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SATAN AND LUCIFER:

A COMPARISON OF THEIR METAMORPHOSES FROM ANGEL TO DEVIL

IN MILTON'S PARADISE LOST AND VONDEL'S LUCIFER

AND ADAM IN BALLINGSCHAP

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The Dutch poet and dramatist, Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679), generally acknowledged as "de hoofd-poëet der schitterende zeventiende eeuw",<sup>1</sup> if not the greatest writer in the Dutch language, completed work on his Lucifer, a drama about the rebellion and fall of the angels, in January 1654, and it was performed in Amsterdam the following month. His Adam in Ballingschap (of Aller Treurspeelen Treurspel), which dramatizes the temptation and fall of Man, was published ten years later, in 1664. John Milton (1608-1674), whose figure dominates the seventeenth century in England and whose poetry is of the most elevated in the English language, started work on his magnum opus, Paradise Lost, in its final epic form some time in the decade that saw the completion and first performance of Lucifer; it was completed in 1665 and published in 1667, fourteen years after Lucifer.<sup>2</sup> These facts certainly do seem to point to a "curiosity of literature",<sup>3</sup> and after William Lauder's fraudulent attempt in 1747 to prove Milton's literary dependence on Vondel, the curiosity was repeatedly investigated and variously explained, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> But this thesis is not concerned with the question of such a relationship between Milton's and Vondel's works. Milton and Vondel were dependent on a common primary source and were familiar with common exegetical and theological traditions, and their works are the culmination of a long and rich literary tradition in which both authors would have been

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<sup>1</sup>W. J. A. Jonckbloet, Geschiedenis der Nederlandsch Letterkunde 6vols. (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1882), 4:131.

<sup>2</sup>See A. Baumgartner, Joost van den Vondel: Zijn Leven en Zijne Werken (Amsterdam: C. L. van Langenhuysen, 1886), pp. 182 and 204, and Milton, Paradise Lost, ed. Alastair Fowler (London: Longman, 1971), Introduction pp. 3-7.

<sup>3</sup>The title of a book (not held in any South African University Library) by Rev. G. Edmundson, Milton and Vondel: A Curiosity of Literature (London: Tribner and Co., 1885).

well schooled. In this last category alone there is "a whole battalion of analogues marching across twelve centuries of literary activity".<sup>5</sup> Poetic borrowing is evident and perfectly acceptable throughout this corpus; indeed, it is to be expected. Milton's and Vondel's mutual debt to du Bartas, for instance, has been documented,<sup>6</sup> and it is known that both authors knew the internationally respected figure, Hugo Grotius and were familiar with his Latin drama, Adamus Exul (1601).<sup>7</sup> Watson Kirkconnell points out that rather than exposing the debts of authors to each other, a survey of the vast literary tradition illustrates the originality of each individual treatment of the same material.<sup>8</sup>

The aim of this thesis is to compare the poetic delineation of the character of Satan in Paradise Lost with that of Lucifer in Lucifer and Adam in Ballingschap, and to consider the influence of the genre in each case, not in order to prove similarities or differences, but rather to allow the characters to illuminate each other.

Both Satan and Lucifer develop progressively from angel to devil in the course of the poem or play. However, this process is more than just a physical metamorphosis, or even a moral degeneration. It is in each case a process of identity change, intensely and consciously experienced by the

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<sup>4</sup>See Baumgartner, Leven en Werken, p. 182 and Jan Jurrien Moolhuizen, Vondels Lucifer en Miltons Verloren Paradijs (s'Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1895), pp. 1-8.

<sup>5</sup>Watson Kirkconnell, The Celestial Cycle (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1952), p. vi. Kirkconnell has collected (with translations) the major analogues of Paradise Lost in world literature.

<sup>6</sup>See George Coffin Taylor, Milton's Use of du Bartas (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934), and Antonie Hendriks, Joost van den Vondel en G. de Saluste Sr. Du Bartas (Leiden: Eduard Ijdo, 1892).

<sup>7</sup>See W. A. P. Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah 3vols. (Zwolle: W. E. J. Tjeenk Willink, 1956-1962), 3:356-66, Kirkconnell, Celestial Cycle, pp. 583-85, and J. M. Evans, Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 207-16.

<sup>8</sup>Kirkconnell, Celestial Cycle, p. vi.

character. The fall is a movement from God to Self.<sup>9</sup> The unfallen creature's integrity consists in his submergence in the Being and Will of God; for the fallen creature integrity means a separate, independent self-hood. In rebelling against their role and duty as Archangel, Satan and Lucifer rebel against submergence in the Being of God and thus against their very nature and the order of things. Consequently they experience personal and psychological disintegration. From this condition of imbalance and uncertainty they both develop to a new state of personal reintegration and unequivocal identity, now as Arch-fiend. In neither case is the process instant or entirely concurrent with the physical fall into Hell. Rather, it is protracted, hence the division of this thesis into sections that focus on the different stages in the development: Archangel, Arch-rebel and Arch-fiend.

I have used Alastair Fowler's edition of Paradise Lost (London: Longman, 1971), A. P. Grové's edition of Lucifer (Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik, 1968) and G. Dekker's edition of Adam in Ballingschap (Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik, 1968). In both Lucifer and Adam in Ballingschap I refer to the scenes by number (e.g. III.ii), though they are not numbered in these editions. I do not always indicate the scene in question, as the numbering of lines in both these plays is continuous. I have occasionally consulted Kirkconnell's translations of Vondel's plays, but do not always find them satisfactory; a few instances are noted in the course of this thesis. I use the title of Kirkconnell's book ("the celestial cycle") as a comprehensive term for the events spanning the whole of history from the fall of the angels through the fall of Man to the redemptive act of Christ and the ultimate destruction of evil.

On technical matters of style and presentation I have consulted Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Disserta-

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<sup>9</sup>See Ernest Schantzer, "Milton's Hell Revisited," University of Toronto Quarterly 24 (1955): 136.

tions, 4th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973).

I wish to thank Professors André Brink and Malvern van Wyk Smith for their guidance and assistance, and my husband Torquil for typing this thesis and especially for the example of his own academic industry and sincerity.

## CHAPTER ONE

### GOD AND HIS DECREE

In both Paradise Lost and Lucifer the divine decree issued in Heaven can be viewed as the chronological genesis of the action. Whether this decree announces the creation of Man (as in Lucifer) or the election of the Son (as in Paradise Lost), it is in both cases (mis)interpreted as heralding a significant change in the status quo in Heaven and therefore received as a challenge. And whether it acts as original stimulus (as it appears to do in Paradise Lost) or as catalyst (as it does in Lucifer), it marks the birth of open rebellion amongst the angels. Milton and Vondel both needed such a specific point of genesis, Milton in order to make intellectual sense and Vondel to make dramatic sense of the events of the celestial cycle. For our purpose of tracing the development of Milton's Satan and Vondel's Lucifer from angel to devil, it is convenient to adopt the chronological pattern provided by Vondel's treatment of the material and to begin with this common point: the issuing of the decree. And if it is the decree that initiates the action then it is relevant to examine its possible role in prompting or provoking the discontent and rebellion. This consideration is important for a valid and comprehensive evaluation of the rebels and their respective motives.

#### I

Paradise Lost begins with the fact of Man's fall from his creator (I.28-33). Given this premise, Milton proceeds to do two concurrent things: to discover and comprehend the cause of this fall and in the process to exonerate God - to "assert eternal providence, /And justify the ways of God to men" (I.25-6). His epic genre allows him to begin with such an accomplished fact and then to probe back in time, through the medium of a cumulative rather than a chronological structure, for its root causes.<sup>1</sup>

The first question to the Holy Muse is, therefore:

what cause  
 Moved our grand parents . . .  
 . . . to fall off  
 From their creator? . . .  
 . . . . .  
 Who first seduced them?

(I.28-33)<sup>2</sup>

The portrayal of the action then opens with Satan already in Hell, locating the "cause" of Man's fall at this point. But the fact of Satan's fall and his subsequent enmity against man raises the same question: "what cause?", and it is given to Adam, much later in the poem, to pose it. He asks Raphael "who [Man's] enemy is, and how he came to be so" (Argument, Book V). Raphael is thus given the task of disclosing the root cause of "all our woe" (I.3). He complies, "beginning from [Satan's] first revolt in heaven, and the occasion thereof" (Argument, Book V). "The occasion thereof" turns out to be God's decree.

On a "day" (the first day of the poem's cycle) in the pre-creation reign of "Chaos wild", an "imperial summons" from God brings before his throne the innumerable hosts of Heaven (V.577-83). God issues his "decree, which unrevoked shall stand" (602-15): He proclaims his Son head over all angels, to whom "shall bow /All knees in heaven, and [all] shall confess him Lord". Disobedience to this new viceregent shall constitute disobedience to God, and any offender "that day / . . . falls /Into utter darkness". "So spake the omnipotent".

This decree (whether by its contents, implications or tone, and whether justifiably or not) provokes Satan's discontent. His rebellious

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<sup>1</sup>An approach which the dramatic genre would not have allowed him, and indeed does not allow Vondel to use.

