Chapter 4

Paradise Lost, Paradigm Inverted

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References
4.1 Paradigm Inverted

This chapter deals with the review of the important characters of *Paradise Lost*. The characters are analysed in the light of the set pattern of the traditional epic hero, as revealed in the studies mainly of Hagin (1967), Levy (1953) and Miller (2002) discussed in Chapter 3. This pattern begins with the hero’s birth, in which many supernatural phenomena are involved. This is followed by his childhood and youth and the adventures, in which he is accompanied by a companion at times and finally his death. As discussed in section 3.4, the protagonist is the prime mover of the epic plot. In some cases the protagonist also functions as the voice of the author.

The Homeric epics exemplified the hero as a man of courage and strength who fought for the glory that the war would bring him. Honour and personal glory were the primary objects of the Homeric hero; a certain amount of reckless folly and overweening pride too made up the heroic prototype. Divine parentage ‘added lustre’ to the heroic figure. No moral virtue, patriotism, patience or heroic martyrdom was expected of this hero; in fact, these were looked upon as a sign of defeat and a want of spirit.

The composition of the Virgilian hero differed from that of the Homeric in the sense that along with strength, courage and prowess were added intellectual and moral qualities. Virgil looked upon patriotism and public spirit favourably, adding patience and heroic martyrdom to the heroic enterprise.

The characters of Satan, Christ and Adam and Eve are discussed in the light of this heroic pattern. Milton inverts the existing paradigm of the heroic frame-work in constructing these characters and highlights the idea of ‘heroism in defeat’ in each of the main characters of *Paradise Lost*. The uncalled for rebellion of Satan is crushed and he falls headlong into the depths of the infernal pit; despite this defeat Satan continues to express his heroism quite vehemently and acts in accordance with the heroic mode until the serpentine hiss silences him. Though represented with the strength and prowess of
the traditional epic hero, Christ transcends these norms in his heroic act of willing submission to the martyrdom of ‘life for life’. In the case of Man it is after his fall that he learns to repent, asks God’s forgiveness and begins ‘to approach the Miltonic standard of heroism’ (Woodhouse, 1972).

4.2 Satan

4.2.1 Origin and Birth

Satan believes that he was not created but is self-existent like God. He is defiant and cannot brook the idea that he has been created,

Remember’st thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us, self-begotten, 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; ... ...

(Paradise Lost, 5.858–865)

But this idea of his has already been challenged by the seraph Abdiel, who emphatically tells Satan that he is a created being.

As by his word the mighty Father made
All things, even thee, and all the spirits of Heaven
By him created in their bright degree ...

(Paradise Lost, 5.835–837)

Commenting on Satan’s ‘doctrine’ of self-existence, Lewis says,
Here Satan attempts to maintain the heresy which is at the root of his whole predicament – the doctrine that he is a self-existent being, not a creature. ...Uneasily shifting on the bed of Nonsense which he has made for himself, he then throws out the happy idea that ‘fatal course’ really produced him, and finally, with a triumphant air, the theory that he sprouted from the soil like a vegetable. Thus in twenty lines, the being too proud to admit derivation from God, has come to rejoice in believing that he ‘just grew’ (Lewis, 1975, p98).

In contrast to the traditional ‘god-begotten’ hero, here we have Satan denying that he was ever created by God. This ruptures the established idea of the origins of a hero’s genealogy.

Lucifer, the earlier name of Satan, has become extinct in heaven when his rebellion transformed him in name and form. Satan, therefore, is ‘born’ from his refusal to accept that he is ‘lesser than God’; in a sense, the ‘birth’ of Satan takes place at this point.

Satan – so call him now, his former name
Is heard no more in Heaven; he of the first,
If not the first Archangel, great in power,
In favor, and pre-eminence, .......

(Paradise Lost, 5.659-662)

4.2.2 The Quest

The canonical form of the quest moves the hero towards the deepest exploration of his extensive space; he will go ‘far away’, to and into strange, threatening, dangerous lands yet despite the fact that he often leaves behind the constricted or punctual space dominated by other powers (especially those of the king), the quest frequently demands that he confront and willingly enter another kind of enclosed space: grim castle of uncanny city, close-guarded shrine or deadly place where his goal, or prize, is securely kept (Miller, 2002, p164).
This is 'the geography of the quest' according to Miller. The analysis below will examine how Satan is fashioned to be the reversal of these dimensions.

At the beginning of the epic, Satan declares what his quest is going to be,

To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. 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;

(Paradise Lost, 1.159–165)

This is a broad spectrum of the quest of Satan. In Book 12, in the Council of devils, Beelzebub explains the 'quest' of Satan in a little more specific manner to the others. But here too Satan is not yet clear of what exactly would be his pursuit. Satan wants to 'abolish' God's works in order to 'interrupt his joy' and take revenge; for that he would go to this newly created world,

here perhaps
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset, either with Hell fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own ... ... 

(Paradise Lost, 2.364–368)

In the soliloquy at the beginning of Book 4, Satan further defines his 'quest'. When he reaches the 'enclosed space' where his final 'triumph' would be sought, Satan's schemes become more formulated in his mind. 'If God's purpose is to bring forth good
out of evil, his, as Antagonist, will continue: ‘Evil, be thou my good’ (Nicolson, 1970, p236).

As he observes Adam and Eve, Satan finally concocts how he would work out his revenge on the Almighty. He has some idea about the nature of Adam and Eve and has also gathered enough information about the Tree of Knowledge. Soon he will set in motion his conquest over man, initially with the dream that he would send into Eve's sleep and later, the actual temptation that will result in the fall of man. This will be the realization of his quest.

4.2.3 Pride

At the background of Satan's quest exist a series of events: the enthronement of the Son of God, Satan's revolt, the warfare in heaven, the defeat of Satan and his downfall. The real 'occasion' that caused the revolt, which subsequently leads Satan on his 'quest', is rooted in another aspect of Satan's character.

With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
Messiah, King anointed, could not bear
Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,

(Paradise Lost, 5.663–667)

The enthronement of the Son of God injures the pride of Satan who was 'great in power, in favour, and pre-eminence'. His rebellion is rooted in this wounded pride. Pride, which is one of the qualities of the epic hero, abounds in Satan.

At the outset of the epic Milton refers to this overweening pride of Satan; he clearly states that it was pride that cast Satan out from heaven. His pride is based on his egoism, which makes him regard himself and God on an equal footing.
To modern readers Pride often seems an admirable quality, but we must understand the word as did Milton and his contemporaries. From their classical ancestors, they had inherited a conception of *hubris* (the Greek word for Pride) is a dangerous quality. ... (The) Christian emphasis (was) upon meekness and humility, according to which Pride was the most deadly of the Seven Deadly Sins (Nicolson, 1970, p. 189).

Pride, one of the essential qualities of the traditional hero, is looked upon as a sin within the Christian context. 'Pride is egoism: it is being self-centred instead of being God-centred' (Woodhouse, 1972, p. 209).

In the traditional epics pride is the basis for the personal honour and glory of the hero. It is this pride that Milton incorporates into the character of Satan so forcefully that makes Blake, Shelley and others of the Satanic school regard Satan as the hero of *Paradise Lost*.

Satan acknowledges that it was 'pride and worse ambition' that brought about his downfall. In his soliloquy Satan wonders, had he been 'some inferior angel', he would not have had the pride and ambition that cast him out of heaven. Nevertheless, the thought stops short and he affirms that even if he were of a lower rank the ambition of some other would have stirred his pride. Satan is aware of the fact that, it was this pride that had brought about his ruin, by not letting him be submissive to God.

