dissiluere, / tum putat id fieri quia se condenseat aer, / errat*, 'But if by chance anyone thinks that this happens at the moment when the bodies have leapt asunder because the air be compressed, he goes astray' (*DRN* 1.391-3).
[196] See Jenkyns (1982), 129-30 and Fowler (2007), ad loc. Martindale (2002), 74 is more hesitant, remarking that 'there may be the ghost of an echo here ("erring" and "errat"), but the effect in this passage of Lucretius is different, since there is no juxtaposition of styles. Nevertheless, a Lucretian influence is likely'.
[197] Martindale (2002), 74.
[198] Cf. *ut fama est* at *DRN* 5.395 and *ut veteres Graium cecinere poetae* at 5.405. Lucretius' account of the worship of Cybele in Book 2 also begins in a similar way (*hanc veteres Graium docti cecinere poetae*, 'The learned ancient poets of Greece sang that she ...', *DRN* 2.600), and Jenkyns (1982), 131, n. 49 argued that 'Milton probably had this passage in mind [...] when he wrote his description of the fall of Mulciber'.
[199] See discussion in section 1.5 above. But this technique is, one may argue, not without its ironies in Lucretius: the relationship between the 'honey' of the poetic form and the 'wormwood' of the didactic message (a conceit used by Lucretius at the opening of Book 4) at times appears to create the opposite effect. At *DRN* 4.570ff., during Lucretius' discussion of echoes, the poet 'magically evokes a picture of satyrs and nymphs and Pan playing his pipes in lonely places at night, only to reject it with contempt. Martindale claims that, as a result, 'the best poetry is given […] to the stories that are being dismissed' (Martindale [2002], 75).
[200] For Milton's theory of accommodation, as demonstrated in Raphael's preface to his narration of the war in heaven at *PL* 5.570-6, see Martindale (2002), 63-4.

knowledge and older than the account of the *Theogony*. Where Satan had undermined the validity of theogonic allusion at the beginning of Book 1, the narrator reclaims it for the biblical narrative of the Fall at the end of the Book.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I considered how Milton sets up his narrative of fate through the language of Satan and the fallen angels in Books 1 and 2 of *Paradise Lost*. After his expulsion from heaven, Satan, I suggested, attempts to deny the divinity and authority of the Father by alluding to epic accounts of divine conflict, which allusively cast Milton's God in the equivalent role of Homer and Hesiod's Zeus and Vergil's Jupiter. Satan's refusal to supplicate and 'deify' the Father at this key juncture in the narrative of the poem has a similar significance as Thetis' supplication of Zeus in the *Iliad*. Furthermore, it evokes memories of the theomachic backstories underlying the image of Olympian order at the beginning of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*. Unlike Aeneas in his first statement about fate in the *Aeneid*, where he foreshadows Jupiter's appearance and the significance of the father of the gods in voicing fate, Satan, in his first speech to the fallen angels, refers to fate as an alternative force which can be invoked against the Father's wishes, alongside other materialist alternatives of 'strength' and 'chance'. The fallen angels' attempt to explain their origins and the history of their unsuccessful war in heaven during the council in Pandaemonium, moreover, leads them to imitate Lucretian techniques of reasoning, which deny divine causes for natural phenomena. Milton's fallen angels, however, employ this language misguidedly, and their consideration of a cosmos ruled by chance rather than the providence of the Father leads them to an intellectual regression – and a refutation of Lucretian reasoning – through a return to chaos. In the next chapter, I will consider Milton's still deeper engagement with Lucretian concepts of material necessity through the language of natural boundaries in *De Rerum Natura*, as played out in the narrative leading up to Satan's temptation and the fall of Adam and Eve.

Chapter 2.

LUCRETIAN TEMPTATIONS:

TRANSGRESSION AND NATURAL LAW IN MILTON'S EDENIC NARRATIVE

In Chapter 1, I considered ways in which Lucretius' epic of knowledge, *De Rerum Natura*, functions as a source of allusion for the language of the fallen angels, but also for the refutation of classical myths in the opening books of *Paradise Lost*. The rebel angels, as we saw, attempt to undermine the authority of the Father in the aftermath of their expulsion from heaven by proposing an alternative, materialist aetiology that echoes the technique of multiple explanation found in *De Rerum Natura*. Lucretian allusion provides a rhetorical means for the fallen angels to defy the Father and challenge his authority in the opening books of the poem. The allusive language of the rebel angels is, as I have argued, contradicted by the divine reality depicted in the poem (or implied by the Judaeo-Christian theology it expounds): the materialist arguments used to account for the angels' origins, for example, especially their undermining of the Father's role in creation and his superior power over all creatures, are challenged by the narrative context in which the rebels find themselves in the opening of Milton's epic, as they awake on the fiery lake following their expulsion from heaven. Their attempts at materialist argumentation, and rhetorical defiance of the Father, as we saw, recall the language of epic heroes such as Vergil's Mezentius and Statius' Capaneus, who attempt – unsuccessfully – to defy the authority of the epic gods. Milton's allusions to words of these heroes in the language of the fallen angels thus not only provide a language for their rebellion, but also, indirectly, announce their shared fate.

As we have seen in the introduction, Lucretius is a materialist but not a fatalist.[201] He rejects the notion of fate at the same time as he rejects the idea of the gods overseeing human affairs. *De Rerum Natura* is a poem, which, at the same times as it denies fate and providence, asserts the natural order of the universe and the laws of nature (*foedera naturae*).[202] Perhaps the major role of Lucretian allusion in this sequence of *Paradise Lost* is in illustrating the breadth and significance of Satan's – and later of Adam and Eve's boundary-breaking. Not only do they break the laws of heaven, but they are also depicted

[201] See Introduction, section 'Materialist and divine accounts: ancient and early modern backgrounds on free will and natural order'.
[202] See Introduction, esp. 'Chance and natural law: some early modern background'.

as transgressing the natural laws in Eden. This Lucretian concept of transgression continues after the Fall, and imbues Adam and Eve's thinking about their fallen condition. Natural law, which Milton evokes through Lucretian allusion, precedes fate in the prelapsarian world of *Paradise Lost*.

Milton's account of the Fall draws upon imagery of *De Rerum Natura* not only to enrich an image in the poem, but to announce a deeper reality that transcends the narrative situation. Lucretian imagery, I argue, permeates a number of scenes in Book 9 of *Paradise Lost*, beginning with Satan's journey to Eden (a noted source of Lucretian allusion from a number of angles), the sequence leading up to the moment of Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit, and Adam and Eve's initial negotiation of their fallen state in the immediate aftermath of the Fall. Although previous scholarship on Lucretius' influence on *Paradise Lost* has isolated a number of allusions to *De Rerum Natura*, less emphasis has been placed on examining the way in which such allusions may have an impact on our reading of key issues which appear in Milton's retelling of the Fall.[203] Allusions to Lucretius afford a new perspective on Milton's refashioning of the Genesis account of the Fall, by engaging with theories of human cognition in Epicurean teaching. Lucretian imagery relating to the process of knowing and discerning and the origins of language lies behind the sequence of Eve's initial encounter with the serpent. Lucretius' account of ethical and physical transgression, moreover, plays a role in shaping Milton's depiction of transgression in the Fall sequence.

The paradox of Milton's – alongside other Christian readers' – engagement with the materialist and (from a seventeenth-century perspective) effectively atheist[204] Lucretius has been considered in a variety of studies in the last few decades.[205] Like Vergil, I would

[203] Previous treatments of Lucretian allusion in *Paradise Lost* include sections of Lewalski (1985), 40-2, 133-5, Leonard (2000, on Milton's engagement with the Lucretian conception of chaos), Quint (2004), and Hardie (2009), 264-79 (revised from Hardie [1995]). See further bibliography also in Hopkins (2007), 273.
[204] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines an 'atheist' as one who 'denies or disbelieves the existence of a God' (1) or 'practically denies the existence of a God by disregard of moral obligations to Him; a godless man' (*OED*, s.v.). Lucretius does not fall into the first category: nowhere in the poem does he deny the existence of the gods, but aims to explode the idea that the gods take an active interest in human affairs. Norbrook (2011), lxv has suggested that in the preface to her translation of *De Rerum Natura*, Lucy Hutchinson uses the term 'atheist' in the 'familiar early modern sense of denying divine involvement in the creation and sustaining of the universe'.
[205] These include Lewalski (1985), Fallon (1991), and Hardie (2009). See discussion in main text below.

argue, Milton appears to 'remythologize' Lucretian material in his epic.[206] Previous scholarship has noted the way in which Milton echoes the materialist cosmology of *De Rerum Natura*, while replacing it with his Christian cosmology – as we see, for example, in Raphael's account of angelic sexuality.[207] On the other hand, Stephen Fallon has also drawn attention to the way in which *Paradise Lost* shares significant features of Lucretius' epic, most strikingly, in Raphael's account of angelic materiality and in a common didactic aim shared by both epic poems.[208]

In the following, I consider the way in which the moral and intellectual error of the rebel angels (and, later, of Adam and Eve) can be seen through allusion to Lucretius' teachings about natural law and the limits of the universe. Milton maps Adam and Eve's Fall, I argue, precisely through reference to didactic sequences in Lucretius, sequences which detail the process of acquiring knowledge and warn against illusion and intellectual deception. The reading of allusion is part of the didactic experience in this sequence. In Book 9, as Eve is drawn closer into the serpent's rhetoric, she enacts a series of Lucretian warnings against intellectual error, and its moral consequences. The Lucretian topics and images that emerge in Milton's narrative include his warnings against sensory illusion and false wonder, provoked in Eve by witnessing the transgression of natural law in Satan's inhabiting of the body of a serpent; his account of transgression and its violation of natural law in the rhetorical prospect of Eve's rule in Eden, as suggested by the serpent; and the depiction of psychological suffering that results from the human fear of death – the ultimate boundary of human life experienced in the aftermath of Adam and Eve's sin. In the depiction of the natural law in Eden, and its Lucretian idiom, Milton engages with a number of subtle early modern readings of Lucretian metaphysics. While the Epicurean *De Rerum Natura* does not itself endorse any sense of fatalism or providentialism, the Lucretian poem, a didactic epic of knowledge dealing with issues of necessity as well as

[206] On the Lucretian technique of '*de*mythologization', see n. 171 above. For Vergil's technique of 'remythologizing' Lucretius' own treatment of myth in the *Georgics*, see Gale (2000), 116-17.
[207] Raphael's account of creation at *PL* 5.404-5 has been described as a 'miniature *De Rerum Natura*': see Lewalski (1985), 40-2 and 133-5. In the account of the angels' corporal existence at *PL* 8.622-9, as C. S. Lewis showed, the Lucretian account of the limitations of human sexuality (*DRN* 4.1076-1111) provides an antecedent passage through which the angels' transcendence of materialism is imagined. The sexual impulse, according to Lucretius, is one that seeks the fusion of two bodies, an aim that can never be fulfilled, ... *possunt* / *nec penetrare et abire in corpore toto* (*DRN* 4.1111). But where humans strive for body union, the angels gain a spiritual intimacy, unbound by bodies. See Lewis (1942), 113.
[208] See Fallon (1991), 166. For more recent studies of Milton's angelology and materialism, see Sugimura (2009) and Raymond (2010).

contingency, nevertheless emerges as a text highly resonant for the Miltonic vocabulary of fate, necessity, and providentialism in *Paradise Lost*.

In Book 9, as I will argue, Milton makes use of the Lucretian depiction of natural law to show the rebellion of Satan, and then of Eve, as transgressing the existing natural law in Eden. Satan's rebellion had attempted to violate the divine hierarchy and order in heaven. In Eden, he performs an action that, in turn, violates the established natural order in Eden. As he seeks out and inhabits the body of a sleeping serpent, Satan is described in the language that subverts the Lucretian argument regarding the impossibility of souls migrating from one body into another. Satan's inhabiting of the body of a serpent initiates a series of further Lucretian re-enactments in the passage. Eve's reaction to the speaking serpent belies Lucretian teaching about human and animal speech as proceeding from a common origin – she reflects on the 'reasoning powers' and praeternatural qualities of the serpent, attributing human cognition to the serpent through his act of speaking. Eve's succumbing to the serpent's arguments, which culminates in her eating of the fruit, in turn, produces fragmentation and destruction of the natural order in Eden. Before it attracts the wrath and punishment of the Father, it is nature itself who responds to the transgression of Eve, by giving 'signs of woe' (*PL* 9.783). The serpent hails Eve in language reminiscent of the poet's address to Venus in the opening of *De Rerum Natura*, and sets Eve up as a competing deity to the Father.

Lucretian allusion, through inversion, provides a language also for the aftermath of the Fall: engagement with *De Rerum Natura*, especially Lucretius' meditations on the empty fears of punishment in the afterlife in Book 3, provides further psychological detail, and marked contrast, ironically, to illustrate the real suffering and despair of Adam and Eve as they contemplate their punishment in the aftermath of the Fall. Milton's debt to Lucretius' didactic message does not end with the Fall, but imbues Adam and Eve's negotiation of their fallen condition, as they attempt to come to terms with their newly acquired mortality.

The present chapter follows the general sequence in which the narrative of the Fall unfolds in the poem. My discussion begins in Book 3, with Milton's foreshadowing of the events of Book 9 in the first speech of the Father in heaven, as he witnesses Satan's journey towards Eden. The Father's narration of Satan's mission, I will suggest, echoes the

language used by the Lucretian narrator to describe the figurative journey of Epicurus in *DRN* 1, an allusion that announces Milton's complex engagement with the didactic function of *De Rerum Natura* in his own Fall narrative.

Milton's early signalling of the *De Rerum Natura* as a way of thinking about the Fall, I suggest, announces a wider parallel with the didactic impetus in Milton's Fall sequence. The participation of reason in the Fall, its corruption through deception, is an element that Milton elaborates from the Genesis account, and which is indebted to Lucretian imagery relating to false cognition and degrees of deception. Milton gives his narrative of the Fall a Lucretian inflection in the very moment in which Eve eats the fruit, enacting Lucretius' depiction of delusion as a rational misjudgment of sensory phenomena, an enactment that, I will argue, is reflected in Eve's deliberate 're-seeing' and 're-considering' of the fruit in this final moment.

I will then discuss the reaction of Eve to the speaking serpent: this again enacts a series of Lucretian warnings about the dangers of misplaced wonder. In marvelling at the serpent's gift of speech, Eve misjudges the distinction between human and animal cognition – an action that serves as an important preface to the violation of natural boundaries that she enacts in succumbing to the serpent's temptation to venture 'higher than [one's] lot' (*PL* 9.960).

Having established these didactic parallels with *De Rerum Natura* in Book 9, I will consider the way in which Milton engages with the Lucretian account of natural law, as he narrates Adam and Eve's Fall as a transgression in Eden as a violation of natural boundaries. Milton's reading of Lucretius, evidenced in the allusions in this passage, and his awareness of the critical reception of the poem in contemporary commentaries are key to the development of his allusive language of fate, free will, and natural law, in this crucial point in the narrative, providing a way of thinking about fate by considering natural law being violated at the Fall.[209]

[209] On Lucretius' own non-fatalistic materialism, see the introduction to the present chapter, with n. 201.

2.1 Satan and Epicurus

Following the council in Pandaemonium, Satan sets out on a solitary mission to Eden. This journey is meant to test the prophecy relating to the creation of 'another kind of creature equal or not much inferior to themselves' (Book 2, 'The Argument'). Satan reaches the gates of hell, where he encounters his daughter, Sin, and their mutual offspring, Death. Satan persuades her to open the gate with the promise of a new empire, and passes through the deep abyss between heaven and hell, a region guarded by Chaos, and described, as Philip Hardie has noted, through an allusion to *DRN* 5.529.[210] Having broken through hell and traversed Chaos, Satan travels towards Eden. At this moment, the poem veers to heaven as Satan comes into view of the Father. He, in turn, addresses the Son:

> Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage
> Transports our adversary, whom no bounds
> Prescribed, no bars of hell, nor all the chains
> Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss
> Wide interrupt can hold; so bent he seems
> On desperate revenge, that shall redound
> Upon his own rebellious head. And now
> Through all restraint broke loose he wings his way
> Not far off heaven, in the precincts of light,
> Directly towards the new created world,
> And man there placed, with purpose to assay
> If him by force he can destroy, or worse,
> By some false guile pervert ...
> (*PL* 3.80-92)

The Father's description of Satan 'whom no bounds / Prescribed no bars of hell, nor all the chains / Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss / Wide interrupt can hold', I suggest, echoes Lucretius' account of the intellectual journey of Epicurus, unconfined and undeterred by superstitious beliefs about the gods and the universe, *quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti / murmure compressit caelum* ... ('whom neither fables of the gods, nor thunderbolts, nor heaven with menacing roar could quell', *DRN* 1.68-9):

> Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret

[210] At *PL* 2.911 Milton describes chaos as 'the womb of nature and perhaps her grave', which Hardie compares to Lucretius' account of an all-creating and all-destroying earth at *DRN* 5.259, *omniparens eadem rerum commune sepulchrum*. See Hardie (2009), 265, n. 8, as well as Martindale (1986), 62. Hutchinson's translation of *DRN* 5.259, perhaps recalling Milton's account of chaos, introduces earth's 'womb' to the Latin original (which she rhymes with 'tomb'): 'Earth for her part made by her fruitfull womb / The general mother, is the common tomb'. John Leonard (2000), 199-209 argued for an echo of Lucretius' *inane profundum* (*DRN* 1.1107) in Milton's 'void profound of inessential night' at *PL* 2.438. Quint sees a further Lucretian echo in the depiction of Satan's fall through Chaos at *PL* 2.927-38: he links the depiction of Satan ('Fluttering his pennons vain' at *PL* 2.933) to Lucretius' account in *DRN* 6 of empty spaces in the air in the region of lake Avernus (*claudicat extemplo pinnarum nisus inanis*, *DRN* 6.834). See further discussion in Quint (2004), 858-9.

> in terris oppressa gravi sub religione
> quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat
> horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,
> primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra
> est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra
> quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti
> murmure compressit caelum, sed eo magis acrem
> irritat animi virtutem, effringere ut arta
> naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret.
>
> When man's life lay for all to see foully grovelling upon the ground, crushed beneath the weight of superstition, which displayed her head from the regions of heaven, lowering over mortals with horrible aspect, a man of Greece was the first that dared to uplift mortal eyes against her, the first to make stand against her; for neither fables of the gods could quell him, nor thunderbolts, nor heaven with menacing roar, but all the more they goaded the eager courage of his soul, so that he should desire, first of all men, to shatter the confining bars of nature's gates. (*DRN* 1.62-71, trans. Rouse and Smith)[211]

The words of the Father, echoing those of the Lucretian narrator of Epicurus, appear as a potent contrast to the cosmic context of Satan's rebellion: whereas Lucretius' Epicurus opposes human beliefs about the cosmos and their association with oppressive divine forces, Satan breaks forth from a real confinement and punishment from the Father, and his expulsion from heaven. Whereas Epicurus' mission is one that frees humankind from superstition and fear of death, Satan's mission is one that will result in the corruption and eventual death of humankind. Satan may begin his journey as an Epicurus figure, but the result more closely resembles the effects of Epicurus' symbolic nemesis, *religio*.

Commonly translated as 'superstition', *religio* is depicted by Lucretius in *quasi*-mythical terms as a monster who towers above and oppresses mankind (*DRN* 1.62-5, see above), and is ultimately defeated by Epicurus, as he frees humans from fear of death and from superstition: *quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim / obteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo* ('Therefore superstition is now in her turn cast down and trampled underfoot, whilst we by the victory are exalted high as heaven', *DRN* 1.78-9). Lucretius' depiction of *religio* in *DRN* 1, her head towering above mortals, may also be echoed in the first depiction of Satan in Book 1 of *Paradise Lost*. But as *religio* 'displays her head from the regions of heaven' (*quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat*), the direction of Satan's first showing of his head, and its location, is pointedly inverted: as Satan lifts his head in Book 1, he

[211] Cf. Hutchinson's neat translation of *DRN* 1.68-9: 'Whose courage neither heav'ns loud threatnings quelld, / Nor tales of Gods, nor thunder bolts repelld'.

appears above the burning lake in chaos (*PL* 1.193, below). Satan is further introduced through language that evokes the suggestiveness of a number of mythical – and allusive – monsters and the threat they pose to humans:

> Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate
> With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
> That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides
> Prone on the flood, extended long and large
> Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
> As whom the fables name of monstrous size …
> (*PL* 1.192-7)

The most persistent biblical parallel associated with this passage is that of Leviathan, but the description also invokes classical depictions of deadly monsters and the effect they have, directly or figuratively, on humans. Alastair Fowler compared Milton's description of Satan to the descriptions of the sea-serpents swimming towards Laocoon in the account of Sinon in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*:[212] *pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta iubaeque / sanguineae superant undas; pares cetera pontum / pone legit* ... ('Their bosoms rise amid the surge, and their crests, blood-red, overtop the waves; the rest of them skims the main behind …, *Aen*. 2.206-8). Vergil's account of the deadly serpents traversing the sea is echoed in the description of Satan's 'other parts besides / Prone on the flood, extended long and large'. Although this description could be seen as announcing Satan's metamorphosis in Book 9, Milton nevertheless avoids the sort of explicit identification of Satan with 'the infernal serpent' that we see at *PL* 1.34. It is the unspecificity and thereby the suggestiveness of the image, its ability to call to mind a number of mythical beasts, that draws Milton's first portrait of Satan close to the Lucretian depiction of *religio* – a depiction that relies on the fluidity of imagery to recreate the process of human imagination of mythical horror. Milton captures the multiplicity of the Lucretian portrait of *religio*, depicted as a creature of the human imagination, precisely through the multiple allusions that the passage evokes.[213] Finally, if, in undertaking his journey to Eden, Satan represents the audacity of Epicurus in his mission to defeat superstition, he himself, in his turn, comes to embody a version of *religio* also within the same allusion, in the defeat foretold by the Father.

[212] Fowler (2007), ad loc.
[213] Kenney (1974), 22 argues that the description of *religio* at *DRN* 1.62 evades any serpentine or dragon specificity.

Satan's identification – and subversion – of the role of the intellectual mission of Epicurus finds further fulfilment in the temptation of Eve. After eating the fruit, the serpent describes his entrance into a higher state of cognition. At *PL* 9.602-5, Satan describes himself as considering 'with capacious mind' 'all things visible', and by eating the fruit is now able to 'discern / things in their causes, and trace the ways / of highest agents, deemed however wise' (*PL* 9.681-3). The serpent's vocabulary of intellectual discovery is similar to the Lucretian account of Epicurus' intellectual achievement at *DRN* 1.74 (*omne immensum peragravit mente animoque*, 'he traversed the immeasurable universe in thought and imagination'), as well as reflecting the Latin etymology of *alta* to indicate things both high and deep, standing here for the limits of the physical world:[214]

> Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
> I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
> Considered all things visible in heaven,
> Or earth, or middle, all things fair and good;
> (*PL* 9.602-5)

For the Lucretian poet, *animus sagax*, 'a keen-scented mind', is one of the conditions of knowing the physical and metaphysical universe: at *DRN* 4.912-15 the poet-narrator asks the reader for a 'subtle ear' and a 'keen-scented mind' (*tu mihi da tenuis aures animumque sagacem*) in order to understand Epicurean teachings.[215] In limiting the action of his mind to 'things visible', however, Satan denies the Lucretian capability of the *animus sagax* to infer that which lies beyond sensory perception:

> sic oculis quoniam non omnia cernere quimus,
> scire licet quaedam tam constare orba colore
> quam sine odore ullo quaedam sonituque remota,
> nec minus haec animum cognoscere posse sagacem
> quam quae sunt aliis rebus privata notare.
>
> So, since we cannot perceive all things with our eyes, you may be sure that certain things exist as much deprived of colour as without any smell and empty of sound, and that the intelligent mind can recognize these no less than it can mark that are devoid of other qualities.
> (*DRN* 2.837-41, my emphasis)

[214] Note, however, that Milton's account departs from Lucretian teaching about the absence of a middle in the universe: *nam medium nil esse potest* (*DRN* 1.1070).
[215] *tu mihi da tenuis aures animumque sagacem, / ne fieri negites quae dicam posse retroque / vera repulsanti discedas pectore dicta, / tutemet in culpa cum sis neque cernere possis* (*DRN* 4.912-15).

Satan's intellectual boast, I suggest, is thus undermined by the poetic context which Milton evokes through this allusion. The role of reason, or rather, of 'right reason' is key to Milton's narration of the Fall and its didactic significance for the reader.[216]

Another crucial ingredient in this passage which I will examine more closely in the present chapter is the link that is created between natural boundaries and the work of reason in defining them. The coincidence of images of the establishment and breaking of boundaries is a paradox of the account of Epicurus' journey in Book 1. On the one hand, Lucretius describes his master as one who 'desired to shatter the confining bars of nature's gates' (*effringere ... arta / naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret*, *DRN* 1.70-1) and who marched along the walls of the world; on the other hand, Epicurus returns in order to show the boundaries of things, through reason, of what can and cannot exist – a refrain of the poem repeated in Books 1, 5, and 6 (*quid possit oriri, / quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique / quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens*, *DRN* 1.75-7, cf. 1.594-6, 5.89-90, and 6.65-6).

Lucretius' phrase *naturae specie ratioque* (*DRN* 1.148, 2.61, 3.93, 6.41), rendered by Rouse and Smith as 'the aspect and law of nature', is translated (rather freely) by Thomas Creech as 'Those eternal rules / Which from firm Premises true Reason draws, / And a deep insight into Nature's laws' (my emphasis).[217] Creech's insistence on the non-aleatory nature of the poem's message is all the stronger, considering the prominent placement given to *Casus* – 'Chance' – in his edition, where it appears in an illustration to its second edition (1683).[218] In discussing Creech's translation, Nick Hardy has argued that an 'insistence on the regularity of the cosmos, and his exaltation of human reason' is one of the core themes of *De Rerum Natura*, and it is rendered as such in Creech's translation.[219] I would go further, and argue that such a reading of Lucretius imbues Milton's portrait of Satan, whose boundary-breaking journey to Eden and his subversion of human reasoning once he reaches it go hand in hand.

[216] See further Hoopes (1962), especially Chapters 9 and 10. See also discussion of right reason in *De Doctrina Christiana* at n. 230 below.
[217] See discussion in Hardy (2016), 201.
[218] See reproduction of the image, and further discussion, in Norbrook (2011), lxix-lxx, and again in Norbrook (2016a).
[219] Hardy (2016), 201. '"Order" and "reason"', as Hardy observes, 'are not the dominant buzzwords in recent studies of the reception of the *De rerum natura*'. Hardy, nevertheless argues that 'there is a strong case to be made for reading Lucretius in the manner suggested by Creech's translation' (202).

2.2 Reasoning and Discernment

This journey of Satan also prefigures and announces the nature of his (anti-)didactic process. Hardie has observed that both *Paradise Lost* and *De Rerum Natura* function as 'epics of knowledge', which 'educate not simply through exposition but through a dramatization of the process of learning', and in which 'the passage from error to truth […] is written into these texts as figurations of the epic plots of struggle or journey.'[220] Milton's evocation of Epicurus' programmatic journey at the outset of Satan's mission to Eden announces the narrative of the Fall as a journey to and from error for Adam and Eve, shown not only in the intellectual and moral defeat of the Fall, but also in their process of discernment that continues in the aftermath of the Fall narrative. The nature of Lucretian allusion in Milton's Fall narrative and its shifting between fallen and unfallen languages, multiple lenses and reference points involves the reader in the process of discernment that is at the heart of the didactic message of *De Rerum Natura*, allowing the Lucretian 'dramatization of learning' to unfold in the allusive level of Milton's narrative.

In the Genesis account of the Fall, the serpent had tempted Eve with a series of rhetorical points aimed at undermining her faith in the instruction of God and opening her to the possibility of still greater knowledge. Satan, in the form of the serpent, presents himself to Eve as attempting to free her from fear of death, promising her a higher degree of reason. In so doing, however, he provokes in Eve a degree of false reasoning, enacting Lucretian warnings against false cognition and misplaced wonder. Satan's promise of greater knowledge to Eve alone does not render Milton's narrative Lucretian *per se* – rather, it is the focus on the cognitive experience of Eve (and later Adam) in response to this prospect that engages Lucretian ideas of false cognition, causing them to be enacted in the dramatic epic environment of Milton's Fall narrative.

Milton ties the prelapsarian experience of Adam and Eve strongly, but not unproblematically, to their reasoning abilities. At *PL* 9.653-4, as Eve is faced with the temptation of the serpent, she gives him an account of their prelapsarian rationality: she tells the serpent that, apart from the positive law embodied in the prohibition of the fruit,

[220] Hardie (2009), 265. Hardie points out that the "'plot" of education is projected out of the texts and into the experience of both the author and the reader. In both poems the activities of character, author, and reader thus become inextricably interwoven, and to a large extent interchangeable'. My discussion expands these categories to include the placement of allusion within the text, and the narrative possibilities that the process of recognition of Lucretian imagery offers at crucial moments in the narrative.

she and Adam for 'the rest ... live / law to ourselves, our reason is our law.'[221] Eve's statement at *PL* 9.653-4 may assert the relationship between the first humans' sinless condition and their ability to hear and internalize God's instruction. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, the author had divided his definition of law as 'primarily that which is grafted onto man's mind and inborn', but had followed this by the other form of law 'which was uttered by God's mouth'.[222] It is the latter, the need for instruction even for prelapsarian humans, that is dramatized in *Paradise Lost*. Adam and Eve certainly appear to be in need of divine instruction before the Fall: in relating the first moments after her creation, Eve recalls her ignorance, 'much wondering where / And what I was, whence thither brought, and how' (*PL* 4.451-2). The words of God are mediated to Adam and Eve through Raphael. In setting out on his didactic mission to Eden, the archangel receives direct instruction from God: 'such discourse bring on, / As may advise him of his happy state' (*PL* 5.233-4). Raphael relates the story of the fall of the rebel angels and the subsequent war in heaven, an account that is framed with a didactic imperative: 'remember, and fear to transgress' (*PL* 6.912).

Milton's portrayal of Adam and Eve's need for instruction even before the Fall originates a number of striking allusions to Lucretius in the poem. A Lucretian 'drama of learning', I argue, lies behind a number of images in Book 9, imbuing Milton's account with narrative details that carry a wider didactic significance through their allusiveness. Milton traces multiple degrees of cognitive error arising in Eve's mind in Book 9, in imagery that owes a debt to passages in *De Rerum Natura* that deal with these teachings. The idea of tracing the cognitive degrees of the Fall provides a relevant impetus for the richness of Lucretian imagery that emerges in this sequence. Milton appears to depict the Fall of Adam and Eve as already prefigured in imagery of cognitive deception.

Milton's emphasis on the cognitive aspects of the Fall and the role of human freedom in the process of error reflects a contemporary focus in which human error and its Christian counterpart, sin, were being debated in the 1640s. The 1649 publication of Pierre Gassendi's *Animadversiones*, an extensive commentary on Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the*

[221] With a citation from 1 John 3:4, sin in *De Doctrina Christiana* is defined as '*anomia*, or transgression of the law'.
[222] 'Peccatum, uti ab ipso Apostolo definitur, est ἀνομία seu legis transgressio, 1. Ioan. 3. 4. … Legis nomine primariò hic intelligitur, illa hominis menti insita et innata: deinde illa ore Dei prolata' (*DDC* 1.11, 'de Lapsu primorum parentum et de Peccato', 412).

Eminent Philosophers, had given prominence to Epicurean philosophy in European scholarly and educational circles as an alternative to the dominant Aristotelian model, and had made known the writings of Epicurus, and their place in the development of ancient thought, to a wider readership.[223] Gassendi's work was quickly disseminated in England, following the publication of Walter Charleton's *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charletoniana* (1654), a translation of the *Animadversiones* into English.

In *The Darkness of Atheism* (1652), a work also highly influenced by Gassendi, Charleton had posited that error was the first step towards sin, and one that arises out of false reasoning, or more specifically, in 'mistaking evil for good':

> God hath set on our right real and true Good, on our left only specious and apparent: the election of either is dependent on our Will, our Will is guided by our Judgement, and our Judgement is the determination or resolve of our Intellect (for without dispute, though common physiology has founded this Liberty on the indifferency of the Will; yet it is radicated in the indifferency of the Intellect, or Cognoscent Faculty, primarily, and the Will only secondarily, insomuch as that ever follows the manuduction of the Intellect).[224]

The issues raised by Charleton's distinction between the work of the will and that of the intellect, recalling Gassendi's own discussion in the *Ethics*,[225] looks further back to his earlier debate with Descartes in the 1640s about the nature and process of human error, and the role of human freedom within it.[226] Whereas Descartes had emphasized the supreme role of will in the process of succumbing to error, Gassendi posited that error is the result of a false interpretation of sensory information, functioning as an act of the reasoning faculties, taking place in the mind, and not the will. Descartes accused Gassendi of making human will subject to the intellect, and this, in turn, subject to the senses, thus precluding the role of free will in human decisions. According to Descartes, Gassendi's

[223] See Jones (1989), 167-85, and Sarasohn, *passim*. In 1624, Gassendi had published the *Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristoteleos*, an indictment against Aristotelian philosophy and its exclusive place in the university curriculum, based on his experience as Professor of Philosophy at Aix. See discussion in Jones (1989), 167.

[224] Charleton (1652), 182-3, cited in full and discussed in Sarasohn (1996), 174, to whom my discussion is indebted.

[225] Sarasohn (1996), 173 has argued that Charleton's *Darkness of Atheism*, insofar as it constitutes a 'selective translation' of the *Animadversiones*, contains 'Gassendi's entire system'.