<sup>2</sup>Any emphasis indicated by underlining in quotations (eg. line 28 above) is my own.

murmurings are directly related to it. He appeals to Beelzebub:

remember'st what decree  
Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips  
Of heaven's almighty?

(V.674-76)

Obviously the decree cannot, either logically or theologically, be the sole cause of Satan's dissatisfaction. The fact that he alone out of the entire celestial company is not "pleased" (V.617) with it suggests that the prime cause resides in him and not in the decree. The seeds of dissent must be present in him already, as illustrated perhaps in his evident interest in rumour and speculation (eg. I.651-54 and X.481-82) and as borne out by Abdiel's appellation: "Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt" (VI.262). But this is never made clear; Milton is obviously and wisely avoiding the problematic question of the actual source of evil, and for our purposes the issuing of the divine decree must suffice as the precipitating element in the action.

Vondel is more bold in his speculation on the first manifestation of evil and makes dramatic capital out of the prior discontent which Milton only hints at. The first scene of Lucifer is devoted to the actions and murmurings of the malcontents even before the decree is issued. They are resentful about the creation of a material world of surpassing sensual beauty and pleasure inhabited by creatures "die 't al te boven gaen" (83). This creation has provoked curiosity and suspicion in Lucifer who, in sending Apollion to earth to investigate, has in turn provoked the suspicion of his subordinates. When the decree is issued in scene ii it merely confirms the speculations and fears that have been fermenting in scene i, and acts as the catalyst which prompts the open rebellion.

As in Paradise Lost, the celestial hosts are imperially summoned, this time with the blast of "een bazuin" (196), to hear the decree. The nature and decorum of dramatic presentation and Vondel's personal awe of the divine prevent him from introducing the person of God into the action.

The decree is therefore issued by one of God's spokesmen and representatives, Gabriël,

Genaectt in 's Hooghsten naem, om uit dien hoogen troon  
T' ontvouwen, als Herout, het geen hem wiert geboôn.  
(199-200)

In what appears to be the first official revelation of the fact, Gabriël announces that God has created Man and that he is destined in time to be elevated above the angels to equality with God; his throne already awaits him in Heaven where all angels shall worship him (218-26). And just as in Paradise Lost God's decree shall stand unrevoked, so here:

Dit 's nootlot, en een onherroepelyck besluit.  
(232)

The angels are therefore commanded ("waer aen de Godtheit u verplicht", 280) to serve Adam and nurture him to his maturity in Heaven:

. . . draegh' hem op de hant, dat hy zyn' voet niet stoote.  
(277)

The exemplary call of the Rey sums up the command:

Laet ons Godt in Adam eeren.  
(346)

The mythological and theological differences between the decrees have significant implications for our understanding of the rebels' motivations and these present interesting dramatic possibilities, which Milton and Vondel have used to particular advantage in their respective works. The central mythological difference is that in Lucifer the creation of man precedes, indeed generates, the rebellion while in Paradise Lost it is subsequent, or even consequent, to the rebellion. Milton is following the more common tradition,<sup>3</sup> eminently suitable for epic, that the Arch-

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<sup>3</sup>Based on Isaiah 14.12-15: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! . . . For thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north . . . I will be like the most High". For summaries of the different theological traditions concerning the rebellion of the angels see John Peter, A Critique of Paradise Lost (New York: Columbia University Press,

angel aspired to emulate God: "He trusted to have equalled the most high" (I.40). Milton slightly modifies this to make the Son the immediate object of Satan's jealousy rather than God himself, using the Psalmist as his source: "I will declare the decree: . . . Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee".<sup>4</sup> For his sinful aspiration Satan is cast down to Hell and only then does God create the world and Man.<sup>5</sup> The subsequent fall of Man necessitates God's call for a Messiah (III.168-216), the Son's offer of Himself (III.227-65), and the eventual Incarnation and the restoration of Man (XII). Through skilful organization of the unchronological structure of his poem around the central fact of God's providence,<sup>6</sup> Milton weaves these threads into the complex theology which informs the poem and provides its essential texture.

Vondel's choice and combination of traditions likewise contribute to the peculiar power of his tragedy. His particular arrangement of events makes possible, indeed inevitable, the initial and classic error that unleashes the forces of tragedy which relentlessly run their course and so produce the consummate shape of the action.

The creation of the world is, as we have seen, the first event in Vondel's scheme. It is followed by the announcement of Man's future elevation:

Godt sloot van eeuwigheit het Menschdom to verheffen,  
 Oock boven 't Engelsdom, en op te voeren tot  
 Een klaerheit en een licht, dat niet verschilt van Godt.  
 Ghy zult het eeuwich Woort, bekleet met been en aren,  
 . . . . .  
 Zien rechten, uit zyn' troon, en onbeschadwt Ryck.  
 (218-24)

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1960), p. 63 and W.A.P. Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 2:77.

<sup>4</sup>Psalm 2.7

<sup>5</sup>God's reason for this is not clear in PL. Satan maintains that this creation was rumoured even before his rebellion (I.651-54), while Raphael claims that God created the world and Man after Satan's fall, almost

What is immediately obvious to the audience/reader but not to the rebels (a dramatic tension central to the effect of the tragedy) is that Gabriël is referring, not to Adam, mere man and the last and lowest of God's creatures, but to Christ, the Son of God, "het eeuwigh Woort" through whose incarnation humanity will be elevated to the heavenly throne and into the Godhead. When the angels are commanded to serve man, it is offensive to Lucifer because of his basic and tragic misinterpretation of this fact; he is mortified and indignant about having to serve mere man and eventually to be subordinate to him in Heaven. Vondel is basically making use of the Catholic tradition which maintains that the angels resented the promise of the Incarnation and the projected union between Christ and Man,<sup>7</sup> but like Milton he modifies it (obscuring the promise of the Incarnation) to work to advantage in his particular recreation of the events. In the course of the play he conflates it with the Isaiah tradition of ambition and pride, which he also cites in his *Berecht*.

An even deeper subtlety of Vondel's arrangement of the material arises out of the fact that the Incarnation is necessitated, of course, by the fall of Man, which in its turn is a consequence of the fall of Lucifer. Thus Lucifer's fall is the first condition for the elevation of Man, and it is precisely in rebelling against it, therefore, that he brings it about.

Because of Lucifer's error, sincere confusion and idealism on his part are made possible, and his pride is considerably qualified by this

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to spite him: "lest his heart exalt him in the harm /Already done" (VII.131-61).

<sup>6</sup>See Dennis H. Burden, *The Logical Epic* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), passim on the centrality of this premise.

<sup>7</sup>Vondel mentions his reasons for choosing to follow this tradition in his *Berecht*, lines 118-29.

genuine bafflement, in contrast with Satan whose pride is of a more pure, uncomplicated, heroic kind.<sup>8</sup> He who is one among a number of Archangels, rebels with jealousy and pride against the elevation of one whom he considers an equal, another angel, another son of God, while Lucifer, the only "Stedehouder", rebels with indignation against the elevation of an inferior, an "aertworm, uit het stof /Gekropen" (463-64).

But this qualitative difference notwithstanding, Satan's and Lucifer's behaviour is identical in one essential respect: it is rebellion; it is disobedience against God and in the end no amount of qualification reduces the ineluctable guilt attached to such disobedience. They both interpret the decree as a herald of a threatening change in the status quo, a call to greater submission. Satan fears he is called "to bend /The supple knee", (V.787-8), and Lucifer that he must "dient, /En eert dit nieuw geslacht, als onderdane knapen" (363-4). These fears are both inspired by a sinful sense of independence and importance, a pride which recoils at servitude. This is obviously an illogical and exaggerated reaction when service and subservience have always been their very raison d'être. The nature of the decree makes any rebellion, regardless of its motives and ideals, evil. For what they are rebelling against is a divine command.

Command is the prerogative and indeed the medium of God. All that exists properly, exists by his command. A divine decree is therefore less an imposition of a new order than it is an explanation of the terms of creaturely existence. The elevation of Christ by the command of God (in both works) is a clarification of the angels' terms of existence, not an alteration of those terms. And B. Rajan points out that according to the

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<sup>8</sup>See Chapters 3 and 4.

seventeenth century world view (inherited from the Elizabethans), the terms of existence of any creature are determined with reference to the Scale of Nature, and that in this view "disobedience [is] synonymous with the violation of 'degree'",<sup>9</sup> while "obedience to a hierarchic superior is a confirmation, not a denial of freedom".<sup>10</sup> Lucifer's and Satan's disobedience to God's command is therefore nothing less than a contradiction or denial of the ground of their being, "Heaven ruining from heaven" (VI.868), or in Rajan's words, "a challenge to the nature of things".<sup>11</sup>

This is elegant theology and seventeenth century Dutch and English readers would have been familiar with it, but it is not easily presented in dramatic terms. This is perhaps the greatest problem inherent in a literary treatment of the events of the celestial cycle: theology cannot be dramatized. The God of theology is strictly indescribable and His ways beyond literary presentation. As Fowler puts it: "any attempt to verbalize God [and by extension, His commands] must fail".<sup>12</sup> He is invisible, inaccessible, the unutterable "I am", "van tyt noch eeuwigheit gemeten" (Lucifer, 283). "Geen verbeelding, tong, noch teken / [Kan Hem] melden" (315-6). Such negative terminology is indispensable in theological discussion about a God of Whom one can know only what He is not, but it is of little use to the poet who must create a dramatic character. The poet, like Raphael in his narrative to Adam, somehow has to "relate / To human sense the invisible exploits" of an invisible God (V.564-5). The only answer is to anthropomorphize God, to describe "what surmounts the reach / Of human sense, . . . / By likening spiritual to corporeal forms" (V.571-3). But the difficulties inherent in this are obvious. To

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<sup>9</sup>B. Rajan, Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), p. 61.