Satan sees the war that he wages against God in heaven as a glorious war. He had fought against the 'tyranny of Heaven'; thus, Satan gives himself a heroic stature. So his fall takes on a colouring of martyrdom and tragedy as well as heroism. However, in Book 4, we come to know that Satan never fought against God himself. The actual warfare had been against Michael, Gabriel and Abdiel and other angels faithful to God. When on the third day of the battle Christ sets out in his chariot there is no war at all. It is a very different scene from the 'glorious war' that Satan has been bragging about. The moment the chariot of Christ rolls out, the adversaries lose all their power to resist,
All courage; down their idle weapons dropped;

Among the accursed, that withered their strength,
And of their wonted vigor left them drained,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.

The monstrous sight
Strook them with horror backward, but far worse
Urged them behind; headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heaven, ....

(Paradise Lost, 6.838–865)

'(The) Son alone drove the terror-struck beings before him to where heaven's wall opened to disclose 'the wasteful deep' (Woodhouse, 1972, p248). This is how the 'glorious battle' that Satan talks about in the first two Books had drawn to a close.

4.2.4 The Epic Voyage

The epic voyage is an important part of the framework of heroic adventure. In order to achieve his goal the hero will undertake many adventurous journeys. These journeys will provide the hero the space where he will prove his prowess. They lead the hero to the other world 'in which a separate reality perdures' (Miller, 2002, p156). Usually the 'other world' is depicted as 'underworld' and many challenges await the hero as he enters this zone. The traditional epic heroes 'always cross the sea and meet women on strange shores who enchant or prophesy, like Siduri, Circe, Meeda and Sibyl of Cumae. They navigate the waters of death to learn their destiny ....' (Levy, 1953, p120).

In the ancient Greek hero tales the place of alterity, and also the goal of some uniquely heroic venturing is Hades, the world of the dead ... The lightless landscape at the end of the world, where the cave was to be found was as close to Hades...(and the) myth- hero had to come.(Miller, 2002, p154).
Gilgamesh takes up the journey in order to secure immortality; Odysseus enters the ‘other world’ with the help of Circe, who gives the directions to the Grove of Persephone, where he encounters the dead. This journey rewards him with a prophecy of his future; Aeneas is guided by the Cumaean Sibyl and enters the nether regions. There the imperial political future of Rome is revealed to him. These and many other heroes like Herakles, Theseus and Orpheus take the fearful journey to the underworld.

The topos of this Other world is marked by threat and grim darkness, with ambiguous barriers (the Styx is in fact marshy, neither flowing water nor firm earth), guarding monsters, and deep secrets that may bring no good to those who learn them to try to carry them back to the living world (Miller, 2002, p 158).

This comment of Miller, gives a comprehensive idea of the journey undertaken by the traditional hero.

This idea in totality is reversed in the journey that Satan will take in Paradise Lost. He leaves his dark and lightless world in search of the new world that has been created by God. This is guarded by angels on all sides and Satan has to resort to deceit through his shape changing to enter it. Satan’s purpose in undertaking this journey is to corrupt ‘the happy seat of some new race called man’. The traditional hero undertakes the journey with the intention of bringing back something that will enhance him and others; to give an example, Gilgamesh is ‘determined to bring it (the plant of eternal youth) to Erech, for himself and others to eat when they should become old’.

The journey of Satan begins in Book 2, which opens with the great Council of Satan and his followers. Milton skilfully imitates the first books of both Iliad and Aeneid where dramatic and ornamented speeches of the great Council are to be found. The fallen angels, in keeping with their characteristic trait, bring forward suggestions on the subsequent action to be taken to achieve their revenge against God.
The perilous and hazardous journey that will be undertaken by Satan is described to the Council. It is actually put forward as a challenge to the others; Beelzebub throws open this challenge to his companions:

But first whom shall we send
In search of this new world, whom shall we find
Sufficient? Who shall tempt with wandering feet
The dark unbottomed infinite abyss
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way, or spread his airy flight
Unborne with indefatigable wings
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy isle; what strength, what art can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict sentries and stations thick
Of angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection, and we know no less
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send,
The weight of all and our last hope relies.

(Paradise Lost, 2.403–418)

While all the others are silent appalled by the dangers elaborated by Beelzebub Satan declares that he would take the journey so as to justify the position he holds as the leader of them all. Satan’s long speech gives more details of the perils of the undertaking. A skilful turn of phrase of Aeneid’s ‘easy is the descent to Hell; but to retrace one’s steps, this is the labor, this task’, is paralleled in,

Long is the way
And hard, that out of Hell leads to light;
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devout, immures us round
Nine fold, and gates of burning adamant
Barred over us prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential night receives him next
Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.

(Paradise Lost, 2.434–444)

In order to prove that he is worthy of the leadership Satan will take up this journey. Satan does not want to share the glory and success of this enterprise with any other; thus, he begins his solitary journey out of hell.

Milton brings in further epic conventions when he introduces Sin and Death. They together, try to obstruct the journey of Satan. Satan is challenged by Death, his son and grandson. Soon the 'recognition' takes place and Sin by opening the doors of hell helps Satan to continue his journey.

4.2.5 The Woman Helper

In the framework of the adventure of the hero, Miller points out the part played by the Woman who becomes one of the 'assistants in the quest of the hero'. 'Her aid to the hero is direct... but usually she possesses special secrets or hidden knowledge... in the language of signs, she can be door or trap-door...' (Miller, 2002, p169). De Vries identifies 'underworld expedition' and 'winning of Maiden' as segments of the quest of hero (De Vries, 1963). In Satan's voyage, the female helper comes in the guise of Sin. Sin and her son Death hold the keys of the gates of hell. Sin is the offspring of Satan as well as his favourite even before his fall. She, Sin, had changed so much that Satan could not recognise her now. Sin has to remind him of her birth and the liaison between them.

Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul? Once deemed so fair
In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee; dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed
Out of thy head I sprung. ... ...
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse, thee chiefly who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing
Becam'st enamored; and such joy thou tooks't
With me in secret, that my womb conceived
A growing burden.

(Paradise Lost, 2.751–769)

Like the many women Miller cites as 'assistant(s) in the quest' – Ariadne the lady of the labyrinth, Meeda who knows the way to the prize of the fleece, the vila of the Balkan tales, the mélusine of the Medieval French tales – (Miller, 2002, p169), here Sin has the keys of the doors of hell.

......this powerful key
Into my hands was given, which charge to keep

These gates shut, which none can pass
Without my opening it.

(Paradise Lost, 2.776–779)
The 'fatal keys' of the nine fold gates of hell that prevent Satan's flight are in the possession of Sin. She opens the gates of hell so that Satan succeeds in his voyage.

On his return, Satan is greeted by Sin and Death, who hail him. As part of her 'helper' image Sin with her son has built a 'supermedious bridge' which increases the joy of Satan by another degree. This 'portentous bridge' will add to the achievement of Satan, Sin declares. Now his descent to hell is made with ease. Satan extols the labours of Sin. The bridge that Sin and Death had constructed, connecting hell and the world has widened the expanse of Satan's kingdom and made 'Hell and this world, one realm, one continent'. For this they are duly rewarded; Satan appoints them as his substitutes as well as those on whose power his kingdom will depend,

My substitutes I send ye,......
   on your joint vigor now
My hold of this new kingdom all depends
   .......
If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell
No detriment need fear;

(Paradise Lost, 10.403–409)

4.2.6 Space Dominated by Other Powers

The gates of hell wide open, Satan with Sin and Death at the gates of hell gaze at the 'dark illimitable ocean without bound'. This is the next stage of Satan's journey. Satan now enters the 'punctual space dominated by other powers (Miller, 2002, p164). Chaos and Night are personified by Milton as the reigning monarch and his consort of the unfathomable space into which Satan has plunged. The momentary hesitation of Satan, as he faces the might, inchoate and meaningless forces, fades away,

Into this wild abyss the Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. ....