[226] Sarasohn (1996), 89 and Bloch (1971), 64 have observed that Gassendi's *Instantia* against Descartes' Fourth Meditation written in 1641 contain and indeed reprise many ideas found in Book 3 of the *Animadversiones*, on 'The Ethics of Epicurus' (*Epicuri Ethica*). See, in particular, his discussion of Epicurus' maxims about sense perception (preserved in Diogenes Laertius 10.139-154, 23 and 24), in Gassendi (1649), 3, 1735-6.

position gave no safeguard against error, and no possible way of turning away from it.[227] Gassendi accused Descartes of a similar determinism, and claimed that '[e]rror is not in the incorrect use of free will so much as in the disparity between our judgement and the thing which is the object of judgement'. Thus error, according to Gassendi, 'arises when our intellectual apprehension of the thing does not correspond with the way the thing really is.'[228] When deciding to eat a poisoned fruit, 'we do so,' Gassendi argued, using a metaphor which Descartes had himself employed, 'because the understanding perceives that the fruit is sweet, and is therefore desirable. The act of will is the result of judgment but does not contribute to judgment.' Gassendi considers the moral aspect of error insofar as '[t]he intellect apprehends how a thing is true in its own terms, but also how it is esteemed to be good by someone else. To the extent that the intellect judges something to be good, so it is desired by the will.'[229]

Gassendi's ideas, grounded in his response to Epicurean teachings, resonate, I suggest, at several key points in Milton's narration of the Fall. A case in point is Eve's own misapprehension of a kind of 'poisoned' fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and her listening to the words of the serpent, whose esteem for the fruit spurs her on to accept it in the final moments ('in her ears the sound / Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned / With reason, to her seeming, and with truth', *PL* 9.736-8; see discussion of this passage below). The sin of Eve in *Paradise Lost* cannot be pinpointed to eating of the forbidden fruit alone, but to a failure of the didactic experience whose need is already shown in the moments after Eve's creation.[230] The Fall itself, Eve's sin, is instead portrayed as a culmination of a series of false cognitive as well as moral judgements – conveyed in imagery indebted to Lucretian warnings against the formation of false judgements and the consequences of these errors, and enriched with moments that echo

[227] Suggestively, to illustrate his point, Descartes used an example of a person who desires an apple that has been poisoned and decides it a suitable food because of its pleasant qualities. See discussion of Descartes' argument in Sarasohn (1996), 93-4.
[228] Gassendi, 'Fifth Set of Objections', in *Philosophical Writings*, 220 (*AT*, 7:317), cited in and translated by Sarasohn (1996), 93.
[229] Gassendi, *Disquisitio Metaphysica* in *Opera Omnia* 3.367, cited and discussed in Sarasohn (1996), 94.
[230] In this narrative detail what we find in the poem appears in tension with what we find in *De Doctrina Christiana*. There, it is argued, 'privation, or serious dulling of right reason' appeared as a consequence of sin after the Fall: 'privation, or serious dulling of right reason' (*recta ratio*), which 'aimed at perceiving the supreme good … was the equivalent of life to the understanding' (*DDC* 1.12, 'de Poena peccati', 433) appears as one of the evils which 'moved into the world straight after the fall itself (*DDC* 1.12, 430). In *Paradise Lost*, however, Milton shows elements of this 'dulling' of right reason, of Adam and Eve's positive, that is, pre-lapsarian ignorance of the world, and of God's teaching, as existing to some extent before the Fall.

Gassendi's discussion of human error. The brevity of description of Eve's eating of the fruit itself – commonly identified as synonymous with the Fall – lies in sharp contrast to the focus on Eve's subjective experience in its build-up, and puts the process of cognitive error at the forefront of this dramatic moment.

The first of Milton's debts to Lucretian teachings about cognitive processes lies in his mirroring of Lucretian teaching about the nature of sensory delusion, tracing error not to information gained by the senses, but to the process of reasoning as it interprets these phenomena. In Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*, Eve had related to Adam the first moments following her creation, an account imbued with imagery of sensory discovery and cognitive development. Eve's account of her sensory perception and her interpretative faculties, I argue, echoes and combines two separate Lucretian images linking the origins of human knowledge about the natural world to the account of human error. Eve's first source of knowledge, as she relates, are her senses: the 'murmuring sound / Of waters' spreading from a cave draw her to a lake:[231]

> That day I oft remember, when from sleep
> I first awaked, and found myself reposed
> Under a shade on flowers, much wondering where
> And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
> Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
> Of waters issued from a cave and spread
> Into a liquid plain, then stood unmoved
> Pure as the expanse of heaven; I thither went
> With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
> On the green bank, to look into the clear
> Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
> (*PL* 4.449-59)

Milton's 'murmuring waters', to which Eve responds by going 'thither', may capture an element of the Lucretian depiction of rivers that 'called' – *vocabant* – the first humans in the way that animals are now called to mountain streams:[232]

> at sedare sitim fluvii fontesque vocabant,
> ut nunc montibus e magnis decursus aquai
> claricitat late sitientia saecla ferarum.

[231] Margaret Kean has suggested that bodies of water in Milton's Eden, having been set in motion by the Creator, are depicted as 'self-stimulated and self-generating': see Kean (1999), 80.

[232] While I am not claiming Lucretian allusion in Milton's use of 'murmuring waters', the parallel between his waters and Lucretius' speaking rivers gains particular relevance if read with the Lucretian allusion at *PL* 4.459 (alluding to *DRN* 4.414-19) in the further development of the passage: see main text below. A reader encountering the full effect of the passage, having recognized the Lucretian allusion below, may be attuned to Lucretian parallels in the lead-up.

> But to quench thirst, rivers and springs invited [lit. 'called'] them, as now the rushing of water down from the great mountains calls loud and far to the thirsting tribes of beasts.
> (*DRN* 5.945-7)[233]

But whereas the Lucretian waters had called the early humans to quench their thirst, Eve is drawn to the waters in Eden, and to an Ovidian allusion: Eve's account of her gazing into the water at her own reflection has been noted since Hume's commentary as evoking, and correcting, Ovid's account of the myth of Narcissus.[234] Maggie Kilgour has most recently argued that Milton employs this with 'redemptive effects', another inversive effect in Milton:[235] unlike Narcissus, consumed by the contemplation of his own image, Eve 'turns away from the watery reflection.'[236] If Eve is redeemed in Milton's rendering of the Ovidian myth, she succumbs to the Lucretian temptation of judging visual phenomena reflected in water, through a underlying allusion to Lucretius. At line 455, Eve describes her 'unexperienced thought' (*PL* 4.455) that may consist in mistaking the reflection in the water for 'another sky' (*PL* 4.459). Philip Hardie considers the image as a 'double allusion' that looks back to the Lucretian passage in which the narrator warns against the tendency of mistaking images, such as the reflection of the sky in water, for the thing itself (*DRN* 4.414-19):[237]

> at collectus aquae digitum non altior unum,
> qui lapides inter sistit per strata viarum,
> despectum praebet sub terras impete tanto,
> a terris quantum caeli patet altus hiatus;

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[233] Like Rouse and Smith's, Hutchinson's translation of *vocabant* as 'invited' avoids any sonic association: 'And as swift currents which run downe the hills / Invite the thirstie heard to their coole drills [small streams, ed. note], / So at each streame and bubling spring did they / In those days their vnquenched thirst allay' (5.986-9).

[234] Patrick Hume (1693), ad 4.461 and Thomas Newton both commented on Eve as comparatively less culpable in Milton's appropriation of the myth, since, unlike Narcissus, the newly-created Eve has no experience to call upon in order to dispel her mistake. See discussion in Green (2009), 28, who observes that '[t]he myth is clearly instrumental in articulating the experience – unique to Adam and Eve as the first human beings – […] of coming to consciousness as fully formed adults, of being brought to life without self-knowledge and encountering the world with "unexperienced thought" (4.457)'.

[235] Fowler (2007), ad 460-71 notes that '[g]enders are not transposed: Eve does not take Echo's role'. Julia Walker has argued that the depiction of Eve gazing into the lake in Book 4 functions as a 'false Narcissus allusion' (Walker [1997], 64). See further remarks in Kilgour (2012), 202, n. 102.

[236] Kilgour (2012), 202. Kilgour further discusses the depiction of Adam as a Narcissus figure in the account of his creation in Book 8, with similarly 'redemptive' effects. Adam, Kilgour argues, realizes Narcissus' dream expressed at *Met.* 3.467-8 that he be separated from his own body: *o utinam a nostro secedere corpore possem! votum in amante novum, vellem, quod amamus, abesset* ('Oh, that I might be parted from my own body! And, strange prayer for a lover I would that what I love were absent from me' (Kilgour uses Goold and Miller's text and translation). Adam's prayer is realized in the creation of Eve.

[237] See discussion by Hardie (2009), 270-2: note that the myth of Narcissus and Echo is itself pointed to in the Lucretian account of echo at *DRN* 4.570-94, 'alluded to by Milton [at] *PL*.4.440-76'.

> nubila despicere et caelum ut videare videre <et>
> corpora mirando sub terras abdita caelo.
>
> But a puddle of water no more than one finger deep, lying between the stones upon a paved street, offers a view downwards under the earth to so great a reach as the open heavens yawn on high, so that you seem to look down upon the clouds and heaven, and to see bodies concealed beneath the ground by a wondrous heaven. (*DRN* 4.414-19)[238]

This Lucretian allusion signals a deeper didactic significance for a passage that otherwise appears to struggle with Eve's error. Scholars have argued that the account of Eve's surroundings in themselves encourage confusion and error, commingling sensory phenomena into an indistinguishable whole.[239] Yet it is clear that the account of her surroundings is an internalized narrative, shaped and related by Eve's subjective experience. When approached from a Lucretian perspective, it betrays elements of her cognitive perception, and susceptibility to illusion through a misjudgement of her sensory stimulus. In a suggestive discussion of this passage, Mandy Green notes the confusion of the environment in Eve's experience, observing that Eve 'lacks the experience or guidance which would inform her that the evidence provided by her senses may be misleading, prompting such a mistake'.[240] Milton's account of Eve's inexperience, I argue, carries a Lucretian significance at this narrative moment: the unreliability of the senses in the passage from *DRN* 4 above is emphasized by the collocation of the verb of seeing (*videre*) and seeming (*videor*) to convey the moment of sensory allusion: *ut videare videre <et> / corpora mirando sub terra abdita caelo* ('so that you seem to see bodies concealed beneath the ground by a wondrous heaven', *DRN* 4.418-19, my emphasis and translation).[241] For Eve, her first vision of the lake 'seemed another sky' (*PL* 4.459, my emphasis).

Eve's error is not fatal at this point of the narrative, perhaps because her ability to judge sensory information – even if in retrospect – is still intact. In the final stage of Eve's

[238] English translation adapted from Rouse and Smith, who print the adverb *mirande*, describing [*corpora*] *abdita*, 'objects buried miraculously beneath the earth'). See further, n. 266 below.
[239] Most notably, Ricks (1963), 101. See discussion and further bibliography in Green (2009), 29 (discussed below).
[240] Green (2009), 28-9.
[241] See Hutchinson's translation: 'Now in the highways little shallow drills, / Which euery raine amongst the pibbles fills, / Scarce a foote deepe make th'heavens seem as farre / Beneath the ground, as they aboue it are, / Deepe sunke in earth celestiall bodies shew / The whole ayre, clouds, and space, appeare below' (4.435-40). Following the Daniel Pareus edition of Lucretius, Hutchinson does not render the Lucretian *mirando* (attached to *caelo*). See discussion in Barbour, Norbrook, and Zerbino (2011), ad 4.439-40. For the significance of wonder in Lucretian accounts of human error, see discussion in main text below.

temptation scene, however, sensory and cognitive information has collapsed. The corruption of reason and the ability to distinguish appearance from reality appears to imbue the final moments of the temptation scene. As Eve loses the ability to judge sensory phenomena, the scene turns into a tragedy of reason. Following details in the Genesis account, the fruit of the tree that emerges first is the source of a sensory temptation, 'which to behold / Might tempt alone' (*PL* 9.735-6).[242] Milton's description extends the visual and tactile stimulus of the biblical account, engaging also Eve's auditory sensations:

> Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
> Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
> Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned
> With reason, to her seeming, and with truth;
> Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
> An eager appetite, raised by the smell
> So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,
> Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
> Solicited her longing eye …
> (*PL* 9.735-43)

The account of the final moments of Eve's temptation is loaded with sensory descriptions of sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch: all her senses are on the side of Satan, and the natural world and its sensory reaction are now collapsed into one. The ripe fruit, '[i]nclinable now grown to touch or taste', seems to droop from the branch, physically bending to reach Eve's hand, as Eve herself grows more 'inclinable' to Satan's propositions. The arguments of the serpent – fusing images relating to reason and the senses – are counted among the sensory temptations that assault Eve's senses: the 'persuasive words' of the serpent ring in her ears.

A condemnation of sensuality was often expressed by the popular understanding of Epicureanism as a synonym for hedonism, which we see demonstrated among the Italian humanists throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, and in Luther's attacks against his theological opponents (most notably Erasmus).[243] In *La Semaine* (1578), a cosmological poem on the creation story in Genesis, the poet Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas employs

[242] Fowler compared this line to Genesis 3:6, 'When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat'. See Fowler (2007), ad 735-43.

[243] An exception among the humanists whom Jones discusses is Giacomo Zabarella's *De Felicitate*, in which the author argues that Epicurus has been largely misunderstood and 'goes so far as to suggest that E. should rightly be included among those for whom mental pleasures are of greater importance than physical ones' (Jones [1989], 144). Zabarella's treatise, though composed in 1400, was not published until 1640.

this definition in the Horatian image of the Epicurean swine (Horace had referred to himself as *Epicuri de grege porcum*, 'a pig from the herd of Epicurus', at *Epistle* 1.4.16) as one of the guises that Satan now assumes in tempting humans. Joshua Sylvester, in his translation of Du Bartas, renders the phrase thus: 'Thou plaist the swine, when plung'd in pleasures vile, / Some Epicure doth sober minds defile …'.[244]

Despite the associations with sensory corruption present already in the biblical account of the Fall, Milton's scene does not present us with a clear narrative image of the distrust of the senses, nor does it utilize the Epicurean associations with hedonism to strengthen the message. Eve's reaction to the fruit, loaded though it is with sensory imagery, is not the last image which Milton presents us with before she tastes it. The senses are responsible for the stimulus, but it is Eve's interpretation and opinion about the significance of the fruit, its 'ability to make wise', that is the direct preface to her downfall. In the account of Eve's sensory experience, Milton dwells on this image of the words of Satan as illusory, and points to Eve's subjective experience of them that then turns into her voiced opinion. Satan's words appear 'impregned with reason, to her seeming, and with truth' (*PL* 9.737-8), pinpointing the moment between sensory stimulus and cognitive interpretation to produce an illusion of 'seeming'. Ironically, the appearance that Eve mistakes is not, as in Lucretius, the image of two ships, or a second sky (as she had at her creation, see below), but 'reason' and 'truth' itself. The stakes of illusory interpretation of the senses are raised in the moments before the Fall, and the ability of truth and reason itself to 'appear' as a sensory illusion is pinned to a cognitive moment. We are let into Eve's subjective experience, an experience that leads her to redefine the significance of the fruit through a 'resighting'. She looks at the fruit once more ('fixed on the fruit she gazed'), and now, instead of renouncing it, as she had done in the words of Scripture at *PL* 9.651 ('of this tree we may not taste or touch'), hails it as fruit 'fair to the eye, inviting to the taste' (9.777) as 'the cure of all' (776), a 'fruit divine / … Of virtue to make wise' (*PL* 9.776-8): the image is followed by an opinion. Eve eats the fruit while she is still speaking – not the biblical, but her own words, echoing those of Satan: 'So saying, her rash hand in evil hour

[244] *The Divine Weeks and Works*, 'The Imposture', ll. 239-41. All quotations from Sylvester's Du Bartas are from Snyder (1979). Gillespie argues that Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas became a way by which 'a number of poets of the earlier seventeenth century would indeed have made indirect contact with Lucretius', and notes that *Paradise Lost* 'undoubtedly shows the effects' of Du Bartas' transformation of Lucretius (citing Milton's image of the Holy Spirit 'brooding on the vast abyss' at *PL* 1.21 with Sylvester's rendering of Du Bartas' opening lines, where the 'spirit eternal … broods' over chaos). This passage, *Divine Weeks and Works*, 9-10, transforms and populates Lucretius' void: see Gillespie (2007), 248.

/ Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate' (*PL* 9.780-1) – words that coincide, perhaps not accidentally, with her Fall.

Adam had given Eve a Lucretian warning against mistaking images for reality in his advice about her proleptic dream in Book 5. After waking up from sleep, Eve is both comforted and instructed by Adam against the anxiety caused by the fallacious images of her dream, of mistaking the images of dreams for reality. Adam imagines reason 'retiring' in sleep, when 'mimic fancy' imitates the work of reason by 'misjoining shapes … Ill matching words and deeds':

> ... But know that in the soul
> Are many lesser faculties that serve
> Reason as chief; among these fancy next
> Her office holds; of all external things,
> Which the five watchful senses represent,
> She forms imaginations, airy shapes,
> Which reason joining or disjoining, frames
> All what we affirm or what deny, and call
> Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
> Into her private cell when nature rests.
> Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes
> To imitate her; but misjoining shapes,
> Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
> Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
> Some such resemblances methinks I find
> Of our last evening's talk, in this thy dream,
> But with addition strange; …
> (*PL* 5.100-16)

Adam's speech displays several elements shared with the Lucretian passage about the delusions of dreams at *DRN* 4.453-68, where dream-images are mistaken for reality itself. Adam's account of the work of reason and fancy – which then can form 'knowledge or opinion' – possibly evokes Lucretian account of 'opinion', which overtakes the work and reliability of the senses, 'so that things are held to be seen which have not been seen by our senses' (*pro visis ut sint quae non sunt sensibu' visa*, *DRN* 4.466).[245] Lucretius describes the erroneous interpretation of dreams as the 'opinions of the mind' that 'we add

[245] Like in Lucretius, in the account of Milton's Adam the senses are not the source of error. For Milton, the 'five watchful senses' represent 'all external things' which reason then forms into belief, knowledge, and opinion. The dangers of associating appearance with reality reaches its peak in the description of Satan's words resonating in Eve's ears 'impregned with reason'. In succumbing to Satan's temptation, Satan's words enter her ears – mistaking 'seeming' for reality: Satan's words are 'impregned with reason to her seeming, and with truth' (*PL* 9.738). The passage obfuscates any distinction between the stimulus with her judgement of it.

ourselves': *opinatus animi quos addimus ipsi* (*DRN* 4.465). In interpreting the material or stimulus of the dream, Adam traces its origin to the previous day's conversation with Raphael, but puzzles over the 'addition strange' (*PL* 5.116), causing him to consider the possibility that the 'uncouth dream, of evil sprung' (*PL* 5.98) could proceed from Eve herself. Yet this is a possibility that he quickly rejects ('Yet evil whence? In thee can harbour none').[246] The seed of doubt as to Eve's prelapsarian innocence has, nevertheless, been sown,[247] and the error about the dream appears, in Epicurean terms, to stem from Eve's own 'opinion', her cognitive judgement of the dream image. The idea that this 'addition' could come from an external source – Satan himself – does not occur to Adam.

A narrative irony emerges in Adam's 'Lucretian' comfort to Eve in Book 5, whose dream is a prefiguring of real, not imagined, events. It is the wandering, immaterial spirit of Satan that inspires this dream in Eve. The premise of Adam's Lucretian advice, that the images seen in dreams have no correspondence with reality, is negated by the narrative, where the image of the dream *is* the result of an external force, and the content of the dream a prefiguring of real events. It is the spirit of Satan, travelling through Eden, as we see in 'The Argument' to Book 4, that tempts Eve in a dream, through 'illusions', 'phantasms', and 'dreams', prefiguring her later temptation in Book 9:[248]

> … him there they found
> Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve;
> Assaying by his devilish art to reach
> The organs of her fancy, and with them to forge
> Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams …
> (*PL* 4.799-803)

The boundaries between dream and reality in Eden are strained in Satan's violation of natural laws in Eden.

In my discussion so far, I have examined the way in which a Lucretian language underpins Milton's depiction of the cognitive aspects of the Fall, its links to languages of seeming

[246] Corns (1994), 60 observes that 'by impressive reasoning, Adam diagnoses an unnatural factor – something ordinary dream material and dream work would not have produced'.
[247] Cf. Du Bartas, who traces Eve's proneness to fall already before the Fall, with a narrative aside following Eve's biblical riposte to the serpent: 'But al-good God (alas, I woat not why) / Forbod us touch that tree on paine to die. / She ceast: already brooding in her hart / A curious wish that will her weale subvert …' (*Divine Weeks and Works,* 'The Imposture', 287-90).
[248] The angels Ithuriel and Zephon are sent by Gabriel to search Eden in the night for an 'evil spirit [who] should be there doing some harm to Adam and Eve sleeping'. They find him 'at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream' (*PL*, Book 4, 'The Argument').

and illusion, and its link to human freedom foregrounded in the debate between Gassendi and Descartes on the nature and process of human error. These languages, I will argue, are key to Milton's depiction of the nature of Adam and Eve's (as well as Satan's) eventual transgression in Book 9, and its violation of natural as well as supernatural (divine) law. The way in which Milton uses Lucretian imagery to convey the transgression, violating Lucretian accounts of order and limit in the universe, provides a fascinating counterpoint to the materialist discourse of the fallen angels in the opening books of *Paradise Lost* (as discussed in Chapter 1).. Milton may have shown the positive transcendence of Lucretian materialism in Raphael's account of angelic sexuality, but in Satan's mission to Eden, his inhabiting of the body of the serpent, we find a language of violation of natural boundaries. Milton's language of violation of natural boundaries in Eden is founded on Lucretian materialist teachings. The material laws in Eden appear to be aligned with – and equally broken by – Satan's journey. This is linked to the Lucretian concept – variously translated – of the 'pacts', or 'laws', of nature (the *foedera naturae*, see below). Satan's act of transgression leads to a series of cognitive transgressions by Eve, ones that have Lucretian resonances, enacting warnings in *De Rerum Natura* about misplaced wonder, misattribution of human and divine qualities, and the confusion of boundaries assigned to living things.

2.3 Lucretian *foedera naturae* and the Serpent

In Book 1 of *De Rerum Natura*, the Lucretian narrator had defined the idea of *foedera naturae* ('laws' or 'ordinances of nature') around the observable impossibility of soul migration, allowing things to obey their 'natural boundary mark', and preventing matter from a change of body:

> Denique iam quoniam generatim reddita finis
> crescendi rebus constat vitamque tenendi,
> et quid quaeque queant per foedera naturai,[249]
> quid porro nequeant, sancitum quandoquidem exstat,
> nec commutatur quicquam, quin omnia constant
> usque adeo, variae volucres ut in ordine cunctae
> ostendant maculas generalis corpore inesse,
> immutabili' materiae quoque corpus habere
> debent nimirum. nam si primordia rerum
> commutari aliqua possent ratione revicta,
> incertum quoque iam constet quid possit oriri,
> quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique

[249] I follow the edition's spelling *foedera naturai*, but will prefer the normalised *foedera naturae* in the main text.

quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens,
nec totiens possent generatim saecla referre
naturam mores victum motusque parentum.

Again, since a limit has been fixed for the growth of things after their kind and for their tenure of life, and since it stands decreed what each can do by the ordinances of nature, and also what each cannot do, and since nothing changes, but all things are constant to such a degree that all the different birds show in succession marks upon their bodies to distinguish their kind, they must also have beyond a doubt a body of immutable matter. For if the first-beginnings of things could be changed, being in any way overmastered, it would also now remain uncertain what could arise and what could not, in a word in what way each thing has its power limited and its deep-set boundary mark, nor could the generations so often repeat after their kind the nature, manners, living, and movements of their parents.
(*DRN* 1.584-98)

In her English translation of *De Rerum Natura*, published in 1675, Lucy Hutchinson rendered the passage thus:

Lastly since generations are confind
That the Principles cannot admitt of change
To termes of life and growth strictly assignd,
And natures laws prescribe them limitts too
What each one may and what they may not doe,
And all vnalterd in their bounds remaine
The bodie of the matter can no change susteine.
As wee in severall featherd birds may find
Whose various coulors alter not their kind.
If natures principles could vanquisht be
Leaving productions to vncerteintie
What might, or might not be, & were there found
Noe power which makes all creatures keepe their bound,
Successiue races had not oft renewd
Their parents natures, motions, manners, food.
(Hutchinson's Lucretius, 1.581-93)

The term *foedera naturae* (1.579) was approached by translators in a variety of ways to include the 'laws' or 'pacts' or nature, and, as Norbrook rightly cautions, is one of the metaphors in the poem which are 'missed when too much emphasis is laid on the element of chance in the Lucretian cosmos'.[250] An obedience to 'natures law' (as Hutchinson renders the Lucretian phrase) is an integral part of the account of the shape and continued existence of the universe. Norbrook points to the accuracy with which Hutchinson conveys the natural limitations and restrictions in the Lucretian cosmos. Far from an attempt by the Calvinist translator to graft a metaphysical teleology onto the poem – in her preface, she

[250] Norbrook (2011), lxix.

had condemned the aleatory nature of the Lucretian cosmos and its rejection of a divine author – she is sensitive in her translation to Lucretius' own account of its natural boundaries and limits.[251] Norbrook notes that 'when she writes […] in [her translation of] Book 1.582 that limits are "strictly assigned" to all living things, she is translating Lucretius' own *reddita*, "assigned" (1.577)'.[252]

The 'pacts of nature', as Hutchinson translates, are observable in the repeated qualities of generations of animals, and considered as one of the unwondrous (*debent nimirum*, *DRN* 1.592) phenomena in nature. Later, in *DRN* 3, the Lucretian narrator describes the impossibility of wandering spirits 'creeping', *insinuentur*, into other bodies.[253] It is impossible that the seeds of life are 'hunted out', *venentur* (*DRN* 3.727) by wandering souls, as is assumed occurs with worms, who appear to be spontaneously generated.[254] The narrator dismisses the idea of souls entering into bodies 'already made', since they cannot combine and share their qualities:

> haud igitur faciunt animae sibi corpora et artus.
> nec tamen est utqui perfectis insinuentur
> corporibus; neque enim poterunt subtiliter esse

[251] Hutchinson's prefatory material and what inspires her verse – including her translation – at times appear to be in tension, and Norbrook has explored these apparently paradoxical impulses to translate a poet whose doctrines she largely condemns. In Book 2, for example, as Norbrook points out, Hutchinson 'adds the comments "Of the vndisturbed quiet of the Gods and the free actings of nature … Horribly impious" … The translation itself, however, renders this latter passage with some vigour'. Norbrook (2011), lxv argues that 'there is evidence that these marginalia were an afterthought'.

[252] Hardy (2016) takes issue with the translation of *foedera* as 'laws', as we find it rendered in John Evelyn and Lucy Hutchinson, pointing to a 'precedent [that] had been set by the earliest published commentary on Lucretius, that of Giovanni Battista Pio in the early sixteenth century, who glossed the phrase *fati foedera* (2.254) as *leges naturales*'. Later translations, including Creech and Dryden, Hardy suggests, introduce the term 'laws' in sections where there is no Latin equivalent. See Hardy (2016), 214.

[253] *quod si forte putas extrinsecus insinuatam / permanare animam nobis per membra solere, / tanto quique magis cum corpore fusa peribit. / quod permanat enim dissolvitur, interit ergo*, 'But if by any chance you think that the spirit is accustomed to creep in from without and so to ooze through our frame, so much the more will it perish, being interfused with the body; for that which permeates is dissolved, perishes therefore' (*DRN* 3.698-701). See again *DRN* 3.737-40: *haud igitur faciunt animae sibi corpora et artus. nec tamen est utqui perfectis insinuentur / corporibus; neque enim poterunt subtiliter esse / conexae neque consensus contagia fient*, 'Nor is there any possibility that they [spirits] creep into bodies already made; for they will not be able to conjoin themselves closely together with these, nor will harmony be established through community of sensation'. The same verb is used to dismantle the ancient belief of the spontaneous generation of life in worms at *DRN* 3.722-9: *quod si forte animas extrinsecus insinuari / vermibus et privas in corpora posse venire / credis nec reputas cur milia multa animarum / convenient unde una recesserit, hoc tamen est ut / quaerendum videatur et in discrimen agendum, / utrum tandem animae venentur semina quaeque / vermiculorum ipsaeque sibi fabricentur ubi sint, / an quasi corporibus perfectis insinuentur* (*DRN* 3.722-9). On Hutchinson's translation of Lucretius' *intrinsecus insinuatam ... animam* (*DRN* 3.699-700) as 'inbreathed souls' ('Hutchinson's Lucretius', 3.375), Barbour, Norbrook, and Zerbino (2011) comment ad loc.: 'H suggests the theory of the infusion of souls, her version of *extrinsecus insinuatam* (3.698)'.

[254] Barbour, Norbrook, and Zerbino (2011), ad 3.759-68 note that Hutchinson's 'syntax and preference for "infusd" obscure L's posing of the wrong, even comic, options, for example, that spirits might hunt for seeds with which to frame their bodies (*DRN* 3.723-9)'.

conexae neque consensu contagia fient.

This proves not yet that minds their bodies make
Or fitted members for their dwelling take.
They neither subtly are together knit
Nor by consent doe these infections gett.
(*DRN* 3.738-40, trans. L. Hutchinson)

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton relates Satan's first action upon entering Eden as seeking out and inhabiting the body of a serpent. This action, key to the Genesis story of the Fall, at the same time (in Milton's account) evokes and subverts Lucretian teachings about the possibility of souls migrating into other bodies, and adopting or intermingling separate qualities of various species.[255]

Satan's action leads to a confusion of his own qualities with that of the serpent. In *La Semaine*, Du Bartas had captured the moment when Satan and the serpent's qualities begin to merge, so that, as Joshua Sylvester renders it in his translation, 'the mover might with th'organ sympathize'. Du Bartas further speculates on the benign nature of the serpent before the Fall, claiming that in Eden the serpent was not yet hated by humans nor crawling on the ground (part of his biblical punishment).[256] The technique of narrative aside is echoed in Milton's description of the serpent's wiliness as 'not nocent yet', and 'Fearless / unfeared' by humans. The image of evil spirits who 'slide … / [a]s subtile spirits, into our fantasie' as quickly as 'in liquid cloudes exhaled thicklie / Water and ayre (as moist) do mingle quickly'[257] appears to inform Milton's account of Satan's travelling '[l]ike a black mist low creeping' (*PL* 9.180), as he seeks out the body of a sleeping serpent.[258] This action foregrounds Satan's further violations of natural principles

[255] Milton's scene may also be in intertextual dialogue with the concept of soul-migration underlying Ennius' account of his dream of Homer in the opening of the *Annales*. According to ancient testimonia, Ennius relates a moment in the *Annales* in which the soul of Homer is said to have migrated from a peacock to Ennius' body (Enn. *Ann*. fr. 13, in Warmington [2014]).
[256] *Divine Weeks and Works*, 'The Imposture', 127-30.
[257] *Divine Weeks and Works*, 'The Imposture', 137-40. See note by Fowler (2007), ad 180. Du Bartas' elaboration of this passage from Genesis is discussed briefly by Fallon (1991), 159.
[258] Another element of the scene may point to a further Lucretian detail. Milton's account of the serpent with his 'head the middle' of his body may parody the Lucretian distinction between the location of the 'mind and spirit', *animus atque anima*, in the 'middle' of the body (*DRN* 3.136-40): *Nunc animum atque animam dico coniuncta teneri / inter se atque unam naturam conficere ex se, / sed caput esse quasi et dominari in corpore toto / consilium quod nos animum mentemque vocamus. / idque situm media regione in pectoris haeret*. The serpent's contortion makes the Lucretian imagination of the mind in the middle of the body possible: the serpent, sleeping curled up into a 'labyrinth of many a round self-rolled', now has hidden his head in the middle of his body.

governing creaturely life in Eden – principles which the speaking serpent will encourage Eve to transgress.

2.4 Linguistic Transgressions

The Lucretian *adynaton* enacted in Satan's soul migration is accompanied by a reaction of wonder in Eve – a further enacting of a Lucretian warning against attributing supernatural qualities to natural phenomena. In the Lucretian account of travelling spirits, one impossibility leads to another, as the narrator considers the impossible scenario of a soul being immortal – a further condition of its ability to travel (only an immortal spirit could survive a change of body; Lucretius uses this logic at *DRN* 3.698ff. to disprove the idea of spirits travelling). This produces a series of *adynata* in the natural world, characterized by the confusion of animal qualities. The Lucretian poet imagines several absurd situations: the timidity of a savage breed of dogs and hawks before their usual prey, and men lacking reason, which instead is given to 'wild generations and wild beasts'. Reason, in Lucretius, is as human a quality as the savagery of natural hunters and predators (*DRN* 3.748-53):

> quod si immortalis foret et mutare soleret
> corpora, permixtis animantes moribus essent,
> effugeret canis Hyrcano de semine saepe
> cornigeri incursum cervi tremeretque per auras
> aeris accipiter fugiens veniente columba,
> desiperent homines, saperent fera saecla ferarum.
>
> For if they were immortall, and did vse
> To change their bodies, they would then infuse
> Mixt inclinations into euery one
> And soe Hyrcanian dogs would sometimes run
> From horned stags, & fearlesse doves would chace
> The trembling hawks, soe mankinds knowing race
> Of humane understanding dispossest,
> A rationall soule might dwell in euery beast.
> (*DRN* 3.748-53, trans. L. Hutchinson, my emphasis)

When the serpent appears to Eve, he presents himself as such an *adynaton*, an animal displaying the human quality of articulate speech. The first danger of the temptation scene, as John Leonard has argued,[259] lies in Eve being drawn into a debate about the nature of the serpent's speech. 'The serpent speaks specifically about his speaking',[260] seducing Eve

[259] Leonard (1999).
[260] See Leonard (1999), 141: 'To be sure, her wonder creates a dangerous moment for Satan, an opportunity for Eve to exercise special vigilance. However, it is an opportunity Eve misses, and a moment that Satan

with the account of how, by eating the fruit, he came to possess the human gift of language as well as the cognitive faculties that underlie it. Eve's ability to understand the serpent may be considered as part of the prelapsarian activity of the first humans: but Eve appears to be surprised by the serpent's human quality of expression:[261]

> What may this mean? Language of man pronounced
> By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed?
> The first at least of these I thought denied
> To beasts, whom God on their creation-day
> Created mute to all articulate sound;
> The latter I demur, for in their looks
> Much reason, and in their actions oft appears.
> Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field
> I knew, but not with human voice endued;
> Redouble then this miracle, and say,
> How cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how
> To me so friendly grown above the rest
> Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
> Say, for such wonder claims attention due.
> (*PL* 9.553-65)

Eve's line of questioning appears to mirror the two chief areas of preoccupation with debates about animal speech which Richard Serjeantson has identified in the period between 1540 and 1700. These relate most commonly to the physical condition of animals, enabling them to utter human sounds, and the assumptions about their reasoning faculties.[262] The emphasis on language as the expression of sensation, as both Gassendi and Hobbes argued (rejecting the Cartesian view), shares a vital feature with the Lucretian account of language, one that considers animal and human language together as a physical capacity of making sounds that correspond to sensations:[263]

> postremo quid in hac mirabile tantoperest re,
> si genus humanum, cui vox et lingua vigeret,
> pro vario sensu varia res voce notaret?
> cum pecudes mutae, cum denique saecla ferarum
> dissimilis soleant voces variasque ciere,
> cum metus aut dolor est et cum iam gaudia gliscunt.
>
> Lastly, why is it strange that humane kind,

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turns to his advantage with what is a dramatic masterstroke by Milton: the serpent speaks specifically about his speaking and attributes this supposedly new power to some as yet unspecified fruit.'