<sup>10</sup>ibid. p. 64.

<sup>11</sup>ibid. p. 65.

<sup>12</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on VI.689, p. 342.

encapsulate the inaccessible Being of God in the form of a dramatic character, to express His ineffable nature in action within Time and Space and to articulate His mysterious wisdom in the form of a decree, is to make Him subject to the imperfect, the fallible. A. J. A. Waldock illustrates the problem with a modern parable:

We are dealing here with something resembling that effect in physics described by Heisenberg in his "uncertainty principle". There are objects in Nature that frustrate every attempt to measure them, for the mere act of measuring disturbs them. . . . Milton is in exactly this predicament with his theme: he cannot embody it, for every act of embodiment does something to it that he did not intend. . . .<sup>13</sup> The Paradise Lost [he intended] is, in a strict sense, unwritable.

Milton partly overcomes the difficulty of confining a timeless God to the strictures of progressive Time by casting the action in an unchronological form.<sup>14</sup> Vondel partly avoids the problem of embodying God by obscuring Him behind His representatives and repeatedly emphasizing His unutterable nature through the Rey's intuitive appreciation of mystery, eg. "ghy waert, ghy zyt, /Ghy blyft de zelve . . . /Ghy zyt alleen dan die ghy zyt" (316-24). In this way Vondel partly does what John Peter wishes Milton had done:

Properly handled, the angels might have removed the tension [between God's majesty and His more anthropomorphic attributes like anger and geniality]: they could have taken over God's practical functions and left his majesty unqualified and intact.<sup>15</sup>

But Milton's God is on trial; Milton must allow His ways to come under close and direct scrutiny if they are to be justified to men. For this reason the epic is more suited to Milton's purpose than the tragic genre would have been. Yet now Milton is forced into reducing his God to the level of Homer's gods, and the inevitable result of thus relating the

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<sup>13</sup>A. J. A. Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1947), pp. 143-4.

<sup>14</sup>See also Jackson I. Cope, The Metaphoric Structure of Paradise Lost (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1964), passim, on the complex relationship of Time, Space, structure and theme in PL.

<sup>15</sup>Peter, A Critique of Paradise Lost, p. 21.

Being and the ways of God to human sense is that His essential nature is distorted in the process. He becomes subject to the imperfections of words, expression and tone, and subject to critical judgment.

Apart from it being a difficulty inherent in their task, Milton and Vondel also inherited aspects of this problem of a God Who is both perfect and imperfect from their common source, Genesis, and from the long line of exegetical and literary tradition. The two strands of the Genesis narrative (Chapters 1.1-2.4 and 2.5-3.24 respectively) convey two different views of God, the first of an omnipotent and benevolent deity, the second more anthropomorphic and severe.<sup>16</sup> It is the God of the second strand who condemns Man and expels him from the garden. These two views were both incorporated into the Christian vision of God inherited by Milton and Vondel.

Both poets considered scripture sacrosanct. Vondel's poetic manifesto, for instance, commits him to the approach of one of his mentors, Prof. G. Vossius, of using as essential everything said by the Word of God, using sparingly what it does not say, and rejecting entirely anything that contradicts the Word:

Wy volghden de goude regels, die de Heer Professor [Vossius] in onze gedachten druckte, te weten: 't Geen Gods boeck zeit noodzaecklyck, 't geen het niet<sup>17</sup> zeit spaerzaem, 't geen hier tegens stryd geensins te zeggen.

Although the cryptic Genesis narrative and the scattered scriptural references to the fall of the angels obviously allowed - indeed necessitated - a good deal of imagination and creative interpretation, Milton and Vondel were both nevertheless committed to using what was given. And as it is

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<sup>16</sup>J. M. Evans, Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition, pp. 11-14.

<sup>17</sup> Opdracht lines 190-93, of his play Gebroeders.

true that, if too searching a light is cast onto Genesis, "God does not show to advantage",<sup>18</sup> it is to be expected that He will show to similar disadvantage in literary interpretations based on Genesis.

It is in this critical light, then, that we must consider the figure of God in Paradise Lost and in Lucifer. It is obviously necessary to keep the intellectual explanations and justifications for His portrayal in mind, and the theological background will always be relevant to our evaluation of Him and the rebels, but it is with His poetic deployment that we are concerned here. It is not valid to judge these works only, or even primarily, on theological grounds. It is not enough, for instance, to postulate the theological necessity, or even to take God's word for it, that the angels "by their own suggestion fell, /Self-tempted, self-depraved" (III.129-30).<sup>19</sup> This is not the full dynamic impression gained in a reading of either Paradise Lost or of Lucifer. A comprehensive investigation of the motives for rebellion in these works will go beyond either internal or external justifications and condemnations (such as God's and the narrator's), and beyond the mere contents of the decree, to a critical consideration of such aspects as its tone and its imaginative and emotional impact on the reader/audience. Inevitably this becomes an investigation into the nature of its author.

## II

William Empson and C. S. Lewis occupy the two extreme positions in the spectrum of critical opinion on the God of Paradise Lost. Empson's "brilliantly perverse"<sup>20</sup> book, Milton's God,<sup>21</sup> is the culmination of a

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<sup>18</sup>Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup>God's point in describing the rebels thus is of course primarily to contrast their sin with Man's and so to justify His withholding of mercy from them and not from Man, but this description also has a distinctly judgmental tone.

line of criticism which sees in the poem a wicked God. This is the inevitable corollary of the Romantic idea from which it grew: that Satan is the hero of the poem. Shelley is an eloquent spokesman for this school:

Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in Paradise Lost. . . . Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent. . . ., is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy . . . with the alleged design of exasperating him to deserve new torments.<sup>22</sup>

Empson continues this tradition when he argues that Satan has a morally sound case; his error is purely an intellectual one, in which God wilfully allows, even encourages, him to persist and so bring damnation upon himself. Empson argues further that this portrayal of God as mean and spiteful was Milton's conscious intention; Milton, he says, was struggling valiantly in Paradise Lost to "moralize or render just tolerable an essentially immoral and intolerable creed".<sup>23</sup> God is a "jovial old ruffian"<sup>24</sup> and Heaven a "forcing-house";<sup>25</sup> it will indeed be "far happier days" (XII.465) when He has abdicated.

This position is obviously so extreme as to become ridiculous. It becomes even more suspect as valid literary criticism when one considers the basic presuppositions and general tone of Empson's book. He makes no attempt to hide or disguise his personal bias but states in his opening chapter: "I think the traditional God of Christianity very wicked".<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Stanley E. Fish, Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1971, p. 46.

<sup>21</sup>William Empson, Milton's God (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965).

<sup>22</sup>Percy Byshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry", in Essays and Letters, ed. Ernest Rhys (London: Walter Scott, 1886), pp. 26-27.

<sup>23</sup>Paraphrase of Empson by Helen Gardner, A Reading of Paradise Lost (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 7.

<sup>24</sup>Empson, Milton's God, p. 124.

<sup>25</sup>ibid. p. 109.

<sup>26</sup>ibid. p. 10.

At the end of his book he includes an entire chapter on his personal view of Christianity. His observations on Paradise Lost are thus unashamedly made in the light of this explicit bias. This is clearly not the sort of premise on which sound objective criticism is based.

Crusading for Milton's God at the opposite pole to Empson is C. S. Lewis, and the remarkable thing is that at this extreme too, personal and, in this context, irrelevant presuppositions play a decisive role. Lewis says in his Preface to Paradise Lost:

. . . mere Christianity commits every Christian to believing that 'the devil is (in the long run) as ass'.<sup>27</sup>

It is clearly not on the presuppositions of mere Christianity that we are to base our judgments of Satan and of God, but on each one's independent and dramatic existence within the poem.

Stanely E. Fish is Lewis's most ingenious ally at this end of the spectrum. His defence of God is unqualified. He ascribes any apparent wickedness on God's part to the fallen perceptions of the reader:

To God belongs the essence of the speech[es], the completeness, the logical perfection, perfect accuracy of . . . perception ; all else is the reader's, the harshness, the sense of irritation, the querulousness.<sup>28</sup>

Fish's description of God here reveals his error: he is basically arguing from theology, from what God is like in theory instead of in the presentation of Him in the poem. Fish discounts the problems raised by this presentation, arguing that it is no more than a trap laid consciously by the poet to tempt the reader to an error of judgment and a fall. Throughout the poem, Fish argues, the reader is repeatedly being surprised in this way by his own sin.