At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
Uplifted spurns the ground; ......

(Paradise Lost, 2.917–929)

This stage of Satan’s journey draws out all the courage and strength he has in himself. He falls ‘ten thousand fathom deep’ then is carried aloft by a ‘tumultuous cloud’ he half flies and half swims through the unknown surroundings. The laboured slow progress that Satan makes is vividly described in the lines,

O’er bog of steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet pursues his way,
And swims or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.

(Paradise Lost, 2.947–950)

The confusing discord that ‘is spread on this wasteful deep’ is very different from what he has confronted in hell. ‘The Chaos is undetermined. It is imperfect because order is a good; but it is not like the perverted orders in hell, committed to evil’ (Woodhouse, 1972, p227). Nicolson is of the opinion that ‘the personification here does not bring Chaos to life, as Sin and Death were brought, and Satan’s chance meeting with him (Chaos) detracts from the sense of loneliness that marks the rest of the journey’ (Nicolson, 1970, p217).

He gets directions to the new made world from ‘Anarch old’ who reigns the ‘undetermined’ imperfection with his consort Night. Though the journey becomes more trying, it revives the spirits of Satan. The hardship of this journey is enhanced by the references to other classical voyages.
With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upwards like a pyramid of fire
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way; harder beset
And more endangered, than when Argo passed
Through Bosporous betwixt the justling rocks,
Or when Ullyses on the larboard shunned
Charydbis, and by the other whirlpool steered.
So he with difficulty and labor hard
Moved on, with difficulty and labor he;

(Paradise Lost, 2.1012–1022)

Satan 'like a weather beaten vessel holds gladly the port' looks from afar his final destination.

And fast by, hanging in a golden chain
This pendent world.

(Paradise Lost, 2.1046–1047)

'From this point, the poet describes another world, the limbo of Vanity – the future paradise of fools. Satan does not enter this world; it is described by the poet more as a digression that stalls the narrative motion. Since this world is not part of Satan's voyage it is not discussed here.

4.2.7 Completion of the Sequence of Quest

'The conclusion of the quest brings its hero back from the perils of the search to take up a prize won by his success' (Miller, 2002, p166).
With joy
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned,

(Paradise Lost, 10.345, 346)

Though he had fled from Eden at the sight of the Son of God, Satan is elated by his conquest. He has won new titles, ‘the antagonist of Heaven’s Almighty King’, and new kingdoms to rule. This is the great ‘prize won by his success’. Satan makes a dramatic appearance to his followers as he passes through them unseen and suddenly appears on his throne with all his ‘majesty’. To the ‘loud acclaim’ of all the other fallen angels, he relates his ‘heroic deeds’

When he returns from his voyage to the otherworld the hero brings along with him recompenses that will be for the benefit of his people. The reward that Satan carries back from his sojourn is that they can ‘enter now into full bliss’. However, this ‘bliss’ soon turns out to be something that neither Satan nor his followers had expected. For soon, Satan finds that,

His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining
Each other, till supplanted down he fell
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
..... ..... He would have spoke,
But hiss for hiss returned with forked tongue
To forked tongue, for now were all transformed
Alike, to serpents all, as accessories
To his bold riot.

(Paradise Lost, 10.511–521)

The real ‘prize’ that Satan has won for him and his ‘people’ is this and more. Outside the Pandemonium, the great council hall of Satan,
A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
His will who reigns above, to aggravate
Their penance, laden with fair fruit like that
Which grew in Paradise. ........

......... Greedily they plucked
The fruitage fair of sight, ... ...

......... They fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chewed bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected. Oft they assayed
Hunger and thirst constraining; drugged as oft,
With hateful disrelish writhed their jaws
With soot and cinder filled;

(Paradise Lost, 10.548–570)

4.2.8 Shape Changing

The degradation of Satan is reflected in the shape changing which Satan undergoes throughout the epic. Symbolically as well as physically, Satan falls from his status as one of the most powerful archangels to that of ‘the infernal serpent’, the shape in which he sinned.

Shape changing or shape shifting can be observed as one characteristic among Celtic Scandinavian-Icelandic heroes. The Celtic heroes Cei and Cu Chulainn have the competence to change their shape by increasing their size. Cei ‘could be as tall as a tree in the forest when it pleased him’ and he has control over his shape shifting (Miller, 2002, p194). Cu Chulainn’s shape changing seems to be associated with his battle rage. Cu Chulainn who is referred to as ‘beardless boy’ and ‘little champion’ undergoes a monstrous transformation when seized by battle rage, ‘he blew up and swelled... ...mottled and terrifying and the huge hero loomed straight up over Ferdia’ (Kinsella, 1969). The Scandinavian-Icelandic heroes’ shape shifting is associated with magical
inclinations and dangerous potencies, which could raise their own dead and pass their body through water and earth. (Gwyn, 1964). Prince Vseslav, the hero of the twelfth century epos of *Prince Vseslav of Polotsk*, could ‘fly abroad or hunt in spirit form’ (Jakobson & Szeftel, 1949).

The very first words of Satan in Book 1, refers to the shape changing that had come over him and his followers. When he sees Beelzebub who lies next to him in the ‘fiery gulf’, he finds it difficult to recognize him:

If thou beest he – but O how fallen! How changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
Myriads,.....

(*Paradise Lost, 1.84–87*)

In keeping with the epic tradition, Milton emphasises the tremendous size of Satan as he comes out of the fiery lake. The physical appearance of Satan is gigantic. This great stature Milton presents not with admiration but negatively.

..... ..... ....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,
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:

So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay

(*Paradise Lost, 1.197–212*)
The description of the shield and spear of Satan adds to his magnitude, brings to mind other epics. Martz (1980, p214) refers to this as, ‘another subtle blending of echoes, this time from Homer, Vergil and Ovid, is found in Milton’s account of Satan’s spear…’.

Homer describes the huge club or staff of Polyphemus, made of olive wood, and compares it to the mast (Odyssey 11.322); Vergil describes the Cyclops as carrying ‘the trunk of a pine tree to guide and support him walking (Aeneid 3.659); while Ovid combines all these elements of Milton’s comparison, as he speaks of the pine tree, large enough to carry a ship’s ringing, which served him as a staff (Metamorphoses 13. 782 – 83)” (Cited in Martz, 1980, p214).

...his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders; like the moon, whose orb
Through optical glass the Tuscan artist views

... ....
Rivers or mountians in her spotty globe.
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand
He walked with to support uneasy steps

(Paradise Lost, 1.288–299)

To bring out the largeness of Satan’s frame, Milton makes use of an extended epic simile that would convey a negative suggestion. According to Virgil, both Briareos and Typhon are two who strove against Zeus and were overcome, punished and imprisoned by him. Moreover, Leviathan the great sea whale is introduced to emphasise the character trait of deceit. Like the whale that misleads the sailors, Satan too has deceived his followers and soon will deceive man. The suggestion of the shield compared to the
moon seen through the telescope of Galileo brings into focus another aspect of falsehood; for the Church at that time looked upon Galileo as a heretic. He too was punished, imprisoned for ‘deceiving’ others.

It is worth noting here a point Miller makes with reference to the ‘Prodigious Physicality’ of the hero.

In the heroic epic, if we can in fact detect a pattern, sheer physical bulk is not always a heroic mark: great size, for example, may mark the hero’s sinister opponent, the black monster figure who may be threatening, but also a bit stupid, even a gull (Miller, 2002, p194).

As we progress through the epic, we find this statement of Miller quite true.

Satan is a fallen angel; still he retains part of his celestial splendour. His stature as he reviews his defeated army is likened to a tower and to the sun which is clouded by the morning mist or seen during the eclipse. But the scars of the war can be seen in his person;

but his face

Deep scar of thunder had intrenched’, and care,
Sat on his faded cheek.