[261] The claim that Adam understood the speech of animals before the Fall had the authority of Josephus. See Serjeantson (2001).

[262] In tracing early modern debates about animal language, Serjeantson comments on the manner in which Gassendi and Cureau in the 1650s had rejected the Cartesian rejection of animal language: see Serjeantson (2001), 437-8.

[263] Gassendi, *Syntagma Philosophicum*, 1658, II, 521-22 and Hobbes, *De homine*, II, 88 (10.1), in Serjeantson (2001), 435.

> Indued with voyce and tongue, should as they [animals] find
> A various sence of things, their thoughts possesse,
> In various sounds of voyce, that sence expresse,
> When euen the dumb beasts various cries eiect,
> As ioy, or griefe, or feare doth them affect?
> (*DRN* 5.1056-61, trans. Lucy Hutchinson)

Lucretius uses the adjective *mutus* to refer to beasts – *pecudes mutae* – who are not capable of uttering articulate sounds.[264] In encountering the serpent for the first time, Eve attributes 'mute[ness] to all articulate sound' as part of the created condition of animals ('The first at least of these I thought denied / To beasts, whom God on their creation-day / Created mute to all articulate sound'). Keeping the question of animal muteness within their physical capacity to utter human sounds,[265] Eve expresses surprise at language expressed 'by tongue of brute', and later repeats her wonder at the ability of the fruit that '[g]ave elocution to the mute, and taught / The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise' (*PL* 9.748-9). She describes the speaking serpent as a 'miracle' and 'wonder', reversing the Lucretian order of the possible and impossible as well the marvellous and the unmarvellous.[266] In Lucretius' account, the human faculty for speech is paralleled in the natural world: the passage that explains the origins of human language begins with a programmatic qualifier *quid mirabile*? ('what is wonderful?'). Lucretius' argument about human speech is an argument derived from animal sounds, as the wondrous is replaced with the knowable.[267]

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[264] But the phrase is also used by Cicero in a letter to his brother Quintus (Cic. *Qfr*. 1.1.24.6) – a letter belonging to the same series that, incidentally, contains his praise of Lucretius.

[265] As Serjeantson (2001), 429 notes, Marin Cureau de la Chambre, in his *A Discourse of the Knowledge of Beasts* (1658), had posed the question of whether the anatomy of animals allowed them to utter articulate human-like sounds, conceding that some species were physiologically capable of imitative sound (such as we see in a parrot). But the cognition underlying human speech, as a condition for animal participation in human rationality, was generally denied to them. In encountering the serpent, and hearing his speech for the first time, Eve expresses surprise in these two areas: the physical capacity of animals to express human language, and the expression of 'human sense' (554), which she later associates with 'reason' (559). While Eve marvels at the first phenomenon, the physical capacity of the serpent to utter human sounds, she unreservedly accepts the latter, the condition of reason underlying his speech. Eve's mistake lies in attributing human cognition to animals more readily than she allows the physical condition to be fulfilled.

[266] For Lucretius, forms of wonder are to be avoided. Wonder, and its negative corollary, *horror*, yields to a tendency to ascribe divine causes, and is often the result of secondary or related knowledge, rather than personal, sensory experience (note the image of the reflected sky in the puddle is described as 'marvellous', *mirando*, at *DRN* 4.419. See also n. 238 above. As Monica Gale (1994) has shown, Lucretius classifies many *adynata* as myths, ones that do not find corroboration in the real world: the myths of giants and monsters are false, due to the limits imposed by creation from atoms, e.g. at *DRN* 1.199-204, 2.701-6. Other phenomena that seem impossible can in fact exist in nature, but have been hitherto unknown, such as the possibility of a white crow or a black swan (*DRN* 2.822-5). See discussion and examples in Gale (1994), 182-3.

[267] Yet she expresses little surprise at the cognitive ability of the serpent to participate in human reasoning: 'The latter I demur, for in their looks / Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears'. Eve's statement

In her reaction to the serpent's speech, Eve appears deliberately to subvert the Lucretian mode of instruction that had occurred in Raphael's narration. In Book 5, Raphael admonished Adam and Eve to 'wonder not' about the plans of God, a passage that relies on the exposition of 'proper substance' (*PL* 5.493). The process in which the Satanic serpent demystifies his own process of attaining language, by contrast, is imbued in the language of marvels. As his narrative progresses, Eve is filled with more – and not less – wonder. Eve is '[y]et more amazed' and replies 'unwar[ily]' at *PL* 9.614. At *PL* 1.552, Eve speaks 'not unamazed' in answer to the serpent, a double negative that may parody the negative of the Lucretian *nimirum*, and expresses wonder in a subversion the language of the unmarvellous:

> So glozed the tempter, and his proem tuned;
> Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
> Though at the voice much marvelling; at length
> Not unamazed she thus in answer spake.
> (*PL* 9.549-52)

Where in Lucretius wonder leads to the danger of ascribing supernatural causes, Eve's wonder is the preface to rejecting the authority of God and the previous didactic authority of Raphael. In Book 9, Eve looks to the serpent for instruction: a new didactic narrator, who, at this narrative moment, as he begins to lead Eve towards the tree, is compared to a fire 'leading the amazed night wanderer from his way' (*PL* 9.640).

We have examined how, in his Edenic narrative, Milton evokes Lucretian teachings about *foedera naturae* governing the distinction between species, and forbidding the confusion of natural qualities. Satan's violation of these principles, in inhabiting the body of a serpent, results in a further Lucretian transgression, this time by Eve: her misplaced wonder at natural phenomena and the misattribution of reasoning power to the serpent, as we saw, subvert contemporary discourses about the nature of animal versus human speech. In the next section, I consider how Satan's temptation of Eve works by him turning his focus to Eve herself. Satan's temptation, aimed at Eve, attempts to replace the natural order of Eden with a false version of a Lucretian natural order, through the praise of Eve as a godlike figure. Milton's pseudo-Lucretian idiom, voiced by the serpent, here in fact shows the violation of Lucretian natural law in Satan's praise of Eve. It also reflects on the

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reverses the order in which early modern thinkers had permitted animals a share in human language – through physical mimicry, but not cognitive participation in reasoning, an exclusively human trait.

exaggeration of nature in early modern readings of Lucretius and draws the reader, paradoxically, further away from the depiction of the natural world of *De Rerum Natura*.

2.5 'Godlike' Eve

At *PL* 9.532-7, the Satanic serpent approaches Eve, and instructs her to 'wonder not' at the unusual sight and sound of an animal addressing her:

> Wonder not, sovereign mistress, if perhaps
> Thou canst, who art sole wonder, much less arm
> Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,
> Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
> Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared
> Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
> (*PL* 9.532-7)

Satan's praise of Eve is prefaced by the Lucretian instruction to 'wonder not'. The Lucretian injunction *nil mirari* cautions against wonder (cf. *DRN* 6.653-4, *quod bene propositum si plane contueare* / *ac videas plane, mirari multa relinquas*, 'If you should keep this steadily before your mind, comprehend it clearly, see it clearly, you would cease to wonder at many things', and *DRN* 6.1056, *Illud in his rebus mirari mitte*, 'In this connexion, you must not allow yourself to wonder'). Satan acknowledges Eve herself as 'sole wonder', expressed in divine terms as a 'heaven of mildness' and 'retired'. The serpent's praise of Eve may allude to attempts by contemporary readers of Lucretius to find in the poem a celebration of a feminized image of nature. David Norbrook has drawn attention to the tendency to depict nature physically (a departure from Lucretius) – as seen, for example, on the title page of Michel de Marolles' 1659 edition of *De Rerum Natura*. Marolles' edition followed the Jansson's edition of the poem, published in 1620, which 'depicted Nature as a multi-breasted, lactating female'.[268] This image, evoking free associations with Lucretius rather than a faithful rendition of the text, had proven popular among royalist readers, such as John Evelyn and Margaret Cavendish. Though she was unlikely to have read the *De Rerum Natura* first hand, Cavendish, as Norbrook claims, 'is likely to have been aware of this link between Nature and a powerful woman, the kind of *femme forte* she was to celebrate in her own writings.'[269] Cavendish's identification of a

[268] This portrayal of a personified nature, as Norbrook (2011), 1, xxxv observes, 'often associated with Earth, had emerged in humanist iconography, displacing older representations of a dignified, clothed Nature'. For further discussion of Marolle's edition and its reception in England, particularly its influence on John Evelyn's *An Essay on the First Book of (T. Lucretius Carus) De Rerum Natura* of 1656, see Cottegnies (2016).
[269] Norbrook (2011), xxxvii.

heroic woman intellectual with a Lucretian image of nature is parodied, perhaps, in Satan's praise of Eve as 'Sovereign of creatures, universal dame' at *PL* 9.612 in the temptation scene in Book 9 (see discussion below).[270]

For Milton, it is the angel Raphael who comes closest to embodying a personified nature, and object of reverence (though, significantly, not of awe – see below). The serpent's encounter with Eve is a distorted image of Adam's first encounter with Raphael in the garden. Adam approaches Raphael 'Nearer his presence Adam though not awed, / Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek, / As to a superior nature, bowing low' (*PL* 5.358-60). Eve too is hailed by Satan as an emblem of nature, yet the authority she represents in Eden appears to compete with the authority of the Father. She is described in quasi-religious vocabulary, as 'there best, where universally admired', and 'worship[ed]':

> But all that fair and good in thy divine
> Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,
> United I beheld; no fair to thine
> Equivalent or second, which compelled
> Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
> And gaze, and worship thee of right declared
> Sovereign of creatures, universal dame.
> (*PL* 9.606-12)

The serpent's avowal of 'no … / Equivalent or second' (*PL* 9.608-9) to Eve, however, belies the multiplicity of figures that compete for supremacy in the Satanic kingdom.[271] In Book 2, Satan had encountered Sin who, at the gates of hell, had expressed her hope for a future kingdom, to rival the heavenly one,[272] in which she will preside 'voluptuous' (cf. the definition of Lucretius' Venus as *voluptas* at *DRN* 1.1) at the 'right hand' of Satan, in a Lucretian universe, 'a new world of light and bliss / among the gods who live at ease', an echo of the condition of the Lucretian gods living *privata dolore omni, privata periclis*, 'free of all pain, free of dangers' (see *DRN* 2.646-51):[273]

> … Thou wilt bring me soon
> To that new world of light and bliss, among
> The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
> At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
> Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.
> (*PL* 2.866-70)

[270] See Norbrook (2011), xxxv.
[271] Later the serpent will praise the fruit itself as 'Mother of science' at *PL* 9.680 – a further competitor to Eve.
[272] Also parodying it in the words of the Nicene creed. See Fowler (2007), ad loc.
[273] On this Lucretian passage, see n. 297 below.

But behind this 'new world' is an old image of an epic one. The image of the gods living at ease is also a Homeric formula to describe the life of the Olympians, as distinct from mortals (see e.g. Homer *Il*. 6.138). Sin hopes for an epic kingdom, to reign as Satan's 'daughter and darling, without end'. Milton announces the danger of a Satanic order through a subversion of the Jovian promise of empire: 'Empire without end', *imperium sine fine*, is what Jupiter promises his daughter Venus in *Aeneid* 1.279.[274] Sin hopes for a competing kingdom to the heavenly one, a rivalry that is expressed by recourse to the ambition of Juno in raising her own kingdom by summoning the winds of Aeolus to destroy the Trojan ships in *Aeneid* 1. Sin's oath of allegiance echoes the oath of Aeolus to Juno as she asks him to release the winds at *Aen*. 1.76-80:

> Aeolus haec contra: 'tuus, o regina, quid optes
> explorare labor; mihi iussa capessere fas est.
> tu mihi quodcumque hoc regni, tu sceptra Iouemque
> concilias …'
>
> Thus answered Aeolus: 'Your task, O queen, is to search out your desire; my duty is to do your bidding. To your grace I owe all this my realm, to your grace my sceptre and Jove's favour …'
> (*Aen*. 1.76-9)

In Milton's Eden, the Satanic serpent swears an oath to Eve that reappraises and completes the oath of Aeolus to Juno. It is in confrontation with Eve that the scene between Satan and Sin, the opening of the gates of Hell, and the point of Satan's mission is fulfilled:

> To whom the guileful tempter thus replied.
> Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve,
> Easy to me it is to tell thee all
> What thou commandst, and right thou shouldst be obeyed:
> (*PL* 9.567-70)

In his Latin translation of *Paradise Lost*, William Dobson rendered the Miltonic lines with the lines of *Aen*. 1.76-7:

> Cui vafer insidians Tentator deinde remisit:
> O dulcem imperio mundum, spectabilis Eva,
> Quae late regina premis, tuus omne quod optas
> Explorare labor, mihi jussa capessere fas est. (*Paradisus Amissus*, 9.567-70)[275]

[274] Fowler (2007), ad loc. suggests a parallel with Horace, *Odes* 1.12.18, the praise of Augustus, *nec viget quicquam simile aut secundum*, and contrasts the passage with the Father's self-description at *PL* 8.406-7: 'for none I know / Second to me or like …'.

[275] William Dobson is the author of possibly the best neo-Latin translation of *Paradise Lost*. Porter (1993) devotes a chapter of his monograph to a discussion of the merits of Dobson's translation also for the study of Milton's Latin allusions. See especially Porter (1993), 136-69.

It is in the serpent's oath to Eve that the Aeolian allusion, begun in the oath of Sin, is completed, and, in turn, transformed. In the Miltonic passage, Aeolus's effort in obeying Juno, conveyed by the verb *labor* (*Aen*. 1.77) is replaced with Satan's 'ease' in obeying Eve (also in the positioning of the line): 'Easy to me it is to tell thee all / What thou commandst, and right thou shouldst be obeyed' (*PL* 9.569-70).[276]

Satan's attempt to fashion Eve as a personification of nature is denied in Milton's depiction of the immediate aftermath of the Fall. If Eve was to be a Lucretian figure of nature in the serpent's rhetoric, it is a dual image of feminized 'earth' and 'nature' that together point to the transgression of Eve, and anticipates the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise. After Eve eats the fruit, it is not heaven, but earth and nature who appear as the first personified 'mourners' of the Fall: 'Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat / Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe, / That all was lost' (*PL* 9.782-4).[277] The Fall itself is figured not only as a transgression against God, but against a multifaceted nature, too.[278]

2.6 'Higher Than My Lot'

The idea that the Christian God acted as a personal embodiment of the order of the Epicurean universe was proposed by a number of early modern readers of Lucretius. A famous example is Francis Bacon's early view that the randomness of the atoms as depicted in the Epicurean universe was in itself, in its absurdity, proof of their ordering by

[276] A further contrast that mirrors the preface to Raphael's narrative of the war in heaven, the 'sad task and hard' (*PL* 5.564), also serves as a well known allusion to Aeneas' preface to his account of the fall of Troy to Dido in the opening of *Aeneid* 2 (*Infandum, regina, iubes renouare dolorem …*, *Aen*. 2.3). See Quint (2013) for parallels between Eve and Dido.

[277] The Miltonic personification of nature may be reminiscent of Lucretius' famous personification of nature in her speech at *DRN* 3.931-71. The thematic contact between the two scenes is close, and the Lucretian echoes in Milton may even hint at a conscious inversion of the Lucretian model. While Lucretius' Nature is instructing desolate man (*quid tibi tanto operest, mortalis, quod nimis aegris / luctibus indulges? quid congemis ac fles?*, 'What ails you so, O mortal, to indulge overmuch in sickly lamentations? Why do you groan and weep at death?', *DRN* 3.933-4), in Milton, it is personified nature herself who, in sympathy for the disaster of the Fall (a sympathetic nature at the face of transgression is of course a common literary motif, but Milton may also owe a particular debt to Rom. 8:22: see Fowler [2007], ad loc.), 'sighing ... gave signs of woe' (*PL* 9.783); whereas Lucretius' Nature instructs a desolate man for whom 'all is lost' (*sin ea quae fructus cumque es periere profusa / vitaque in offensost, cur amplius addere quaeris, / rursum quod pereat male et ingratum occidat omne*, 'But if all that you have enjoyed has been spilt out and lost, and if you have a grudge at life, why seek to add more, only to be miserably lost again and to perish wholly without gratification?', *DRN* 3.940-2) to end his life, in Milton, nature, having turned into the desolate mourner, is herself faced with the situation in which indeed 'all is lost' (*PL* 9.784).

[278] For mourning nature giving portents, see also the parallel with Lucan in the opening of Book 2: epic imagery overtakes the materialist narrative.

a divine Being.[279] In his translation of Du Bartas' *La Semaine*, furthermore, Joshua Sylvester had imagined the Father in the act of creation as collaborating with nature: 'Who (only Beeing) being gives to all, / And of all things, the seeds substantiall / Within their first-borne bodies hath inclosed / To be in time by natures hand disposed' (*The Divine Works and Weeks*, 2.1.2, 174-6).[280] Lucretius' French commentator Tanneguy Lefebvre, however, had warned against associating Lucretius' account of natural limits – of what cannot be achieved 'beyond the laws of nature' (*praeter naturae foedera*)[281] – with the providence of the gods.[282] In a variorum edition of *DRN*, published in 1675, Lefebvre's discussion is cited immediately below a comment by the French scholar Denys Lambin, who, in his 1563 edition with commentary on the poem, had glossed the Lucretian phrase *quid possit oriri* at *DRN* 1.75, 'that which can exist', in discernibly providential language:

> *quid possit oriri* …] … qua ratione *suus cuique rei finis* sit constitutus, *& terminus* immotus, stabilis, aeternus, altissimeque defixus, ac depactus.
>
> In this way, *suus cuique rei finis* is established, and the *terminus*[283] is unmoveable, firm, enduring, most highly and deeply fixed, and established.[284]

Whereas Lefebvre rejects the collocation of divine providence with Lucretian accounts of natural law, Milton's narrative in *Paradise Lost* appears to encourage a multifaceted reading of the serpent's transgression of both natural and divinely appointed law. Part of the effectiveness of the serpent's arguments in the lead-up to the Fall lay in his presentation of himself as a positive *exemplum* of transgression. At *PL* 9.689-90, the serpent claims to have attained 'life more perfect … than fate / Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot':

> Queen of this universe, do not believe
> Those rigid threats of death; ye shall not die:

[279] 'Nay, even that *Schoole*, which is most accused of *Atheisme*, doth demonstrate *Religion*; that is, the *Schoole* of *Leucippus*, and *Democritus*, and *Epicurus*. For it is a thousand times more Credible, that foure Mutable Elements, and one Immutable Fift Essence, duly and Eternally placed, need no God, then that an Army, of Infinite small Portions, or Seedes unplaced, should have produced this Order, and Beauty, without a Divine Marshall': Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, civill and morall*, in Kiernan (1985), cited and discussed in Hardy (2016), 210.
[280] Sylvester's 'seeds substantial' may be a version of Lucretius' *semina rerum* at *DRN* 1.59.
[281] Lefebvre claimed that Lucretius aims to show that 'nothing can be achieved outside or above the pacts of nature': '(*naturae foedera*): *nil illi praeter naturae foedera moliri queant, &c. huc scilicet tendit Lucretius*' (Lefebvre [1675], ad *DRN* 1.75).
[282] For this, he uses the Lucretian language of rejecting wonders (*Si autem finite cuique, &c inde fiet ut miraculis, quae a Deorum providentia, nulla fides*). The idea of *foedus* in Lucretius as a way of seeing a 'contract' in nature, irrespective of the ordinances of the gods, far removed from human affairs and the ordering of the universe. See further discussion in Hine (1995), 737.
[283] On *Terminus* as the Roman god of boundaries, see Lactantius 1.20.38.
[284] Lefebvre (1675), ad *DRN* 1.75. My translation.

> How should ye? By the fruit? It gives you life
> To knowledge. By the threatener? Look on me,
> Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,
> And life more perfect have attained than fate
> Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
> (*PL* 9.684-90)

While alluding to the serpent's transgression of the natural cognitive and linguistic abilities of animals, and the natural law of Eden, his argument also alludes to the language of Satan's own transgression of his God-given 'lot' in heaven, pointing to a moment earlier in the poem which depicted the allocation of honours among the angels. In Book 4, Uriel had acknowledged that it is Gabriel's 'lot' to watch over Eden ('Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given / Charge and strict watch that to this happy place / No evil thing approach or enter in', *PL* 4.561-3).[285] The transgression of these boundaries, and most prominently of 'fate', asserts, paradoxically, Satan's transgression of his place in heaven and his rejection of the authority of the Father. In the council in Pandaemonium in Book 2, Beëlzebub had praised the resolve of the fallen angels to defy their banishment from heaven, and to rise 'from the lowest deep / … in spite of fate' (*PL* 2.392-3).[286] Moloch had previously collocated fate with the will of the Father: 'since fate inevitable / Subdues us, and omnipotent decree, / The victor's will' (*PL* 2.197-9). Moloch's collocation announces the Father's own claim of his personal power over fate in Book 7, and his final renouncing of materialist alternatives in Book 7:[287] 'necessity and chance / Approach not me, and what I will is fate' (*PL* 7.172-3). In speaking as a serpent, Satan's attempt to limit the language of his transgression to natural law cannot escape from the allusive facts of the poem – of Satan's simultaneous transgression of the Father's divine authority.

2.7 Transgression and Aftermath

In developing his argument about the transgression against fate in the passage at *PL* 9.684-90 (above), the serpent presents an argument about his continuing life after his transgression, presenting himself as living proof against the prophecy of punishment: 'look on me, / Me who have touched and tasted, and yet ... live' (*PL* 9.687-8). This argument is repeated by Eve at *PL* 9.764 and Adam at 9.932-3 ('he yet lives, / Lives as thou saidst…').

[285] Cf. also the weighing of lots at the end of Book 4.
[286] 'Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, / Synod of gods, and like to what ye are, / Great things resolved; which from the lowest deep / Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate, / Nearer our ancient seat ...' (*PL* 2.390-4, my emphasis).
[287] See further discussion of the Father's speech in Chapter 3.

If the serpent had previously attempted to echo the language of Lucretius in comforting Eve against her fear of death, his language, in fact, traps both Satan and the first humans in the fate of those who are punished for their transgressions within their own lifetimes. The allusion is misplaced in Satan's rhetoric, and the argument of 'still living' alludes to Lucretius' warning against the sufferings to be endured by those who, ironically, attempt to avoid them in life. The one Lucretian reference to continuing life is not aimed as a comfort. Indeed, at the only instance when the poet refers to men escaping death, it is not in order to offer comfort, but to issue a warning against committing crimes, and sharing in the punishment of continuing to live in suffering:

> nam quod saepe homines morbos magis esse timendos
> infamemque ferunt vitam quam Tartara leti
> et se scire animi naturam sanguinis esse
> aut etiam venti, si fert ita forte voluntas,
> nec prorsum quicquam nostrae rationis egere,
> hinc licet advertas animum magis omnia laudis
> iactari causa quam quod res ipsa probetur.
> extorres idem patria longeque fugati
> conspectu ex hominum, foedati crimine turpi,
> omnibus aerumnis adfecti denique vivunt …
>
> That sick or infamous life should be abhorrd,
> More then the terrors all deaths can afford,
> That humane soules doe in the blood reside,
> Nor need we should for them with care provide,
> Many affirme, though scarce perswaded soe,
> Whose arguments out of vaine glorie flow,
> And perverse wills to contradiction bent;
> For even these, driv'n into banishment,
> With woes afflicted, and with crimes defil'd,
> Prolong their wretched lives, from men exil'd …
> (*DRN* 3.41-50, trans. L. Hutchinson)

The Lucretian passage, with emphasis on those who 'still live' (*denique vivunt*), reformulates the perceived sufferings of the afterlife into the real sufferings of those who committed crimes (crimes that consist in 'transgressing the boundaries of the law', *transcendere fines / iuris*, *DRN* 3.60-1). These men, in Lucretius' account, are banished in life through their misdeeds, and suffer, by their own estimation, a fate worse than death. The Miltonic serpent, too, is attempting to reformulate and dismantle the fears against a perceived punishment. The Lucretian antecedent passage illuminates Satan's deception: the crime and suffering of Adam and Eve will be experienced before their death. The

tragedy of Adam and Eve, as Wilson has shown, lies in continued life, drawing together imagery from tragedy,[288] but which also, I argue, relies on fulfilling the Lucretian warning.

The allusivity of the serpent's argument creates a narrative irony, transforming Lucretius' reassurance against the fear of eternal sufferings after death. At *DRN* 3.847-53, the poet had comforted Memmius against the possibility of eternal sufferings – even if it is possible to imagine that matter may gather together again and reconstitute our human material and consciousness again, we will have no memory of the previous life:

> nec, si materiem nostram collegerit aetas
> post obitum rursumque redegerit ut sita nunc est
> atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitae,
> pertineat quicquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum,
> interrupta semel cum sit repetentia nostri.
> et nunc nil ad nos de nobis attinet, ante
> qui fuimus, <nil> iam de illis nos adficit angor.
>
> Now, though the nature of the souls, dismist
> From humane bodies, could with sence subsist,
> Yett that concerns not vs, who haue alone
> Our life and being in their coniunction.
> Neither though time should after death restore
> Our matter to that state it had before,
> And vs in regions of the light reviue
> Could we a benefit from thence deriue,
> After the chaine of life were broke, &we
> Once interrupted in our memorie.
> We now in life are not solicitous
> From what was done before <nor> anxious
> For what our matter shall hereafter doe
> When time shall our dissolued frames renew.
> (*DRN* 3.847-53, trans. L. Hutchinson)

The description of Milton's fallen angels, however, appears as an inversion of the Lucretian passage. The rebels are described in Book 1 thus:

> In horrible destruction laid thus low,
> As far as gods and heavenly essences
> Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
> Invincible, and vigour soon returns,
> Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
> Here swallowed up in endless misery.
> (*PL* 1.137-42)

[288] On 'overliving' as a tragic motif in *Paradise Lost*, see Emily Wilson's discussion (2004), 164-207.

The punishment of the fallen angels is perpetuated by a continuous reassembling of an 'invincible' 'mind', 'spirit', and 'vigour'. The only death is that of previous glory ('Though all our glory extinct'), and the memory of their previous life is the source of the fallen angels' present suffering: 'for the mind and spirit remains / Invincible, and vigour soon returns'.

In Book 10, in the aftermath of the Fall and the realization of his transgression, it is Adam who trembles at the thought – 'Horrid, if true!' (*PL* 10.789) – of an afterlife, of a punishment that extends beyond death.[289] In his speech, Adam uses a series of Lucretian images, expressing a desire to become one with nature, and longs for death expressed in Lucretian terms as an end of sensation and expectation:

> … How gladly would I meet
> Mortality my sentence, and be earth
> Insensible, how glad would lay me down
> As in my mother's lap! There I should rest
> And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
> Would thunder in my ears, no fear of worse
> To me, and to my offspring would torment me
> With cruel expectation …
> (*PL* 10.775-82)

In his desire to lay in his 'mother's lap', Adam's diction replaces the authority of the Father with an image of nature as mother – a further rhetorical replacement of the creative and generative authority of the Father,[290] and describes himself as part of the material natural world: through death, he wishes to become 'earth / Insensible', and he longs for a psychological state that contains characteristics of the Epicurean freedom from psychological torment: fear of divine retribution and 'cruel expectation'.

Moreover, at *PL* 10.792, 'All of me then shall die', Adam's inversion of the Horatian *non omnis moriar*, 'I shall not wholly die' (*Carm.* 3.30.6),[291] is posited against the doubt that he

[289] Cf. Aeneas' trembling *horrescit uisu* at *Aen*. 6.710 at the sight of souls lining up for a second life (a passage that, despite Anchises' Stoic message, contains a Lucretian formulation, *dira cupido*, in Aeneas' question at *Aen*. 6.721: *quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?*).
[290] Cf. also the account of Mars described as lying vanquished in the lap of Venus at *DRN* 1.33-4 (*in gremium qui saepe tuum se / reicit aeterno devictus vulnere amoris*).
[291] The Miltonic use and placement of the adjectival 'all' (in the sense of adverbial 'entirely') mirrors the Latin usage of an adjective in such cases: Milton's Latinism makes the Horatian echo (cf. *omnis moriar*) resound more strongly here. An important discussion of the complex function of the adjective 'all' in *Paradise Lost* is found in Empson (1951), 101-5.

experiences about the mortality of the soul, as the reality of his punishment, in this life, presents itself to him as a reality:

> … Yet one doubt
> Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;
> Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of man
> Which God inspired, cannot together perish
> With this corporeal clod; then in the grave,
> Or in some other dismal place, who knows
> But I shall die a living death? Oh thought
> Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
> Of life that sinned; what dies but what had life
> And sin? The body properly hath neither.
> All of me then shall die: let this appease
> The doubt, since human reach no farther knows.
> For though the Lord of all be infinite,
> Is his wrath also? Be it, man is not so,
> But mortal doomed. How can he exercise
> Wrath without end on man whom death must end?
> Can he make deathless death? That were to make
> Strange contradiction, which to God himself
> Impossible is held, as argument
> Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
> For anger's sake, finite to infinite
> In punished man, to satisfy his rigour
> Satisfied never? That were to extend
> His sentence beyond dust and nature's law
> (*PL* 10.782-805, my emphasis)

As has been noted,[292] Adam's experience could be imagined as participating in the four stages of death described in *De Doctrina Christiana* 1.12, where the soul, 'which sins most of all', is imagined as being punished along with the body by death. In Chapter 12 of *DDC* 1, death, described as a consequence of sin, includes a variety of spiritual, psychological, and cognitive phenomena. These phenomena are seen as part of the human experience of death, and to have antedated the bodily one of Adam and Eve after their wilful obedience to God's commands:

> Mala autem omnia et quicquid ducere ad interitum videtur, sub mortis nomine summatim Scriptura complectitur: Mors enim Corporalis, quae dicitur, Adami peccatum non est eo die secuta, prout minatus est Deus.
> Quatuor [sic] itaque mortis gradus haud incommode statuuntur. primus, ut supra dixi, sunt mala omnia quae ad mortem vergunt, quaeque ab ipso statim lapsu immigrasse in mundum constat …
>
> But all evils, and whatever seems to lead to extinction, Scripture summarily

[292] See e.g. Fowler (2007), ad 10.786-92, with further references.

> embraces under the name of death. For what is called Bodily Death did not follow Adam's sin 'on that day', as God threatened.
> And so four degrees of death are quite appropriately laid down. Forming the first, as I said above, are all the evils which incline towards death and which, it is certain, moved into the world straight after the fall itself …
> (*DDC* 1.12, 'de Poena peccati', 430)

Adam's mistake lies is trying to maintain his account of the soul's death along with the body within a Lucretian viewpoint. As Alastair Fowler notes, Adam omits the second judgement from his speculation, as well as its consequences: eternal punishment for sin, where the sinful soul experiences its 'final' death. Instead, as Adam contemplates the possibility of an afterlife, he expresses the paradox of Lucretian 'deathless death', the *mors … immortalis* (see *DRN* 3.869).

Yet death itself is only a reality for Adam and Eve after the Fall, as is the tragedy of 'overliving',[293] the final breaking of the boundary of death, that causes Adam and Eve to share in the crime and punishment of Satan himself. By encouraging the 'mortal taste' (*PL* 1.2) of the fruit, Satan, in the guise of a serpent, subverts the Epicurean mission from freeing mankind from death, and 'brought death into the world, and all our woe' (*PL* 1.3).

Conclusion

Allusions to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, as we have seen in this chapter, appear in key episodes in Book 9, enriching the account of the human Fall and its aftermath and providing a vocabulary integral to Milton's narrative of fate, natural law, and their transgression in the poem. By alluding also to contemporary readings of *De Rerum Natura*, and engaging specifically in discussions of order and natural law, Milton builds a set of imagery to depict the reality of Adam and Eve's transgression in Eden and its prefiguring in Satan's fall and subsequent punishment through the lens of a Lucretian cosmos. As in the language of the fallen angels (discussed in the previous chapter), Milton's use of Lucretian allusion in his narrative of the Fall relies on recognition and allusive play with the reader, who recognizes in the language of Satan a misplaced account of intellectual freedom in the lead-up to the Fall, while transforming the world of Lucretian myth to depict the real sufferings of Adam and Eve in its aftermath. A Lucretian account of the universe of *Paradise Lost*, which in the opening of the poem seemed to

[293] Wilson (2004), see n. 288 above.

have belonged to the rebel angels, is, in Book 9, equally important for the didactic message of the Fall as a transgression of natural as well as supernatural law.

Chapter 3.

FORESEEING THE FALL: FATE, FREE WILL, AND PROPHECY IN BOOK 3

In the previous two chapters of this thesis I have considered Milton's narrative of fate, providence, necessity, and natural law as it evolves in the rhetoric of Satan and the fallen angels. In this chapter, I turn attention to the first narrative appearance of Milton's God in the poem, in the opening of Book 3, where he foretells the success of Satan's mission to Eden and the resulting Fall of Adam and Eve. The scene, as has been noted, negotiates the theological tension between the Father's assertion of Adam and Eve's free will on the one hand, and his foreseeing of their actions on the other. My contribution to existing debates lies in tracing the ways that the theology and theodicy of the Father's speech can be further situated in Milton's readings in epic, as mediated from Homer through to Marco Girolamo Vida's Neo-Latin *Christiad*. I will begin by discussing a previously noted example of classical allusion in the Father's defence of free will – Zeus's complaint in the council of the gods at the beginning of *Odyssey* 1. This allusion is a noted 'cross-over' between Milton's poetry and the theological ideas expounded in *De Doctrina Christiana*: the author cites this passage at a prominent place in his theological treatise in support of his argument about predetermination. I will consider this allusion within the wider context of early modern readings of the Homeric scene, arguing that Milton's echoing of Zeus's words in the words of the Father may reflect an earlier comment by Jean de Sponde, who, in his 1583 edition of the *Odyssey*, comments on the propriety of Homer's depiction of Zeus speaking 'worthily of a Christian', and not like a pagan deity.[294]

I will then consider Milton's use of this Homeric allusion in *Paradise Lost*. It reflects his wider interest in epic languages of fate. Zeus's speech, in its defence of free will, laments men who venture 'beyond fate' (ὑπὲρ μόρον, *Od.* 1.34). This and similar phrases appear at counterfactual narrative moments in Homer, often used in the narrative of the *Iliad* to depict events beyond the scope of the narrative – and beyond fate – but which are duly interrupted by the intervention of a deity.[295] I will show how Milton alludes to these Homeric moments, in the passage leading up to the Son's offer of his life for man, where the narrator employs a conditional construction to depict events that teeter on the brink of what is permitted and ordained in the narrative.