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<sup>27</sup>C. S. Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost (London: O.U.P., 1960), p. 95.

<sup>28</sup>Fish, Surprised by Sin, p. 86.

One cannot but bring against Fish the very criticism that he levels at Ricks and Stein for their analyses of the language of Paradise Lost:<sup>29</sup>

This is brilliant criticism, although [one] might ask whether Stein and Ricks are not confusing their own subtlety with Milton's<sup>s</sup> and creating a response no reader could be expected to deliver.<sup>30</sup>

Fish's own theory of the reader's humiliation and consequent education is so subtle that one might seriously question whether this was indeed part of Milton's intention. But the value of extreme points of view such as those of Empson and Fish is that they challenge and alert our responses and help us to maintain some equilibrium in our understanding of the characters of Satan and God.

Few critics still disagree that the God of Paradise Lost poses a serious problem. We first encounter Him in Book III "sitting on his throne", from whence He observes Satan flying towards the world and, pointing him out to the Son, He "foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind [and] clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputation" (Argument, Book III). God is immediately at a disadvantage. Firstly, His appearance here follows directly in the wake of the great opening books, in which the reader has just participated in the hazardous and heroic journey up from the "Stygian pool" (III.14) to the shores of light. Theological premises notwithstanding, the weight of sympathy in the poem is squarely on Satan's side at this point. Secondly, the fact of God's providence complicates the dramatic presentation of this scene and places Him at a further disadvantage; He is to "foretell" the fall of Man and so be forced to judge him long before he sins. And thirdly, having done that, He must defend Himself, "clear his own justice . . . from all imputation". For the abstract God

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<sup>29</sup>Christopher Ricks, Milton's Grand Style (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) and Arnold Stein, Answerable Style (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1953) argue that Milton uses language in such a way as to activate two levels of meaning, a pre- and a post-lapsarian.

<sup>30</sup>Fish, Surprised by Sin, p. 93.

of theology this may be done through intellectual argument, but for a character in a dramatic poem, and one whose justice is on trial, it is more problematic.

God's speech (III.80-134) is, in the nature of divine speeches and because of his prescience, expository rather than a reproach or a judgment:

. . . man will hearken to [Satan's] 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.  
 (III.93-99)

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.  
 (III.122-25)

This is, from God's point of view, simply an unfolding of things as they are; He is clarifying the central and necessary concept of free will and so exonerating Himself. Fish analyses the speech in this light and makes clear theological sense of it.<sup>31</sup> But this kind of analysis does not take into account the tone of the speech, a crucial aspect in a context where God functions not as an abstract deity but as a dramatis persona. In fact, though God may be fully in His right, this fact is severely outweighed by a querulous, defensive, even neurotic tone. At least six times in the course of some fifty lines He emphasizes that the blame rests not with Him but with the rebels (whether Satan or Man), e.g.

they themselves decreed  
 Their own revolt, not I,  
 (III.116-7)

and

they themselves ordained their fall  
 (III.128)

God's insistence in asserting His own innocence begins to sound like an

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<sup>31</sup>Fish, Surprised by Sin, pp. 57-68.

abdication of responsibility or a guilty obsession. The fall being already accomplished from His perspective (Man was "sufficient to have stood"; III.99), He speaks with bitter reproach of Man, who from the reader's perspective is still unfallen, calling him an "ingrate" and "faithless", "enthralled /By sin to foul exorbitant desires" (III.176-7). The emotive force of His language tends to go beyond exposition. He appears even to relish the fate of His "enthralled" creatures:

so will fall,  
He and his faithless progeny: whose fault?  
Whose but his own? Ingrate . . .  
(III.95-7)

Clearly the contents of this speech is vital to the meaning of the poem, as the concept of free will is central to the fall both of Satan and of Man. This speech therefore had to be made.<sup>32</sup> The pity is that it is God who makes it and that the judgment contained within it inevitably seems premature. It is unfortunate that God, the professed fount of mercy and grace, should be trapped by the conditions of the material into what appears to be more self-justification than explanation. Even when the speech ends with the promise of His mercy (III.131-4), it is difficult to imagine that "while God spake, ambrosial fragrance filled /All heaven, and in the blessed spirits elect /Sense of new joy ineffable diffused" (III.135-7).

The same motive of self-justification seems to inform God's brief instruction to Raphael to visit Man and warn him of his danger (V.224-45). This is hardly a mission of mercy and help but rather an opportunity to

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<sup>32</sup>The speech see-saws between images of a just and a wicked God, suggesting that it is not so much Milton's version of orthodoxy as it is the projection of his own debate with the dilemma of justice and judgment. Part of his solution to the problem of portraying such a mysterious God has been to project the aspects of love and mercy onto the Son. This Old Testament view of God is thus offset against the New Testament view of the Son.

explain to Man his responsibility and so to "render [him] inexcusable" (Argument, Book V), and by extension to excuse God.

Thus after his first two appearances God is far from commanding our unqualified respect or sympathy, especially after Satan's profoundly impressive appearance earlier in the poem. When Raphael's narrative to Adam takes the story right back to its source and we hear God issuing the famous decree (V.600-15), the ambiguity of God's earlier impression is further enhanced. The decree is dictatorial and curt:

Hear, all ye angels, . . .  
 . . . . .  
 Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.  
 This day I have begot whom I declare  
 My only Son, . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . your head I him appoint;  
 And by my self have sworn to him shall bow  
 All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord.  
 (V.600-608)

Even in this imperious fiat the defensiveness of His earlier speeches is echoed. Again He is forced to mete out dreadful punishments long before any crime has in fact been committed, or this time even conceived (V.611-15). His providence traps Him into what appears to be an obsessive fear of being disobeyed, a position where it seems that it is He who introduces the concept of disobedience (V.611) or the idea of blaming the Maker for the fall of the creature (III.112) or the possibility that grace might be rejected (III.198-9). The logical end of this is the unhappy appearance that what God offers with the one hand He neurotically and spitefully grabs back with the other:

This my long sufferance and my day of grace  
 They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;  
 But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more,  
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall.  
 (III.198-202)

This is a cruel, even malicious God Who in one breath contradicts the very grace He offers. The same impression is created in the issuing of the decree. He promises celestial bliss:

Under [my Son's] great vicegerent reign abide  
 United as one individual soul  
 For ever happy,

(V.609-11)

but immediately goes on to counter it with dire warnings:

him who disobeys  
 Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day  
 Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls  
 Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place  
 Ordained without redemption, without end.

(V.611-15)

This procedure and tone can almost be interpreted as provocative. Waldock describes the decree as "distinctly curt and challenging"<sup>33</sup> while Empson concludes: "Such a Heaven was a forcing-house to develop the pride of Satan".<sup>34</sup> Empson's statement is typically extreme but his point is valid: dramatically speaking Satan is not entirely "self-tempted". Even if the contents of the decree should theoretically have given no cause for dissent, in the dynamics of the action as presented, God's tone may well contribute to Satan's motives for rebellion.

### III

Can the same be said of Lucifer? To what extent are Vondel's rebels provoked by God's decree?

Vondel's critics on the whole are much less daring than Milton's; they are content to take the author on his own terms, considering, for instance, what they consider to be "Vondel's bedoeling"<sup>35</sup> as the primary directive for their interpretation. But this cautious criterion does

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<sup>33</sup>Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics, p. 72.

<sup>34</sup>Empson, Milton's God, p. 109.

<sup>35</sup>Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 2:102.

not always encourage incisive criticism, even when one does consider that part of Vondel's "bedoeling" is in fact to use "de geheimenis van het toekomende menschworden des Woorts", "om den naeryver der hooghmoedige en nydige Geesten te heftiger t' ontsteken" (Berecht, 118-22).

We have seen the discrepancy between the God we assume Milton intended to portray and the One Whom the conditions of his poem forced him to portray. Therefore to accept God and His representatives uncritically in Lucifer (even if they are the author's spokesmen) is to judge the play on extraneous criteria and therefore either to miss or to ignore a nuance that exists (whether intended or not) in the atmosphere of Vondel's Heaven. There is, for instance, a certain sense of an uneasy tension or distance between God and His angels (even the loyal ones), which creates a slightly unharmonious atmosphere. God is obviously faced with the dilemma of both concealing and revealing Himself, but His mystery tends at times towards secretiveness, by which He seems to keep the angels (and even his emissaries) "enthralled" in ignorance and misunderstanding. Apparent tactlessness in the tone and timing of His decree seems to spur on the rebellion, and this must call His wisdom into question. A critical investigation of both God and his decree as elements motivating the drama is therefore necessary.