(Paradise Lost, 1.596-598)

And revenge against the Almighty has already brought about a physical change to his companions too. All of them stand before him ‘glory withered’.

In Book 2 we see Satan in all the glory and splendour of an oriental king,

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, ... ...

*(Paradise Lost, 2.1–5)*

At the close of Book 3 Satan approaches Uriel in the disguise of a ‘stripling Cherub’ and asks for direction to the garden of Eden. Satan who was one of the archangels now takes the form of one of the ‘lesser angles’. Uriel does not detect this disguise of Satan; he addresses Satan as ‘fair angel’.

The beginning of Book 4, further emphasises the debasement of Satan. As Satan looks at the sun he is reminded of his past glory and his present state. The soliloquy of Satan brings this out without any of his false boasts and pretence. These musings bring about a change in his ‘borrowed visage’, and almost gives him away,

Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face
Thrice changed with pale, ire, envy, and despair,
Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld.

*(Paradise Lost, 4.114–117)*

Satan who entered the garden in the guise of a cherub soon changes himself into a cormorant and ironically sits on the tree of life ‘devising death’, observing the Garden of Eden. To get a closer view of ‘his prey’ Satan soon changes from the disguise of the large bird to that of a lion, the king of the beast and then to a tiger, a powerful agile beast.

While the watchful angels come looking for the ‘infernal spirit’ that had escaped from hell they find him ‘squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve’. When Ithuriel touches with his spear, Satan, who in the form of a toad was inducing dreams in Eve’s mind, is startled and all his shape changing melts away.

133
Up starts
Discovered and surprised.....
So started up in his own shape the fiend

(Paradise Lost, 4.813–815)

Though Satan is taken by surprise, he soon recollects himself and a battle of words goes on between the angels and Satan. Once again Milton brings out the indomitable spirit of Satan. When 'the angelic squad' surround him, Satan soon changes into an incredible form.

Collecting all his might dilated stood,
Like Teneriffe of Atlas unremoved:
His stature reached the sky, and on his chest
Sat horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
What seemed both spear and shield.

(Paradise Lost, 4.986–990)

'So majestic, so unconquerable does Satan seem at this moment that we feel even with the phalanxes of Gabriel surrounding him, he might have proved invincible' (Nicolson, 1970, p224). However, as soon as he sees the golden scales on the skies, this show of strength fades away pathetically, while he withdraws murmuring - a ludicrous contrast to his boastful and heroic speeches.

Satan appears before Eve in the guise of a serpent, still it is a shape that is both pleasing and lovely. It is a grand description of an unusual serpent that Milton presents.

Circular base of rising folds, that towered.
Fold above fold a surging maze; his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant. Pleasing was his shape,
And lovely, never since a serpent kind
Lovelier; ......
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve
To lure her eye; .... ...
His turret crest, and sleek enamelled neck..

(Paradise Lost, 9.498-526)

Nevertheless, this is not the shape that Satan is transformed into finally. When Satan changes into a serpent in front of all the other fallen angels, he does not stand erect as he did in the Garden of Eden; ‘he fell down a monstrous serpent on his belly prone’.

Slowly Satan disintegrates from a heavenly being into a serpent ‘prone on the ground’.

4.3 Christ

In crafting the character of Christ, Milton has deviated from the existing norms of the epic and the Biblical traditions. The figure of Christ in Paradise Lost has a strong resemblance to Marduk of the Akkadian Epic of Creation. Marduk fights against the second generation of gods who disturb the primeval calm. Marduk, the champion of the elder gods, fights with the powers of evil for the supremacy of the reigning dynasty of world powers. His divinity merges with the myth of the dying god (Levy, 1953). In the Book of Revelation a ‘direct description (is) to be found of a war in heaven waged from the foundation of the world against powers symbolized by Babylon itself’ (Levy, 1953, p111).

The Christ that Milton focuses on in Paradise Lost, is the Son of God and not the God incarnate as man. For this reason we find that he is referred to not as Jesus but as the Son of God. In Paradise Lost we see not the simple carpenter who walked the dusty roads of Galilee, but the mighty Son of God who is enthroned in heaven, for the time span of the
epic does not extend to the incarnation of Christ as the Messiah. It is only in the last Book of *Paradise Lost* that Milton refers to the birth of the Christ child,

> A virgin is his mother, but his sire
> The Power of the Most High;....

(*Paradise Lost*, 12.368, 369)

This prophecy of Michael to Adam at the very end of the epic links the birth of Christ with that of other epic heroes. The supernatural birth of the epic hero is hinted at here; like many other heroes, Christ too is to be born of a mortal being sired by other than human powers.

4.3.1 Divinity

Christ's divine nature expounded by Milton parallels the superhuman quality, which is a vital feature of the epic hero. Though there has been allusion to Christ in the two earlier Books, it is in Book 3 that Milton introduces Christ to his readers. God's first address to Christ is, 'Only begotten Son' and 'O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight...'

(*Paradise Lost*, 3.80, 168).

It is worth noting that this echoes the words of the voice that was heard at the baptism of Jesus. As he starts his mission on earth he is initiated into it by the voice of God in these same words: 'And when Jesus had been baptized just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened... ...and a voice from the heavens said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased' (*Matthew* 3:16-17). Milton here uses the exact words of the Gospel. The initial image of Christ that Milton presents is that of his sharing the heavenly throne with God.

> Now had the Almighty Father from above,
> From the pure empyrean where he sits
> High throned above all highth,.....

136
On his right

The radiant image of his glory sat
His only Son.

(Paradise Lost, 3.50–62)

God directs the angels to adore the Son with fervour and veneration equal to that given to the Almighty. ‘Adore the Son and Honour him as me’ is His command to the angels.

The ‘enthronement’ of the Son, which is related by Gabriel to Adam in Book 5, further emphasises the divinity of Christ. It is an act that ceremonially confirms the power and the position of the Son as equal to that of the Godhead.

The Father Infinite,
By whom in bliss embosomed sat the Son,

................................................ thus spake:

................................................

This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand. Your head I him appoint;
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord.

(Paradise Lost, 5.597–609)

This is the ritual proclamation of the divinity of the Son. The Son has already exercised his divine functions in the creation of the heavenly bodies and that of the angels but here his status as the divine ruler of the entire created world is established. It is this proclamation of the divinity of the Son that had caused the initial revolt in Satan.
The divine nature of the Son is something that he shares with God as he shares the throne of God. The God of Milton is represented in the Hebraic tradition as formless and the Son through his divinity makes visible the God whom no one can behold.

Thee next they sang, of all creation first,
Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud
Made Visible, the Almighty Father shines,
Whom else no creature can behold; on thee
Impressed the effulgence of his glory abides

(Paradise Lost, 3.383–387)

Though Milton may have expressed his anti-Trinitarian attitude in his prose work 'De Doctrina Christian', nowhere in Paradise Lost do we find the divinity of Christ diminished.

4.3.2 Son, The Active Energy of God

In Book 6 we see Christ as a warrior hero. The climatic scene of the war in heaven gives ample space for Milton to represent the Son of God in the traditional epic fashion. A close parallel to the war in The Epic of Creation and the war in Heaven can be seen in Book 4. In The Epic of Creation when the later gods are distressed by the monstrous brood of Timant (Chaos) and Kingu (the husband of Timant and the leader of the monstrous brood), the gods elect the heroic Marduk, the son of Ea, the deity of the first generation, as their champion, giving him the rank of 'Great God'. Armed with arrows of lightning and the whirlwind, Marduk rides out in the storm-chariot. The monstrous progeny of Timant are not destroyed by Marduk, but are bound in a net suggesting that the battle must be fought again (Langdon, 1923).