[294] See further discussion in section 3.2 below.
[295] See below, esp. n. 349.

A Homeric scene which problematizes the relationship between fate and the will of the gods – the discussion of Hera and Zeus over the imminent death of Zeus' son Sarpedon – functions also, as I will suggest, as an intertextual framework for Milton's dramatization of the theology of the Atonement in Book 3. The exchange between Zeus and Hera occurs in Book 16 of the *Iliad* where the goddess rebukes the father of the gods for wishing to circumvent fate by saving his son. This scene, I will show, with its charges against the power and goodness of Zeus, is a further key source of allusion for the dialogue between the Father and Son, mediated through transformations of this scene by Vergil and through Vida's *Christiad* in the depiction of the Father as he witnesses the death of Christ on the cross.

In the last part of this chapter, I will argue that in the intercession of the Son, Milton recreates the intercession of Venus to Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1, while addressing and resolving the charges of Jupiter's coercion. The Son's offer to die in place of man, I will argue, activates a language of substitution that further advances Milton's narrative of fate. I will suggest, moreover, that Milton builds upon ancient and early modern commentaries on the exchange between Zeus and Hera in *Iliad* 16, which debate the possibility of circumventing fate, or of replacing the fate of one by another. The dialogue between the Father and Son, I will argue, exceeds the dynamics and the results of the Olympian intercessions. Milton's transformation of ancient epic precedent here relies on the fact that in depicting the offer of the Son to die in place of fallen man's – and the Father's acceptance of this offer – the fate of all mankind is altered by the sacrifice of one man, Christ. Milton, thereby, emulates the language of sacrifice and substitution of Vergilian epic and its reception in the *Christiad*.

3.1 'What I Will is Fate'

As the Father catches sight of Satan on his cosmic journey towards Eden, he turns to the Son, foretelling the result of Satan's journey – the temptation and eventual fall of Adam and Eve:

> Him God beholding from his prospect high,
> Wherein past, present, future he beholds,
> Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake.
> Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage
> Transports our adversary, whom no bounds

Prescribed, no bars of hell, nor all the chains
Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss
Wide interrupt can hold; so bent he seems
On desperate revenge, that shall redound
Upon his own rebellious head. And now
Through all restraint broke loose he wings his way
Not far off heaven, in the precincts of light,
Directly towards the new created world,
And man there placed, with purpose to assay
If him by force he can destroy, or worse,
By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert;
For man will hearken to his glozing lies,
And easily transgress the sole command,
Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall,
He and his faithless progeny: whose fault?
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
All he could have; I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all the ethereal powers
And spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith or love?
Where only what they needs must do, appeared,
Nor what they would, what praise could they receive?
What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
When will and reason (reason also is choice)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
Made passive both, had served necessity,
Not me. They therefore as to right belonged,
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their maker, or their making, or their fate;
As if predestination overruled
Their will, disposed by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass, authors to themselves in all
Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
I formed them free, and free they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
Their freedom, they themselves ordained their fall.
The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
Self-tempted, self-depraved: man falls deceived
By the other first: man therefore shall find grace,

> The other none: in mercy and justice both,
> Through heaven and earth, so shall my glory excel,
> But mercy first and last shall brightest shine.
> (*PL* 3.77-134)

This speech serves to refute the false narrative of creation given by the fallen angels in the council of Pandaemonium ('Such I created all the ethereal powers / And spirits, both them who stood and them who failed', *PL* 3.100-1). In his debate with the angel Abdiel, Satan had undermined the certainty of the angels' divine creation, describing them as 'self-begot, self-raised' (*PL* 5.860). This self-reflexive language, I argue, is mirrored and subverted by the Father to refer to their rebellion, undertaken by angels who 'by their own suggestion fell, / Self-tempted, self-depraved' (*PL* 3.130, my emphasis). The speech also looks forward to the temptation of Adam and Eve, and the issues it raises about the relationship between reason and will in the lead-up to the Fall, which we explored in the previous chapter. Reason, in the Father's speech, functions as an expression of free will. Were it not free, it would serve 'necessity, / Not me' (*PL* 3.110-11), and is afforded to humans and angels alike.

The Father's refutation of necessity in this passage in Book 3 anticipates a moment narrated retrospectively in Book 7, where Raphael relates to Adam and Eve the moment when the Father had given to the Son the task of the creation of the world. The Father's speech evokes and dismisses the materialist alternatives offered by Mammon in the council of Pandaemonium – the fallen angel's speculation about 'strength, or chance, or fate' (*PL* 1.133)[296] is superseded by the Father's assertion of his personal freedom from materialist forces, insofar as 'necessity and Chance approach not me, and what I will is fate':

> …bid the deep
> Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth,
> Boundless the deep, because I am who fill
> Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.
> Though I uncircumscribed myself retire,
> And put not forth my goodness, which is free
> To act or not, necessity and chance
> Approach not me, and what I will is fate.
> (*PL* 7.166-73)

[296] See above, Chapter 1, section 1.5.

The Father's speech also contains Lucretian echoes: Milton's God describes himself as removed from human affairs, and free from coercion, 'free / To act or not', echoing the Lucretian account of the nature gods, who are 'far removed and separated from our affairs' (*semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe*) and 'neither propitiated with services or touched by wrath' (*nec bene promeritis capitur neque tangitur ira*):

> omnis enim per se divum natura necessest
> immortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur
> semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;
> nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
> ipsa suis pollens opibus, nil indiga nostri,
> nec bene promeritis capitur neque tangitur ira.
>
> [F]or the very nature of divinity must necessarily enjoy immortal life in the deepest peace, far removed and separated from our affairs; for without any pain, without danger, itself might by its own resources, needing us not at all, it is neither propitiated with services nor touched by wrath.
> (*DRN* 1.44-8 = 2.646-51)[297]

The Father dismisses the Lucretian interplay between necessity and contingency – to which even the Lucretian gods are bound (note the phrase *necessest* framing the nature of the gods at *DRN* 1.44). Instead, the Father defines 'fate' solely in relation to his personal will. Milton's Father's 'Though I uncircumscribed myself retire', furthermore, can be read as a subtle correction of the separation of the gods from the world in Lucretius – a separation that, in the Epicurean universe, is necessitated, not voluntary. His speech may further allude to the Lucretian account of the physical cosmos, to the account of the 'void', or of the spaces that appear between things. The Lucretian *inane* is variously translated as 'void', 'vacuity', or even 'space'[298] that is between matter, on both an atomistic and cosmic level:

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[297] This passage, which re-appears at *DRN* 2.646-51, although it 'comes in abruptly' (Rouse/Smith 1992, 6, ad loc.), is retained in Book 1 in Martin's (1963) Teubner edition and in the Loeb text (Rouse/Smith 1992). Pontanus and Marullus first excluded the lines at 1.44-8 (and they thus do not appear in Candidus' 1512 edition), and Lachmann then posited the *lacuna* that is also given in Bailey's *OCT* (1922). But see Bailey's discussion in his commentary ad loc., arguing for the restoration of the lines: Bailey (1947), 601-3. For a full discussion, with further references, see Deufert (1996), 32-40. Deufert makes the case for interpolation of the lines in Book 1. Milton, in any case, would have encountered the disputed passage both in Book 1 and in Book 2: following Avancius' 1500 edition, Lambin (1563) – the text that Milton is most likely to have consulted – did not delete the disputed passage, but merely moved it, and printed 1.44-9 after line 61.

[298] See Norbrook (2011), lv-lvi: 'For the void through which atoms move, Lucretius displays a characteristic fluidity, with familiar adjectives for emptiness turned into nouns— *vacuum, inane*, each of them sometimes standing as a noun in itself (1.367, 1.330), the former often modifying *inane* (1.439); the terms are piled up with a third in the line *Omne quod est spatium, vacuum constaret inane* (1.523), where editors continue to dispute whether *spatium* agrees with *Omne*, as Pareus' punctuation implies—"Vacuitie would take vp all this space", Hutchinson, 1.526—or whether the first three words constitute the subject and *vacuum* and *inane* agree with *spatium*—"the universe would be a void empty space." The fluidity is an important part of the

> Nec tamen undique corporea stipata tenentur
> omnia natura; namque est in rebus inane.
> quod tibi cognosse in multis erit utile rebus
> nec sinet errantem dubitare et quaerere semper
> de summa rerum et nostris diffidere dictis.
> quapropter locus est intactus inane vacansque.
>
> Yet everything is not held close and packed everywhere in one solid mass, for there is void in things: which knowledge will be useful to you in many matters, and will not allow you to wander in doubt and always to be at a loss as regards the universe and to distrust my words. Therefore there is intangible space, void, emptiness. (*DRN* 1.329-34)

As Hutchinson does in her translation of Lucretius, Milton in his account of a divinely-sanctioned cosmos employs the term 'vacuity' (rather than 'void'), which is a term, as Norbrook notes,[299] that Evelyn and Creech use in their translations of *De Rerum Natura*. Satan describes the 'void profound / Of unessential night', which divides hell from the outer world, and is described as 'wide gaping' and 'threatening' with 'total loss of being' (*PL* 2.438-41). Milton's God, by contrast, inhabits what appears to be a Lucretian depiction of a void – which is only limitless insofar as it is inhabited by the Father, who is infinite in himself: 'Boundless the deep, because I am who fill / Infinitude, nor vacuous the space' (*PL* 7.168-9).

For Dennis Danielson, Milton's cosmic and ethical ideas collide in this speech of the Father. He emphasizes the importance of Milton's rejection of the idea of a cosmos created *ex nihilo*, an idea exemplified in the writings of the English theologian William Pemble. In his *Treatise of the Providence of God*, published in 1659, Pemble had suggested, as Danielson points out, that 'creation … is the action of God, whereby out of nothing he brought forth Nature, and all things in Nature.'[300] Milton, by contrast, as Danielson shows, 'declares that "God produced all things not out of nothing but out of himself"'.[301] Milton, moreover, 'avoids the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* by assuming that God *is* that eternal

poetic effect; but it can lead to philosophical ambiguity, since *spatium* can refer both to the void that alternates with matter and to the extension of both across the universe'.

[299] Hutchinson's translation of the Lucretius reads: 'Yet condenst bodies not all in nature be / But there's besides them a vacuitie; / Which opend to your search will vsefull proove, / Confirme my sayings, and yr doubts remooue. / There is a place vntoucht, emptie and voyd …' Norbrook (2011), llxxii notes that '[f]or the "void", "Vacuum" is a word unfamiliar enough for her to have been uncertain of its pronunciation (1.369–70n); but she [Hutchinson] uses it and varies it with 'vacuities' where Lucretius has merely *vacuum* (Lucretius, 1.393–4, Hutchinson, 1.394–6), and also introduces alternatives like "vast space" for *inane* (2.212); she steers clear, however, of "void" as a noun, which Evelyn and Creech frequently deploy'. See further discussion in Leonard (2000) and Sugimura (2009).

[300] Pemble (1659), 266. See discussion in Danielson (1982), 43, who quotes Pemble.

[301] The quotation is taken from Pemble (1659), 310, as cited in Danielson (1982), 43.

substance, from which all other derive.'[302] This position, however, involves moral problems, insofar as it poses the question of how could God create evil. The solution, for Danielson, lies in the actions which the Father undertakes after the creation. His act of 'retiring' from creation can be transferred to his treatment of human freedom, the 'stuff of that freedom which man himself is to exercise': insofar as he 'ordained [men's] freedom, they themselves ordained their fall' (*PL* 3.127-8).[303] For Danielson, moreover, the Father's speech in the opening scene of Book 3 is a key moment in which Milton realizes his theodicy. In the proem to Book 1 of *Paradise Lost*, the poet had declared his aim, to 'assert the eternal providence, / And justify the ways of God to men' (*PL* 1.25-6). This claim, according to Danielson, appears as a paradox, insofar as it seeks to negotiate a position between the competing theological positions of Arminianism and Calvinism.[304] The first position, originating with the work of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, grew out of a reaction to orthodox Calvinism. Like Erasmus before him in his debates with Martin Luther, Arminius and his followers emphasized the role of free will in accepting the offer of grace from God, which a person is able to freely accept or resist (the idea of resistible grace). This claim hit at the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election (God's predetermination that some be saved and others damned, regardless of their own actions) and irresistible grace (the impossibility that a person is able to reject salvation when it is the will of God that a person be saved).[305]

Milton's relationship to Arminian theology is complex: on the one hand he appears to be drawn to its sacramental aspects in the 1630s, but condemns its teachings on original sin in the 1640s (see discussion below).[306] The term 'Arminian' and its accuracy for Milton's evolving theological stance has been further complicated in view of Nicholas Tyacke's study of English Arminianism and its departure from the actual teachings of Arminius.[307]

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[302] Danielson (1982), 43.
[303] See Danielson (1982), 49, who includes this passage from *PL* in his discussion. Milton's God 'retires' from chaos which he creates, 'in order to provide the matter, the potentiality'. Just as the Father had disassociated himself from necessity and chance, and asserted his freedom 'to act or not', so too, Danielson argues, he 'has also dissociated his creatures' freedom from fate or necessity' (Danielson [1982], 49).
[304] Danielson (1982), *passim*, but see esp. Chapters 3, 4 and 5.
[305] See discussion in Danielson (1982), 66-75.
[306] Campbell and Corns (2007) have suggested that in asserting the doctrine of general rather than particular elections in *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton 'recapitulates the Arminian position of Arminius and his followers'. He differs on the issue of reprobation, arguing that reprobation 'must not be attributed – as the election of grace is – to the divine will alone' (*DDC* 1.4, 'de Praedestinatione', in Hale [2012], 106), an idea which is expressed at *PL* 3.183-8 and which could be identified with the 'radical Arminianism of figures such as John Goodwin, and even Servetus' (Campbell and Corns [2007], 117).
[307] Tyacke (1987).

Stephen Fallon justifies his use of the term 'Arminian' to refer to Milton's rejection of a series of Calvinist doctrines such as unconditional election, unlimited atonement, and irresistible grace,[308] as laid out in his own polemical writings in the 1640s (the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, 1644, and *Of True Religion*, 1673).[309] Like Fallon, I use the term 'Arminian' in this chapter to refer to Milton's rejection of the Calvinist doctrine of irresistible grace, and the implications this creates also for the theology of *Paradise Lost*.

If Milton proposes a theology of free will in *Paradise Lost*, he is, at the same time, aware of the challenges that it creates for his theodicy. Danielson argued that the Father's speech in Book 3 aims to navigate between the charges levelled at the Father in both the Arminian account of free will and the Calvinist account of irresistible grace and unconditional election: the latter challenging the goodness of the Father (insofar as he preordains the salvation of some and the damnation of others), and the former challenging his greatness (insofar as he appears unable to prevent the damnation of some who choose evil of their own will).

In the following sections, I will consider how the theodicy of Milton's scene in heaven is further contextualized in his readings in epic texts, specifically in scenes that negotiate heroic action against the backdrop of the divine machinery. I will begin with the first of the charges – the challenge to the Father's 'goodness' – insofar as he foresees the actions of Adam and Eve, thereby raising the charge that these actions are predetermined. I will consider the Father's defence of free will as shaped by a scene in Book 1 of the *Odyssey*, where Zeus asserts the freedom of men, bemoaning the charges laid at the gods by humans who bring sufferings upon themselves.

3.2 Milton's Epic Theodicy

The free-will defence immediately follows the Father's prophecy, crowding and almost interrupting the completeness of the line:

> ... so will fall,
> He and his faithless progeny: whose fault?
> Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
> All he could have; I made him just and right,

[308] Milton preserves Augustine's distinction of 'sufficient grace': in *Paradise Lost*, the Father describes his creatures as having been created '[s]ufficient to have stood, though free to fall' (*PL* 3.99). See discussion in Campbell and Corns (2007), 113.
[309] Fallon (2007), 184, n. 8.

> Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
> (*PL* 3.95-9)

These lines have been identified as an echo of Zeus's complaint in *Odyssey* 1 about the behaviour of humans towards the gods.[310] There, Zeus expresses frustration at men who blame the gods for their sufferings, when they themselves are to blame for their sufferings that arise 'out of their own recklessness':[311]

> Ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν Αἰθίοπας μετεκίαθε τηλόθ᾽ ἐόντας,
> Αἰθίοπας, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαίαται, ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν,
> οἱ μὲν δυσομένου Ὑπερίονος, οἱ δ᾽ ἀνιόντος,
> ἀντιόων ταύρων τε καὶ ἀρνειῶν ἑκατόμβης.
> ἔνθ᾽ ὅ γε τέρπετο δαιτὶ παρήμενος· οἱ δὲ δὴ ἄλλοι
> Ζηνὸς ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν Ὀλυμπίου ἀθρόοι ἦσαν.
> τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε·
> μνήσατο γὰρ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀμύμονος Αἰγίσθοιο,
> τόν ῥ᾽ Ἀγαμεμνονίδης τηλεκλυτὸς ἔκταν᾽ Ὀρέστης·
> τοῦ ὅ γ᾽ ἐπιμνησθεὶς ἔπε᾽ ἀθανάτοισι μετηύδα·
> "Ὢ πόποι, οἷον δή νυ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται.
> ἐξ ἡμέων γάρ φασι κάκ᾽ ἔμμεναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ
> σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε᾽ ἔχουσιν …
>
> But now [Poseidon] had gone among the far-off Ethiopians—the Ethiopians who dwell divided in two, the farthermost of men, some where Hyperion sets and some where he rises—there to receive a hecatomb of bulls and rams, and there he was taking his joy, sitting at the feast; but the other gods were gathered together in the halls of Olympian Zeus. Among them the father of gods and men was the first to speak, for in his heart he thought of flawless Aegisthus, whom far-famed Orestes, Agamemnon's son, had slain. Thinking of him he spoke among the immortals, and said: 'It's astonishing how ready mortals are to blame the gods. It is from us, they say, that evils come, but they even by themselves, through their own blind folly, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained …
> (*Od.* 1.22-34)

This moment in the *Odyssey* – Zeus's complaint in the council about the fact that 'mortals blame the gods' (θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται), but 'by themselves, throughout their own blind folly, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained' (οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ /σφῇσιν

[310] See esp. Van der Laan (2009), for a good study that links Milton's 'Arminian thought' with his employment of Homeric allusion. Quint observes that '[b]eyond its importance for Milton's theodicy, this evocation at the beginning of the *Odyssey* underscores the sense that *Paradise Lost* is beginning again or beginning in earnest in Book 3' (Quint [2014], 60). See also Frye (1965), 99, Lewalski (1985), 115-16, and Gallagher (1990), 144-8. Martindale notes that in *De Doctrina Christiana* Milton 'quotes with approval the passage in *Odyssey* 1 (32ff) in which Zeus denies that the gods are to blame for the sufferings of men', as evidence of Milton's regard for the ethical value of the Homeric epics. See Martindale (2002), 58.

[311] Stephanie West (in Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth [1988]), 77, ad *Od*. 1.32-3 considered the rhetoric of Zeus' statement within the wider context of the Homeric narrative, arguing that blaming the gods is 'a standard feature of Homeric conversation, sometimes serious and sincere, sometimes a way of disclaiming responsibility'.

ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε᾽ ἔχουσιν) – has most recently been discussed by Sarah Van der Laan and by David Quint as informing the Father's defence of free will in *Paradise Lost*. This example appears to be corroborated within Milton's theological writings. At the end of his chapter on predestination, Milton had illustrated his theology of free will with the same example from the *Odyssey*.[312] Milton draws a parallel between Christians who, through a belief in reprobation, that is in the preordained damnation of some souls and the salvation of others, relinquish the idea of responsibility for their own actions – and their own sufferings. He gives the first speech of Zeus in the *Odyssey* as a pagan *exemplum* for his idea about personal culpability. That humans are responsible for their deeds was proven 'even by the pagan Homer':

> Accusant enim revera Deum, tametsi id vehementer negant: et ab Homero etiam ethnico egregiè redarguuntur, Odyss. I. 7.
> *αὐτῶν γάρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο*
> Suis enim ipsorum flagitiis perierunt.
>
> Et rursus, inducta Iovis persona:
> *ὤ πόποι, οἷον δή νυ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται!*
> *ἐξ ἡμέων γάρ φασι κάκ' ἔμμεναι. οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ*
> *σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν.*
> Papae, ut scilicet Deos, mortales accusant!
> Ex nobis enim dicunt mala esse: illi vero ipsi
> Suismet flagitiis, praeter fatum, dolores patiuntur.
>
> For they actually accuse God, although they strenuously deny it; and they are superbly confuted even by pagan Homer, *Odyssey*, I. 7:
> *For by their own personal outrages they perished.*
>
> And again, when the character of Jupiter has been brought in:
> *Oh dear! how indeed mortals reproach gods!*
> *For they say that evils come out of us, yet they themselves*
> *By their own outrages suffer sorrows beyond fate*.[313]

The cross-over between questions of human autonomy against the backdrop of the divine, and their relationship to Christian theology appears to have occupied early modern commentators on the Olympian scenes in Homeric and Vergilian epic. Milton, indeed, is not the first to have recognized the value of this moment for a Christian reader. Zeus's speech was praised by the Homeric commentator Jean de Sponde in his 1583 folio edition

[312] The methodology of reading *DDC* as a gloss on *Paradise Lost* was first systematically employed by Maurice Kelley (1941). Stephen Fallon (2007), however, reverses this relationship in his discussion of the poetics of self-representation in *Paradise Lost*. For a discussion of the Miltonic provenance of *De Doctrina* (which has been satisfactorily demonstrated by Campbell, Corns et al. [2007]), see Cullington and Hale (2012), xxviii-xxix.
[313] *DDC* 1.4, 'de Praedestinatione', 117-18.

of Homer's collected works. De Sponde praised this passage as fit to be read and spoken by a Christian (and not a pagan):

> Elegans est hic locus, & non Ethnico, sed Christiano homine plane dignus. Agnoscit enim Poeta sub Iouis loquentis persona, malorum quae hominibus contingunt, causam non esse in Deum, sed in ipsas hominum nequitias & improbitates referendam …
>
> This is an elegant topic, and worthy not of a pagan, but of a Christian man. For the poet, behind the person of the speaking Jupiter, recognizes that the cause for the evils which afflict men should be traced not to God, but to the very wickednesses and depravities of humans …[314]

De Sponde notes a link in the diction of Zeus's complaint of men who suffer σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν, 'by their own outrages', and the narrative account of the loss of Odysseus' companions, who also perished σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν (*Od*. 1.7). This phrase is also given prominence in Milton's discussion in *DDC* – Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns note that parallel translation is not Milton's usual practice, and conclude that in this example 'the needs of faithful clarity are uppermost',[315] where it is isolated and furnished with a Latin translation (see above).

Zeus's complaint is echoed in the Father's own statement about the free will of Adam and Eve, who 'trespass, authors to themselves in all' (*PL* 3.122). William Poole has noted the proliferation of the reflexive pronouns in the Father's free-will defence, linking it to the language with which the Father refers to Satan's fall.[316] In referring to the freedom of humans as 'ordain[ed]' (by the 'high decree / unchangeable, eternal', *PL* 3.126-7), moreover, the Father's self-proclaimed theodicy functions almost parodically to attempt a linguistic middle ground between portraying a God who allows for the free choices of humans and upholding the authority of his ordinations. Milton's theodicy in Book 3 owes more to the Homeric *exemplum* than a passing linguistic echo: the context of Zeus' speech, the *concilium deorum* ('council of the gods') is an epic narrative device which Milton imitates in his entire depiction of the Father's speech – and the Son's response to it. Milton's Christian theodicy, I argue, is unveiled in his critical reappraisal of the epic *concilia*, in scenes of dialogue, concession and intercession. Unlike interactions between the epic gods, however, where the will of Zeus or Jupiter appears to be challenged or

[314] Sponde (1583), ad *Od.* 1.7. The translation is my own.
[315] Campbell, Corns et al. (2007), 150.
[316] Poole (2005), 159.

compromised by the intercession of Athena, Hera, Venus, or Juno, the Father's plan for salvation is revealed in its fullness through dialogue with the Son. I will focus on a scene which is transformed throughout the epic tradition, and which traces the function of fate as a rhetorical and narrative device that appears to challenge even the will of Zeus. The Son's appeal to the plan of the Father, by contrast, rather than undermining his will, transforms both the dynamics and outcomes of the Olympian *concilia*. Through the promise of the Incarnation, the results of the Son's intercession transcend the possibilities of divine intervention among the pagan gods on the human sphere of the epic narratives. Milton's imitation and emulation of the epic council of the gods is key, I will argue, for his narrative of fate.

3.3 *Concilium Deorum*

Scholarly discussion of the classical epic *concilium deorum* and its presence in the Christian epics of the Renaissance has largely focused on the so-called 'council in hell', a late antique transposition of the epic scenes on Olympus into the underworld. In 1918, Olin Moore stated that 'it was by means of his infernal council that the transformation of *Paradise Lost* to the epic form was accomplished',[317] and Mason Hammond, in his 1933 article '"Concilia Deorum" from Homer through Milton', limited discussion of the *concilium deorum* in Milton to the council in hell, drawing on the Claudian tradition.[318] In the introduction to his recent 2009 edition and commentary on the *Christiad*, moreover, Gardner cited Vida's 'infernal machinery' as one of his chief influences on later epics such as Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (4.25-40), and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (2.625-8), the council of Pandaemonium.[319]

Milton's scene in heaven in Book 3, with the only speakers being the Father and Son, has been seen as a potent contrast to the plurality of the council in Pandaemonium – a benevolent Father and Son appearing as united first and second persons of the Trinity (with the choirs of angels appearing in the background, populating heaven, yet only voicing acquiescence and celebration at the end). The epic *concilium deorum* is listed among a variety of genres that are fed into this scene, and Barbara Lewalski has rightly

[317] Moore (1918), 193.
[318] Hammond (1933), 10-14 on Milton's council in hell: see esp. 14, 'Milton [...] has certainly drawn on Claudian for most of its color'.
[319] Gardner (2009), xxiv-xxvi. Note, however, the influence that contemporary 1640s pamphlets on diabolical councils may have had on Milton's council in Pandaemonium. See Achinstein (1994), 177-224.

focused on the scene's debt to medieval allegory.[320] Milton's scene follows a tradition, existing outside the account in St John's Gospel, which imagines the Father's decision to exercise mercy towards mankind as preceded by the intercession of the Son. This tradition was revived in the Protestant theories of the Atonement that spread after the Reformation.[321] In this theory, the claims of justice and mercy are split between the first and second persons of the Trinity, with the Son imagined both as defender of mankind against the wrath of the Father and as the means of conciliation. The medieval 'Parliament in Heaven' had dramatized the debate between the personified allegories of Justice and Mercy as well as others, together constituting the 'four daughters of God'.[322] Milton himself had planned a similar scene in the draft of *Paradise Lost* as a tragedy, preserved in the Trinity manuscript, with 'Justice', 'Mercy', and 'Wisdom' 'debating what should become of man if he fall'.[323]

Part of Milton's debt to the medieval dialogue scenes between justice and mercy is also signalled through departure, as Lewalski notes, in the depiction of the Father and Son as articulated and dynamic persons: 'instead of allegorical personifications stating fixed and apparently exclusive positions', Lewalski argues, 'the two speakers are dramatic characters, each of whom responds and incorporates the argument of the other'.[324] The change in the dynamics of the scene, and in the characterization of the Father and Son, can be accounted for in Milton's movement to the epic genre. The 'dramatic characters' of this scene, I argue, could equally – and more precisely – be considered as speakers allusively modelled within the generic framework of the epic *concilium deorum* and Olympian dialogues. The recreation of an epic dialogue where one speaker can change the mind of the other is, I suggest, integral to Milton's turning to the epic genre in *Paradise Lost*.

Milton's modelling of the dialogues between the Olympian deities is discernible through verbal echoes of these scenes, allusions that are further mediated, I argue below, through the established tradition of the neo-Latin New Testament epics of Jacopo Sannazaro and Marco Girolamo Vida. Jacopo Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis* (1526) had transformed the

[320] Lewalski (1985), 119.
[321] See the discussion in Campbell, Corns et al. (2007), 113, who argue that Milton is most likely to have subscribed to the 'forensic' theory.
[322] Travers (1925) remains the most exhaustive treatment of medieval dramatizations of the Atonement.
[323] Milton, *Trinity MS*, Draft iii, 'Paradise Lost: The Persons', reproduced in Fowler (2007), 2. For discussion and further bibliography, see Lewalski (1985), 118.
[324] Lewalski (1985), 119 n. 3. Earlier studies on this scene include Samuel (1957) and Hughes (1965).

dialogue between Olympian deities into a monologue at the beginning of the poem, whereas Marco Girolamo Vida's *Christiad* (1535), a poem commissioned by Pope Leo X to celebrate the events of the Gospels,[325] had imagined the Father debating with the risen Christ in heaven. The *Christiad* is known to have influenced the young Milton, and the study of parallels with Vida's Vergilian-inspired epic have proven fruitful for the study of *Paradise Lost*. In her study of the intertextual links between the *Christiad* and *Paradise Lost*, Estelle Haan saw the timing of Milton's dialogue as one of the key ways in which Vida's dialogue is transformed, insofar as the events in Milton's account precede, and actively foreshadow, the Incarnation.[326] As Haan notes, Milton's scene 'predates' Vida's: unlike his Roman Catholic predecessor, Milton in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost* returns to a debate between the Father and Son before the Incarnation has taken place, and presents the Son as an active intercessor with the Father at the Atonement, acting as an agent of salvation on behalf of mankind before the Fall takes place. At the same time, Milton's scene preserves the drama of its ancient models, recreating the narrative suspense of the divine intercessions where Olympian goddesses appeal to the father of the gods on behalf of their favourite mortals.

3.4 Speaking Fates: Milton's Jovian Father

In this section, I consider the way in which the Father's appearance mirrors that of Jupiter in the *Aeneid*, as Milton recreates the Latin etymology of 'fate' as tied to Latin verb of speaking, *fari*, re-enacting the wordplay of Jupiter in his prophecy to Venus in the first divine scene in Book 1 (*Aen*. 1.261-2) . As he depicts the Father appearing in Book 3 at the highest point in heaven, I suggest that Milton imitates the delayed appearance of Jupiter in the *Aeneid* and the 'nowness' of the narrative turning to Olympus. The delayed appearance of the Father and the shift from the past-focused opening of the opening books of *Paradise Lost* – with their memories of the war in heaven and use of Hesiodic allusion – moves the narrative into the present as Milton mirrors the Vergilian ordering of events. Vergil's *Et iam finis erat, cum Iuppiter aethere summo despiciens* (*Aen*. 1.224) is echoed at *PL* 3.56-8 by Milton's 'Now had the Almighty Father from above, / [...] High throned above all height, bent down his eye':

[325] See Warner (2005), 109, and Gregory (2006), 61.

[326] Haan (1993), 128, n. 7 argues that Milton's account 'invert[s] the order of events in Vida. There the Son's offer to die *preceded* the Father's speech; in *Paradise Lost* it follows upon the Father's words to constitute the professed fulfilment of a condition. Milton has also transformed what was in Vida an interaction between earth and heaven into a debate located solely in heaven itself. Vida's incarnate Christ has not yet been born in Milton. Instead he is envisaged as pre-existing incarnation, but already emitting love and selflessness'.

Et iam finis erat, cum Iuppiter aethere summo
despiciens mare ueliuolum terrasque iacentis
litoraque et latos populos, sic uertice caeli
constitit et Libyae defixit lumina regnis.

And now all was ended, when from the sky's summit Jupiter
Looked forth upon the sail-winged sea and outspread lands,
The shores and peoples far and wide, and, looking, paused
On heaven's height and cast his eyes on Libya's realm.
(*Aen*. 1.223-6)

Now had the almighty from above,
From the pure empyrean where he sits
High throned above all height, bent down his eye,
His own works and their works at once to view …
(*PL* 3.56-60)

Milton's description ('High throned above all height, bent down his eye') recreates the action of Jupiter, *despiciens*, while the Miltonic 'High throned above all height', in describing the Father, emulates Vergil's depiction of Jupiter *aethere summo* ('from the highest point in the heaven').[327] But there are also transformations that show the Father's superiority to Jupiter: unlike the travelling gaze of Jupiter, who looks down upon 'the sail-winged sea and outspread lands' (*mare ueliuolum terrasque iacentis*), before fixing his eyes on Libya (*constitit et Libyae defixit lumina regnis*), Milton's Father views all regions of the cosmos 'at once' (*PL* 3.59).[328] The vision of the Father collapses both temporal and spatial perspectives as he views Satan 'from his prospect high, / Wherein past, present, future he beholds' (*PL* 3.77-8) and foretells the outcome of Satan's journey.

Milton's rewriting of the epic *concilium deorum* and Olympian dialogue scene activates a Vergilian language of fate, I argue, as the Father foretells the fall of Adam and Eve in the language of epic prophecy, an action that in itself functions as a vehicle for intertextuality in Latin poetry. As Alessandro Barchiesi has shown, the language of prophecy is a marker

[327] In the description of Jupiter looking down on all realms, La Cerda (1612), '*Explicatio*', ad 1.228 notes the way in which Jupiter fulfils what the poet aspires to show in his poem – fulfils a vision that the poet can only aspire to ('*Nota, vt Iouem antiqui rerum omnium spectator fecerint, nam ad hanc potestatem videtur Poeta aspirare*'). Cf. Milton's exordium to Book 3, where the poet of *Paradise Lost* prays for 'eyes … that I may see and tell / Of things invisible to mortal sight' (*PL* 3.53-5). Note, furthermore, that, as much as the Miltonic 'above all height' exceeds the Vergilian *summo aethere*, the Vergilian phrase had, in turn, already emulated the Homeric depiction of Zeus, emphasising Jupiter's omnipotent, super-mundane role: cf. the Vergilian depiction e.g. with *Il*. 1.498-9; 5.753-4; 8.2-3; 8.51-2: see Wlosok (1967), 28, esp. n. 6.