God is represented in Lucifer by three spokesmen who articulate His will, and the rebels' encounters with these spokesmen are the closest visible contact that they (the rebels) have with God Himself. Each representative embodies an aspect of God's nature: His authority (Gabriël), His mercy (Raphaël) and His wrath (Michaël). But beyond merely representing God, these angels are individualized into independent dramatic personalities whose characters contribute significantly to the dynamics of the action. God's commands are filtered through their individual personalities. Each encounter is therefore as much a dramatic conflict of personalities as it

is a simple communication of information or the relay of a command from God to His subjects. It is largely for this reason that each of Lucifer's conversations with a representative of God ironically confirms him in his choice of rebellion and consolidates his resolve instead of bringing him to repentance.<sup>36</sup> It is therefore not enough to study God via His representatives; it is also necessary to keep in mind that He is often perhaps misrepresented by them.

Milton used a similar device of employing an angel as go-between at the issuing of the decree. In Paradise Lost no spokesman stands between God and the angels, but Raphael stands between God and the reader, which raises the question of the accuracy of his reconstruction of the events in Heaven. But in Paradise Lost it is not so much Raphael's personality that is relevant as the situation within which he is speaking. He is under divine instruction to warn Adam of the impending danger of Satan's attack - to warn him so explicitly and urgently that there can be no excuse of ignorance. God has commissioned Raphael to

tell him withal  
His danger, and from whom, what enemy  
Late fallen himself from heaven, is plotting now  
The fall of others.

(V.238-41)

The story of Satan's fall is to be a warning, not an after-dinner tale, so that it might profit Adam to hear "by terrible example the reward /Of disobedience" (VI.910-11). Raphael's sense of mission could therefore justifiably be said to contribute to the threatening, severe, tone of the decree. But this, while it illuminates some of the dynamics in operation in Books V and VI, does not absolve Milton's God. Our previous encounters with Him verify the tone of the decree as His own and not merely the product of Raphael's zeal.

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<sup>36</sup>See pp. 65-71 and 83-88 below.

In Lucifer the mediation of the representative angel is more significant. The context in which he finds himself is also relevant. When, at the end of the first scene of Lucifer, Gabriël's "bazuin" announces his imminent arrival, Belzebub says:

Ons lust te hooren wat d' Aertsengel zal gebieden.  
(201)

Why are the rebels so eager to receive God's messenger?

Apollion has returned from a mission to the newly-created world and has brought with him a branch laden with fruit as visual evidence of the blessedness of Man. He describes Paradise and its inhabitants, and in what might be considered a foreshadowing of the temptation of Eve, he offers the fruit to the rebels, tempting them into an irrevocable fall into jealousy and covetousness:

. . . [ick] offere u de vruchten.  
 . . . . .  
 . . . oordeel, uit de vruchten, van het lant,  
 En van den hof, door Godt gezegent, en beplant,  
 Tot wellust van den mensch.  
(25-29)

"Wellust" (sensual delight) is the keynote to the subsequent descriptions of man's state; the rebels are soon persuaded by their own diabolical exaggeration and greed that it transcends their own in very way. They envy the luxury of Man's environment (see especially lines 29-38), his dual nature which allows him the pleasures and advantages both of men and of angels (105-6 and 119-21), and especially his sexuality. This is the final stimulus to their covetousness:

Dan ging de bruiloft in, met eenen wellekom  
 En brant van liefde . . .  
 Een hooger zaligheid, die d' Engelen noch missen.  
 . . . . .  
 Helaes! wy zyn misdeelt.  
(136-41)

Angels cannot procreate. For two reasons they begrudge Adam and Eve this gift. Firstly, Apollion is evidently filled with lustful admiration for Eve. He is transported by the exchanges of tenderness which he observed

between Adam and Eve, and by the sensuality of their love (129-42 and 144-8). It is an experience that he has been denied:

wy weten van geen trouwen,  
Van gade of gading, in een' hemel, zonder vrouwen.  
(141-2)

Secondly they begrudge Man the gift of procreation because soon it will bring the threat of numbers: "de wyde weerelt zal eer lang van menschen krielen" (125). Compounded with Man's immortality (175-82), this will before long constitute a threat to the status and favour of the angels. The reasoning by which they arrive at this point is emotive and devious, instigated by Belzebub's unfounded and envious statement at first sight of the branch of fruit: "'t Geluck der Engelen moet wycken voor de menschen" (38). This idea determines the drift of their reactions. Apollion even uses this as his main argument when he describes what he saw, and especially in describing Adam's authority:

Hy heerscht, gelyck een Godt, om wien het al moet slaven,  
(118)  
Voor hare majesteit staen alle geesten stom.  
(124)

This unfounded notion that they will have to be slaves to Adam begins to dominate their thought, and from there the conclusions are inevitable:

Hier door geniet de mensch het eeuwich en onsterflijck,  
En wort den Engelen, zijn' broederen, gelijk,  
Ja overtreftze in 't eindt,  
(182-4)

and

hy zal al hooger gaen,  
Om zijnen stoel in top der hemelen te zetten.  
(192-3)

The rebels' dissatisfaction has brewed throughout the scene and at this point only the actual articulation of the revolt is lacking.

Into this cauldron of fermenting passions God sends Gabriël. When the sound of his trumpet tears through the atmosphere of anger and envy,

the growing rebellion is momentarily suspended. The rebels eagerly expect from the divine messenger a clarification of the situation: either relief from their anxiety or justification for their growing resentment. However, all Gabriël does is to issue the divine decree, announcing the creation of the world and its enigmatic implications. Quite apart from any inciting or annoying idiosyncracies in Gabriël's manner of conveying the decree, the fact that God issues it at this moment appears tactless and provocative. By its very nature it must be dictatorial and absolute, but at this point in the action it can only confirm the rebels' worst fears:

Godt sloot van eenwigheit het Menschdom te verheffen,  
Oock boven 't Engelsdom.

. . . . .

Dan schynt de heldre vlam der Serafynen duister,  
By 's menschen licht.

(218-30)

Because the angels do not hear the decree issue directly from the mouth of God as in Paradise Lost, but from one of their equals, it sounds to them less like a fiat or statement of accomplished fact that will be obeyed, and more like an arbitrary command or order which must be obeyed. Rebellion against a fiat from God would seem a more awesome thing (fitting for epic), while the command from Gabriël seems more provocative, more like a "bare challenge".<sup>37</sup> God has not warned Gabriël of the suspicions and the emotional temper of the angels. When Gabriël therefore coolly announces the very event which they have been dreading, it sounds like deliberate defiance.

Unlike Satan's lonely vigil in the night of his discontent (V.657ff.), widespread dissatisfaction seems to follow the issuing of this decree (cf. 713-4). The decree is therefore clearly the major generating factor in the action of Vondel's play.

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<sup>37</sup>Empson, Milton's God, p. 102.

In Lucifer, God appears to keep His representatives always in some degree of ignorance about what He knows, what He intends, or what He means by His instructions. Obviously Vondel would want to maintain some mystery about the person of God, and it is fitting that even the angels should not know and understand God entirely, but in the dramatic recreation of events this is problematic. Already we have seen that Gabriël's ignorance about the dissatisfaction and rebelliousness leads him into a blunder of tactlessness which only pours oil onto the fire. It might also be asked at this point whether Gabriël himself, the "Geheimenistolck der Godtheit",<sup>38</sup> understands that the "mensch" of whom he tells, the "eeuwich Woort" (221) who is to be elevated above the angels, is not Adam but Christ. It is questionable whether he does understand (i.e. whether God has revealed it to him), because he does not explain it to the rebels. Thus the error of judgment or understanding that unleashes the tragic events might simply be the result of a strange gulf in empathy and understanding between God and His angels. Information which could have averted the rebellion or at least have clarified the issue and exposed the magnitude of their sin to the rebels, seems to be wilfully veiled or withheld.

Vondel has two clear reasons for organizing matters in this way. The first is generic. Lucifer's misunderstanding of God's intention is necessary, not only because the tragic hero must not be entirely bad or damnable, but also because this misunderstanding is basic to the tragic irony inherent in his rebellion; Lucifer's rebellion brings about (or makes possible) precisely that which it is rising against, the Incarnation of Christ and the consequent elevation of Man. The fact, therefore, that God is irreproachable, above question and never to be fully comprehended, is exactly the circumstance that gives rise to the misunderstanding which

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<sup>38</sup>Berecht, 121.

sets the wheels of tragedy in motion.

Secondly Vondel maintains this mysterious secretiveness about God because it is central to his theology that the ways of God, whatever they may be and whatever they may imply, must be accepted (while Milton's concern is of course that they should be understood and justified). This is the Rey's message to the rebels, and the whole message of the play:

Al wat de hemel stemt, zal 't hemelsch heir behagen.  
(233)

Above all, God demands obedience.

In the light of this, W. A. P. Smit interprets the decree as a "beproeving",<sup>39</sup> a trial for the rebels, a test of their obedience. Any divine decree clearly has this essential function, that it forces a choice either to obey or to disobey, and in this way tests the "true allegiance, constant faith and love" (PL. III.104) of the subjects. This is indeed what happens in Paradise Lost; God's decree, issued at a completely arbitrary moment, forces a choice and so clarifies the principle of free will. The choice is whether to be for God or against Him, and in this sense the decree can also be said to be a clarification of the angels' terms of existence.