There is a remarkable similarity between Marduk and the Christ of Book 6. ‘Genesis ... believed to have been composed after the exile in Babylon’ (Levy, 1953, p106) is the
source for Paradise Lost; therefore it is not surprising that the image of Christ has a strong resemblance to Marduk.

In the projection of 'the Son as the active energy of God', Milton is afforded the scope to represent Christ with the semblance of the traditional epic hero. Milton deviates from the traditional idea of the epic hero and the Biblical narrative in various aspects in Paradise Lost. 'As soon as action appears in the world, Milton speaks of the Son and no longer of God' (Saurat, 1925, p117). While in the Bible, it is God the Father who is involved in the act of creation and in the judgement of Adam and Eve, in Paradise Lost it is the Son who undertakes these.

In Book 6 Milton introduces the elements that make up the traditional epic battle scene: the 'wrath' of the hero, the 'fierce chariot' with its 'burning wheels', the arrows and the thunder bolts form the gear of the traditional warrior hero. The Son is depicted as the god-assisted hero who is bestowed celestial arms. There is also the striking image of Marduk's arrows of lightning, his weapon of the whirlwind, and his storm-chariot in these lines,

Go then thou Mightiest in thy Father's might
Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels
That shake Heaven's basis, bring forth all my war,
My bow and thunder, my almighty arms
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;

(Paradise Lost, 6.710–714)

On the third day of the war, God appoints His Son to end the conflict in Heaven. Here Milton takes up the theme of 'the single champion' as found in other heroic narratives. As Christ rides out to meet his adversary, he orders all the heavenly warriors to withdraw,

.... The great Son of God
To all his host on either hand thus spake:
"Stand still in bright array, ye saints, here stand,
Ye angels armed, this day from battle rest;
... stand only and behold
God's indignation on these godless poured
By me; ....
Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned
That they may have their wish, to try with me
In battle which the stronger proves, they all,
Or I alone against them, since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous... ....

(Paradise Lost, 6.800–821)

The heavenly army does not join in the battle between the Son and his foe; they are
the silent 'eye-witness to his almighty acts' as the 'single champion'.

Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes
Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.
To meet him all his saints, who silent stood
Eye-witness to his almighty acts

(Paradise Lost, 6.881–884)

The Christ we see here is contrary to the conventional image of a mild and
compassionate Christ. This war-like Christ of wrath is not to be found in the rest of
Paradise Lost. It is his mercy and compassion that predominate in his divine personage.

... and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appeared,
Love without end, and without measure grace...

(Paradise Lost, 3.140–142)
... his meek aspect

...... breathed immortal love

To mortal man

(Paradise Lost, 3.266–271)

Book 6 portrays the Son of God armed with ten thousand thunderbolts in his right hand, with the bow and arrow of the Father, clad in mighty armour and a sword at his side. His looks are as fierce as the weapons he possesses.

... and into terror changed

His countenance, too severe to be beheld
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.

(Paradise Lost, 6.825–827)

'The mild Son is transformed into an intimidating figure of martial vigour... The attribute of vengeance belonging in Christianity exclusively to the Father ('Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord) is now modified. It becomes not only God's but also .. '.whose he sole appoints' (Paradise Lost, 6.808), in order to allow the Son to function as the avenger in his place' (Roston, 1980, p143). Roston traces the one incident in the Bible – in the Book of Revelation, where the mildness of Christ is changed to the war-like stature.

'Then I saw heaven opened and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems.... From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron' (Rev. 19:11–15). Milton has modified the words as well as the images of the Book of Revelation to suit his own purpose.

The Son does not completely defeat Satan at this point. As in The Epic of Creation where the monstrous brood are bound in a net by Marduk, Christ chains Satan and his followers; the actual defeats take place much later. After crushing the rebellion, the Son
of God turns his chariot round to enter the heavens. This grand representation of the victorious entry of Christ is equivalent to that of other warrior heroes entering the city in triumph.

Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes
Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.
To meet him all his saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced; and as they went,
Shaded with branching palm, each order bright
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to Him dominion given,
Worthies to reign. He celebrated rode
Triumphant through mid Heaven, into the courts
And temple of his mighty Father throned
On high;

(Paradise Lost, 6.881–889)

Milton in these lines recalls the entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem just before his crucifixion. ‘The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting ‘Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord - the King of Israel!’ (John 12:12,13).

Martz sees the description of the return of the Messiah in triumph as the poet’s skilful technique of preparing the way for the great vision of creative power soon to appear’ (Martz, 1980, p115).

Gaunt (1997, p213), analysing the Creation theme in epic poetry says, ‘the Creation-themeputs us in the right mood for the heroic events which (are) to follow’. He further states that the creation narratives in the epics prepare the reader for the events that are
'solemn, of great import'. Milton places the 'creation narrative' right in the middle of the epic. Even more so, the description of the Son setting forth in his chariot for the purpose of creating the new world is structurally at the central point of the epic. This naturally places Christ in the central position of the epic. Christ, as the agent of God filled with all the powers of God himself, sets out in all majesty. He is not a lone hero braving nature's harshness in his journey. He goes surrounded by 'numberless winged spirits'. Milton has woven majesty and radiance into this event, which he places right in the middle of the epic.

Meanwhile the Son
On his great expedition now appeared
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
Of majesty divine, sapience and love
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot numberless were poured
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones
And virtues, winged spirits, and chariots winged

(Paradise Lost, 7.192-199)

Christ does not brave the perilous sea and the fog and storm like the traditional epic hero whose journey into the otherworld would be usually random and perhaps out of his control (Miller, 2002). Here we find Christ in perfect control of the situation. Chaos, which was in a state of abysmal disorder, is brought under control by the command of Christ,

On heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains to assault
Heaven's heighth, and with the center mix the pole.
'Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep peace'
Said then the omnific Word, 'Your discord end'

(Paradise Lost, 7.210–217)

The words of the Son here, reflect the words of Jesus calming the seas in the New Testament when he 'rebuked the wind and said to the raging waves, 'Peace! Be still'. The wind ceased and there was dead calm' (Mark 4:39).

The sequence of Satan's journey out of hell comes as a contrast to this scene. While Satan struggles, 'drops ten thousand fathom deep', carried up by the vapours and so on, the Son of God 'uplifted in paternal glory' rides majestically into Chaos. Gaunt is of the opinion that,

This theme (the theme of creation), which by reason of its grandeur is particularly suited to epic, has evidently appealed to poets over a long period of time because it is associated with certain effects to be described in the narrative... ...a great deed or project perhaps involving long distances of time span... ...or a general contrast between the savage and civilized emotions (Gaunt, 1997, p213).

Here the contrast is between divine power and Satan's disability. Satan is seen almost as a mock epic hero trying with all his might to brave the void in Chaos.

Just as in the battle scene, the Son of God deploys his creative powers without the assistance of other agency. All the angels are but spectators to the action of creation as in the war of the third day.

Him all his train
Followed in bright procession to behold
Creation and the wonders of his might

(Paradise Lost, 7.221–223)
Milton makes the Son the agent of creation unlike in the creation narrative of Genesis. There, it is God the Father who creates the world and all that is within it. However, in the depiction of day to day creation, Milton strictly follows the Biblical narrative. ‘The account of each day’s work opens with the Scriptural words, largely following the King James’ Version, quoted as closely as metrical demands permitted’ (Nicolson, 1970, p223).