[328] An image that, as Fowler (2007), ad 56-79 observes, functions as '[t]he first of the panoramic views of creation, offsetting Satan's 'sudden view / Of all this world at once (iii 542f.)'.

of poetic memory in epic scenes.[329] Milton's scene, with the Father's prophecy of the Fall, activates a similar intertextual connection, as the Father looks back to Jupiter's speech in *Aeneid* 1. At the same time as he activates a Vergilian 'poetics of fate', the Miltonic narrator also mirrors the etymological link, with fate as spoken, stressed in Vergil in his emphasis on the spoken aspect of Jupiter's assertion of fate as what he says (*fabor*, see below). Milton clearly responds to the verbal imagery of the Vergilian *fabor*, rather than the visual imagery of unrolling the scrolls of the fates in the next line (*longius et uoluens fatorum arcana mouebo*).[330] In announcing the Father's prophecy at *PL* 3.79 ('Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake'), the narrator of *Paradise Lost* may capture the meaning of the Latin verb *fabor*, used by Jupiter to announce his prophecy to Venus at *Aen*. 1.261-2:[331] ... *(fabor enim, quando haec te cura remordet, / longius et uoluens fatorum arcana mouebo)*, '... for, since this care gnaws at your heart, I will speak and, further unrolling the scroll of fate, will disclose its secrets'.[332] Jupiter's statement, as Feeney has noted, functions as a 'bald etymological play that gives us to understand that the *fata* ('things said') are what *he* says'.[333]

Again, as in the case of the Homeric *exemplum* and its existing comment by de Sponde, Milton may be creatively reflecting ideas he would have encountered in the early modern commentaries on the *Aeneid*. The Vergilian commentator Juan Luis de La Cerda (see earlier discussion in Chapter 1) notes the wordplay in his comment on Jupiter's use of *fabor*, observing that 'the verb is fittingly given to Jove, who establishes the fates' ('ad *verbum* fabor: *aptè datur Ioui, qui fata constituit*').[334] A similar link between fate and a personal utterance is reflected in the refutation of the idea of an impersonal fate in *De Doctrina Christiana*: *... et fatum quid nisi effatum divinum omnipotentis cuiuspiam*

[329] Barchiesi (2001), 133-5.
[330] Contrast with Ovid's Jupiter, who, as Barchiesi notes 'has read, memorized, and can now recite [fate] (15.815 *referam*). The god's prophetic powers have now become more bookish than they were in the *Aeneid*'. As a result, Barchiesi suggests that Ovid's Jupiter 'recites' also the fate that Vergil's Jupiter had already pronounced – the success of Aeneas' descendants, now extended specifically to the Julian line. See Barchiesi (2001), 131.
[331] On Jupiter's answer to Venus, one of the three major prophetic visions of history in the *Aeneid*, see further Wlosok (1967), 60-73.
[332] With *Aen*. 1.261-2 cf. also 3.375-6, again in a periphrasis by a divine speaker: *(sic fata deum rex / sortitur uoluitque uices, is uertitur ordo)*, 'for thus the king of the gods allots the fates and rolls the wheel of change, and such is the circling course'.
[333] Feeney (1991), 139. On the etymology of *fatum* cf. Varro, *de Lingua Latina* 6.52: *ab hoc tempora quod tum pueris constituant Parcae fando, dictum fatum et res fatales*, 'From the fact that the *Parcae* set the lifespans of children by speaking (*fando*), fate (*fatum*) is named, and the fateful things (*fatales*)' (my own translation).
[334] La Cerda (1612), ad loc.

numinis potest esse?, 'And what can fate [*fatum*] be but the divine decree [*effatum*] of some almighty deity?'.[335]

3.5 Divine Revelations

At the end of the Father's first speech in heaven, the Father, I argue, reconciles the positions of justice and mercy within his own person, dismissing the generic expectation of a medieval debate between personified Justice and Mercy. As the Father declares that 'in mercy and justice both, / Through heaven and earth, so shall my glory excel', the narrative evokes a recognizably epic atmosphere, as 'ambrosial fragrance' spreads throughout heaven:

> … man therefore shall find grace,
> The other none: in mercy and justice both,
> Through heaven and earth, so shall my glory excel,
> But mercy first and last shall brightest shine.
> Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance filled
> All heaven, and in the blessèd spirits elect
> Sense of new joy ineffable diffused …
> (*PL* 3.130-7)

The 'ambrosial fragrance' not only signals the joy of the angelic hosts, but also marks the solemnity of the Father's promise by means of a Homeric allusion. In *Iliad* 1, the epithet ἀμβρόσιαι describes the hair on Zeus' immortal head (κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο), mirroring the Olympian supremacy of Zeus ἄναξ as he nods in assent to Thetis' supplication, and causes Olympus to tremble: 'The son of Cronos spoke, and bowed his dark brow in assent, and the ambrosial locks shook on the king's immortal head; and he made great Olympus quake', 'Ἦ καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων: / ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος / κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον' (*Il.* 1.528-30).

Milton's 'ambrosial fragrance' may also recall a scene of divine revelation in *Aeneid* 1, where Venus appears to Aeneas in the guise of a huntress, a scene that reveals Venus as a 'true goddess' (*uera ... dea*, *Aen.* 1.405), as 'from her head her ambrosial tresses breathed celestial fragrance' (*ambrosiaeque comae diuinum uertice odorem / spirauere*, *Aen.* 1.403-

[335] *DDC* 1.2, 'de Deo', 24-5. See also Servius' comment on *fata deum* at *Aen.* 2.54: *'fata' modo participium est, hoc est, 'quae dii loquuntur'*, and above, n. 333. Further discussion in Austin (1971), 101, n. 262.

4).[336] Vergil's scene of divine recognition would form a further intertextual backdrop to Milton's introduction of the Son, which, as Haan has shown, is mediated through Vida's account of the Transfiguration of Christ before his disciples on mount Tabor (*Christiad* 1.936-40). By activating the language of revelation at the outset of the Son's appearance, Milton would be correcting the Vergilian scene, in which Aeneas complains about the false images of the gods (the revelation of the disguised Venus had prompted Aeneas' reproach against the goddess for deceiving him with false images: '*quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis / ludis imaginibus?*', 'Why, cruel like others, do you so often mock your son with vain phantoms?', *Aen*. 1.407-8). For La Cerda, Aeneas' complaint reminds us of two charges against the Olympian goddesses: Venus is responsible for deluding Aeneas, while Juno is responsible for persecuting him: 'When he says *crudelis tu quoque* the allusion becomes, to an extent, about Juno. It is as if he says, "she [*i.e*. Juno] is the most cruel in striking against me, and you [*i.e.* Venus] are cruel in some measure in deceiving me"' (*Cum ait* crudelis tu quoque*, fit nonnulla allusio ad Iunonem. quasi dicat, illa saeuissima est in me affligendo, tu nonnihil in illudendo*).[337] As an image of the Father 'substantially expressed' (*PL* 3.140), by contrast, the Son reflects the quality of the Father's speech.[338] His Son's appearance and his later speech function as a continuation of the Father's expression, in whom 'mercy first and last shall brightest shine' (*PL* 3.134). For readers who recognize the intertextual link with the Vergilian scene, the moment of criticism of the epic gods in the *Aeneid* would become a moment of revelation in Milton.

The epic model that Milton preserves – of two speakers – nevertheless appears to fracture the Christian God. Milton's anti-Trinitarian views may find expression in the preservation of the Father and Son as separate persons in the dialogue.[339] Yet unlike Jupiter, who

[336] For 'ambrosial fragrance' attached to the benevolent intervention of gods into human affairs, cf. also *Georgics* 4.415-16, where the nymph Cyrene pours down a stream of fragrant ambrosia upon her son Aristaeus (*Haec ait et liquidum ambrosiae defundit odorem, / quo totum nati corpus perduxit ...*). At *Aen.* 12.418-9, Venus effects the healing of Aeneas by sprinkling ambrosial juice and a fragrant all-healing plant into the water that will bathe his wound (*… spargitque salubris / ambrosiae sucos et odoriferam panaceam*); though Maguinness (1953), ad loc. argued that 'this external application is evidently not the ambrosia that was the favourite item on the Olympian menu'. See further discussion in Tarrant (2012), ad loc.

[337] La Cerda (1612), ad *Aen*. 1.407, with my own English translation.

[338] Haan (1993), 128, n. 7 compares the phrase to Vida's description of the transfigured Christ as *Genitoris imago* at *Christiad* 1.940. For Fowler (2007), ad *PL* 3.140, the participle 'expressed', functioning as an 'intransitive preterite', points back to the Father, '[r]endering the Father's expression in the Son's compassion'.

[339] For the most recent discussion of Milton's anti-Trinitarian views and their impact on *Paradise Lost* (specifically *PL* 12.439-43, a scene which may revise the Johannine Comma), see Cullington and Hale (2012), lix-lx.

reveals the fates to comfort Venus at *Aeneid* 1,[340] the Father's prophecy precedes the intercession of the Son, who reflects the performative aspect of the Father's speech ('Father thy word is past, man shall find grace', *PL* 3.227), signalling harmony. Curiously, and unlike in Sannazaro and Vida, Milton's scene preserves the tension of two speakers, modelled on Olympian epic deities. The first speech of the Son, moreover, presents questions that appear to voice a series of accusations against the Father: at lines 150-66, he voices the charges that would be raised had the Father not just made his speech about his provision for mercy ('So would thy goodness and thy greatness both / be questioned and blasphemed without defence').[341] Just as the Father had echoed the language of Jupiter, the questions of the Son, I argue, recall several elements of the rhetorical technique of Venus' first appeal to Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1. The Son's appeal to 'thy creature late so loved' at *PL* 3.151 may echo Venus' famous appeal *tua progenies*: in her approaching Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1, Venus repeatedly refers to her own status as his offspring, first at 1.237, where she addresses Jupiter as *genitor*, 'father', and then in the famous appeal at 1.250-2, *nos, tua progenies, caeli quibus adnuis arcem, / nauibus (infandum!) amissis unius ob iram / prodimur*, 'But we, your offspring, to whom you grant the heights of heaven, have lost our ships – O shame unutterable! – and, to appease one angry foe, are betrayed'.[342] The Son's allusion to the 'end' of the enemy at *PL* 3.156-7 ('Or shall the adversary thus obtain / His end, and frustrate thine'), furthermore, echoes Venus' question about the 'end' of the narrative in the same scene in *Aeneid* 1: *quem das finem, rex magne, laborum?*, 'What end of their toils, great king, do you grant?'(*Aen*. 1.241) – a line that signals the rhetorical contest between Jupiter and Juno for the conclusion of the Vergilian narrative. Venus'

[340] Venus' intercession in *Aeneid* 1 had provoked Jupiter to reveal his secret counsel by moving the fates. On the one hand, Jupiter announces that the fates of her people are *immota* (*manent immota tuorum / fata tibi*, *Aen*. 1.257-8), as he himself is unmoved in his earlier promise (*neque me sententia uertit*, *Aen*. 1.260). On the other hand, Jupiter himself is compelled by Venus' intercession to 'move' the secrets of the fates (*longius et uoluens fatorum mouebo*, *Aen*. 1.261-2).

[341] Hughes (1965) discusses possible biblical models of intercession for the Son's appeal to the Father in the prayer of Abraham (*Gen*. 18:25), where he asks God: 'Shall not the judge of the earth do right?'. Hughes further cites Matheo Aleman's depiction of Apollo reproaching Jupiter on behalf of mankind in his picaresque novel *The Rogue: or the Life of Guzman de Alfarache* (1599, 1604, and which was translated into English in 1623). According to Francis Peck (1740), Aleman was one of Milton's sources for *PL*: see Wittreich (1983), 116. As Hughes points out, Aleman makes his hero Guzman present 'a morall Fable of the gods of old-time, and the Councel that was held in heaven against Mankind', where Apollo intercedes with Jove on behalf on mankind. Like the Son who, later in *Paradise Lost* intercedes on behalf of fallen man, Apollo argues for the consequences that Jove's destruction of the human race will have for his creation, and ends with a question that expresses a theodical concern with the harshness of God's punishment: '[H]ow can it stand with the power and goodnesse of a Creator, to take too strict a course against his Creature, and to exceed, by extraordinary meanes, in his chastisements?': see Hughes (1965), 116-17.

[342] At *Christiad* 1.843, Christ describes himself as *progenies tua*. See Haan (1993), 127, n. 7. On the conclusion of Venus' speech at *Aen*. 1.250-3, and her emphasis on her own genealogy as Jupiter's offspring, see further Wlosok (1967), 53-4.

question to Jupiter is, as Richard Tarrant has noted, embedded in the question posed in turn by Jupiter to Juno in the final book of the *Aeneid*: *'quae iam finis erit, coniunx?'*, 'What now shall be the end, wife?', (*Aen*. 12.793).[343] It has been considered as introducing his equivocation to Juno, breaking the implication created in the opening of the *Aeneid* that the poem's *finis* is synonymous with Jupiter's intentions alone.[344]

Venus' query, that has become Jupiter's question, is recast in Jacopo Sannazaro's New Testament epic, *De Partu Virginis* (1525), where the question is posed rhetorically by the Father alone. As Michael Putnam has noted,[345] the Father utters these words at the beginning of the narrative, as he looks down from a Jovian height and sees the souls of men being dragged to Tartarus:

> Viderat aetherea superum regnator ab arce
> undique collectas vectari in Tartara praedas
> …
> Tum pectus pater aeterno succensus amore
> sic secum: 'Ecquis erit finis? ...'
>
> The Ruler of the gods had observed from his celestial citadel
> that booty drawn together from every side was being carried into Tartarus
> …
> Then the Father, his heart on fire with ever enduring love,
> spoke thus to Himself: 'Will there be any end?'
> (*De Partu Virginis* 1.33-41)[346]

In causing the Father to utter these words to himself, Sannazaro not only reminds us of the words of Jupiter to Juno, but revises the moment of apparent equivocation of the father of the gods to Juno's antagonism to Troy. The dialogue with which the divine action of the *Aeneid* ends becomes a monologue that begins the story of the Incarnation in Sannazaro's Christian epic. In Sannazaro's dramatization of the Atonement, the decision about the Incarnation begins and ends with the Father, who, 'his heart on fire with eternal love' (*pectus pater aeterno succensus amore*, *De Partu Virginis* 1.40), takes the narrative and allusive place occupied by Juno, who appears early in the *Aeneid* 'nursing an eternal wound in her breast' (*aeternum seruans sub pectore uulnus*, *Aen*. 1.36) and with heart and

[343] See Tarrant (2012), ad loc.
[344] Tarrant (2012), ad *Aen*. 12.793 observes that 'Jupiter's questions may also recall Juno's words to Venus, 4.98 *sed quis erit modus, aut quo certamine tanto?*, but with a stronger sense of finality'. But cf. Feeney (1991), 137-8, who notes that at *Aen*. 1.223, '[t]he poet is already looking forward to the eventual end which Jupiter will impose on the poem, and on the anarchy of Juno […] who […] has dominated the beginning.'
[345] See Putnam (2009), ad loc.: 'With *Ecquis erit finis?* Sannazaro is reminding us of the words with which Jupiter begins his speech to Juno at Vergil *Aen*. 12.793'.
[346] All references to the text and English translation of Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis* are from Putnam (2009).

mind inflamed with rage and resentment (*necdum etiam causae irarum saeuique dolores / exciderant animo*, *Aen*. 1.25-6, 'not yet, too, had the cause of her wrath and her bitter sorrows faded from her mind').

In dramatizing the Atonement, Milton preserves elements of the model of an Olympian dialogue: especially in comparison with Sannazaro's scene, the preservation of a tension between two speakers creates a striking effect. In the second edition of Thomas Newton's 1749 *variorum* commentary on *Paradise Lost*, a commentator contrasted the 'fragrance and delight' that spreads throughout heaven following the first speech of the Father with the oppressive silence following Zeus's speeches among the gods in the Homeric *concilium deorum*.[347] The 'scene of terror and awful consternation' that Newton describes may refer to the *concilium* scene in *Iliad* 8,[348] where Zeus speaks out among the assembled gods, threatening them with a punishment he will inflict on any god who will attempt to aid the Trojans or the Greeks (*Il*. 8.10-18) – a speech that makes the gods fall silent (*Il.* 8.28-9). Despite the commentator's insistence on the contrast between the Miltonic and the Homeric scene, however, Milton does in fact recreate a similar atmosphere as he builds dramatic tension leading to the offer of the Son and asks who will volunteer their life for man, following the Father's question:

> He asked, but all the heavenly choir stood mute,
> And silence was in heaven: on man's behalf
> Patron or intercessor none appeared,
> Much less that durst upon his head draw
> The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
> And now without redemption all mankind
> Must have been lost, adjudged to death and hell
> By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
> In whom the fullness dwells of love divine,
> His dearest mediation thus renewed.
> (*PL* 3.217-26)

The narrative tension built through the silence that spreads throughout heaven is heightened by a conditional at lines 222-6, a construction that strengthens the Homeric resonance of the scene. The Homeric counterfactual, depicting events that would have

[347] Cf. Hera's fear after Zeus reminds her of her own previous punishment (*Il*. 15.34).
[348] 'Our Milton here shows, that he was no servile imitator of the Ancients. It is very well known that his master Homer, and all who followed him, where they are presenting the Deity speaking, describe a scene of terror and awful consternation. […] Our author has very judiciously made the words of the Almighty diffusing fragrance and delight all around him'. This note is ascribed to 'Harrington' in Newton (1750), ad loc.

happened were it not for the intervention of a deity, serves as a 'quasi-narrative' device (of the general type 'and now *x* would have occurred had not *y* intervened').[349] In other words, the narrator offers a glimpse of events unfolding in the opposite direction, and, in the Homeric constructions, often accompanies it with the phrase ὑπέρμορον / ὑπὲρ μόρον or ὑπὲρ αἶσαν – a phrase which, as we saw, Zeus employs in his speech in Book 1 of the *Odyssey*,[350] and which in this narrative context relates to speculation about events that would have occurred beyond, or in excess of, fate.[351] The possibility of events unfolding contrary to the narrative is particularly strong at this moment preceding the promise of salvation in Milton's poem – in this construction we find the only occurrence of 'must have' in *Paradise Lost*: 'And now without redemption all mankind / Must have been lost, adjudged to death and hell / By doom severe …' (*PL* 3.223-4). The device, though less strongly formulated, has been noted by Charles Martindale at other points in Milton's narrative, such as in the duel between Satan and Gabriel at the end of Book 4 (lines 990-7) and in the final stage of Raphael's account of the war in heaven (*PL* 6.679-74), where the interventions are both instigated by the Father.[352] The moment at the end of the war in heaven in Book 6 prefaces the Father's revelation of the Son's power, as he sends him to end the war. Homeric counterfactuals, for a moment, may appear to circumvent the authority of fate (as far as it can be seen as aligned to the will of Zeus, as we see, for example, at *Iliad* 17.327, where 'beyond fate' is replace by the phrase 'beyond god', to

[349] On this device in Homer, see Morrison (1992), 61, and Louden (1993). See also Nesselrath (1992) on 'Beinahe-Episoden' in Greek and Roman epic, esp. 5-37 for the Homeric epics. Nesselrath's book also includes discussion of some instances of this feature in Tasso, Milton, and Voltaire (see 144-51). Louden, in a further study, points out that Milton uses a counterfactual formulation ten times in *PL*, including the moment before the Son's offer (our passage discussed above): see Louden (1996), esp. 325.

[350] Richard Janko notes that '[n]othing ever happens contrary to fate in the *Iliad*, save for the extraordinary hyperbole at 16.780, when the Greeks prevail 'beyond destiny' (ὑπὲρ αἶσαν); normally we hear that events would have happened "contrary to fate", had not someone intervened (e.g. 16.698ff.)': Janko (1992), 5. In *Iliad* 6, Hektor reassures Andromache that no man will be able to hurl him to Hades beyond what is fated (ὑπὲρ αἶσαν), and that μοῖρα is inescapable, for both a bad and a good man (*Il*. 6.486-9).

[351] Martindale (1986), 100, n. 8 offers an example at *Iliad* 8.130ff. Other examples include *Iliad* 2, where the narrator states that, following the arguments of Agamemnon, 'the Argives [would] have accomplished their return even beyond what was fated, had not Hera spoken a word to Athena, saying:' (Ἔνθά κεν Ἀργείοισιν ὑπέρμορα νόστος ἐτύχθη / εἰ μὴ Ἀθηναίην Ἥρη πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν, *Il*. 2.155–6). The phrase 'ὑπέρμορον' also occurs in negative wishes prefacing and justifying the intervention of a deity on the battlefield. In Book 20, Zeus revokes his prohibition to the gods in Book 8, and urges them to involve themselves in the fighting, since 'I fear that even beyond what is ordained he [Achilleus] may lay waste the wall' (δείδω μὴ καὶ τεῖχος ὑπὲρμορον ἐξαλαπάξῃ, *Il*. 20.30). In Book 21, Apollo goes to Troy out of concern, 'lest the Danaans beyond what was ordained should lay it [the wall] waste on that day (μὴ Δαναοὶ πέρσειαν ὑπὲρμορον ἤματι κείνῳ, *Il*. 21.517). In *Odyssey* 5, Athene helps the shipwrecked Aeneas swim to safety as a wave threatens to drown him: ἔνθα κε δὴ δύστηνος ὑπὲρ μόρον ὤλετ Ὀδυσσεύς, / εἰ μὴ ἐπιφροσύνην δῶκε γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη, 'Wretched Odysseus would have perished there, beyond what was fated, if grey-eyed Athene had not given him prudence' (*Od*. 5.436-7).

[352] Milton echoes this Homeric formulation at other points in the narrative, such as during the account of the war in heaven at *PL* 6.699ff. See the discussion by Martindale (1986), 99, n. 8.

refer to Zeus).[353] In Milton's account, however, a counterfactual appears precisely in order to reveal the will of the Father, who had 'foreseen / This tumult, and permitted all':

> ... and now all heav'n
> Had gone to wreck, with ruin overspread,
> Had not the almighty Father where he sits
> Shrined in his sanctuary of heav'n secure,
> Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
> This tumult, and permitted all, advised:
> That his great purpose he might so fulfil,
> To honor his anointed Son avenged
> Upon his enemies, and to declare
> All power on him transferred: whence to his Son,
> The assessor of his throne, he thus began.
> (*PL* 6.669-79)

The insistence of the Father's foreknowledge is important: the Miltonic use of the counterfactual emphasises the Christian God's superiority to his pagan predecessors. Where the Homeric Zeus would at times have to interfere in the here and now, the Father's foresight in the past reveals his perfect providence.

Milton's depiction of the Father in the last moments of the war in heaven, I further argue, recalls Vida's account of the Father in a key moment in the *Christiad*. Like Milton's God, the Father in the *Christiad* is facing a revolt in heaven, but the scenario is vastly different. The angels, witnessing the death of Christ on the cross, begin to storm heaven, in imagery that recalls the earlier war with the rebel angels. Again, we find a counterfactual, to emphasize the precariousness of events:

> aetheris ardebant fractis erumpere portis.
> Iamque adeo evassent omnes terrisque potiti
> sontem incendissent oram, iamque urbibus igni
> correptis, Iudaea nocens, commissa luisses,
> ni pater altitonans stellanti nixus Olympo
> (motus enim tanto subito flagrante tumultu)
> coepta redargueret verbisque inhiberet acerbis
> bellum importunum, cunctis haud mollia mandans.
>
> The angels yearned to burst forth and fight, breaking down the gates of heaven. Even now they would all have escaped and overrun Judaea, setting fire to the guilty land. Already, guilty Judaea, you would have paid for your crimes, your cities consumed by fire. But the far thundering Father, sitting in starry Olympus, was moved by this great and sudden tumult. He opposed the angels' purpose and, with bitter words, he

[353] See Janko (1992), 5.

checked this importunate conflict, commanding them in stern terms.
(*Christiad* 5.617-24)[354]

Like Milton's Father, Vida's Father circumvents the war by sending an agent: in Vida's account, it is *mitis Clementia* (*Christiad* 5.628), 'temperate Clemency', to calm the angels and allow events to unfold. The combination of the conditional construction and the issue at hand – the imminent death of Christ, which the Father does not prevent – echoes scenes of divine-human interaction that centre on fate in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. What emerges in this instance is a moment of Milton's complex engagement with previous epic: here, his own literary construction, while not restricted solely by certain sources, can be seen as a subtle re-reading of the ancient epic scenes through the lens of Vida's earlier Christianized reception and echoing of Homeric and Vergilian narrative means.

3.6 Sons and Fathers: the Case of Sarpedon

In the previous sections, I have focused on how Milton negotiates the charge against the 'goodness' of the Father, first by his defence of free will, modelled on the evocative example of Homer's Zeus in the first council scene in the *Odyssey*, and secondly by his modelling of his exchange with the Son on a scene on imitation and emulation of epic scenes of divine conflict. In this next section, I will consider the second charge, the 'greatness' of the Father, as it is played out in his need to endure events not of his making, most prominently, the Fall of Adam and Eve, and the suffering of Christ, in order to redeem them. For this problem, I suggest, Milton engages a series of allusions to epic scenes which negotiate the limits of divine intervention in human affairs, and which involve a complex vocabulary of fate.

One of the most problematic scenes for Homeric theology and a challenge to attempts to define fate in the *Iliad* occurs in a dialogue between Zeus and Hera in Book 16 over the death of Zeus's son, Sarpedon. The theological difficulty of this scene is centred on the concept of fate, and to what extent Zeus can or cannot circumvent what is fated. In the previous Book, Zeus had foretold the consequences of Patroklos' *aristeia*, including the death of his own son, Sarpedon.[355] But as the moment nears on the battlefield, and each hero leaps from his chariot, Zeus confides in Hera as he considers intervening to save his

[354] All references to the Latin text of the *Christiad* are from Gardner (2009). English translations in block quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from Gardner (2009). Translations appearing in the main text are adapted from Gardner (2009).
[355] The death is foretold at *Il*. 15.67.

son's life (*Il*. 16.431-8). Zeus is rebuked by Hera, who reproaches him for his desire to save a man 'doomed long since by fate' (*Il*. 16.441, see below). Zeus relents, and, following Hera's advice, sends death and sleep upon Sarpedon, while shedding tears of blood, in a moment which, Janko suggests, 'shows Zeus' sorrowful obedience'.[356]

A discussion of this scene, I have found, appears in an early modern discussion of Arminianism, as a way of illustrating the powerlessness of Homer's Zeus. In 1643, the English theologian John Owen published an anti-Arminian treatise, 'A Display of Arminianisme'.[357] There he attempted to illustrate the way in which an assertion of free will and resistible grace puts the Christian God at a disadvantage by drawing a comparison with Homer's Zeus, who, in the scene in *Iliad* 16, cannot save his son Sarpedon. As a result of the free actions of humans, Owen argued, God 'must be forced to loose his desire, lay downe his affection, change his purpose, and see the greatest part of them to perish everlastingly':

> Now let any good natured man, who hath beene a little troubled for poore *Jupiter* in *Homer*, mourning for the death of his sonne *Sarpedon*, which he could not prevent: or hath beene grieved for the sorrow of a distressed father, not able to remove the wickednesse and inevitable ruine, of an onely sonne; droppe one teare for the restrained condition of the God of heaven: who, when he would have all and every man in the world to come to heaven to escape the torments of hell, and that with a serious purpose and intention, that it shall be so: a vehement affection and fervent naturall desire, that it should be so, yet being not in himselfe alone able to save one, must be forced to loose his desire, lay downe his affection, change his purpose, and see the greatest part of them to perish everlastingly.[358]

Owen's discussion gives a particular reading of this scene in which Zeus is dissuaded by Hera from saving his mortal son from the death he foresees at the hands of Hektor.[359]

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[356] Janko (1992), ad 458-61.

[357] In the same year as Owen's treatise, Milton published his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, where he argued that 'the Jesuits, and that sect among us which is nam'd of *Arminius*, are wont to charge us of making God the author of sinne'. In the previous year he had published his *Apology against a Pamphlet*, in which he had condemned Arminians who 'deny original sin'. For the spread of Laudian Arminianism in England and its opposition among the Puritans, see Danielson (1982), 76-80.

[358] Owen (1643), 47.

[359] Objections to Hera's interventions with Zeus, here and at other points in the narrative, date back to Xenophanes' earliest comments on the depiction of the Homeric gods. The ability of the goddess to manipulate Zeus is evident in the notorious Διὸς ἀπάτη, the deception of Zeus, in Book 14 of the *Iliad* (14.153-353). He had confided in Hera, considering whether or not he should intervene on the battlefield and save his son. Hera dissuades him, using a series of arguments, including her standard language of protest. Hera's statement contains repeated elements from other addresses, including her standard address of Zeus: αἰνότατε Κρονίδη ('most dread son of Kronos') appeals to his power among the gods, as well as the preface to the rebuke that immediately follows. She asks 'what sort of a thing have you said'? (ποῖον τὸν μῦθον

Owen omits the argument that it is Hera's persuasion and appeal to Olympian politics that may prevent Zeus from saving his son (Hera had pointed out the dangerous precedent that Zeus' saving of his son may set for the other gods, and had used her standard language of protest in a scene that skirts the issue between the relative power of the gods and Hera's ability to manipulate her husband). Instead, he emphasizes the relative powerlessness of Zeus in losing a son whose death he 'could not prevent', presumably linking it to the moment in which Hera asserts that he should not (or indeed cannot?) save a man 'long doomed by fate'. In the Homeric scene, the source of this powerlessness was traced by commentators to Hera's reminder that in saving Sarpedon from death, Zeus will be acting against what has long since been fated:

> ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόντα, πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ,
> ἂψ ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ἐξαναλῦσαι;
>
> Are you minded to free from dolourous death a mortal man, one doomed long since by fate?
> (*Il*. 16.441-2)[360]

The depiction of Zeus yielding to the arguments of Hera in the action that follows, and particularly to her reprimand about circumventing fate, was seen by the Homeric commentator de Sponde as one of the 'faults' of the Homeric poet, who appears to depict Zeus yielding not as much to Hera, but bowing to fate itself. De Sponde gives this charge the authority of the 2nd/3rd-century commentator Clement of Alexandria, who, in the *Protrepticus*, had cited Zeus's lament at *Il*. 16.433-4, commenting that 'the desire of the god has been overcome, and, defeated, Zeus appears to us to lament on account of Sarpedon' (Κεκράτηται τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Διὸς καὶ ὁ Ζεὺς ὑμῖν διὰ Σαρπηδόνα οἰμῴζει νενικημένος).[361] Hera's reply had prompted a criticism that Zeus, in this scene, appears to be overruled by fate:[362]

> Hic locus à [sic] Clemente Alexandrino uellicatur …, quod dicatur uoluntas Iouis à [sic] fato superata. Et sane [sic] indignum est tanto Numine, ut illo potentiora & efficaciora Parcarum consilia ab impia ista Poetarum natione existimentur. Atque hoc inter naeuos Poeseos Homericae numeretur… Erat autem Sarpedon Iouis filius ideò [sic] tam est de eo hoc loco Iupiter sollicitus, paterno nimirum animo.

ἔειπες), an exclamation that, as Minchin (2011), 22 has shown, is 'reserved in the *Iliad* for Herē', always introducing a protest to Zeus.

[360] The bT scholiast identifies αἶσα with its synonym μοῖρα in commenting on *Il*.16.441: '441. πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ: κεκριμένον τῇ μοίρᾳ… **b** (BCE3E4) **T** [441. 'destined by αἶσα: chosen by μοῖρα …']'.

[361] Clementis Alexandrini *Protrepticus* 55.4, in Marcovich (1995), 86.

[362] Janko (1992), ad *Il*. 16.431-61 points out that the scene ends, but '[Zeus'] protest against fate does not prove that he can reverse it' and 'the question of relative power, though posed, is left unanswered'.