If this were the kind of test implicit in the issuing of the decree in Lucifer, i.e. a challenge which would force a choice, then God's timing and tone and His withholding of information are obviously essential to the trial, and therefore strategic rather than tactless. But the point in Lucifer is that the malcontents have already chosen. In being resentful they have already sinned. The decree can therefore be seen as, not so much a test, as an opportunity to repent. It may be argued that it is

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<sup>39</sup>Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 2:92. See P. Maximilianus, "Vondel's Lucifer en de Franciscaanse School," Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal en Letterkunde 67 (1950):81-102.

issued not arbitrarily but largely in reaction to the discontent - a reaction of patience and mercy. But if this is its purpose, it remains questionable, in dramatic terms, whether its timing and tone can reasonably be expected to evoke repentance.

Nevertheless this introduces an aspect of Vondel's God which Milton's God does not share - His patience and longsuffering. Milton's God reacts with epic speed and power when the rebellion rises. He makes no effort to restrain Satan but immediately prepares for war, even before Satan has explicitly declared it (V.719ff.). Abdiel's challenge to Satan, though it might be seen to give Satan an opportunity of changing his mind, is not so intended by God. Vondel's God on the other hand delays His wrath. Through Gabriël His herald He issues His command, giving the opportunity for repentance (I.ii.202ff.); He follows this up with a warning of His wrath (III.iv.1096ff.). When that fails, He sends Raphaël, bearer of His mercy, to offer His Grace (IV.iii.1455ff.). Only in the last resort does He strike with His power and wrath, in the person of His "Veltheer", Michaël (V.i.1708ff.). The entire action of the play turns therefore on the process of Lucifer's choice. By causing God to delay His judgment, Vondel makes possible a protracted agony of choosing and deciding, the process central to this tragedy.

Thus Milton and Vondel deal in various ways with their common problem: how to present God in literary form. On the one hand His essential nature has to be preserved, and it is at this end of the scale that we find Him (especially Milton's God) to be the least problematic - when His ineffable majesty is preserved and we are allowed to "identify him with Fate and the Absolute".<sup>40</sup> As Waldock puts it:

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<sup>40</sup>Empson, Milton's God, p. 117.

The utterance of God is good in proportion as it is drained of personality: the less we feel God in what he says the better is the effect.<sup>41</sup>

But on the other hand God has to be personalized; a poem about a de-personalized character would be at the worst unwritable or at best entirely undramatic. God must therefore be anthropomorphized and His nature compromised. And for all their skill and circumspection, neither Milton nor Vondel escapes the inevitable; God becomes less than God.

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<sup>41</sup>Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics, p. 104.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ARCHANGEL

If the issuing of the divine decree is a convenient starting point for a comparative discussion of Paradise Lost and Lucifer, then the logical next step is a comparison of the reactions of the Archangels to that decree. In their immediate and spontaneous reactions we find an embryonic expression of each one's nature and motives, and therefore a convenient point from which to trace his development. However, it is not enough simply to ask: "How do Satan and Lucifer react to God's decree?" and then to turn to Book V and Act II respectively and attempt simple character sketches. The poet's wider purpose in each portrayal may not be discounted or ignored.

#### I

Milton is writing an epic in the classical style. The action takes place on an enormous, external scale, not confined to Heaven or Paradise but spanning the entire cosmos, and eternity. The devil is magnificent, his behaviour grand and his pride awful. This generic mould obviously dictates certain conventions within which Satan will behave in reacting to God's decree. Structurally too his character is controlled by certain factors. For instance, the action of the poem is not presented chronologically, so that when in Book V we see Satan reacting to the decree, much has already happened to establish our idea and expectations of him. Before he falls, we have already seen him fallen; before he rebels we have already seen the results of his rebellion - we have seen him vanquished and rolling upon the flood. But we have also seen him raise himself from this quagmire of defeat and undertake the heroic journey through Chaos to the new world, all the time committing himself more firmly and irrevocably to the course he has chosen, and through this determination achieving a peculiarly admirable (if perverse) stoic heroism.<sup>1</sup> But at the same time Satan has, from Book I

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter 4.

to Book V, undergone a steady moral degeneration, and Milton has simultaneously engineered an increasing alienation of the reader from Satan, progressively disconnecting our sympathies from the hero of the opening books.<sup>2</sup> Thus when we see Satan in Book V "defy[ing] the omnipotent to arms", we have just recently seen him, "squat like a toad", whispering deceit in Eve's ear (IV.799-809). Milton's wider purpose in Book V is obviously to maintain a degree of interest in the figure of Satan, but to discourage, even disallow, any renewal of sympathy or admiration for him. It is therefore against this complex background and in this bifocal way that we consider Satan when we see him react to the announcement of the Son's election.

No individual mention is made of Satan at the issuing of the decree; he is merely one of "the empyreal host /Of angels" (V.583-84). Then when he is first mentioned it is not with any recognition of his rank or even his person; we are not confronted with the glorious Archangel or even the defiant Arch-rebel, but merely become aware of an ominous and discordant undertone to the "harmony divine" (625), the orderly jubilation of song and dance that follows the decree:

with [God's] words  
All seemed well pleased, all seemed, but were not all.  
(V.616-17)

Satan's presence is not initially manifested in a military or heroic way, but in this foreboding murmur; evil at its origin is not a substantial enemy who can be dealt with in open battle but insubstantial, insidious and uncombattible. This menace then materializes as Satan is identified in the midst of the crowd, standing out by his different behaviour: all retire to sleep,

But not so waked  
Satan.  
(V.657-58)

Milton is here brilliantly imitating, through the organization of his material,

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<sup>2</sup>See Chapter 4.

the birth of rebellion in Satan, the awakening in him of a sense of self-awareness and independence. The division of the line imitates Satan's emergence from the crowd. (The dash that follows his name in some editions<sup>3</sup> isolates him and distinctly sets him apart from the body of angels.) This is Satan's first reaction to the decree and the first and definitive sin that he commits: he assumes independence from God. He aspires to the claim that God alone can make: "I am". He goes on to claim certain rights and dues and believes these to be "impaired" (665) by the election of the Son. He begins to view his relationship with God as a contract, according to which God's decree constitutes an alteration in the terms, which justifies a change of mind on his part:

New laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise  
In us who serve.

(V.680-81)

And so, "fraught /With envy against the Son of God" (661-62) and justifying his dissent on rational and legalistic grounds, he resolves to "dislodge" himself from the throne of God (669). The next step after such an awakening of self-awareness and independence is ambition and ultimately an attempt at usurpation. No prevaricating agony of decision precedes this progression in Satan. The epic demands grand and energetic action and Satan embarks unhesitatingly upon it. From his pride and envy he spontaneously conceives "deep malice" (666) and begins immediately to translate it into action: he plans mutiny. Waking Beelzebub he orders him:

Assemble thou  
Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;  
Tell them that by command . . .  
. . . I am to haste  
. . . . .  
Homeward with flying march where we possess

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<sup>3</sup>See Douglas Bush, ed., Milton: Poetical Works (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 314.

The quarters of the north.

(V.683-89)

Satan claims that he "possesses" a home apart from God. Satan's lie that he is commanded to fly north draws the deceived angels after him, but for the reader, as for God, there is no doubt about what is happening. God sees "rebellion rising" (715) and knows Satan's intention:

[he] intends to erect his throne  
Equal to ours.

(V.725-26)

The shift of perspective here to God's viewpoint has a distancing effect which undermines Satan's self-importance and discourages any identification of the reader with his cause. This subtle degradation is compounded by the fact that God, by announcing Satan's intention before Satan has even formulated it, pre-empts and so reduces the impact of his declaration of independence. The prefiguration at this point of Messiah's victory over the rebels (V.739-42) also thwarts Satan's rebellion before it has even begun. At this point in the poem Satan is not allowed the magnificence and grandeur and the command of our awe that made him the hero of Books I and II. In Books V and VI he is far more the conventional Arch-rebel, whom God justifiably laughs to scorn.

Satan is the sole instigator of the rebellion, and from first to last he is firmly and absolutely in control of the faction. Though it appears that perhaps Beelzebub shares his dissatisfaction,<sup>4</sup> the initiative to act comes entirely from Satan and Beelzebub is never more than just "his next subordinate" (671). Satan is unequivocally "the author of all ill" (II.381). The evil exaggeration and bitter sarcasm of the devil already inform his thought. He instructs Beelzebub to deceive the angels thus:

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<sup>4</sup>cf. V.676-78 and I.87-88. Milton's concentration of power and dynamism in the figure of one devil is obviously particularly suited to the epic treatment of the material. Medieval dramatic treatments often diversified the role of the devil; see E. J. Haslinghuis, De Duivel in het Drama der Middel Eeuwen (Leiden: Gebroeders van der Hoek, 1912), Chapter 6.