Milton has fashioned Christ as the ‘tool of God’s justice’ in Paradise Lost. God the Father had bestowed the power of ‘all judgement whether in Heaven or Earth or Hell’. When Satan wars against heaven, God commissions Christ to rid the heavens of the rebels and condemn them ‘to chains of darkness’. A second time, he is commissioned to pass judgement on Man after his fall. There is a distinct difference between the corresponding images of Christ in these two events. There is an absence of ceremonial flourish in the latter instance where he does not ride out in the ‘parental chariot’ nor does the heavenly host accompany him to be the witness of his deeds. His countenance, which was ‘too severe to behold and full of wrath bent on his enemies’ then, is now mild and gentle. Even though he passes judgement on Man, it is accompanied by the promise of redemption. This promise of redemption is explained to Adam much later by Michael in the narrative of the future events of the birth of Christ, his death and the salvation which would come through it. The Son’s judgement is tempered with mercy and with parental care; he takes pity on Man, at his external and internal nakedness.

Then pitying how they stood
Before him naked to the air, … …
As father of his family he clad
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, …
Nor he their outward only with the skins
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness
Arraying, covered from his father’s sight.

(Paradise Lost, 10.217–223)
The return of Christ to heaven after the judgement is also in a different form to that of the other ‘home comings’. There is no description of ‘heaven that opened wide her blazing portals’ or the procession of ‘saints as they went shaded with branching palms’ or singing of halleluiah. But as soon as the judgement is over Christ is at the Father’s side.

To him with swift ascent he up returned
Into his blissful bosom reasserted
In glory as of old; to him appeased,
All, though all-knowing, what had passed with man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

(Paradise Lost, 10.224–228)

Thus, Christ in Paradise Lost is depicted as the energetic power of the Almighty in crushing the rebellion in heaven, in the act of creation and in meeting out judgement on Man and Satan.

4.3.3 Transcended Heroism

In Book 3 Milton gives an exposition of heaven; the scene in heaven stands in direct opposition to that in hell in Book 2. In the Council in hell, we find that the speeches are full of rhetoric vain and idle boast. The Council meets to think of ways and means for Man to be destroyed and brought as low as themselves,

................. and drive as we were driven,
The puny habitants; if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, .................

This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
.................when his darling sons
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original and faded bliss,...

(Paradise Lost, 2.368–377)

In contrast, in heaven, the fall of Man is not important but it is his redemption that is stressed most. In hell the great question is who will be the 'Heaven-warring champion' to leave hell to destroy man: in heaven it is a different issue altogether:

Say, Heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
Man's mortal crime, and just the unjust to save?
Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?

(Paradise Lost, 3.212–215)

In reply to this question of the Almighty Christ answers with utter simplicity, 'Behold me then', he says. There is no explanation or elaboration given by Christ but a total willingness is expressed in his ready response

Satan's project is suffused with hatred and aims at the destruction of Man. On the other hand, the Son of God willingly offers to give his 'life for life'; love and pity for man is dominant in Christ's desire to redeem Man. The disparity between Christ and Satan becomes obvious here. Satan wants to establish his right to the throne of hell. To establish his supremacy to his followers Satan would take a great risk, venture into the unknown and work out the destruction of Man,

But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperil sovranty, adorned
With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger could deter
Me from attempting. ....

147
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more, as he above the rest
High honoured sits?

(Paradise Lost, 2.447–458)

The proposition of Christ is in sharp contrast to that of Satan who ventures on the hazardous journey so that he would be found worthy of the throne that he occupies in hell, whereas Christ is willing to forego the glory of his already exalted position in heaven.

This is a new type of hero: a hero who is willing to forego the fame and glory that he already possesses for the sake of others. Christ is contrasted with the traditional epic hero who gives up his life for 'fame and glory'. The Son of God is ready to give up his exalted 'glorious seat in heaven' and die not for the fame death would bring him but for the life that his death would bring to mankind.

It is in portraying Christ as the Redeemer that Milton brings out the heroism in the character of Christ. By willingly offering to die, he conquers death. While the epic hero seeks fame and glory in his death, Christ foregoes 'the radiant image of his glory' in seeking death.

The angelic choir continuously sings the glory of the Son along with that of the Father. And, God himself receives him into his glory and his place in Heaven is at the right hand of the father. The heroism of Christ is exemplified in his offer to forego the honour that he shares with the Godhead in heaven.

I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and glory next to thee
Freely put off and for him freely die
Well pleased;

(Paradise Lost, 3.238–241)
Fame is the undercurrent in any heroic testimony; it is the attainment of fame, which directs the hero in all his enterprises. In the Homeric epics we find the heroic ideal to be the ‘the powerful image of the physically perfect young hero dying for fame’ (Miller, 2002, p4). This he strives to accomplish through many heroic deeds, which mainly involve his martial skills. Another aspect of heroism that is connected with fame and glory is death. ‘... the player in the game of death, who seeks by death to earn kleos aphthiton, that ‘eternal fame’ or ‘unfailing praise’ that also paradoxically preserves him athanatos and ageraos - deathless and ageless’ (Miller, 2002, p5).

Christ willingly comes forward to give up his life for the salvation of man. In his offer to give up his own life, Christ expresses his submission to the will of the Father and also the love and compassion he (Christ) bears for mankind. The result of this is death, which he has freely accepted.

Behold me then, me for him, life for life
I offer... on me let death wreak all his rage

(Paradise Lost, 3.236–237, 241)

The willing submission to the will of God in accepting death will bring him more glory and honour than before. Like the epic hero he too will become ‘deathless and ageless’ by dying. The willingness with which Christ accepts death can be compared to what Douglas says about the traditional hero: ‘(Part) of the mysterious and lasting potency of the heroic individual comes from his voluntary submission to death; the hero wills himself to accept and even welcome death’ (Douglas, 1966, pp177-78). Christ by dying will make all of mankind deathless. For by his death Christ would have conquered Death and he along with the redeemed, will once again enter the glory of heaven victoriously.

But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil;
Then with the multitude of my redeemed
Shall enter Heaven .....................

(Paradise Lost, 3.250–261)

In Paradise Lost, the character of Christ does not need as much space as that of Satan. For in Christ what Milton is doing is exposition and not development. There is no change or development in Christ in Paradise Lost. Though there is mobility of action as the victor, the creator and the redeemer, the character of Christ is static. Unlike in Satan where there is a gradual degeneration or as in Man where there is a development, Christ remains unchanged throughout the epic.

4.4 Man

4.4.1 Uniquely fashioned by God

In this Section Adam and Eve are discussed collectively under the title Man. The character of Adam and Eve put together will represent human kind. (The title may be read as Woman too).

Man in Paradise Lost definitely does not bear a resemblance to the traditional epic hero. The traditional epic hero is looked upon as a great warrior of superhuman strength, who fights for the honour and glory the battle will bring him. Man as represented by Adam and Eve does not display these heroic qualities ostensibly. A detailed study will show how much they are affiliated to the traditional hero while they stand away from his exterior manifestation.

The first mention of Man in the epic places him in the most focal point. The opening lines indicate this.
Of Man’s first disobedience,…

... ... ...

Sing Heavenly Muse

(Paradise Lost, 1.1 – 6)

It is in relation to the action of Man that the whole epic would unfold, as reflected in Homer’s first lines, ‘Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles…’ and ‘Tell me, Muse, the story of that resourceful… man’, it is to be understood that in Paradise Lost Man would occupy a vital place. Adam and Eve are the only two human characters in the epic though Addison would see them as four characters; he makes a distinction between the Adam and Eve before the fall and after the fall. ‘Adam and Eve, before the fall, are a different species from that of mankind who are descended from them’ says Addison (Addison, 1712, reproduced in Jones, 1961, p251).