> This place is railed at by Clement of Alexandria …, because the will of Jove is said to be overcome by fate. And reasonably it is unfit for such a great Divinity, that the plans of the *Parcae* should be considered stronger and more powerful than him by that impious race of poets. And this should be counted among the faults of Homeric poetry … But Sarpedon was the son of Jupiter (and) for that reason Jupiter is so concerned for him at this place, doubtless in a father's spirit.[363]

In *Aeneid* 10, Vergil had recast this scene: Vergil's Jupiter takes on the role of both advocate of Hera's argument about the justice to the other gods and spokesman of fate for mortals. This is a scene that carries intertextual memories: it is Jupiter who reminds Hercules, another soon-to-be bereaved father-figure, of his duty towards the other gods and the wider fates. He alludes to '[his] son Sarpedon' (*Sarpedon, mea progenies*, 10.451) who died at Troy, which strengthens the continuity between Homer's Zeus and Vergil's Jupiter as well as the two scenes:

> audiit Alcides iuvenem magnumque sub imo
> corde premit gemitum lacrimasque effundit inanis.
> tum genitor natum dictis adfatur amicis:
> 'stat sua cuique dies, breve et inreparabile tempus
> omnibus est vitae; sed famam extendere factis,
> hoc virtutis opus. Troiae sub moenibus altis
> tot nati cecidere deum, quin occidit una
> Sarpedon, mea progenies: etiam sua Turnum
> fata vocant metasque dati pervenit ad aevi.'
> sic ait, atque oculos Rutulorum reicit arvis.
>
> Alcides heard the young man and deep in his heart he suppressed a groan and shed vain tears. Then the father of the gods spoke to his son with kind words: 'Each man has his day, and the span of life is short and irretrievable for all. But to stretch fame out with deeds, this is virtue's task. So many children of the gods fell beneath the high walls of Troy. Indeed, Sarpedon perished as one of them, Sarpedon, my own progeny. Yes, Turnus' fates summon him and he has reached the limits of the time given to him.' Thus he spoke, and he cast his eyes away from fields of the Rutuli. (*Aen*. 10.464-73)[364]

Vergil's dialogue between Jupiter and Hercules, and the Homeric scene that it looks back to, I suggest, permeate Vida's scene of the crucifixion in Book 5 of the *Christiad* (whose climactic scene, the near-storming of heaven by the angels, is discussed above). The tension between portraying the pity of the fatherly spirit and yet preserving the authority and autonomy of the Father over events in heaven and on earth is negotiated by the poet of the *Christiad* in his portrayal of the Christian God, Father and Son, with the former

[363] Sponde (1583), ad *Il*. 16.433.
[364] Following this speech, Jupiter turns his gaze away, Pallas is killed, and Aeneas has an *aristeia*, killing many Rutulians as he seeks out Turnus (*Aen*. 10.510-605).

witnessing the crucifixion from heaven. Vida's scene alludes to Vergil's recasting of the scene of the grieving father-figure, Hercules, in *Aeneid* 10, who is reminded by Jupiter about the fates.[365] Both the portrait of Homer's Zeus in Book 16 and of Vergil's Hercules in Book 10 of the *Aeneid*, who hears the appeal of Pallas, I argue, inform the portrait of the Father in conflict as the Son calls upon him on the cross, before the Father reclaims the composure and restraint of Jupiter:

> Audiit has summus voces pater; audiit omnis
> coelestum chorus. Ipse (alta secum omnia mente
> versabat genitor, nutu haud oblitus agi rem
> nempe suo) stetit immotus seseque repressit.
>
> The supreme father heard these cries; all of the heavenly choir heard it.
> But he (the father weighed all things with himself deep in his mind,
> not forgetting that surely a thing is done by his nod) stood his ground,
> unshakeable, and restrained himself.
> (*Christiad* 5.504-7)[366]

In the prominent repetition of *audiit ... pater, audiit ...*, I suggest, Vida recalls the pathos of the dialogue between Jupiter and Hercules in *Aeneid* 10, echoing the reaction of Hercules to the appeal of Pallas (*audiit Alcides iuuenem magnumque sub imo / corde premit gemitum lacrimasque effundit inanis*, 'Alcides heard the youth, and deep in his heart stifled a heavy groan, and shed useless tears', *Aen*. 10.464). The phrase *alta ... mente*, in turn, could direct the reader to an early act of remembering in the *Aeneid*, that of Juno. At *Aen*. 1.26, past grievances are described as remaining deep in her mind (… *manet alta mente repostum*). The Father's memory, by comparison, is more dignified than the deep resentment of Juno, rendering an ethical contrast to the behaviour of the Father whose memories supersede those of Juno. Juno's memories relate to events linked to Troy, the first of which is the judgement of Paris, and recall Homeric Hera's antagonism towards Troy.[367] Gian Biagio Conte has established the role of verbs of memory as markers of allusivity or 'poetic memory' in Latin, and specifically, of characters who actively and allusively recall their previous literary incarnations.[368]

The past that the Father remembers is an epic one: Vida's *summus pater* 'turns things over

[365] Harrison (1991), ad *Aen.* 10.469-70 suggests that Vergil's scene 'hints at a story, not explicit in Vergil but known elsewhere, that Pallas was Hercules' son rather than Evander's (Dion. Hal. *Ant*. 1. 43. 1)'.
[366] English translation adapted from Gardner (2009).
[367] See also n. 147 above.
[368] Conte discussed the levels of allusion in Ovid's depiction of Ariadne at *Fasti* 3.471-6. The verb *memini* (473), Conte argued, alludes to Ariadne's memory also of her previous incarnation in Catullus' poem 64 (130-5 and 143-4). See Conte (1986), 60-2.

deep in his mind' (*omnia mente* / *uersabat*), a scene that, at the same time, may evoke the depiction of Homer's Zeus. The verb *uersabat* may be an equivalent term for the action of Zeus at *Iliad* 16.435 who confesses to Hera that 'my heart is divided in counsel as I ponder' (διχθὰ δέ μοι κραδίη μέμονε φρεσὶν ὁρμαίνοντι, my emphasis) whether to snatch Sarpedon off the battlefield and save him from death at the hands of Patroklos.[369] Unlike Homer's Zeus or Vergil's Hercules, however, Vida's God does not need a divine speaker to remind him of his duty towards fate and the other gods, as Hera does Zeus in *Iliad* 16 – he himself literally recalls (*haud oblitus*) the nod of Zeus that gives the words of Zeus their weight in *Iliad* 1, and whose consequences include allowing the death of his own son. Like Vergil's Jupiter, Vida's Father exercises Stoic virtue: he 'repressed himself' (*seseqe repressit*) and holds off the legions arming in heaven, as they prepare to avenge Christ and seize him from death. He is *immotus*, an epithet used by Jupiter of the fates themselves at *Aen*. 1.257.[370]

Vida's account of the Father enduring the death of his Son, therefore, can be read as an effective commentary on the Homeric precedent: it illuminates the pity of Homer's Zeus for his Son – a part of Zeus's behaviour that was considered acceptable by de Sponde but without the charges of his weakness. In the *Iliad*, Zeus's persuasion by Hera results in his sending Death and Sleep to Sarpedon: the Father's mission in Vida, in sending personified mercy, *Clementia*, on the other hand, is part of his active plan for salvation. Vida's *Clementia* is accompanied by personified versions of typically Roman virtues, *Pietas* and *Pax*, as well as *Spes* and *Fides*,[371] extended, by the addition of *Amor*, into a list of the

[369] In Homer, the verb ὁρμαίνω refers only to mental activities of 'turning or revolving anxiously in the mind, debating, or pondering' (see LSJ, s.v.). Vergil evokes the sense of the Homeric ὁρμαίνω in specific uses of the Latin *uersare* at *Aeneid* 4.286, where Aeneas 'considers all options' (*omnia uersat*) in a desperate determination to quit Carthage (cf. 5.702 and 8.21, a more physical description). Aeneas' wavering is contrasted with the use of *uersat* as it pertains to Dido plotting evils at 4.563-4: *illa dolos dirumque nefas in pectore uersat* / *certa mori*. Here the verb *uersat* appears to signal Dido's perplexity in considering various possibilities as it does Aeneas', yet the expectation created by the verb is dissipated in the following enjambed line, where she is described as *certa mori*, determined to die: it is only the means of her death that are still uncertain (cf. 4.630). The verb *uertere* is never used of Jupiter's decision-making (rather of an accusation of him being persuaded by others, see Venus' *quae te, genitor, sententia uertit?*, *Aen*. 1.237). In the *concilium deorum* of *Aeneid* 10, Jupiter reproaches the other gods for changing their mind (*caelicolae magni, quianam sententia uobis* / *uersa retro…?*, *Aen*. 10.6-7).

[370] Cf. the description of Aeneas resisting Dido's entreaties at *Aen*. 4.332: Aeneas' 'steadfast gaze' (*immota lumina*) and the suppression of his pain is directed by Jupiter himself: *ille Iovis monitis immota tenebat* / *lumina et obnixus curam sub corde premebat*, 'he by Jove's command held his eyes steadfast and with a struggle smothered the pain deep within his heart (*Aen*. 4.331-2); and again at *Aen*. 4.449: *mens immota manet* 'his mind stands steadfast'.

[371] This is an Horatian collocation: see his description of *rara Fides* at Hor. *Carm*. 1.35.21.

Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love (*Christiad* 5.628-47).[372] These serve a peaceful mission: they cause the armed legions of angels to refrain from an armed intervention, lay down their arms, and resume their ranks in heaven (5.643-7). *Clementia* may be an unexpected choice to play the role of the divinity who prevents the angels' armed intervention from heaven. Surely, the Father would have mercy on the Son, who is calling on him in his dying moments. But *Clementia* here enacts a different kind of mercy. It alludes to the wider mercy of the Father for the angels – whom he refrains from destroying, but also, in its wider role, for all humans. This type of mercy will ensure their eventual salvation, a story contained in the promise of the Incarnation in Sannazaro's account: in the *Christiad*, it is shown in the sacrifice of the Son in the language of Roman sacrifice for the state.

3.7 Sacrifice and Substitution

As Lewalski has noted, the Son's intercession with the Father in Book 3 differs markedly from those of the Olympian goddesses, insofar as the Son offers himself as both intercessor and means of satisfaction. Unlike Athena interceding on behalf of Odysseus, or Venus for Aeneas, the Son cannot appeal to the merit of soon-to-be-fallen Adam. Mercy, rather, and the Son's merit are the terms by which the Son intercedes with the Father.[373] The Father's defence of the principles of divine justice had mirrored an earlier discussion of the theology of original sin in *De Doctrina Christiana*. There, the author argues that it is established not only in Christian religion but 'was also the most ancient law among all peoples', that a violation against sacred laws of various religions involves a punishment to be exacted not only on the criminal himself (*non ipse solum*), but also on 'all of his descendants' (*sed omnis etiam progenies*, *DDC* 1.11, 'de Lapsu primorum parentum et de Peccato', 414). Milton furnished his argument with a Vergilian *exemplum*, arguing that the idea of a general punishment for original sin was already attested in pagan authors. Milton cites the example of Vergil's Juno, who, in Book 1 of the *Aeneid* complains that (Pallas) Athena was able to destroy the whole Argive fleet for the sin of one man at Troy:

[372] *Amor* is less fitting for the Christian account of love in the Pauline epistle. Jerome's translation reads *caritas*, which, however, would not scan in Vida's epic hexameter. The pagan and erotic connotations of personified *Amor* in Vergil, Cupid, appears in Christian epic as an approximation of the intimate relationship between the Father and Son.

[373] Lewalski (1985), 116: 'In the *Odyssey*, Athena, goddess of wisdom, plays the suasory role in the Council of the Gods. Appealing to the same principles of justice that rightly condemned Aigisthos, she bespeaks pity and aid for beleaguered Odysseus, who is agreed to be wise and worthy. By contrast, the Son's pleas for fallen man (hardly wise and worthy) are appeals for mercy, not justice'.

> Verum in piaculis vindicandis eadem divinae iustitiae ratio nec ignota aliis gentibus, nec iniqua unquam visa est. Sic … Virgil: Aeneid. l. I.
>
> > –Pallasne exurere classem
> > Argivûm, atque ipsos potuit submergere ponto,
> > Unius ob noxam–?
>
> However, the same principle of divine justice in avenging acts that demand atonement has been seen neither as unknown to other races nor as ever unfair. So … Virgil, *Aeneid* [Book] I. [39-41]:
>
> > … Could Pallas burn up the Argives' fleet,
> > And drown the men themselves in the deep,
> > Because of one man's wrongdoing …?
>
> (*DDC* 1.11, 'de Lapsu primorum parentum et de Peccato', 418-9)[374]

Where an act of impiety was performed, the death of one results in the death of many in the reckoning of the gods, and becomes, in Milton's treatise, an image for the damnation of the entire human race by original sin.[375]

In Vida's *Christiad*, the risen Christ had presented his wounds as a ransom price to the Father, who accepted this payment, stating that Christ's wounds had 'earned' (*meruere*, 6.870) not only the salvation of Adam, but of all mankind (*Christiad* 6.869-76). In Milton's dialogue in heaven, however, it is not Christ's wounds, but his whole self that serves as the price for salvation. The Son's offer carries evidence of the 'ransom' theory of the Atonement. The verb 'account' at *PL* 3.238 carries a predominantly mercenary sense, and implies that the death of Christ as man, 'life for life' could repay the cost of Adam's sin. According to the ransom theory of the Atonement, proposed by the Church Fathers, 'the life of Jesus was paid as a ransom to Satan to pay for the sins of humankind; in the usual elaborations of this theory, Jesus was disguised by human flesh and so became a divine mousetrap (so Augustine) or fishhook (so Gregory the Great), and so Satan was defeated by the securing of the ransom.'[376] In Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, Michael foretells to Adam Christ's death and Resurrection, with 'Thy ransom paid, which man from Death redeems (*PL* 12.424).[377]

[374] Hale (2012), ad loc. notes that '[t]he passage […] shows Milton drawing on the question of theodicy as found in ancient epic'.
[375] For a discussion of the Vergilian motif of the 'one and the many' in the epics of Lucan and Statius, see Hardie (1993), 3-10.
[376] Campbell, Corns et al. (2007), 112.
[377] The sacrifice of the biblical Samson, retold in Milton's tragedy, *Samson Agonistes*, could be considered as

Vida had furthermore created an allusive connection between Christ in his dying moments, and the Vergilian helmsman, Palinurus, whose death functions as a sacrifice of one for many. In his depiction of Christ, I argue, Vida activates the Vergilian motif of the 'one and the many': Christ's exclamation at *Christiad* 5.502-3, *Heu, quianam extremis genitor me summe periclis* / *deseris?* ('Father, why do you abandon me in this utmost peril?')[378] recalls the words of the Trojan helmsman Palinurus in the storm at the beginning of *Aeneid* 5: *heu quianam tanti cinxerunt aethera nimbi?* / *Quidue, pater Neptune paras?*, 'Alas! why have such clouds girt the heaven? What have you in mind, Father Neptune?' (*Aen*. 5.13-14). In this scene, Christ is not only subject to mortal death, the destiny of humans in epic, but to human ignorance of divine plans. Palinurus' question (*quid ... paras?*) is particularly apt: Neptune is indeed planning something, an action that will be revealed at the end of Book 5, where Palinurus will be offered as a sacrifice for the Trojans' safe passage through the storm. Neptune announces this plan to Venus at 5.815, describing Palinurus as a sacrifice of 'one for many', *unum pro multis* (5.815).

In Milton's account, the language of the Son activates a similarly evocative Vergilian language of substitution. The repetition of the personal pronoun *me* in the Son's offer of his life for man alludes to the Vergilian language of human sacrifice, recalling, as Haan and more recently Whittington have noted, the words of Nisus at *Aeneid* 9.427-30, as he offers himself in place of Euryalus (*me, me, adsum qui feci, in me conuertite ferrum, / o Rutuli!*):[379]

> 'Behold me then, me for him, life for life
> I offer, on me let thine anger fall;
> Account me man'
> (*PL* 3.236-8)

---

an Old Testament prefiguration of the Son's ransoming of humans. In seeking to destroy the Philistines, Samson is himself destroyed: thus, as John Ulreich has noted, 'Samson the Destroyer becomes a Deliverer by destroying himself: when he delivers himself *to* death, he finally delivers his people *from* oppression' (Ulreich [1979], 79-80). For Milton's debt to ancient epic scenes of ransom in *Samson Agonistes*, such as the ransoming of Hektor's body by Priam, likened to Manoa's attempt to ransom his own son, see Gossman (1960).

[378] Translation adapted from Putnam (2009).

[379] Haan (1993), 133, n. 7: 'In Vida the offer to die in the place of another as conveyed by the heightened tone and *adsum* (825) recalls the words of Nisus in *Aeneid* 9.427–30 as he attempted to die in Euryalus' place. Milton transposes the Son's offer to make it the central point of the heavenly proceedings. Nisus volunteered to die for a fellow man; Christ volunteers to die for all mankind […] The repetition of the pronoun *me* and the express wish that anger be turned upon the speaker suggest that Milton, like Vida, is echoing Nisus' words: *me, me adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum* (9.427)'. Whittington (2010) has considered the repetition *me … me* in this passage as an echo of Nisus' speech in *Aen.* 9.427-30.

The Son's offer, and the Father's acquiescence, is extraordinary in light of the epic passages it evokes, and the commentaries with which they were furnished. In *Aeneid* 10, Juno pleads with Jupiter for the life of Turnus, a scene that reworks the dynamics of the dialogue between Zeus and Hera in *Iliad* 16. As in the earlier exchange with Hercules at *Aen*. 10.464-73, it is now the father of the gods who reminds his spouse about the limitations that her request entails (*Aen*. 10.622-7). Jupiter agrees to a concession: to merely delay the present death of Juno's protégé, but not to snatch him from death altogether (*Aen*. 10.621-7).[380] La Cerda considered the idea expressed by Jupiter in *Aeneid* 10 as picking up the same question posed, but never answered, in the Zeus-Hera dialogue of *Iliad* 16:

> Respectum in hoc excursu ad 16. Iliad. vbi Iuppiter, & Iuno consultant de proferendis Sarpedoni fatis, morte iam imminente, interpretes monent … loquitur enim Virgilius ex opinione illorum, qui dicebant, uniuersa fata mutari non posse, singulorum posse.
>
> Expounders on this diversion suggest looking back to *Iliad* 16, where Jupiter and Juno, with Sarpedon's death now imminent, consult on the matter of postponing his doom … For Vergil expresses the opinion of those who said that is possible to change individual fates, but not the universal ones.[381]

The principle of divine justice, as Milton relates in *DDC*, is that the crime of one man brings the punishment of many.[382] The Son's offer in *Paradise Lost*, however, ensures the redemption of all. His intercession results in a new prophecy of the Father, one that reconciles the claims of both justice and of mercy:

> As in him perish all men, so in thee
> As from a second root shall be restored,
> As many as are restored, without thee none.
> His crime makes guilty all his sons, thy merit
> Imputed shall absolve them who renounce
> Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
> And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
> Receive new life. So man, as is most just,

[380] Harrison (1991), ad 625 notes that the verb *indulgere* 'here characterizes the condescension of the celestial patriarch to his consort', with the outcome of Juno's intercession – the temporal delay of Turnus' death – being 'a good example of the "soft" determinism of the *Aeneid*' (ad 626-7). Contrast with the appeal of Venus to Jupiter for the apotheosis of Romulus in Book 15 of the *Metamorphoses*, where Jupiter points to the futility of her intercession, asking: *sola insuperabile fatum, / nata, mouere paras?* ('Do you, by your sole power, my daughter, think to move the changeless fates?'). See Hardie (2015), ad *Met*. 15.807-42, who compares this passage with the exchange between Hera and Zeus at *Iliad* 16.441-2, and Jupiter and Hercules over the death of Pallas at *Aeneid* 10.464-73.

[381] La Cerda (1617), 502, ad loc.

[382] This idea is challenged in Venus' own reproach to Jupiter, where the suffering of many men is caused by the wrath of one, *unius ob iram* (1.251) – a phrase that mirrors Juno's *unius ob noxam* (1.41), even in its appearance in the same metrical position at the end of the line.

Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die,
And dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life.
(*PL* 3.287-97)

The condensed epic narrative given by the Father at lines 294-7, I argue, functions as a retelling of the *Aeneid* that is mediated through Vida's presentation of Christ as the hero who will 'by his death bring the souls of the pious to paradise' (*morte sua manesque pios inferret Olympo*, *Christiad* 1.7).[383] It is through the intercession and offer of the Son, activating the language of epic prophecy, that the fullness of the Father's plan for the narrative of salvation is revealed. Whereas La Cerda notes that, in the world of ancient epic, the wider fates cannot be changed for one man, Milton points to the fact that, in Christian doctrine, the fate of *all* mankind can be changed by the action of 'one greater man' (*PL* 1.4).

The depiction of the Son in dialogue with the Father in Book 3, offering his life for man and eliciting a new prophecy, could be seen as the fulfilment of the epic ambition of the pre-eminent hero in the figure of the Christ as he appears to negotiate a role between the divine and human spheres in Christian epic. Unlike Odysseus, I suggest, who is unable to save his companions, who perish 'by their own recklessness' (σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσινa, *Od*. 1.7, a phrase echoed by Zeus in his complaint at *Od.* 1.34 about the follies of humans), Christ, the divine and human hero of *Paradise Lost* can save his companions who 'trespass, authors to themselves in all' (*PL* 3.122). The Father's far-reaching prophecy of the damnation of all mankind – 'so will fall, / He and his faithless progeny' (*PL* 3.95-6) – is replaced with a narrative of the salvation. The voluntary offer of the Son balances the complaint of the Father in Milton's council scene, and elicits the final prophecy, incorporating and foreshadowing the Incarnation: 'thy merit, / Imputed, shall

[383] Vida's invocation transforms the language of empire into the language of spiritual conquest. In Vida's invocation, the destination of Christ's heroic journey is literally extended, appearing at the end of the line: compare Vida's *pios inferret Olympo* at the end of line 7 with *Aen*. 1.6, which begins with *inferret deos Latio*. Christ will not lead his people to a human city, as Aeneas does, but to heaven itself, expressed through epic diction as 'Olympus', a region barred to mortals in the traditional world of heroic epic, 'opening the blocked path to Olympus,' as Sannazaro states in his own proem (*obstructique viam patefecit Olympi*, *DPV* 1.4). As Burrow (1993), 276 has noted, the *pietas* of Christ himself and that of those he has redeemed becomes one, foretelling Christian piety, and making all humans share in the heroic quality of Christ. See also Contzen, Glei et al. (2013), ad *Christiad* 1.7.

absolve them who renounce / Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds' (*PL* 3.290-3).[384]

Conclusion

In this chapter I considered the way in which Milton establishes the narrative authority of the Father and his personal relationship to fate in Book 3, by mirroring the appearance and language of Jupiter in the first Olympian scene of the *Aeneid*. As the Father engages in a dialogue with the Son, debating the terms of salvation, Milton, I argued, recreates the dynamics of dialogues between the Olympian epic deities interceding on behalf of their favourite mortals. Milton's scene creates multiple points of contact, I suggested, between Protestant theologies of the Atonement and contemporary responses to the Olympian epic scenes, recreating the features of divine prophecy, intercession, and activating theodical charges raised in their depiction of the father of the gods bowing to the arguments of lesser deities, and even to fate itself. I further argued that the Christian message of Milton's dramatization of the Atonement is shaped by its generic placement within the framework of ancient epic, as the concept of fate is redefined in the poem to apply to the wider narrative of salvation. Milton's use of a counterfactual at *PL* 3.223 with the emphatic '[m]ust have', delineates the importance of the Son's intervention for human history, offering the reader a glimpse of an alternative, seemingly inevitable fate. Rather than depicting fate as a concept elicited from the Father by the Son, moreover, in the manner that the interceding goddesses elicit prophecies from Zeus and Jupiter, the fullness of the Father's fated plan for salvation is revealed in dialogue with the Son, transforming the dynamics – and the results – of the Olympian negotiations. As the Son negotiates the terms of the Atonement with the Father, he elicits a revised prophecy from the Father in which the Son appears as a figure who embodies the reconciliation of divine and human fates.

[384] The Son's merit appears as the counter-image of the image of Satan, who appears in the council of Pandaemonium 'exalted … by merit raised / To that bad eminence' (*PL* 2.5-6) among his peers, and whose 'sense of injured merit' (*PL* 1.98) raises him alone 'with the mightiest to contend' (*PL* 1.99).

Chapter 4.

WITH 'PROVIDENCE THEIR GUIDE':

POST-VERGILIAN AFTERMATHS

In the previous chapter I considered Milton's portrait of the Father and Son in the opening scene of Book 3. A key ingredient of Milton's Christian theodicy and its success in this scene, I argued, can be gleaned from the way in which it transforms the intertextual expectations created by its recreation of epic dialogues between the Olympian deities. Milton's dialogue between the Father and Son, I suggested, alludes to and transforms the Homeric and Vergilian scenes centred on the issues of fate, personal autonomy and divine agency, ideas which Milton delineates in reference to the ancient epic tradition.

This chapter aims to account for the final stage of Milton's postlapsarian narrative of fate in *Paradise Lost* by identifying shared narrative patterns with post-Vergilian epic poems which are conscious of their own belatedness in the epic tradition. In Books 11 and 12 of *Paradise Lost*, Lewalski argued, tragedy – specifically Christian tragedy – 'becomes a prominent element in the mixed mode of Christian heroic'.[385] When it comes to epic models, however, Lewalski's view of the 'mixed mode' of the concluding books needs to be supplemented. I will argue that allusions to the post-Vergilian epics of aftermath ought to be given fuller attention in readings of the final books of *Paradise Lost*. Acknowledging the potential influence of models such as Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* (on the use of which in Milton there are several excellent studies) and Statius' *Thebaid* (allusions to which have not been analysed in a sustained way by scholars)[386] would have significant implications for reading *Paradise Lost*, from the political to the spiritual themes of the poem. If the poem's ending can be read in conjunction with and as an oblique response to these post-Vergilian, dark epics of aftermath and transgression, the impact on Milton of Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* can possibly also be extended to Statius' *Thebaid*: the Statian depiction of a failed monarchy and the cursed house of Oedipus could be as relevant for Milton's political background as the Lucanian treatment of the Roman civil war and end of the Roman Republic. Milton's anti-monarchical sentiments are expressed, for instance, in his

[385] Lewalski (1985), 224.

[386] Previously noted allusions to the *Thebaid* in *Paradise Lost* and Milton's other poetic works are listed by Patterson et al. (1931-8), vol. 2, s.v. 'Statius'. These include: *Theb*. 4.424 at Milton's *Il Penseroso*, 79; *Theb.* 9.733 at *Comus*, 525; *Theb*. 3.222 at *Elegy* 4.78; *Theb*. 6.112 at *Elegy* 5.122; *Theb*. 10.288 at *In Quintum Novembris*, 20; *Theb*. 8.240 at *Mansus* 82; *Theb*. 4.420 at *PL* 1.83; *Theb*. 4.514 at *PL* 2.964; *Theb.*10, 85-6 at *PL* 9.1086; *Theb*. 11.604 at *PL* 11.31; *Theb*. 12.817 at *PL* 11.332.

Defensio Prima, where he uses an example from the *Aeneid*.[387] In this example, Evander warns Aeneas on the dangers of tyranny. Statius' depiction of the cursed house of Oedipus, of hereditary guilt, and of the failure of a shared monarchy restored by the intervention of Theseus, may provide a further allusive epic language for expressing the dangers of inherited rule on both the royalist and republican sides – from the advance of Richard Cromwell to the restoration of the monarchy with Charles II.

Milton scholarship in recent decades has witnessed an increase of interest in post-Vergilian epics as sources of allusion in *Paradise Lost*. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in particular have inspired several focused studies, with monographs by Davis Harding, Richard DuRocher, Mandy Green, and Maggie Kilgour tracing Milton's debt to the *Metamorphoses* in various narrative episodes of *Paradise Lost*.[388] Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* (which, as we saw in Chapter 1, also provides an allusive backdrop to the rhetoric of the fallen angels in the opening books of *Paradise Lost*) has provided another fruitful area for recent discussion. Charles Martindale included a chapter on Lucan in his 1986 monograph on Milton's transformation of ancient epic, pointing to a series of allusions to the *Bellum Ciuile* in *Paradise Lost*, as well as tracing 'some broad similarities of poetic strategy [...] which [...] differentiate the poems from the mainstream epic tradition'.[389] Discussions of Milton's allusions to Lucan have, in their rhetoric, served to challenge the notion that Milton places his poem in the Vergilian epic tradition. This argument was taken further by David Norbrook, who observed that several allusions previously identified as Vergilian in Milton's epic could more accurately be traced to the *Bellum Ciuile*, and aimed to 'emphasize the continuing stream of allusions to the *Pharsalia* that has been missed by those in search of Virgilian references.'[390] Norbrook argued that 'the poem's anti-Augustanism', moreover, 'belongs to the republican assessment of classical literary culture

[387] See below, section 4.1.
[388] Harding (1946), DuRocher (1985), Green (2009). Maggie Kilgour's recent study argued that Ovid's revision of his literary predecessors functions as a model for Milton's own relationship to the classical authors he alludes to in *Paradise Lost*. See Kilgour (2012), esp. 11-13. See also my discussion in the introduction to this thesis.
[389] Martindale (2002), 198. For Barker (1949) and MacCaffrey (1975), Milton's invocation, the progression from 'man's first disobedience' to Christ's 'regaining of the blissful seat' in the opening of *Paradise Lost* to the prophecy of Michael 'corresponds to that of Virgil's *principium*, from the fall of Troy through a journey to the founding of Rome' (see Fowler [2007], ad 1-5). Here Christ appears as the hero to replace the fallen Adam and fulfil the promise of a spiritual empire – embedded into Christian epic transformations of Vergilian timelines. The idea of an overreaching Vergilian structure in the narrative of *Paradise Lost* has been more recently developed by Quint (1993), building on Fowler. He argues that *Paradise Lost* is structured symmetrically around the Son's descent in his chariot at *PL* 6.761-2.
[390] Norbrook (1999), 438.

in the mid-century.'[391] Lucan's influence, according to Norbrook, is pervasive throughout *Paradise Lost*, and prefigured in the poem's original ten-book structure – a remarkable deviation from the Vergilian norm, Norbrook argued, which was 'duly corrected in 1674.'[392]

4.1 *Paradise Lost* and Post-Vergilian Epic

Milton's adoption of a twelve-book structure in the second edition of *Paradise Lost* need not wholly colour Milton's epic through the modelling of the poem on an 'Augustan' *Aeneid*, or indeed necessarily align it with 'optimistic' readings of the Augustan epic.[393] Craig Kallendorf recently presented a series of 'pessimistic' early modern readers of Vergil – with Milton counted among them – and cites a striking example of Milton's 'anti-Augustan' reading of the *Aeneid* in the *Defensio Prima*. This text was republished in 1658, around the same time that Milton is believed to have begun serious work on *Paradise Lost*.[394] In his first *Defensio*, Milton had argued against hereditary monarchy and the way in which it led to tyranny, citing Augustus as an example of a leader who had 'then assume[d] the name of *princeps*, or emperor and tyrant' ('*nomen deinde principis aut imperatoris et αὐτοκράτορος sibi arrogare*'). Milton had cited an example from Book 8 of the *Aeneid*,[395] where Evander recalls the exile of the king of the Etruscans, Mezentius, as a precedent for the custom that lay at the foundation of the Roman Republic. Milton's sees Evander's story given to Aeneas as a veiled message of the poet for Augustus himself:

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[391] Norbrook (1999), 438.
[392] Norbrook (1999), 443.
[393] The terms 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' have been used to describe the critical views of 20th-century readers of the *Aeneid*: the former, the 'optimistic' readers, generally following Richard Heinze's seminal work *Vergils epische Technik* (first published in 1903), have viewed the poem as 'a sublime assertion of the might of Rome and Augustus' (Harrison [1990], 1). Heinze's views, relatively uncontentious between the two World Wars, were taken further in Viktor Pöschl's *Die Dichtkunst Vergils* (1950) and popularized by T.S. Eliot. Pöschl's work sparked interest among 20th-century critics in the symbolism of the *Aeneid* – a movement that, ironically, gave rise to the Harvard school of Vergilian critics in the 1950s and 60s – most notably Adam Parry, Wendell Clausen, and Michael Putnam – known also as 'pessimistic' readers. See esp. the seminal study by Johnson (1976), who foregrounds the 'darker' elements in Vergil's poem, calling into question readings of the *Aeneid* as a panegyrical poem and one that glorifies the (pre-)history of Rome. See the summary of the scholarly discussions in Harrison (1990), 1-21. The term 'pessimistic' has recently been applied by Kallendorf (2007) to early modern readers of the *Aeneid*, including Milton. It has also been argued that the post-Augustan authors were among the first 'pessimistic' readers of the *Aeneid*, developing further what they found in the 'darker' crevices of the poem (see esp. Putnam 1995): they would thus have been pre-empting early modern receptions as well as 20th-century scholarly readings.
[394] The year 1658 appears to be the general consensus among Milton biographers, based on the account of Milton's nephew, Edward Philips, and Milton's close friend Cyriack Skinner. See Norbrook (1999), 434: '[Milton's] nephew Edward Phillips told Aubrey that he heard Milton recite Satan's first soliloquy on arriving on Earth during the early 1650s, and that Milton began work in earnest on the epic about two years before the Restoration and finished three years after it' (434). See also Kallendorf (2007), 148.
[395] See Kallendorf (2007), 148-9.

> Quid illi [*i.e*. Romani] in tyrannos suos, sive reges, sive Imperatores fecerint, vulgò notum est. Tarquinium expulerunt; et more quidem majorum; aut enim expulsi civitate Agyllina Mezentii tyranni antiquissimum exemplum Hetruria vicina praebuit, aut eâ fabulâ summus artifex decori Virgilius, quo jure apud cunctas gentes, idque ab omni vetustate, fuissent reges, regnanti etiam tunc Romae Octaviano Caesari voluit ostendere, Aeneid. l.8.
>
> > *At fessi tandem cives infanda furentem*
> > *Armati circumsistunt, ipsúmque, domúmque:*
> > *Obtruncant socios; ignem ad fastigia jactant.*
> > *Ille inter caedes, Rutulorum elapsus in agros*
> > *Confugere, et Turni defendier hospitis armis.*
> > *Ergo omnis furiis surrexit Etruria justis:*
> > *Regem ad supplicium praesenti Marte reposcunt.*
>
> How they [the Romans] acted towards their tyrants, whether kings, or emperors, is common knowledge. They expelled Tarquin, and by indeed, by the *mos maiorum*, the way of their elders. For either their neighbouring Etruria provided them with a very ancient example when the tyrant Mezentius was expelled from the city of Agylla, or, through this story, in book 8 of the Aeneid, Virgil, the master of what was fitting, meant to show to Octavian Caesar, who was still ruling Rome at that time, by what authority kings were appointed among all peoples, and this from the oldest times:
>
> > And finally the tired citizens surround the man raging with unspeakable madness, and, armed, they surround both him and his house: they cut down his companions, and throw fire upon his rooftop. He slips away amidst the slaughter, flees to the Rutulian fields, and is defended by the arms of his host, Turnus. Therefore all Etruria rose in righteous rage: with war looming, they demand the king be returned for punishment.[396]

The lines taken from the *Aeneid* are addressed to Aeneas by Evander, who assures him: *his ego te, Aenea, ductorem milibus addam* ('I will add you, Aeneas, to these thousands, as their leader', *Aen*. 8.496). Inherent in this promise is also the duty it brings, or so Milton would have interpreted Evander's promise: Aeneas' kingship would not exempt him from these laws, or from the wrath of his subjects, if, like Mezentius, he were to become a tyrant – nor would it, by extension, exempt his successor, Augustus. For Milton, the example could equally have served to warn Richard Cromwell (who succeeded his father Oliver as Lord Protector in the same year in which Milton republished his *Defensio*), as much as it did for Oliver Cromwell or indeed the executed king Charles I.[397]

[396] Milton, *Defensio Prima*, cited from Chapter 5 in Patterson et al. (1931-8), vol. 7, 323-5.
[397] Norbrook (1999), 435 questioned the assumption that Milton had retreated from political engagement after the Restoration. He discusses the example of George Sikes' biography of the 'republican martyr' Sir Henry Vane in 1662, which included Milton's sonnet to Vane. Sikes' inclusion of the sonnet was the basis of

Even in its twelve-book format, the attempt to map the structure of the *Aeneid* onto *Paradise Lost* presents some difficulties. As Michael Putnam has noted, '[t]he *Aeneid* ends twice in *Paradise Lost*.'[398] The first of these noted endings occurs at the end of Book 4, as Satan flees the confrontation with Gabriel: like the ghost of Turnus, who, in the last line of the *Aeneid*, 'with a moan fled resentfully to the shades below' (*cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras*, *Aen.* 12.952),[399] Satan 'fled / Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night' (*PL* 4.1014-15). Like Turnus, Satan appears to fade out of the narrative – though only temporarily.[400] The momentary defeat of the humbled Satan anticipates his final defeat in *Paradise Regained* by the greater hero, Christ himself.[401] Milton's foreshadowing of this event could be considered as a form of literary afterword to or emendation of the ending of the *Aeneid*.