Tell them that, by command . . .  
 . . . I am to haste  
 . . . . .  
 To the quarters of the north, there to prepare  
 Fit entertainment to receive our king  
 The great Messiah, and his new commands,  
 Who speedily through all the hierarchies  
 Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.  
 (V.685-93)

Satan bases his rebellion on the same unfounded exaggeration which characterizes Belzebub's and Apollion's reasoning in Act I of Lucifer, i.e. that the decree implies the introduction of a severe tyranny.<sup>5</sup> And at this point in the poem of course the promise of "fit entertainment" for the new tyrant echoes the black humour of his promise of entertainment for Adam and Eve:

hell shall unfold her gates ,  
 To entertain you two.  
 (IV.381-82)

On his arrival at the mount of the Congregation, his seat in the north, Satan assumes a role which clearly expresses his sinful self-awareness and ambition:

Satan came to his royal seat  
 High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount  
 Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers  
 From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold,  
 The palace of great Lucifer . . .  
 . . . . .  
 In imitation of that mount whereon  
 Messiah was declared in sight of heaven.  
 (V.756-65)

In Rajan's words, "Satan's external lineaments reflect his sin".<sup>6</sup> Throughout the poem such imitations and parodies of God explicitly illustrate Satan's ambition of "affecting all equality with God" (763). These parodies also form but one thread in the complex web of irony that is wrapped around Satan in the course of the poem, through the multiple cross-references, echoes and prefigurations activated by the unchronological structure. Satan's ascending

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<sup>5</sup>See pp. 21-22 above.

<sup>6</sup>Rajan, Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader, p. 44.

his throne in the north, for instance, at once echoes (structurally) and anticipates (chronologically) his exaltation in Pandemonium in greatly altered circumstances (II.1-10). His folly in Book V is therefore highlighted, and his self-importance further undercut, by our knowledge of his fate. Milton relies, in Books V and VI especially, on this kind of retrospective cross-reference to colour his portrayal of Satan.

At the Council in the North (still in the same night after the issuing of the decree) Satan formulates his rebellion and succeeds in winning a third of Heaven's population to his side. This is in many ways a baffling scene. The angels have been drawn by deceit to the Council; no prior discontent existed among them (Satan alone remained awake after the decree, not "well pleased", 617 ). And yet Satan manages, in the space of thirty lines, to persuade all but one of those gathered at the Council that rebellion is justified. At this stage of the poem we are well aware of Satan's skill as a demagogue (cf. Books I and II), and we half expect this kind of success on his part. But the difference between the councils in Books II and V is that in Book V Satan is not confronted with fallen and desperate rebels but with an audience of uncorrupted and "well pleased" angels, "a vast assembly of crystal clear intelligences".<sup>7</sup> With John Peter therefore we may ask, when they are so readily converted: "Has Satan somehow contrived to isolate Heaven's imbeciles?"<sup>8</sup> But the difficulty of believing this scene is considerably reduced if Raphael's mediating presence is kept in mind. Raphael is narrating these events to Adam and Eve in Paradise; his knowledge of them is second-hand (he was not in the north), his opinion of Satan is obviously biased by his perspective and by his own loyalties, and his purpose in narrating is to warn Adam and Eve of Satan's insidious and persuasive power. He is not giving an eye-witness account nor a full report of all

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<sup>7</sup>Peter, A Critique of Paradise Lost, p. 69.      <sup>8</sup>ibid. p. 70.

that was said and done; in the nature of a reporter he is both selective and biased and has appropriated to himself the freedom of an editor.

Raphael's narrating presence in Books V to VIII tends to be obscured by the style he adopts. He is a narrator in the same style as the authorial narrator of the poem: his account is so vivid and immediate that the dramatic element obscures his mediation. But Milton is careful to alert his reader to it from time to time. Just before the start of Satan's speech, for instance, we are pointedly reminded of the context of the narrative. Raphael tells of the exodus to the north:

Regions they passed, . . .  
 . . . regions to which  
 All thy dominion, Adam, is no more  
 Than what this garden is to all the earth.  
(V.748-52)

The unexpected introduction of the vocative returns us to "this garden", distancing us again from the events in Heaven and maintaining our critical attitude towards Satan. Milton also plants a number of inconsistencies in Raphael's narrative to remind us of the angel's personal bias and the imperfection of his knowledge of the events, e.g. his contradictory portrayals of Beelzebub: on the one hand he is innocently manipulated by Satan ("[Satan] infused /Bad influence into the unwary breast /Of his associate", V.694-96) while on the other hand he is a wily partner in the scheming (Satan: "Thou to me thy thought /Was wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart", 676-77).

Raphael sweepingly and pejoratively describes Satan's speech to the Council as "bold discourse without control" (803) and a "current of . . . fury" (808). But a close analysis of the speech reveals that in fact the style, skill and control of the demagogue are very much in evidence. Even though Raphael has severely edited and condensed it, the speech remains a skilful feat of persuasion. It is structured around a central idea which both introduces and concludes it, and it progresses with great caution towards the suggestion

of rebellion. It is informed by a purposeful indignation and constructed with impeccable skill in seduction.

Satan addresses the angels with exactly the same appellation as God used when He announced His decree:

Thrones, dominations, principdoms, virtues, powers.  
(V.772)

This becomes a formula of address in the poem and is often no more than a "mere sonorous roll-call of titles",<sup>9</sup> but in this case it is loaded. It immediately recalls God's decree, the cause of the present discontent, and the whole of Satan's appeal revolves around these titles. His argument is that God's new decree demands of them a form of servitude which is contrary to the nature and rights of creatures of the rank of principdom or power: God is perpetrating "the abuse /Of those imperial titles" (V.800-1). Consequently, as he enumerates the titles, calling their attention to their ranks, Satan wishes to stir in the angels the same proud self-awareness that was awakened in him by the threat of the decree. But he is careful to begin his appeal unobtrusively. He starts his address with this formula that would seem on the surface to be merely conventional, and then he carefully begins to appeal to their more active interest with the unorthodox and challenging suggestion that these titles are perhaps "merely titular" (V.774). Feigning obedience, he explains why they are gathered:

to consult how we may best  
With what may be devised of honours new  
Receive him [Messiah].  
(V.779-81)

For the reader "honours new" bristles with the same sarcastic threat as "fit entertainment" (V.690) and points grimly ahead to the "new honour" with which the rebel angels will in fact "receive" (VI.561) and "entertain" (VI.611) Messiah's army: their new invention, gunpowder.

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<sup>9</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on V.601, p. 295.

Satan is sowing the seeds of discontent, guiding his listeners' emotions by his choice of words. His argument becomes progressively more emotive: the angels are "eclipsed" (V.776); they must pay "knee-tribute" (782); and finally, they must practise "prostration vile" (782). Satan steadily perverts service into servility; "unjustly [he] deprav[es] it with the name /Of servitude to serve whom God ordains" (VI.174-75). But in the light of these carefully planted innuendos his listeners will no longer find so outrageous the suggestion that their titles perhaps mean nothing. Indeed, it will begin to sound probable. Having thus paved the way, Satan begins to make tentative gestures towards rebellion:

But what if better counsels might erect  
Our minds and teach us to cast off this yoke?  
(V.785-86)

This suggestion is merely an elaboration of his earlier, spontaneous rebellion against the decree:

New laws from him . . . new minds may raise  
In us.  
(V.680-81)

The words "erect" and "raise" evoke at once both the physical and spiritual opposite of "prostration" and appeal to a sense of courage and heroism such as Satan grandly displays in hell but which, in this context and at this point in the poem, has only negative connotations.

Before the outrage of the proposal can startle his audience, Satan returns to his main point again, drawing attention to the repugnant paradox of Princedoms in submission:

Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend  
The supple knee?  
(V.787-88)

and he immediately follows this with flattery designed to pre-empt any critical reasoning on their part:

Ye will not, if I trust  
To know ye right.  
(V.788-89)

But relevant here as corrective to this bold defiance are two earlier pictures of Satan. The first is of him searching his heart on Mt. Niphates (IV.9.113) and admitting: "nor was [God's] service hard" (45). The second is when Gabriel apprehends him in the garden in Book IV and says to him:

thou sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem  
Patron of liberty, who more than thou  
Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored  
Heaven's awful monarch?

(IV.957-60)

Considering the situation, Gabriel is probably exaggerating, but his view nevertheless contributes to our composite picture of Satan. Our memory of these two pictures qualifies our evaluation of Satan's defiant confidence before the Council.

Satan now introduces to the angels the erroneous argument which must follow once they have been persuaded to overestimate the significance of their titles: the fallacy that they have, by virtue of these titles and ranks, certain rights which God is infringing and impairing by elevating His Son above them:

[We are] natives and sons of heaven possessed before  
By none . . .  
. . . . .  
Who can in reason then or right assume  
Monarchy over such as live by right  
His equals, . . .  
. . . Or can introduce  
Law and edict on us, who without law  
Err not . . . ?