The first glimpse of Adam and Eve that we get in Paradise Lost is through the eyes of Satan in Book 4. However, we have already ‘heard’ about them in the council of hell where Beelzebub informs the others,

There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
Err not), another world, the happy seat
Of some new race called man, about the time
To be created like to us though less
In power and excellence, but favoured more
Of him who rules above;

(Paradise Lost, 2.347–353)

Later on when Satan meets Sin and Death and informs them of the purpose of the journey he has undertaken, he tells them that Man is created to ‘supply perhaps our vacant room’ in Heaven and Sin looks forward to live in that ‘new world of light and bliss, among the gods who live at ease’. These intimations about Man reveal two aspects:
that Man, like the traditional epic hero, is godlike and that he is ‘favoured by the gods’. The godlike quality of Adam and Eve is what strikes Satan when he first spies on them.

Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,  
Godlike erect, with native honour clad  
In naked majesty seemed lords of all,  
And worthy seemed for in their look divine  
The image of their Maker shone,  

(Paradise Lost, 4.288–292)

Satan who was one of the foremost angels immediately recognises God’s own image in Man.

The creation of Man in Book 7, which closely follows the Biblical narrative, shows how God fashioned him in a unique manner. While everything else is created by word alone it is in the creation of Man that God combines word with action. In Raphael’s account of the creation of Man as well as Adam’s recollection of the creation of Eve we find that God takes special care in creating ‘the loveliest pair’. Unlike the other creatures Man is ‘endued with sanctity of reason’.

Let us make now man in our image, man  
In our similitude, .........................  
........... he formed thee Adam, thee O man  
Dust of the ground and in thy nostrils breathed  
The breath of life; in his own image he

Created thee, in the image of God  
Express, and thou becam’st a living soul.  

(Paradise Lost, 7.519–528)
This is the account of Adam’s creation as recounted to him by Raphael. And in Book 8 is the description of Eve’s creation.

The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Man like, but different sex, so lovely fair
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
Mean, .....  

(Paradise Lost, 8.469–473)

In the creation of Adam we see nature and divinity coming together and Eve is created as Adam’s ‘own self’, so she too like Adam, a blend of nature and divinity. Akin to the first human hero Gilgamesh who is ‘two-thirds man and one-third god’, Adam and Eve are of a mixture of earth and heaven; ‘Dust of the ground’ and breath of the Almighty formed Adam, and Eve is a creature ‘fashioned with his hands’. Thus they become ‘superhuman beings’, though the use of the phrase ‘superhuman’ becomes anachronistic here, as there were no other human beings for them to be measured against. It should also be remembered Adam and Eve in paradise were sinless; in that way too they are superhuman beings.

4.4.2 Overlordship of Man

When Adam and Eve are created, God tells them to rule the world.

.......... ...... let them rule
Over fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground

(Paradise Lost, 7.520–523)
The sovereignty of paradise rested on Adam and Eve and Satan recognises this at the initial sight of them: ‘noble’, ‘majesty’, ‘Lords of all’, these are the terms that Satan uses to describe the position of Adam and Eve in paradise.

Adam receiving his heavenly guest Raphael serves as a fitting incident for Milton to bring out the regal bearing of both Adam and Eve. Adam goes to welcome the angel as any king would to receive a dignitary.

Meanwhile our primitive great sire, to meet
His godlike guest, walks forth, without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfection; in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horse led and grooms besmeared with gold
Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.

(Paradise Lost, 5.350–357)

Raphael’s greeting to Eve as he enters their home befits a queen: ‘Hail’ is the salutation that the heavenly being finds it fit to greet ‘the mother of mankind’. Satan entices Eve addressing her as ‘Empress’ and ‘queen of the Universe’. The regality of Man in paradise surpasses that of any traditional epic hero. Milton gives Adam and Eve in their naked innocence the regal splendour that, ‘Solomon and Charlemagne and Haroun-a-Raschid, and Louis XIV lamely and unsuccessfully strove to imitate on thrones of ivory between lanes of drawn swords and under jewelled baldachins (Lewis, 1960, p118).
4.4.3 A Worthy Opponent to the Adversary of Heaven

‘Matchless strength, unsurpassed prowess and dauntless courage’ are some of the main characteristics of the traditional hero. Man in Paradise Lost does not possess any of these qualities. However, he is created with free will to choose the right.

... I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.

(Paradise Lost, 3.96, 97)

This Free will and Reason are the weaponry that arm Man and make him ‘sufficient’ to stand against the ‘adversary of heaven’. Some critics like Addison and Saurat are of the view that Man is pitted against a far more powerful opponent in Satan. Addison’s verdict is that Man is ‘by no means a match for his enemies’ (Addison, 1712, reproduced in Jones, 1961, pp240-259); and Saurat’s opinion is that Man is no ‘fitting counterpart for Satan’ (Saurat, 1925, p183).

Man in his innocence is far stronger than Satan. In fact, Satan himself expresses this opinion of Man. He not only sees him as majestic and godlike but also knows that Man is more powerful than himself because, like the conventional epic hero, Man is specially favoured by god. Satan has to plan each step he has to take toward manipulating the fall of Man. The strength of Man becomes more emphasised if we are to consider the heroic stature of Satan that is built up by Milton.

Bringing about the fall of Man has not been an easy task for Satan. He has to approach him step by step. Satan begins with the dream, which he instils into Eve. Then he waits in watch till he finds Eve alone. He begins the temptation first with flattery and then hypocrisy and finally by confusing the mind of Eve, he succeeds in making her go against the command of God but the fall of Man is not yet a reality; it is only when Adam would willingly let passion rule over reason that the fall is complete. Satan needs the
active cooperation of Adam and Eve to accomplish his mission. Here too Satan’s power is not enough to attain the fall of Man in entirety.

Lewis raises the question, ‘What would have happened if instead of his ‘compliance bad’ Adam had scolded Eve and interceded with God on her behalf...’ (Lewis, 1961, p127). But Adam is no Aeneas to sail away in response to the will of god, abandoning Dido to perish. It is the ‘compliance bad’ of Adam that makes the fall complete; if not for Adam’s ‘voluntary submission’ to sin, Satan could not have succeeded in the revenge he had planned against God.

Milton depicts Man, even in his fallen state, to be stronger than Satan. Satan revolts against God and is punished and banished from hell. There is no repentance in him. Even the faint hint of repentance that comes out in the soliloquies of Satan is crushed by his thoughts of revenge against God. It is quite the contrary in the case of Adam.

As we see Adam lying on the cold ground cursing his creation, our memories may go back to our first sight of Satan, lying on the lake of fire, and remembering the Heaven he has lost as he realizes the Hell he has found (Nicolson, 1970, p229).

In contrast to Satan, no self-pity is to be found in Adam’s soliloquy; his regret is that he had brought about the curse on his descendants. Eve confesses her fault and is willing to bear the punishment herself alone.

Both have sinned, but thou
Against God only, I against God and thee,
And to the place of judgement will return,
There with cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence from thy head removed may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
Me, me only, just object of his ire.

(Paradise Lost, 10.1010–1016)
The words of Eve bring Adam closer to reconciliation with her as well as with God. Adam’s thoughts are now directed towards submission and reconciliation. Once they have made peace with each other they turn to God. Remembering his tender care even after their fall they are reassured in their minds that they will be forgiven by God.

They forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent, and both confessed
Humbly their faults and pardon begged, with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.

*(Paradise Lost, 10.1178–1184)*

Man in his ‘humiliation meek’ turns out to be stronger than Satan. Though no longer sinless, Man once again becomes the ‘god assisted hero’. Satan recedes to the background once judgement has been passed on him by the Son and he is ‘punished in the shape he sinned’; Man, despite his fall, courageously moves forward to the end of the epic.