4.2 Epic as Tragedy: the Invocation to Book 9

One area in which the final Books of *Paradise Lost* mark themselves out as attuned to 'darker' features of Vergil's *Aeneid* that were taken further by the post-Vergilian poets is to be found in the inclusion of tragic elements.[402] At the beginning of Book 9, as the narrator of *Paradise Lost* moves to the subject-proper of the Fall, he invokes association with the tragic genre thus:

> ... I now must change
> Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach
> Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
> And disobedience: on the part of heaven
> Now alienated, distance and distaste,
> Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,
> That brought into this world a world of woe,
> Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery
> Death's harbinger: … (*PL* 9.5-13)

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an exposition on the Romans' rightful abolition of the monarchy – alluding perhaps to Milton's republication of his *Defensio* four years earlier.

[398] Putnam (2006), 387.

[399] English translation adapted from Fairclough and Gould (2000).

[400] See Burrow (1993), 273, Putnam (2006), 387, and Quint (2014), 143. Burrow identifies the meaning of 'Murmuring' with the definition at *OED* s.v., 2, 'To complain or repine in low muttered tones', associating it with Vergil's *indignata*, uniformly understood in Renaissance translations of the *Aeneid* to refer to Turnus as 'disdainful' or 'indignant' in his last-stand. In this scene, Burrow argues, Milton completes and transposes the Aeneas-like Satan of the opening books into the defeated Turnus at the end of Book 4: 'He has changed sides, turned from a pausing Aeneas to a conquered Turnus in the 600 lines between his imperial delay over his human opponents and the end of Book IV—and all without a battle'.

[401] Martindale (2002), 102 emphasizes the silencing of Satan in this scene: 'It is striking that the verbose Satan should be so utterly silenced [that] he seems to melt away.'

[402] See Norbrook (1999), 440-1.

For Thomas Newton, Milton's change of subject also brought with it a change in style, moving from the epic to the 'tragic strain'.[403] For Addison, the tragic trajectory of Adam and Eve's fall was a subject 'not so proper for an Heroick poem'.[404] Yet, the idea of epic as an all-encompassing genre had been proposed by Joseph Scaliger in his *Poetics*, and goes back to the very origins of Homeric epic as the well-spring of all other genres.[405] The Aristotelian identification of the plot of the *Iliad* as 'pathetic', Lewalski argues, reflects an association that is continued in Renaissance genre theory: in his *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1568), William Webbe had traced the origins of tragedy to the *Iliad*. It is only fitting that Milton, in attempting an archetypal story at the origin of human history, should recall these debates about the development of tragedy out of epic. Only a few lines later in his proem, at *PL* 9.13-4, Milton firmly situates the subject of the Fall, and the narrative he is about to embark on, within the sphere of classical epic, in his invocation of its 'tragic' themes: ('sad task, yet argument / Not less but more heroic than the wrath / Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued / … or rage / Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused, / Or Neptune's ire or Juno's, that so long / Perplexed the Greek and Cytherea's son', *PL* 9.13-19).[406] Norbrook argued that *Paradise Lost* 'shares the tragic spirit of the *Pharsalia*', and cites the 'sharp, sceptical wit' demonstrated at *PL* 9.13-19 as evidence for this. Summarizing Richard Bentley's comment on this passage (in which he argued that Milton could not have written these lines), Norbrook posits that Milton engages with the darker and anti-imperial episodes of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* – an undermining, rather than an assertion of the epic tradition and the place of his own poem within it.[407]

Milton's debt, in *Paradise Lost*, to the tragic elements of the *Aeneid*, recently demonstrated by David Quint, provides opportunities for exploring generic cross-over in

[403] Newton (1749), v. 2, 120, n. 5: 'As the author is now changing his subject, he professes likewise to change his stile agreeably to it. […] What follows is more of the tragic strain than of the epic. Which may serve as an answer to those critics who censure the latter books of the *Paradise Lost* as falling below the former'.
[404] Thus Joseph Addison in *Spectator* 297 (see Cook 1926), cited in Lewalski (1985), 220.
[405] Scaliger (1561), vol. 5, 113, with further discussion in Lewalski (1985), 4-5. On the generic inclusivity of epic, see Harrison (2007), 207-8, with further references.
[406] Norbrook argued that *Paradise Lost* 'shares the tragic spirit of the *Pharsalia*', and cites the 'sharp, sceptical wit' demonstrated at *PL* 9.13-9 as evidence for this. Summarizing Bentley's comment on this passage (in which he argued that Milton could not have written these lines), Norbrook posits that Milton engages with the darker and anti-imperial episodes of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* – an undermining, rather than an assertion of the epic tradition and the place of his own poem within it. See Norbrook (1999), 440-1.
[407] See Norbrook (1999), 440-1.

general and relationships between Milton and Statius in particular.[408] The *Thebaid*, with its expression of the subject of tragedy within the epic genre, provides a further potential model for Milton in addition to the epic precedent of tragic elements in Vergil and Lucan: Statius' inclusion of material from tragedy, a further development of the same inclusivity in the *Aeneid*,[409] stands out. The *Thebaid* not only looked back to the early Greek poem of the same title (now lost), but – significantly – must also have engaged with the famous treatments of its likely mythic subject-matter in Greek tragedy, which include Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, Sophocles' *Antigone* and, most significantly, Euripides' *Phoenissae*.[410]

The *Thebaid*'s expression of the subject of tragedy seems important for Milton's plotting of the epic narrative of Book 9. As he lists the vices of the first humans after the Fall (cited above), Milton creates a similar effect to the accumulation of evils that invade the minds of Eteocles and Polynices in Book 1 of the *Thebaid*, and which haunt these characters as part of their mythic – and conspicuously tragic – pedigree:

> atque ea Cadmeo praeceps ubi culmine primum
> constitit adsuetaque infecit nube penates,
> protinus adtoniti fratrum sub pectore motus,
> gentilisque animos subiit furor aegraque laetis
> invidia atque parens odii metus, inde regendi
> saevus amor, ruptaeque vices iurisque secundi
> ambitus inpatiens, et summo dulcius unum
> stare loco, sociisque comes discordia regnis.
>
> When first she stayed her headlong course at the Cadmean citadel and tainted the dwelling with her wonted mist, shock stirred the brothers' hearts. The family madness invaded their minds, envy sick at another's good fortune and fear, parent of hate, then fierce love of rule, breach of give and take, ambition intolerant of

[408] Quint has examined how the narrative of the Fall harmonizes elements of both the Dido and Creusa story. Eve, who initially, at her fall, resembled Dido, is transformed into a Creusa who, unlike Aeneas' wife, leaves the burning homeland with her husband. The tragic ending of the poem is transformed into *felix culpa* through the technique of epic prophecy. The idea of the Fall narrative as a tragedy is transformed in the language of epic prophecy. The *felix culpa* by which the eventual triumph – spanning beyond the poem – is achieved transcends the tragic arc of the narrative into an epic-styled prophecy; announced through the redemption performed by Christ. This is announced in a Vergilian-styled vision of the future – a version of the procession of heroes in *Aeneid* 6. Quint (2014), 8 argues that 'Adam and Eve leave *Paradise Lost* cheered, officially by the happy ending of Christian promise, dramatically by the comic solution of marriage.' Cf. Wilson (2004), 164-206.

[409] For discussions of significant tragic elements in the *Aeneid*, see Wlosok (1999) on the 'tragedy' of Dido and further implications for the whole poem, and the treatment by Hardie (1997), with further references.

[410] See the remarks in Hardie (2005), 97. Euripides is also the tragedian whom Milton appears to have favoured: see Norbrook (1995). On Statius' relationship to his Greek predecessors, see, most recently, Marinis (2015).

second place, hankering to stand at the top alone, strife, the companion of shared sovereignty.[411]
(*Theb*. 1.123-30, with my emphasis)

Milton creates a similar effect in the tragic invocation at the beginning of Book 9, balancing it with a contrast between the crimes of man, and the anger and punishment of heaven:

foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
And disobedience: on the part of heaven
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,
That brought into this world a world of woe,
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery
Death's harbinger: …
(*PL* 9.6-13)

As in the case of the ending of the war in heaven at the end of *Paradise Lost* 6 and the ending of the civil war in the *Thebaid* discussed above, the comparative reading of the Miltonic tragic invocation and the Statian scene does not rely on Miltonic allusion. What is worthy of note, however, is the role of personification allegory in Statius' practice: the personifications at the opening of *Paradise Lost* 9 are comparable to Statian personified evils such as the ones haunting the minds of Eteocles and Polynices in *Thebaid* 1 (above). Statius' epic predecessors tend to be further away from personification allegory than he is.[412] Reading the Statian and Miltonic passages side by side, then, allows us to see a significant moment in the Miltonic construction: unlike in the scene in the *Thebaid*, where the journey of Tisiphone carries with it the invasion of fraternal vices, in Milton's account it is the first vices of Adam and Eve that bring forth 'into this world a world of woe' – through the release of the personifications Sin and Death forth from their previous dwelling at the gates of hell (*PL* 9.11).

[411] Unless otherwise stated, all English translations of the *Thebaid* are by Shackleton Bailey (2003). Cf. Thomas Stephens' translation, which veers further away from Statius' text, and concludes with an apostrophe outside the original. His apostrophe to the 'Crownes divided' captures a sense of the political anxieties in the year before Charles I's trial and execution: 'Oh! 'tis brave / To be Lord Paramount, and not to have / A partner in our royal Fortunes: Neither Will Crownes divided ever hold together' (*Theb*. 1.123-130, trans. T. Stephens)

[412] See, e.g., Kaufmann (2013), 485; but cf. Lowe (2008). Statius' handling of allegory has famously been read as laying the groundwork for medieval allegories: see Lewis (1936), 48-56.

4.3 'Mortal Taste': Transgressive Eating from Lucan to Milton

Moments of aftermath and tragic elements are accompanied by Milton's exploration of post-Vergilian epic transgressions. In the opening of *Paradise Lost*, it was the 'mortal taste' of the fruit that brought 'death into the world, and all our woe' (*PL* 1.3). For Milton, human transgression is achieved through an act of eating,[413] recreating the Genesis account of the temptation and fall of Eve, who is tempted by the serpent to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Milton paints the consequences of the Fall as a cosmic transgression. David Norbrook has pointed to a Lucanian precedent for this, and compares the causeway built by Sin and Death to connect hell with earth with Lucan's description of the gigantic fence built by Caesar to wall in Pompey's forces at *BC* 2.672-9.[414] The passage depicting the aftermath of Eve's picking and eating the fruit in Book 9 (780-4), moreover, as Porter has discussed, evokes the depiction of the storm which accompanies the Dido and Aeneas' encounter in the cave in *Aeneid* 4:[415]

> … prima et Tellus et pronuba Iuno
> dant signum; fulsere ignes et conscius aether
> conubiis summoque ululârunt vertice Nymphae.
> ille dies primus leti primusque malorum
> causa fuit …
>
> Primal Earth and nuptial Juno give the sign; fires flashed in Heaven, the witness to their bridal, and on the mountaintop screamed the Nymphs. That day the first of death, the first of calamity was cause.
> (*Aen*. 4.166-70)

According to Norbrook, the Miltonic passage furthermore evokes Lucan's description of the aftermath of the battle of Pharsalia, 'where the Earth likewise is involved':

> ingemuisse putem campos, terramque nocentem
> inspirasse animas, infectumque aera totum
> manibus et superam Stygia formidine noctem.
>
> you would haue thought the field
> Had groan'd, and that the guilty earth did yield
> Exhaled spirits, that in the aire did moue,
> And Stygian fears possest the night aboue.
> (*BC* 7.768-70, trans. Thomas May)

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[413] On the significance of prelapsarian, communal eating in Books 4 and 5 of *Paradise Lost*, see Tigner (2010), who sees significance in Milton's contemporary culinary and social environment. For her, part of Eve's transgression in eating the fruit lies in her 'consuming the fruit without Adam' (248).
[414] Norbrook (1999), 458.
[415] For a discussion of the Vergilian parallel, see Porter (1993), 112-3. Norbrook sees the Lucanian parallel as more convincing than the Vergilian one.

Through this allusion, Norbrook argues, 'Satan has brought the heavenly civil war to earth, and the cosmic disruption that ensues renders the Earth more like the fissured, tragic landscape of *Pharsalia* that Lucan had evoked so powerfully in the passage leading up to the battle.'[416] Norbrook offers a further example at *PL* 10.687-91, where the Sun turns away in horror from the transgression which is compared to the cannibalistic crime of Thyestes. The turning away of the personified Sun is given as an *aetion* for the loss of the temperate Edenic climate at the Fall:

> ... At that tasted Fruit
> The Sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned
> His course intended; else how had the world
> Inhabited, though sinless, more then now,
> Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
> (*PL* 10.687-91)

Citing Patrick Hume's note to this passage, Norbrook compares it to the narrator's lament in *Bellum Ciuile* 7 that 'the sun could look on the loss of liberty even though it had withheld its eyes from Thyestes' cannibalism':

> … astra Thyestae
> intulit et subitis damnauit noctibus Argos:
> tot similis fratrum gladios patrumque gerenti
> Thessaliae dabit ille diem?
>
> He at Thyestes feast could shut vp day,
> Involving Argos in a suddaine night;
> And can he lend Thessalia his light,
> Where brothers fight, and sonnes 'gainst fathers are?
> (*BC* 7.451-4, trans. May)

In addition to the Lucanian models suggested by Norbrook, there may be further post-Vergilian epic resonances in Milton's reworking of the motif of transgressive eating, mediated through Dante. Milton's description of the human sin of eating the fruit, George Butler has argued, continues a Dantean language of transgressive eating.[417] The portrait of Dante's Satan in *Inferno* is an image of a monster with three mouths, prefigured in Ugolino at *Inferno*, Cantos 32-3 (the transgressive nature of Ugolino's appearance is mirrored in its description spilling into the next Canto). It is possible that Milton's portrait of Adam and Eve's transgression also carries with it a Statian genealogy, which is, in turn, behind Dante's version. In Dante, Ugolino foreshadows the gruesome portrait of Satan,

[416] Norbrook (1999), 458.
[417] See Butler (2006).

who is depicted in the ninth circle of hell, as he gnaws on the heads of Judas, Cassius, and Brutus in his three mouths (*Inferno* 34.55-67). This action may recall the crime committed by Statius' Tydeus at the end of Book 8 of the *Thebaid*. Initially content with holding the head of his defeated enemy in his hands, Tydeus is incited by the fury Tisiphone to commit a transgressive act (*plus exigit ultrix* / *Tisiphone*, 'but avenging Tisiphone exacts more', *Theb.* 8.757-8).[418] The goddess Athena arrives at the same time, with the intention of bestowing immortality on Tydeus (*misero decus immortale ferebat*, 'she was bearing immortal glory to the unhappy warrior', *Theb*. 8.769), only to witness the act of transgressive eating:

> atque illum effracti perfusum tabe cerebri
> aspicit et vivo scelerantem sanguine fauces
> (nec comites auferre valent) ...
>
> She looks at him, sees him wet with the issue of the broken brain and polluting his jaws with living blood – nor can his comrades wrest it away.
> (*Theb*. 8.760-2)

Moral shock-waves following Tydeus' transgressive act of cannibalism spread: in the *Thebaid*, the atrocity is remembered at *Theb*. 11.85-8. But the shock-waves also transcend the poem: Dante's Ugolino is explicitly likened to Tydeus at *Inf.* 32.130-2, 'non altrimenti Tidëo si rose / le tempie a Menalippo per disdegno, / che quei faceva il teschio e l'altre cose' ('not otherwise did Tydeus gnaw Menalippus' / temples in his rage, than this one did the skull / and the other things').[419] Tydeus' crime costs him his immortality – the goddess Athena flees in horror at the sight of his transgression, and 'purges' her eyes with water:

> … fugit aversata iacentem,
> nec prius astra subit quam mystica lampas et insons
> Elisos multa purgavit lumina lympha.
>
> Turning from the prostrate man, she flees, nor ascends to the stars until the mystic torch and guiltless Elisos had purged her eyes with plenteous water.
> (*Theb*. 8.764-6)

Milton, too, draws a pointed link between Adam and Eve's transgressive eating and its mortal cost. Butler has argued that the Miltonic depiction of the fallen angels' transformation into serpents in Book 10 'captures the ravenous appetite of Dante's

[418] See discussion in Butler (2006), 148.
[419] Text and English translation from Durling and Martinez (1996). Lewis (1966), 95 draws a parallel between Dante's Ugolino and Statius' Tydeus, observing that in Canto 32 of the *Inferno* 'Ugolino gnaws for ever the head of Ruggieri as Tydeus for ever gnaws that of Melanippus' (note that Dante prefers the spelling 'Melanippus' over the ancient 'Menalippus').

Satan'.[420] The serpents scale a mirage of the forbidden tree and 'greedily … plucked / the fruitage fair to sight' (*PL* 10.560-1). The serpents' act of eating shares another element with the description of the transgression in Statius: the eating happens in close proximity to another fury, 'that curled Megaera' (*PL* 10.560). More importantly, the image of transgressive eating, I would point out, is closely related to the transgression of Eve. The serpents' action re-enacts the fatal connection between death and eating found in the description of Eve's Fall.[421] The parallelism of these two moments is also suggested in the repetition of 'greedily':'Greedily she engorged without restraint, / And knew not eating death' (*PL* 9.791-2).[422] Like Statius' Tydeus, Eve (and Adam) will lose their immortality through an act of transgressive eating. Whereas Tydeus' eating, however, included 'living blood', and his death was only to be enacted afterwards, as a result of Athena having been present to witness the transgressive act, Eve is, by contrast, 'eating death'.

4.4 Transgression and Transmigration

The action of the *Thebaid* begins with Oedipus' summoning of the gods of the underworld and, most importantly, the fury Tisiphone, to incite hatred in the hearts of his sons, Eteocles and Polynices (*Theb*. 1.82-5). Oedipus' action inaugurates the contamination of the upper and lower worlds, realms traditionally separated in classical epic. Denis Feeney has commented on the journey of Tisiphone, and specifically on the description at *Theb*. 1.96-9 as causing cosmic confusion: 'the organization of the cosmos is breached', and 'the world reacts with disarray.'[423]

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton's Satan enacts a version of Oedipus' summoning of Tisiphone in the sending of Sin and Death out of hell and towards Eden (*PL* 10.397-402) – an act that also results in confusion in the geography of Milton's supernatural cosmos by creating a link between Eden and hell. The shadowiness of the allusion is part of the effect: as

[420] Butler (2006), 148 argues that 'Milton draws on Dante's characterisation of the devouring devil to underscore Satan's bestial nature. Satan brings death to humanity, and Milton casts mortality in terms of eating. […] (PL 1.1-3)'.
[421] The 'fruitage fair to sight' (*PL* 10.560-1) also obviously recalls the 'fair' fruit of Adam and Eve's Fall (e.g. *PL* 9.972, 'of tasting this fair fruit'; *PL* 9.996, 'that fair enticing fruit').
[422] In linking '(not) knowing' and 'eating', Milton seems to be alluding to epistemological implications of taste: the Latin *sapere* can mean 'to taste' and 'to know'.
[423] See Feeney (1991), 347. Statius' opening, Feeney further notes, recalls the opening of Senecan tragedy in its depiction of cosmic confusion. For this, see in particular the beginning of Seneca's *Thyestes*, where the ghost of Tantalus, having been dragged out of the underworld, is incited by a Fury to infest the house with his presence, which inaugurates the manifold transgressions of this play. See further Tarrant (1985), 85-6, with Hine (1981). On the transgressive poetics of Senecan drama, and *Thyestes* in particular, see Schiesaro (2003).

Milton's poem thins out into allegory it necessarily approaches the representation of the archetypically evil; and in that dark space allusions to earlier tragic epics almost inevitably multiply. This action takes place in the aftermath of the Fall, and is a physical manifestation of the success of Satan's previous, solitary mission. Satan congratulates Sin and Death on building a bridge between hell and Eden, making 'one realm / Hell and this world' (*PL* 10.391-2). Fowler has traced the sources for the journey of Sin and Death to Vergil, Lucan, and Ovid's account of Phaethon's ill-fated journey in his father's chariot across the sky.[424] Like the horses released from Phaethon's grip (cf. ... *ruunt altoque sub aethere fixis / incursant stellis rapiuntque per auia currum*, 'they rush, knocking against the stars set deep in the sky and snatching the chariot along through uncharted ways', Ov. *Met*. 2.204-5),[425] Milton's Sin and Death

> … with speed
> Their course through thickest constellations held
> Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan,
> And planets, planet-strook, real eclipse
> Then suffered …
> (*PL* 10.410-14)

If the environment of epic aftermaths established in the late books in the poem were recognized by a fit reader, they may well recall another post-Vergilian moment: Milton's image of the paling stars helps to recreate a post-Vergilian atmosphere of transgression and contamination of the upper and lower worlds, such as at the end of *Thebaid* 7, where the hero Amphiaraus enters the underworld directly from the battlefield. The ground breaks open and the warrior, still alive, is carried into hell in his chariot.[426] If Milton's description of Sin and Death leaving hell recalled the Statian moment, it would reverse the direction of Statius' account of Amphiaraus' entrance into the underworld. But consider especially the further effects of the transgression: as the earth broke open in Statius' account, the 'stars and the shades' (*sidera et umbrae*) – emblematic of the upper and lower worlds – 'were afraid' (*timuerunt*):

> … ecce alte praeceps humus ore profundo

[424] See Fowler (2007), ad 412-3. Hardie (1993), 78, n. 44 suggested further Satanic echoes of the Son's journey: Mercury's journey in *Thebaid* 7 functions as one of the models for Satan's journey through chaos.
[425] Text given according to Tarrant (2004); the English translation is Miller's, revised by Goold (2014).
[426] This act – the entrance of a living body into the underworld – is transgressive to such an extent that the description itself transgresses the boundaries of the Book 7 and continues into Book 8, where Amphiaraus 'with his armed corpse throws the ghosts into confusion' (*armato turbavit funere manes*, *Theb*. 8.3). On Amphiaraus' transgressive *katabasis*, see also McNelis (2007), 128-31, who points to the further implication that the hero's 'descent into the underworld [...] catalyses a struggle between Dis and Jupiter for the control of the universe' (130).

> dissilit, inque vicem timuerunt sidera et umbrae.
> illum ingens haurit specus et transire parantis
> mergit equos; non arma manu, non frena remisit:
> sicut erat, rectos defert in Tartara currus
> respexitque cadens caelum campumque coire
> ingemuit, donec levior distantia rursus
> miscuit arva tremor lucemque exclusit Averno.
>
> See, the ground becomes a precipice, springing asunder in a deep chasm, stars and shades fear in turn. Him a huge cavern swallows, sinking the horses as they are about to cross. He did not let the arms go from his hand or the reins. As he was, he brought the chariot upright down to Tartarus and falling looked back at the sky and groaned to see the plain meet, until a fainter tremor mingled again the sundered fields and shut off the daylight from Avernus.
> (*Theb.* 7.816-23)

In Milton's account, by contrast, it is the actual bursting forth of the hell-born creatures, Sin and Death – the opening, not closing of hell – that causes the stars above to pale ('the blasted stars looked wan', *PL* 10.412), and the planets, in turn, to suffer a 'real eclipse' (*PL* 10.413).[427]

If Satan in Book 10 re-enacts the appearance of Oedipus at the beginning of the *Thebaid*, it is the Son whose words gain a further level of meaning if read with the words of Oedipus as he encounters the bodies of his dead sons at the poem's end. The Son's prayer on behalf of fallen man in *PL* 11, where he appeals to the Father to 'hear his sighs though mute' (*PL* 11.31), may be contrasted with the 'mute sighs' (*muta ... suspira*) of Oedipus as he throws himself onto the corpses of Eteocles and Polynices:[428]

> dum tractat galeas atque ora latentia quaerit,
> tandem muta diu genitor suspiria solvit:
> 'tarda meam, Pietas, longo post tempore mentem
> percutis? estne sub hoc hominis clementia corde?'
>
> But while the father strokes the helmet and seeks the lurking faces, at last he resolves his long, silent sighs: 'Tardy Piety, after so long do you smite my soul? Does human mercy exist in this heart of mine? (*Theb*. 11.604-6)

[427] Pluto's sending of Tisiphone in Book 8 is a result of the entrance of Amphiaraus into Hades – a transgression of such magnitude that the Fates (identified as the *Parcae*) only break off his life's thread after being startled by the sight of the living and armed Amphiaraus in the underworld (*quin comminus ipsa / Fatorum deprensa colus, visoque paventes / augure tunc demum rumpebant stamina Parcae*, *Theb*. 8.13). Fowler (2007), ad 412-3 further suggests links between Sin and Death and the hounds in Vergil's *Georgics* (1.464-71) and Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* (9.647).

[428] The parallel is noted in the index to Patterson et al. (1931-8), ad 'Statius'.

The irony of the Statian scene lies in Oedipus' address to the absent *Pietas*, who has been previously driven away by Tisiphone (*Theb*. 11.496) before the brothers' deadly duel. In the aftermath of the Fall, by contrast, and following the departure of the angels from Paradise (*PL* 10.17-18), the Son is sent by the Father to Eden to judge Adam and Eve (*PL* 10.55-62). He then mediates their prayers to the Father in heaven (*PL* 11.22-44), mitigating the punishment for their transgression. The final sequence of the poem, nevertheless, like that of the *Thebaid*, represents an environment in which humans are alone. Given Oedipus' own association with the realm of tragedy, with fate, and necessity, moreover, the Son's ostentatiously free decision to suffer for mankind and mediate for them with the Father would be a pointed inversion of the tragedy of the Oedipus tale – and with it, a reader attuned to Milton's contrast with the post-Vergilian epic atmosphere may realize, the whole body of fatalistic tragedy and inherited taint.

4.5 With 'Providence Their Guide': Post-Vergilian Conceptions of Fate in *Paradise Lost*

> If then his providence
> Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
> Our labour must be to pervert that end,
> And out of good still to find means of evil;
> Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
> Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
> His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
> (*PL* 1.162-8)

Milton's narrative of fate and providence in the final books of *Paradise Lost*, I suggest, should be read alongside Statius' own reception of the Vergilian treatment of fate in the *Aeneid*. The depiction of fate in Statius' epic has been seen as alluding to Vergil: the most striking and often discussed example is Statius' introduction of Jupiter in the first council scene of the *Thebaid*. As he speaks out among the gods, his voice is followed by the fates: *incipit ex alto (grave et immutabile sanctis / pondus adest verbis, et vocem fata sequuntur)*, 'From on high he begins. His holy words have weight heavy and immutable and the Fates follow his voice' (*Theb*. 1.211-13). Servius cited this description as illuminating the elusive 'fates of the gods', *fata deum*, at *Aeneid* 2.54: '*fata* modo participium est, hoc est, "quae dii lonquuntur", ut Statius *et vocem fata sequuntur*'.[429] Statius' introduction of Jupiter in the first council scene in the *Thebaid* renders the Jovian wordplay on *fabor* to

[429] Servius ad *Aen*. 2.54 (edition: Rand [1946]).

Venus in the first Olympian dialogue at *Aen*. 1.261-2 explicit: his appears to be the verbal control of the fates that is hinted at in the *Aeneid*.[430]

A poem that asserts Jovian fate at its outset, the *Thebaid* nevertheless presents a bleak outlook on human agency in light of the divine machinery. Cecilia Criado has argued that the language of Jupiter's promise to Venus of *imperium sine fine* in the *Aeneid* is travestied in the *Thebaid*, where it is transformed into a universal and inevitable propensity for common disaster. Criado attributes Statius' transformation of Vergilian fate to a dialogue with the *Metamorphoses*, 'a poem that is the quintessential song of constant and unfailing mutation, [in which] the only items that are *immobilis an immutabilis* are, besides Fatum, human essence and genetic heredity.'[431]

In the first Olympian-styled dialogue between the Father and Son in *Paradise Lost*, the Father appears to perform a move similar to that found in the Statian transformation of the Vergilian promise of *imperium sine fine* into the language of hereditary guilt. The Father's condemnation of Adam, and of all humankind, at *PL* 3.95-6, 'so will fall / he and his faithless progeny', is a negative version of prophecy of Jupiter's prophetic reassurance to Venus at *Aeneid* 1.257-8 (*manent immota tuorum / fata tibi*, 'your children's fates abide unmoved'). The entire complaint of the Father about man's sin at *PL* 3.93-8 has close precedent in Statius' own reworking of his epic models. The Miltonic Father's condemnation of man's hereditary guilt can be fruitfully read alongside the complaint by Statius' Jupiter about the sins of mankind at *Theb*. 1.214ff.[432] This Statian passage itself is modelled on the Homeric Zeus' assertion that humans had brought evil upon themselves due to their own fault at *Od*. 1.32, a scene that, as we have seen, Milton engaged with in his fashioning of the dialogue between the Father and Son in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*. Milton's allusion to Homer is unarguably post-Statian in narrowly chronological terms, but it may also function as a window allusion, pointing, through the *Thebaid* passage, to

[430] Criado (2013) draws a further parallel with the words of Ovid's Jupiter, who remarks *me quoque fata regunt* ('I too, am ruled by the fates') at *Met*. 9.434. Statius' portrait of Zeus, Criado further argues, also responds to the question posed by the Lucanian narrator of the 'great and mighty god' (*magnusque potensque*, Luc. 5.91) at Luc. 5.92-3: *siue canit fatum seu, quod iubet ille canendo, / fit fatum?* ('whether he merely predicts the future or the future is itself determined by the fiat of his utterance'). The Statian narrator, Criado argues, 'seems to answer resolutely the uncertainty of Lucan in 5.92-93 with respect to whether predetermined Destiny exists prior to the enunciative act of the gods.' See discussion in Criado (2011), 202, with further examples from Silius Italicus and Valerius Flaccus.
[431] Criado (2013), 200.
[432] Statius' Jupiter does more than just allow man's downfall (as the Miltonic Father does): cf. *Theb*. 1.242-3.

Statius' own model in Homer. Jupiter's words of condemnation at *Theb.* 1.242-3, moreover, (*totumque a stirpe revellam / exitiale genus*, 'I shall … tear the whole deadly stock out of the root') may inform Milton's thinking about hereditary guilt in the Father's speech in Book 3, and his foreseeing and condemning of Adam and 'his faithless progeny' (*PL* 3.96)

The Father's full prophecy for humankind, however, as we saw in the previous Chapter, is only revealed through the subsequent intercession with the Son, whose offer of his life through the Incarnation as atonement for the sin of Adam and Eve in fact fulfils the Father's wider providential plan for salvation. Russell Hillier has traced the way in which this plan of the redemption of humankind – one that is written into the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* – is unveiled in its final books. It is Adam who, alongside the reader, appears as the first recipient of the poem's theodicy. Hillier maps the aim of the poem to 'assert eternal providence' (*PL* 1.25) onto the experience of Adam as he witnesses the consequences of his sin and finally the redemption of humankind in the prophetic vision guided by the archangel Michael in Books 11 and 12. Hillier emphasizes the revelation of the Son in this process, arguing that the final books of *Paradise Lost* assert a 'Christocentric providence', which underlies Milton's epic intention. As a result, Milton's narrative of salvation consists of 'the fall of one hero' – Adam – 'and the rise of another' – the Son.[433] Alongside Hillier's discussion of the Son, it is important to acknowledge that the figure of the Father also undergoes a transformation in the narrative of the final books. His presence as an articulated character gradually fades out as the postlapsarian narrative progresses, mirroring the experience of Adam and Eve's alienation from God after the Fall. As he contemplates the necessity of leaving Eden in Book 11, Adam expresses his regret at no longer experiencing the direct presence of God:

> This most afflicts me, that departing hence,
> As from his face I shall be hid, deprived
> His blessèd count'nance; here I could frequent,
> With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed
> Presence divine, and to my sons relate;
> On this mount he appeared, under this tree
> Stood visible, among these pines his voice
> I heard, here with him at this fountain talked:
> So many graceful altars I would rear
> Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
> Of lustre from the brook, in memory,

[433] See Hillier (2011), 609.

Or monument to ages, and thereon
Offer sweet-smelling gums and fruits and flowers:
In yonder nether world where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or his footsteps trace?
For though I fled him angry, yet recalled
To life prolonged and promised race, I now
Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
Of glory, and far off his steps adore.
(*PL* 11.315-33)

As Adam and Eve contemplate the world after the Fall – and with it, their transformed relationship to God, they invoke words used by Statius in the epilogue of the *Thebaid*. Statius' celebrated expression of literary distance from his epic predecessor Vergil appears, in *Paradise Lost*, to express Adam's sense of distancing from God. The desire of Adam and Eve to admire God from afar, to 'now / Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts / Of glory, and far off his steps adore' (*PL* 11.331-3), echoes the words of the poet of the *Thebaid* as he proclaims the place of his poem in light of its great predecessor, the *Aeneid*: *uiue, precor; nec tu diuinam Aeneida tempta, / sed longe sequere et uestigia semper adora*, 'Live, I pray; and essay not the divine *Aeneid*, but ever follow her footsteps from afar in adoration' (*Theb*. 12.816-17) – a passage that also asserts its genealogy in English epic.[434]

A further Statian echo may be present in Michael's response to Adam. Adam associates his experience of God with Eden itself, and with the places where Adam saw, spoke to, and listened to God ('On this mount he appeared, under this tree / Stood visible, among these pines his voice / I heard, here with him at this fountain talked', *PL* 11.320-2). Michael consoles – and corrects – Adam's notion, advising him to 'surmise not then / His presence to these narrow bounds confined / Of Paradise or Eden' (*PL* 11.341-2). In its demystifying of sacred space, the lesson given to Adam may recall the effect created by

[434] A parallel noted in the Columbia index, see Patterson et al (1931-8), ad 'Statius'. Carey (2007), ad 332-3 compares this passage to the description in Book 3 of the 'dazzling *skirts* of God, cp. 375-82n'. The image of blinding light, or light imitating darkness, as we will see below, is another of Milton's images that is indebted to Statius. Milton's Statian reference continues the line of English allusion to the concluding lines of the *Thebaid* by which Spenser, in the envoy to *The Shepheardes Calender*, had alluded to Chaucer's own homage to Statius at *Troilus and Criseyde* 5.1786-92 ('Go, litel book, go litel myn tragedye, / Ther god thi makere yet, er that he dye, / So sende myght to make in som comedye! / But litel book, no makyng thou n'envie, / But subgit be to alle poesye; / And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace / Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace'; text is given according to Benson/Robinson [1987]): 'Goe lyttle Calender, thou hast a free passeporte, / Goe but a lowly gate emongste the meaner sorte. / Dare not to match thy pype with Tityrus hys style, / Nor with the Pilgrim that the Ploughman playde a whyle: / But followe them farre off, and their high steppes adore, / The better please, the worse despise, I aske nomore' (Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, 'Epilogue'; text: Osgood/Lotspeich [1943]).

the Statian narrator in his assertion of aniconic divinity in the description of the altar of mercy, *ara clementiae*, in *Thebaid* 12.[435] Situated in the centre of Athens, where the wives of the Argive dead, led by Juno, make their way, the altar is dedicated 'to no deity of power', *nulli concessa potentum ara deum* (*Theb*. 12.481-2):

> Urbe fuit media nulli concessa potentum
> ara deum; mitis posuit Clementia sedem,
> et miseri fecere sacram. sine supplice numquam
> illa novo, nulla damnavit vota repulsa.
> Auditi quicumque rogant, noctesque diesque
> ire datum et solis numen placare querelis.
> parca superstitio: non turea flamma nec altus
> accipitur sanguis: lacrimis altaria sudant,
> maestarumque super libamina secta comarum
> pendent et vestes mutata sorte relictae.
> mite nemus circa cultuque insigne verendo,
> vittatae laurus et supplicis arbor olivae.
> nulla autem effigies, nulli commissa metallo
> forma dei: mentes habitare et pectora gaudet.
>
> In the midst of the city was an altar made over to no deity of power; gentle Mercy made there her seat and the unfortunate consecrated it. Never was she without a new suppliant, no prayers did she condemn with a refusal; whoso ask are heard. Night and day they are allowed to come and propitiate the goddess by plaints alone. Frugal is her cult, no flame of incense or deep measure of blood is accepted: the altar is moist with tears and above it hang severed offerings of sad hair and clothing left when luck changed. A gentle grove surrounds, with signs of worship to be revered, laurels entwined with wool and the tree of the suppliant olive. No image is there, no shape of deity committed to metal; she joys to dwell in minds and hearts.
> (*Theb*. 12.481-94)

Statius' depiction of the *ara clementiae* has been considered by some readers of the *Thebaid* as a reflection of the poet's nascent Christianity.[436] This passage would appeal to a Protestant iconoclast such as Milton. His evocation of this scene would not only stress the portrait of *clementia* and its resemblance to Christian mercy, but also the concept of divine presence expressed within human agency.[437] As Loewenstein has pointed out, in the

[435] Statius' *ara clementiae* contains 'no image, no shape of the deity committed in metal' (*nulla autem effigies, nulli commissa metallo / forma dei*, *Theb*. 12.493-4), but dwells in the 'minds and hearts' (*mentes ... et pectora*, *Theb*. 12.494) instead. On 'God's iconoclasm', in the destruction of Eden foretold by Michael at *PL* 11.824-34, see Loewenstein (1990), 108: 'God's wrath [...] obliterates [...] the vision of an ideal, fertile Paradise which Milton had so carefully and deliberately rendered in Book IV'.