### 4.4.4 Consistent Characters

Addison in his essays on *Paradise Lost* in the *Spectator* says

Adam and Eve before the fall are a different species from that of mankind who are descended from them... there are four distinct Characters in these two Persons. We see man and woman in the highest Innocence and perfection and in the most abject State of guilt and Infirmity (Addison, 1712, reproduced in Jones, 1961, pp240- 259).
This statement of Addison, in a way, makes Milton seem guilty of the inconsistency of character that Aristotle talks of. However, a close look at Adam and Eve will make it clear that they do not become different characters after the fall. Tillyard argues that ‘both Adam and Eve were virtually fallen before the official temptation’ (Tillyard, 1951, reproduced in Dyson & Lovelock, 1973, p124). He points out how, much before the actual act of transgression began, both Adam and Eve have thoughts that are not compatible with the state of innocence. The dream that Satan insinuates into the mind of Eve foreshadows the process of the fall. Though Adam reassures her that,

\[
\text{Evil into the mind of god or man} \\
\text{May come and go, so unapproved, and leave} \\
\text{No spot of blame behind.....}
\]

(Paradise Lost, 5.117-19)

Tillyard (1951) feels that the evil that had entered the mind of Eve has already begun to take effect. The dream has brought distress to the mind of Eve making her shed tears and argue with Adam that she is capable of being by herself; soon she would separate from him.

Further, the transition in Adam takes place, ‘when he confides to Raphael how Eve’s beauty is apt to affect his mind in a way that is dangerous to the sovereignty there of the Reason. Not that Adam denies this sovereignty, but by speaking of his transport of love for Eve as ‘commotion strange’, he has admitted to feelings alien to the angelic and akin to Eve’s sleeping perturbation. Technically, he is still innocent, but in our hearts we recognise him as just across the frontier’ (Tillyard, 1951, reproduced in Dyson & Lovelock, 1973, p126).

The parting words of Raphael to Adam is a warning for letting the physical charm of Eve affect his mind.
Milton has already begun the preparation for the fall of man at this point. Therefore, the four different characters Addison perceived seem but the same embodied in one Adam and Eve; it would not be proper to see them as two sets of different characters.

4.4.5 Obstruction of Heroic Virtue

According to Steadman, the 'pattern of the obstruction of heroic virtue by unheroic leisure' is represented in Man's fall (Steadman, 1970, p17). He cites Achilles's refusal to fight in the island of Scyros and after the fight with Agamemnon, Ulysses' wanderings with Circe and Calypso and Aeneas's love affair with Dido which suspends Aeneas's journey for a short while, as being very much similar to that of Adam's 'voluntary transgression'. However the traditional hero's 'obstruction of heroic virtue' is only a temporary phase in his heroic career. Achilles soon resumes fighting and defeats Troy. Odysseus in spite of the many wanderings perseveres in his return to Ithaca. The passion of Dido is not capable of holding back Aeneas from his ultimate aim. In this respect, Adam differs from the set pattern of the epic hero. For Adam it is not a 'temporary lapse'.

......but endless misery
From this day onward, which I feel begun
Both in me and without me, and so last
To perpetuity:..........................
both death and I
Am found eternal, and incorporate both,
Nor I on my part single; in me all
Posterity stands cursed. ...........

Ah, why should all mankind
For one man’s fault thus guiltless be condemned,
If guiltless?

(Paradise Lost, 10.800–814)

4.4.6 Other World Experience

The other world experience of Adam and Eve is antithetical to that of the traditional hero. The hero willingly entering an enclosed space ‘where his goal or prize is securely kept’ (Miller, 2002, p164) is the canonical form that moves the hero towards the Other world. Michael the archangel comes to inform Adam and Eve that they are to be expelled from Paradise.

But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not; to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the garden forth

(Paradise Lost, 10.258–260)

Michael takes Adam to the top of the hill to show him the world where he would work out his salvation. It is there the ‘other world experience’ awaits Man. The enclosed garden now becomes a guarded space where they may not enter hereafter.

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.

(Paradise Lost, 12.641–644)
It is outside the gates of Eden that they will 'fight out' their redemption. The garden of the high cliff remains closed behind flaming gates while on the 'subjected plain', 'the world was all before them' to,

...... only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love
By name to come called charity the soul
Of all the rest then wilt thou not be loth
To leave this paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far.

(Paradise Lost, 12.581–587)

While the traditional hero seeks his otherworld experience armed with martial prowess and sometimes with trickery and guile, Man goes 'out' to seek his otherworld experience fortified with knowledge, virtue, patience, temperance and love.

4.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the characters shows how Milton has inverted the paradigm of the traditional epic hero to suit his own purpose. This inversion is reflected mainly in Satan and Christ.

Satan has all the grandeur of an epic hero: in him are found the overweening pride, personal glory and an 'indomitable spirit'. This 'indomitable spirit', pride and his rebellious stance against the Almighty in the characterisation of Satan, made Blake (Cited in Dyson & Lovelock, 1973, p44) pronounce the verdict that, Milton was 'of the Devil's party without knowing it'. Many other critics have followed the same line of thought, seeing Satan as the hero of Paradise Lost. The main reason for this conception is that many of the epic mechanisms come into play in Satan. As discussed in Section 4.2, Satan, more than any other character in Paradise Lost, possesses the splendour of an epic
hero: his spear and shield, his physical stature (even though Satan, in principle, is a spirit), his otherworld adventures and his quest. Satan’s dramatic exploits and epic magnificence play no part in the struggle of Satan in Paradise Lost. The fact that Satan makes an exit in the middle of Book 10 too should be taken into consideration. The character of Satan undergoes a slow and measured degeneration from Book 1 to the middle of Book 10 where he makes the final exit as one among ‘a crowd of ugly serpents’.

‘If Milton’s chief concern had been to paint a picture of indomitable spirit, he would certainly have selected a hero in whom this spirit was joined with a positive purpose’ (Hagin, 1967, p151).

In Christ too Milton deviates from the epic conventions while at the same time he capitalizes on them. Milton creates an image that is very unusual to the biblical image of Christ but very much in keeping with the epic tradition. The archetypal image of a warrior riding out on the ‘paternal chariot’ armed with arrows and thunderbolts, is given to Christ as he ventures out to end the warfare in heaven and crush Satan. This is further extended when Christ sets forth to create the world. Nevertheless, the heroism that Christ represents is atypical of the traditional epic hero. The occurrences where Milton projects him in the semblance of the traditional epic fashion are not directly involved with the heroic act of Christ, that is, the willing submission to the will of God. It is evident that Milton has made use of these epic conventions in the character of Christ only as an external device to enhance the epic status of his poem.

Man stands in direct opposition to the traditional epic hero. He is bereft of all the fineries of his conventional counterpart. It is significant that Man who is devoid of all the dazzle and blaze of the epic hero stands at the centre of the action in Paradise Lost. Milton does not provide Adam and Eve even with ‘the heroic outwardness’ that he attributes to Christ. However, it is on the action of Man that the structure of the poem rests. The creation, the councils in heaven and hell, the vengeance of Satan and the heroism of Christ are all centred around the action of man; it is Man’s exploits that give
the unity to the poem. Man occupies the pivotal position in the sense that it is Man who is the concern of God the Father, the Son, Satan and the angels.

The character of Man is responsible for the movement of the epic plot and thereby Man becomes the protagonist of the epic. This is very much in contrast with the older Western epics. In the epics of Homer and Virgil the roles of the hero and the protagonist are taken up by the same character. Woodhouse comments,

This has confused the critics, who have rightly rejected Adam as hero and have sought another, but in their search have unfortunately stumbled on Satan. In reality Adam is the protagonist and Christ the hero, while Satan is reserved for another role, that of antagonist. To separate hero and protagonist was a bold step necessitated by Milton's theme. (Woodhouse, 1972, pp188-189).

References


Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, John Milton, Grolier Inc., New York