[436] See the discussion in Vessey (1973), 311.

[437] Drews (2009), vol. 2, 753-4 has suggested that Michael's assurance of the omnipresence of God at *PL* 11.336-7 ('his omnipresence fills / Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives') serves as an allusive answer to the Lucanian query about the location of the gods in the question posed by Cato at *Bellum Ciuile* 9.578-9: *Estque dei sedes, nisi terra et pontus et aer / Et caelum et virtus? Superos quid querimus ultra?*, 'Is there any

proleptic vision afforded to Adam in Book 11, Michael foreshadows also the destruction of Eden, 'a divine act, as the angel explains, aimed at teaching Adam that God "attributes to place / no sanctity, if none be thither brought / By men who there frequent, or therein dwell" (*PL* 11.836-8)'.[438] To practise Christian virtue, is, as Adam learns, to 'possess A / Paradise within thee, happier far' (*PL* 12.586-7).

4.6 Exit from Eden: Conjugal Love and Providence

Adam and Eve's departure from Paradise has been seen as enacting Aeneas' exit from the underworld through the gate of dreams at the end of Book 6 of the *Aeneid*[439] – at the same time, however, Milton portrays the first humans walking through a post-Vergilian landscape. In its exploration of motifs of wandering and solitude, in the contrast between former glory and present desolation, Milton's description of Adam and Eve's exit from Paradise, I suggest, may recall the desolate journey of the Argive princess across the Theban battlefield in the aftermath of the battle in Book 12.[440]

As has recently been argued with reference to the final Books of *Paradise Lost*, 'Milton recuperates temporal delay, spatial wandering, as well as human error in such a way that Adam and Eve's joint departure serves as an optimistic conclusion to the epic'.[441] The last lines of the poem, in particular, have also been read in conjunction with the *Aeneid*: David Quint has compared Aeneas' exit from Troy, carrying Anchises on his shoulders and guiding his son Ascanius by the hand, but leaving his wife Creusa behind, with Milton's ending, bringing out a sharp contrast: according to this reading, Milton 'puts Eve, wife and partner, [and] the future of humanity in place of the Virgilian father and son: she is no Creusa to be left behind'.[442] These two readings of the poem's ending are rewarding, but Milton, I suggest, may have found models in post-Vergilian epic that are even more compelling than Quint's example from Aeneas' story. Statius' epic, for instance, places a more particular emphasis on the role of conjugal love, conjugal separation, and conjugal

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other seat of the gods apart from the earth and sea, the sky, and manly courage?' (translation adapted from Duff). See the further discussion of Milton's response to this passage in Drews (2009), vol. 2, 753-4.

[438] Loewenstein (1990), 107, with further discussion at 107-11.

[439] For Michael Putnam (2006), 387 this scene serves as the 'second' ending of the *Aeneid* in *Paradise Lost*, which consists of 'the entire last quarter of his epic extending from the new beginning at the start of book 9 to the poem's famous final lines'.

[440] These images may also echo Vergil's portrayal of Nisus and Euryalus wandering through the Italian camp at *Aeneid* 9 (314ff.).

[441] Song (2016), 137.

[442] Quint (2014), 222.

loyalty than the *Aeneid*. As Mandy Green has shown, moreover, Milton's depiction of Adam and Eve's mutual prayer after the Fall (*PL* 11.8-14) evokes Ovid's account of Deucalion and Pyrrha's intercession in Book 1 of the *Metamorphoses*, after Jupiter had purged the human race away after a great flood. Adam and Eve's 'resemblance to Deucalion and Pyrrha at this pivotal point', Green argues, 'confirms the renewal of their marriage after the divisive experience of the Fall and its aftermath.'[443] In the particular context of aftermath in the final Books of *Paradise Lost*, moreover, Milton's depiction of Adam and Eve's departure from Eden is evocative of post-Vergilian epic scenes. Statius' account of the Theban princess Argia's diminished state as she searches for the body of her husband is worth comparing. Argia's former glory is contrasted with her solitude as she wanders across the Theban battlefield:

> regina Argolicas modo formidata per urbes,
> votum inmane procis spesque augustissima gentis,
> nocte sub infesta, nullo duce et hoste propinquo,
> sola per offensus armorum et lubrica tabo
> gramina …
>
> The queen, lately feared all through the cities of Argos, the outrageous prayer of suitors and august hope of her nation, in hostile night, without a guide and with enemy close by, makes her lonely way.
> (*Theb*. 12.280-4)

As David Vessey has pointed out, Statius' scene abounds in dichotomies of 'light and darkness, […] love and tyranny, [and] of *pietas* and cruelty', as Statius revisits imagery from earlier episodes in the story:

> Like Polynices in book 1, Argia travels in the gloom of night (228ff), and when she reaches Thebes it is sun in '*nigrantes tenebras*' (254). (…) Bearing aloft a blazing torch, a symbol of her burning love (267 ff.), she searches the battlefield for her husband's corpse (281ff).[444]

This scene, at the closure of the book, takes place in darkness at night – but, crucially, at a liminal moment before the dawn.[445] Such a pronounced use of liminality, expressed poetically in the contrast between darkness and light, has been noted to be a feature of post-Augustan poetry, and specifically seen in epic: the *locus classicus* of such liminality

[443] See Green (2009), 186.
[444] Vessey (1973), 132.
[445] Vessey (1973), 159 comments on this scene: 'The fall of night occurs at the end of the book, and it closes with a moving conversation between Argia and Adrastus, neither of whom is able to sleep. The darkness of night has a symbolic meaning, for it represents the final triumph in Argos of the spirit of Thebes. [...] [Argia] goes to see her father just before dawn "ubi sola superstite plaustro / Arctos ad oceanum fugientibus invidet astris" (684-5)'.

may be the beginning of Book 7 of Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile*, where the text lingers over the description of dawn, which inaugurates the battle.[446] The 'dawning' of the moon, at the behest of Juno, on the Theban battlefield carries its own menace in Statius' scene. Juno pities Argia and intercedes with Diana to take the darkness away (*Theb*. 12.299-308).[447] We see a further extraordinary activity and the light that, like in the death of Amphiaraus, frightens the stars and shades. The fulfilment of Juno's request, to illuminate Argia's path, leads to a double recognition. She recognizes not only the body of her Polynices, but also her own unwitting role in bringing Polynices to his death: '*ipsa dedi bellum maestumque rogavi / ipsa patrem, ut talem nunc te complexa tenerem*', 'It was I myself who gave you war, I who implored my father so that now, embraced, I may hold you' (*Theb*. 12.336-7). In commenting on this scene, Vessey notes the fatalistic quality of Argia's self-recognition: 'All who have been involved with the house of Oedipus have found that Fate has twisted every action to its own dire purposes'.[448]

If read with the Statian scene, an essential difference becomes obvious in Milton's ending to *Paradise Lost*. Unlike Argia, who wanders *nullo duce*, 'without a guide', across the Theban battlefield, Adam and Eve leave Eden together and with 'providence their guide':

> …the hastening angel caught
> Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
> Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
> To the subjected plain; then disappeared.
> They looking back, all the eastern side beheld
> Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
> Waved over by the flaming brand, the gate
> With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
> Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and providence their guide:
> They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow
> Through Eden took their solitary way.

[446] The way Lucan makes use of moments of liminality and narrative destabilization is discussed by Masters (1992), *passim*, but see esp. 1-10. This technique is also important in Senecan tragedy: the role of darkness and light in Oedipus is comparable, and the play starts with dawn. See further Allendorf (2013), 107-10, with the earlier discussion by Paratore (1956), esp. 114-16.

[447] It is no accident that Juno is now the one revealing the plot – there is a uniting of the divine machinery in the aftermath of a battle that has left even the gods' allegiances in ruins, mirrored on the human plane in the unity of Antigone and Argia. Juno is displaced in the *Thebaid* as the antagonist of Jupiter. Unlike in the *Aeneid*, where Juno attempts to thwart the outcome of the narrative as prophesied by Jupiter, in the *Thebaid* the role of the divine antagonist to Jovian fate is Dis himself, as the divine machinery and its allegiances are divided on geographical grounds – the geography of Olympus and the gods of the underworld. Finally, it is humans who enact the eternal hatred that had previously been the domain of the gods: after the gods have left, Jupiter has turned away (*Theb*. 11.134-5), only the anger of Polynices and Eteocles endures.

[448] Vessey (1973), 132.

(*PL* 12.637-49, my emphasis)

The Miltonic adjective 'solitary' can be compared to the Statian language of solitariness: at the end of the *Thebaid*, this is emphasised twice. Not only is Argia wandering *nullo duce*, but also *sola*, 'lonely, solitary'. But Argia's solitariness prior to discovering her husband's death is in striking contrast with the situation of Eve in Milton's description: she will not have to mourn the death of her husband Adam, neither does he have to mourn hers. The post-Vergilian desolate solitariness of Argia is gone. Instead, the Miltonic narrator presents us with the paradoxical solitariness shared between two bound together, on their 'solitary way'.

At this point in the poem, Russell Hillier has argued, providence also stands for a didactic awareness of the full picture of human history – a vision which is given to Adam by Michael, and, indirectly, also to the reader. Foresight – of the Fall, but also of the eventual redemption of humankind, which had initially belonged to the Father in Book 3 – is now given to Adam, too, and by association, is also shared by the reader. As Friedemann Drews has argued, foresight alone remains in the last lines of the poem, even when the natural closeness and harmony between God and man in Eden is lost.[449] A counter-tragic providentialism is taking over from the earlier materialist and deterministic narratives which had been evoked by the devils earlier in the poem.

4.7 Wandering and Erring

Statius' description of Argia 'wearily wandering through the fields in vain', *per campos errore fatiscere vano* (*Theb*. 12.295), provides a further detail of aftermath that is mirrored in the action of Adam and Eve as they leave the lost paradise with 'wandering steps and slow' (*PL* 12.648). For Fowler, Milton's word-choice reflects a 'maze of moral options unapparent earlier'[450] – a comment that points back to the depiction of the earlier intellectual activities of the fallen angels in the council of Pandaemonium, where they debated 'providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate, / Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge

[449] Drews (2011), vol. 2, 701.
[450] Fowler (2007), ad 648. This imagery is picked up in Loewenstein's discussion of how Milton, in *The Reason of Church Government*, had reworked motifs of history as tragedy, with human history full of physical and moral error – imagery indebted to Augustine's view of human history: 'As Adam learns from Michael's historical drama, the history of the human race involves no linear process, rather it consists, as Adam himself observes, of men in successive ages trading "Paths indirect" (XI.631), what Milton in the controversial prose calls "the perpetuall stumble of conjecture and disturbance in this our darke voyage" (*The Reason of Church Government*, I, 753)' (Loewenstein [1990], 97).

absolute', and find 'no end, in wandering mazes lost' (*PL* 2.558-61). Milton's 'wandering mazes' indicate the physical, ethical, and intellectual decentralization of the fallen angels, whose physical dispersal after the council in Pandaemonium in Book 2 echoes, and indeed travesties, the activities of the blessed in Elysium as described in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* (6.642-44):

> pars in gramineis exercent membra palaestris,
> contendunt ludo et fulua luctantur harena;
> pars pedibus plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt.
>
> Some disport their limbs on the grassy wrestling ground, vie in sports, and grapple in the yellow sand; some tread the rhythm of a dance and chant songs.
> (*Aen*. 6.642-4)

In its creation of a sense of aftermath and transgression, Milton's relocation of the activities of the blessed into Pandaemonium may echo Statius' depiction of the activities of the Argive and Theban survivors in the aftermath of the battle in Book 12 – an image that, in its repetition of *pars*, had already evoked the Vergilian scene as a backdrop:[451]

> pars currus deflent viduisque loquuntur,
> hoc solum quia restat, equis; pars oscula figunt
> vulneribus magnis et de virtute queruntur.
>
> Some see weapons and bodies, but others only the faces of the slain and alien breasts beside them. Part mourn the chariots and speak to the widowed horses, since this is all that remains; part plant kisses on great wounds and complain of valour.
> (*Theb*. 12.26-8)

Unlike the fallen angels in Pandaemonium, who 'find no end' in their debates about free will, Adam in Book 12 affirms the lesson he has learnt about God's providence. He is the first of those instructed of God's 'eternal providence' within Milton's epic, by the archangel Michael:

> Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
> And love with fear the only God; to walk
> As in his presence; ever to observe
> His providence; and on him sole depend…
> (*PL* 12.561-4)

In the course of the poem, Adam certainly appears as a figure who, in exercising his free will, is incapable of altering the divine will or the providential outcome of the poem (cf. *PL* 11.307-12). Adam's admission of the inefficacy of prayer in altering God's

[451] See Pollman (2004), ad loc.

omnipotence enacts a basic dramatic irony of epic narratives, in which the epic heroes pray to the gods, but readers are aware of their prayers' futility (a case in point is the sacrifice of the Greeks to Zeus led by Agamemnon at *Il*. 2.412-20, in which a prayer for a swift victory over Troy is not heard by Zeus, who accepts the sacrifice, but does not end the war). Adam, like the reader, has already been made privy to the future, shown to them in the proleptic vision offered by the archangel Michael.

Adam's realization of the role of divine providence does not ensure a happy outcome in the immediate action of the poem: he and Eve are displaced from Eden, following the path 'with wandering steps', an image that foreshadows the effects of his moral choices, and the course of human history, as revealed by Michael in the proleptic vision of the preceding books. For Fowler, the depiction of Adam and Eve embarking on a journey 'where to choose / Their place of rest' in a world that was 'all before them' (*PL* 12.646-7) asserts Adam and Eve's personal freedom – but a freedom guided by faith.[452] Providence, in the close of the poem belongs not only to the Father, but humans, too, as Adam and Eve conclude the action of the poem, but not its narrative of salvation.

4.8 Post-Vergilian Epic Endings

Philip Hardie has shown how '[t]he self-conscious play on beginnings and endings had been taken up with gusto by the ancient imitators of Virgil', providing Milton's ending of *Paradise Lost* as a 'classic example of an epic ending that is a beginning'.[453] This feature, Hardie points out, is prominent in post-Vergilian endings as beginnings:[454] Ovid, he observes, 'introduces the *last* book of the *Metamorphoses* with the long Speech of Pythagoras that reworks the Speech of Homer with which Ennius introduces the *first* book of his epic.'[455] Similarly, '[i]n the final book of Silius' *Punica* Hannibal sails from Italy to Africa, but as Italy disappears over the horizon he has second thoughts, and turns his ships in their course. This is an attempt to steer the epic narrative back to the renewal of war in Italy; there ensues a replay of the storm which begins the *Aeneid*, and which has also driven Virgil's hero from his course in Italy.'[456] Finally, according to Hardie, Statius, like Silius' *Punica*, 'alludes to the inaugural storm of the *Aeneid* just before the ending of the

[452] Fowler (2007), ad 646-7 claims that Milton's combining of choice with providence serves as a 'final Arminian emphasis' in the poem.
[453] Hardie (1993), 13.
[454] Cf. also Braund (1996) on the ending of Statius' *Thebaid*.
[455] Hardie (1993), 13.
[456] Hardie (1993), 13.

Thebaid in the simile at 12.650-5 comparing the onrush of Theseus against Thebes to the unleashing of the storm winds from Aeolus' kingdom.'[457]

This tendency to conflate endings and beginnings in post-Vergilian epic leads us to reconsider the place of post-Vergilian epic and its influence on Milton's structuring of his epic in the final books. If Milton's epic ends with Adam and Eve leaving Paradise, what does it mean for epic history? Their departure from Eden is an arch-beginning: all subsequent epics, including Milton's own, remain to be written. The image of the first humans leaving with 'the world … all before them' serves as the ultimate narrative foregrounding of a future that has already been contained within Milton's epic undertaking – as well as a statement about Milton's absorption of previous literature by not only looking back to it, but also forward.

Milton's depiction of Adam and Eve leaving paradise with 'the world … all before them' serves, as we have noted, as an example *par excellence* of the 'ending as beginning' motif common in post-Vergilian epic.[458] Such an ending, evoking and continuing the line of epic endings after the *Aeneid*, is fitting for a poem that equally creates a post-Vergilian climate in its final sequence, and which absorbs the idea of narrative aftermath into the narrative of the human Fall and salvation. Although Milton's epic has been placed at the end of the epic tradition, for the poet, characters, and readers of *Paradise Lost*, the story has only begun.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for the significance of post-Vergilian epics of aftermath in reading the final books of *Paradise Lost*. Expanding existing work on the presence of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and political readings of Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* in *Paradise Lost*, I suggested that Statius' *Thebaid* is a significant intertext in Milton's wider mapping of Adam and Eve's postlapsarian experiences on epics after the *Aeneid*. Milton's epic narrative at the close of *Paradise Lost* is in striking contrast with the tragic moments of the *Thebaid* and post-Vergilian atmosphere of aftermath and transgression. This literary-

[457] Hardie (1993), 14.
[458] See Hardie (1993), 13: 'The classic example of an epic ending that is a beginning is the close of *Paradise Lost*, that starts the "heroes" off on the epic journey of mankind from paradise lost to paradise regained [...] At this point, [...] we are left with a pair of individuals, now truly alone until the final reintegration of the human race through redemption, and for whom "The world was all *before* them"' (italics in the original).

historical transformation extends Milton's narratives of fate and providence and his concern with the relationship between human agency and fatalisms both material and theistic. The present study has merely provided one reading of key Statian moments in the Miltonic epic universe: allusions to and intertextual echoes of post-Vergilian epic in the latter books of the poem, I have suggested, make a powerful statement about human agency at the close of Milton's epic.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has traced the presence of fate, providence, free will, natural law as classical epic narrative elements in *Paradise Lost* by examining Milton's poetic allusions to the epics of Homer, Lucretius, Vergil, Lucan, and Statius. Milton, I have argued, constructs his Christian narrative of human sin and eventual salvation around an evolving conception of fate, free will, natural law, and divine providence, recalling its previous life in ancient epic. The role of allusion and intertextuality, whether a verbal affinity, or a narrative or structural parallel or contrast, here serves to signal Milton's intervention in ancient debates about human will and divine agency, and the conflicts and possibilities that these ancient conceptions create in the setting of his Christian epic. The narrative of fate and its related concepts in *Paradise Lost* encompasses a poetic and spiritual journey through the epic tradition: from the moral and intellectual error of Satan and the fallen angels, and their subversion of Lucretian reasoning; through the Father's echoing and transformation of the words of Homer's Zeus and Vergil's Jupiter in Book 3; and finally to the realignment with divine providence by Adam and Eve after their Fall, in which readers can encounter a response to the post-Vergilian epic atmosphere. I have, furthermore, suggested ways in which the Father's statement in Book 7, 'necessity and chance / Approach not me, and what I will is fate', *PL* 7.172-3, evokes both materialist and divine functions of fate in ancient epic. This duality in ancient epic depictions of fate, and its impact on the depiction of the Olympian gods, I have argued, is dramatized in *Paradise Lost*, in the rhetorical contest between God and Satan for the soul of man. As a result, in addition to identifying new allusions to Homeric and Vergilian epic in the poem, I have also considered the influence of Lucretius' didactic epic, *De Rerum Natura*, in *Paradise Lost*, where it functions as a key text in Milton's narrative of the Fall. In Book 9, I suggested that Milton's Satan tempts Eve to transgress her natural state in Eden, in language that alludes to and inverts Lucretian teachings about the limits of the natural world. The language of transgression which Milton creates to describe the sin of Adam and Eve, moreover, is further developed through allusions to post-Vergilian epic narratives, and their depiction of human transgression and its aftermath. The poems of Lucretius, Lucan, Ovid, and Statius, I have suggested, should be considered alongside Homer and Vergil in evaluating Milton's debt to ancient epic conceptions of fate, free will, and natural law in *Paradise Lost*.

My examination of fate, providence, necessity, and natural law in this thesis has focused on Milton's interaction with those concepts in the genre of classical epic. In doing so, it has followed what I believe to be the consistent stream of allusions that function throughout the narrative episodes of the poem. My discussion of Statius and other epics of aftermath in Chapter 4, however, extends this to examining Milton's engagement with the tragic genre within his epic concerns. By considering the proem of Book 9, and reading scenes of the *Thebaid* alongside the final books of *Paradise Lost*, I have suggested that Milton's engagement with post-Vergilian epic offers new possibilities for considering his marrying of epic and tragedy in the poem. Further studies on this topic could focus on Milton's engagement with the conception of fate in Greek as well as Roman tragedy, especially in Euripides, whose text Milton emended (and whose presence, as Norbrook has shown, is felt throughout Milton's political writings as well as in the theological discussions in *De Doctrina Christiana*).[459] Seneca's Roman tragedies, moreover, could present a further post-Vergilian model for a variety of motifs in *Paradise Lost*, as we saw in the previous Chapter, particularly in Seneca's imagery of light and darkness, and his depiction of cosmic confusion following acts of human transgression.[460]

Finally, in reassessing the possibilities that the study of allusion can offer the thematic dimension of a text, this study has also aimed to challenge some assumptions governing the study of Milton's allusions to the Classics. Using Hinds's technique of 'reversing the trope', that is, of favouring the role of allusion in illuminating the subject it describes (rather than vice versa), I have suggested that Milton's allusions to ancient epic illuminate a core theme of the poem, and function as a thematic undercurrent to his Christian narrative. At times, I have argued that allusion functions in *Paradise Lost* as a method of arguing and developing issues relating to Milton's Christian theology (as in Chapter 3). To illustrate the dynamic relationship that it is possible to find between subject and allusion in *Paradise Lost*, I return to perhaps the best noted, but least debated allusion to the *Thebaid* in *Paradise Lost*. In the epilogue to the *Thebaid*, as we saw in Chapter 4, the poet, addressing his *Thebaid* directly, instructs it to 'essay not the divine *Aeneid*, but ever [to] follow [the *Aeneid*'s] footsteps from afar in adoration' (... *nec tu diuinam / Aeneida tempta, / sed longe sequere et uestigia semper adora*, *Theb*. 12.816-17). Hinds has

[459] See Norbrook (1995).
[460] For the wider impact of Senecan tragedy on European – especially Renaissance – drama, see Braden (1985).

criticized attempts to read these lines as an unequivocal assertion of the *Thebaid*'s inferiority in the epic tradition, to 'read it as a literary historical position statement', and suggested ways in which Statius situates his poem on other occasions in a relationship which attempts to rival, if not equal, Vergil's epic.[461] In Milton's reception, however, Statius' reference to the *Aeneid* almost entirely transcends the context of a literary relationship (and contrasts with both Chaucer and Spenser's allusions to the same lines in their poems): Adam, leaving Paradise, as we saw, expresses his desire to follow God from the necessary distance that the Fall has entailed. Adam's words echo the words of Statius: 'I now / Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts / Of glory, and far off his steps adore' (*PL* 11.331-3). Milton appears conscious of the complexity and subtlety of Statius' statement of poetic distance, and its possibility of expressing additional meanings beyond the immediate, surface rhetoric: the effect of Adam's own allusive statement, his echoing of Statius' assertion of poetic distance, is to illustrate the sense of distance and alienation felt by the first humans towards God after the Fall. Milton's use of allusion, in effect, becomes, in this instance, a way of expressing a spiritual reality. Adam's voiced experience, moreover, is shared by the assumed Christian reader of Milton's epic, mirroring the common experience of alienation from the divine that is part of the human condition after the Fall – an effect heightened by an image, familiar to Milton's 'fit audience' (*PL* 7.31), of belatedness in the epic tradition.

[461] Hinds (1998), 94. So Mozley (1928), in his introduction to the Loeb edition of Statius, with further discussion in Hinds (1998), 92-3. The instruction to follow the *Aeneid* only from afar, Hinds argues, could be disingenuous: he compares Statius' statement in the *Thebaid* epilogue with his claim in the *Silvae* that Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* will in fact surpass its Vergilian predecessor (*Silvae* 2.7, 79-80), and even that his *Thebaid*, too, 'attempts with daring lyre the joys of Vergilian fame' (… *Thebais … / temptat audaci fide Mantuanae / gaudia famae*, *Silv.* 4.7.26-8).

Appendix: Milton's Statius

The neglect of Statius's epic in studies of classical allusion in *Paradise Lost* may seem surprising. A key pagan author read continuously through the medieval period,[462] Statius' place among the canon of ancient authors is most famously attested in the appearance of the poet of the *Thebaid* in Dante's *Purgatorio* (Cantos 31-2).[463] Dante's Statius relates his conversion to Christianity, inspired by his reading of Vergil's fourth – or 'Messianic' – *Eclogue*. This portrait of a Christian Statius reflects the influence of the *accessus* tradition, with its discussion (and speculation) on the author's life, in shaping interpretations of the *Thebaid*.[464] C. S. Lewis argued that the prominence given to Statius in the *Purgatorio* must also have reflected the knowledge of Dante's readers – their familiarity with the poet of the *Thebaid*, insofar as Dante 'would probably have expected his more learned readers to compare the character he gave of Statius with that which they might infer from their own copies of the *Thebaid*'.[465] There is certainly reason to believe that Statius' epic was well known to a learned readership also in Milton's time. The *editio princeps* of the *Thebaid* was published in Rome in 1470,[466] and the first English translation of the poem by Thomas Stephens appeared in 1648. The latter was published with some explanatory notes, and seems, as appears from its preface, to have been meant as a school edition.[467] We can reasonably assume, however, that by this time Milton was already familiar with Statius, whom he was likely to have read in Latin in his final undergraduate year at Christ's College, Cambridge (alongside Lucan and Senecan tragedy as well as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*).[468] The title of Milton's miscellaneous Latin poems *Silvarum Liber*, published in

[462] For the medieval transmission of the text of the *Thebaid*, and the reception of the poem into medieval vernaculars, see Edwards (2015). Anderson (2009), vol. 1 provides entries of the manuscripts transmitted and circulated in the medieval period.

[463] Heslin (2015) has recently reconsidered Dante's relationship to Statius in the *Commedia*, arguing that Dante does not so much attempt to turn Statius into a Christian, but rather 'highlights the sheer novelty of Statius' treatment of the gods' while 'constructing a Christian teleology for the epic tradition' (Heslin [2015], 514).

[464] See Lewis (1966), 94. See Anderson (2009), vol. 3 for a discussion of Statius' Christianity in the medieval *accessus* tradition (discussed below) and its influence on medieval (and possibly Renaissance) readings of Statius.

[465] Lewis (1966), 94.

[466] For a discussion of the poem's medieval manuscripts and commentaries tradition as they may have been read by Chaucer, see Clogan (1964).

[467] Though Carole Newlands considers Stephens' claim in his preface to contain 'an element of disingenuousness, considering that it is at the same time the first translation of the *Thebaid* into English'. Newlands suggests that Stephens' political affiliations – he was a committed royalist – may have narrowed the intended readership of the poem when it was published in 1648. See Newlands (2015), 601.

[468] See Fletcher (1956), 462. Milton clearly displays knowledge of the other post-Augustan authors from this curriculum; in *Of Education*, Milton recommends the study of Seneca's *Natural Questions*. Senecan presences are scattered throughout his works: cf. e.g. the quotation in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, where Milton quotes the words of Hercules uttered in Seneca's *Herc. F.* (922-4) against the tyrant Lycus,

his 1645 collection of poems, may, as Colin Burrow has noted, announce Milton's epic in the same way that Statius' *Silvae* had functioned as a prelude to his epic *Thebaid*.[469]

The number of commentaries on the *Thebaid* from the period spanning the 1590s to 1685, as Valéry Berlincourt has recently shown, attests to the wide and varied readings of the poem.[470] Berlincourt identifies the period between the publication of Johannes Bernartius' Latin commentary on the *Thebaid*, published in 1595, and that of Beraldus in 1685 as the development of an 'especially dynamic tradition' of exegesis on the *Thebaid*.[471] These included the critical editions of Gronovius (1653) and Barth (1664-65), as well as a large number of editions that printed the scholia of the late antique commentator on Statius, Lactantius Placidus.[472] Fowler has demonstrated the likelihood of Milton's knowledge of Lactantius' commentary, evidenced in the portrait of the horrors sitting at the entrance to Chaos at *PL* 2.959-67.[473] Among these is 'the dreaded name / Of Demogorgon'. The passage looks back to Tiresias' necromancy in *Thebaid* 4, where, even in his fearless summoning forth of the ghosts of the underworld, the seer stops short of naming, in the words of Stephens' translation, 'Worlds first Mover, who / Must not be known':

> scimus enim et quidquid dici noscique timetis
> et turbare Hecaten (ni te, Thymbraee, uererer)
> et triplicis mundi summum, quem scire nefastum.
>
> We can be angry too; we know what e're

---

whom he just killed. Milton renders the Latin *uictima haud ulla amplior* / *potest magisque opima mactari Iovi,* / *quam rex iniquus* as 'There can be slain / No sacrifice to God more acceptable / Than an unjust and wicked king'. See Fitch (2002), 123, ad loc.

[469] Burrow (1999), 55. For the idea that the careers of the classical authors provided models for later poets, especially the early moderns, see the case studies in Hardie/Moore (2010). Lipking (1981), ix had suggested that Vergil's poetic career, moving from *Eclogues* to *Georgics* to *Aeneid*, provided a general model for Milton, but this does of course not preclude influence of the Statian model, as argued for by Burrow. Consider especially the similar trajectories in the sequence of the major works: Statius followed his *Silvae* with two epics *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*, the latter of which on one hero, Milton followed his *Silvae* with the epics *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, the latter one also on one hero, Christ.

[470] Though Berlincourt, it is important to note, disputes the term 'commentary' for works that, by the last decades of the fifteenth century, were shifting from full-scale commentaries and into (often scattered) notes that often focused on a more specific critical issue (under which he includes Bernartius, Barclay, Cruceus, and Gronovius, as well as Lindenbrog). Among the full-scale early modern commentaries Berlincourt counts Barth and Beraldus' commentaries. See Berlincourt (2015), 545-6.

[471] Berlincourt (2015), 544.

[472] The oldest part of Lactantius Placidus' commentary is likely to have been written in the second half of the fourth century. For a summary of scholarly debates on the dating of Lactantius' commentary, see Kaufmann (2015), 492. The commentary of Lactantius 'was included in collected works of Statius from 1683' (Berlincourt [2015], 544). According to Harald Anderson's latest bibliographical work on the early printed editions of Statius, the commentary of Lactantius Placidus appeared in Bernartius', Lindenbrog's (1600), and Cruceus' (1618) editions of the *Thebaid*. See Anderson (2009), vol. 1, 201-5, entries 67, 78, and 105.

[473] Clogan (1964) argued that Chaucer had already made use of various scholia to the *Thebaid*, including those of Lactantius Placidus.

> You dread to hear, or know: Did not I fear
> Thymbraeus, and the Worlds first Mover, who
> Must not be known. I can vex Hecate too
> (*Theb*. 4.514-16, transl. T. Stephens [1683])

In his gloss on lines 516-17, Lactantius identifies the monster Demogorgon as the god whose name should not be known, and who appears in Plato's *Timaeus* (28, a6) as the divine craftsman of the universe: *dicit [autem] deum* δημιουργόν, *cuius scire non licet nomen*.[474] Fowler argues that Milton's naming of the god Demogorgon is synonymous with invoking his 'divine nature'.[475] Milton's allusion to 'that dread name of Demogorgos' at *PL* 2.964-5 names what in Statius is unnameable, evoking the full horror of Chaos, and anticipating the contamination of this world after the Fall.

[474] Text of Lactantius Placidus' commentary from Sweeney (1997). C. S. Lewis (1964), 39-40 observed that the god Demogorgon whom we know from Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Gods*, as well as from Spenser and Milton, originated from a corruption of a variant spelling of the Platonic δημιουργόν in the manuscripts, spelt *demogorgona* or *demogorgon*. This produced a 'completely new deity', and is, as Lewis put it memorably, the 'only time a scribal blunder underwent an apotheosis'.

[475] See Fowler (2007), ad 2.964-5, who argues that Milton is '[a]lluding to Statius' mention […] of "the name whose knowing and whose speaking" the ghosts dread – identified by the scholiast as Demogorgon'.

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