(V.790-99)

On the surface of it these questions are reasonable, and as Rajan points out, this is "a perfectly orthodox version of the claim that monarchy is not grounded on the law of Nature".<sup>10</sup> But Satan's error is in claiming that Messiah has "assumed" monarchy. He has in fact been divinely "begotten", and Satan's questioning of this is outright disobedience, the product of

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<sup>10</sup>Rajan, Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader, p. 63.

a sinful sense of self-awareness and independence. He is calling God to account. Unwilling to accept the mystery, he tries to measure God's decree by the rule of reason. But an important observation here is that, in the nature of the epic hero, Satan suffers no real internal struggle over this tension between accepting and understanding, while it is a central aspect of Lucifer's tragic agony.<sup>11</sup> Satan simply exploits it as a means of appealing to his listeners. His real motives are hidden beneath this facade of rational integrity. It is really jealous pride much more than a legalistic sense of unfair impairment that lurks beneath the "counterfeited truth" (V.771). He complains:

Another now hath to himself engrossed  
All power, and us eclipsed.  
(V.775-76)

This subjective motive also slips out unobtrusively when he states that Messiah is coming to receive from them

Knee tribute yet unpaid, . . .  
Too much to one, but double how endured?  
(V.782-83)

The implication is that to serve God alone is already too much to bear. Evil is fast taking possession of Satan's reason. As his argument develops and he feels it succeeding, so his boldness and disobedience increase; he no longer merely resists subordination to the Son, who was his equal, but resists being subordinate at all, to anyone.

Satan neatly concludes his dialectics by returning again to "those imperial titles" of the angels (801). These imply, he concludes, that the angels are "ordained to govern, not to serve" (802). But this antithesis echoes other notorious words spoken in a very different and infinitely more unhappy context:

Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.  
(I.263)

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<sup>11</sup>See Chapter 3.

This determination to "reign in hell" is born not out of jealous mortification, as is his original rebellion, but from despair which, though it yet awaits him, we have already seen him suffer, and our memory of it casts an ironic, even pathetic light on the unsuspecting boldness of his words to the Council in the North. Thus, while for his listeners Satan's speech ends on a strong and defiant note, - "[we are] ordained to govern, not to serve" - for the reader it is injected with this darker implication.

At this point in the chronological order of events, Sin is born. She herself relates this event in Book II, where it plays an important role in Satan's reintegration following his fall, and has the equally important function of contributing to his degradation at that point.<sup>12</sup> Though it is not mentioned again in Book V, it is relevant to our analysis of Satan's development to consider it here.

In conceiving rebellion against God, Satan has conceived sin. Milton translates this psychology into an allegorical event in which Satan physically "bears" Sin in the form of a "goddess armed" (II.757). She narrates as follows:

at the assembly, and in sight  
Of all the seraphim . . .  
. . . . .  
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.

(II.749-58)<sup>13</sup>

What Sin is describing is the delirious ecstasy of the full awakening of self-awareness. The birth of Sin in "flaming darkness" is also an instant

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<sup>12</sup>See pp. 117-18 below.

<sup>13</sup>Clearly a perverse imitation of Athene's birth from Zeus's head, but also a diabolic parody of the godhead (cf. V.594-99) and of the generation of the Son. cf. Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on II. 752-61, p. 125.

induction of the inverted order of Hell, the world of contraries like "darkness visible" (I.63). "Sin's birth provides the original milieu of flames".<sup>14</sup> She continues:

familiar grown,  
I pleased, and with attractive graces won  
The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft  
Thy self in me thy perfect image viewing  
Becamest enamoured.

(II.761-65)

The mirror-effect of the line "Thy self in me thy perfect image viewing" (an obvious parody of the relationship between the Father and the Son) illustrates the degree of Satan's self-awareness and megalomania.<sup>15</sup> He sees his sin for what it is, and is in love with it; within a matter of hours following the decree he has fully integrated evil into his self-image and has become "to [himself] enthralled" (VI.181).

Satan's hubris reaches its peak in his clash with Abdiel. Abdiel's lonely defiance against Satan at the Council in the North is brave and is fully supported by the sympathetic weight of the poetry.<sup>16</sup> In preparing for Messiah's entrance it forecasts Satan's defeat, but paradoxically Abdiel's resistance only confirms Satan in his sin. By treating Satan as someone independent and significant, and as the threat which he believes he is, Abdiel flatters Satan's self-image and so increases his confidence. Satan's sinful self-awareness reaches its extreme in his argument that he is self-begotten:

We know no time when we were not as now;  
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised  
By our own quickening power.

(V.859-61)<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Cope, Metaphoric Structure, p. 95.

<sup>15</sup>Adam and Eve too become self-aware and dramatically more real after their fall. Broadbent explains: ". . . as they fall, Adam and Eve are humanised. . . . Dramatically it is a clumsy business; but that personality should co-incide with sin is precisely the comment that the myth is trying to make: individuation is man's glory and his peril" (J. B. Broadbent, Some Graver Subject (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), p. 192.

To deny not only his dependence on but also his evolution from any source outside himself is his most audacious grasp at equality with God. Satan has made himself into a god and in the confidence of this self-image he goes on to lead the third part of heaven's host in rebellion against the Almighty.

## II

Vondel's purpose is to mould this same material into a tragedy. Of this same Archangel he must make a sympathetic tragic hero, of this same decision to rebel a protracted personal agony founded on a tragic error. He is forced by his genre to treat the action chronologically and so to begin with the rebellion in Heaven. Out of the rebelling Archangel he must create a character whose damnation is inevitable and deserved but whose salvation the audience nevertheless desires, a figure whose pride strikes terror into us but whose situation evokes our pity for him. It is therefore imperative that from the moment of his first appearance Lucifer should begin to win our awe, admiration and sympathy.

It is out of the question for Vondel to begin his drama with the kind of devil whom he envisages in his *Opdracht, Berecht and Inhoudt*, and who closely resembles the Satan of Book V of Paradise Lost. This devil is an unqualifiedly proud, ambitious and envious being "die zich vermat aen Godts zyde te zitten, en Gode gelyck te worden" (*Opdracht*, 17-18). He is driven by "Hoovaerdy en Nydigheit, twee oirzaecken of aenstokers van dezen afgrysselycken brant van tweedraght en oorloge" (*Berecht*, 75-76). As far as inspiring terror is concerned such material obviously confronts Vondel with no problem. But the evocation of pity is a more delicate matter. How is the audience to have pity for this most despicable of

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<sup>16</sup>For a fuller analysis of Abdiel's role see pp. 130-32 below.

<sup>17</sup>This begins as an opportunistic argument, but Satan is soon persuaded by his own rhetoric to believe it, at least for the moment (see p. 132 below).

creatures?

Vondel sets the action on a much smaller scale: he confines it to Heaven, internalizes a great deal of it and protracts the events that lead up to the rebellion to form the body of the drama. His first appeal to our sympathy for Lucifer is neatly paradoxical: he keeps him out of the action.

Lucifer is not present when Gabriël appears in Act I to announce God's decree. Indeed, he is conspicuously absent throughout the first act: conspicuously, because he is identified right from the start as the instigator of the disobedient behaviour and yet he is not present to share or witness its development. It is he who has sent Apollion to spy on God's creation: "Vorst Lucifer zondt hem" (3). His absence at Apollion's return therefore demands comment. Smit tends to stray too far from the evidence of the text when he explains Lucifer's absence by suggesting that he (Lucifer) was not actually the mastermind behind the scheme but that he was pressurized by the other rebel leaders to send Apollion to Paradise; hence his lack of interest in Apollion's report.<sup>18</sup> But such an interpretation shifts the source of evil entirely away from Lucifer, and in terms of the conventions of tragedy this is not acceptable. It shifts all blame and guilt from Lucifer and tends to leave him without any initiative. Vondel clearly intends us, however, to understand that Lucifer is the author of evil, hence the deliberate mention of him in the opening lines. At the outset, Lucifer is identified as the father of evil. But he remains the detached mind behind the scheme. Vondel cannot at this point in the play allow him to be seen to be actively part of the subversive action; that would militate too strongly against our sympathy. Lucifer's absence at the return of his envoy is therefore a skilful dramatic manoeuvre which allows Vondel a significant ambiguity: Lucifer is present at the birth of evil and

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<sup>18</sup>Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 2:91-92.

yet he is not. Vondel must keep this paradox in balance for the major part of the play. The devil must be given an admirable character and a plausible case, but his character must nevertheless be evil and his case wrong. Lucifer must be worthy of our admiration, but still become the Arch-fiend.

Participation in this sour scene would have degraded Lucifer's behaviour to the level of base and unworthy jealousy, whereas his motives are in fact at least partly idealistic. Belzebub, functioning throughout the play as foil to Lucifer, replaces Lucifer in Act I as an object for our disgust. The sentiments of jealousy and dissent are put into his mouth, e.g. he is the first to begin the envious comparison of the state of the angels with that of Man (34-37); he sets the tone for Apollion's description of earth and its inhabitants; it is also he who directs the rebels' thoughts to the idea that Man's existence is a threat to them (143 and 189). His role in the scene is that of a skilful conductor. Lucifer in the meantime is present only in a kind of glorious abstraction; he is only mentioned, and in the nature of tragedy he is presented as being of admirable stature and high esteem. His title (see the Personaedjen) immediately sets him above and apart from the conniving fiends. They are already called by their diabolic names and identified as "wederspannige Oversten" while he is described without bias simply as "Stedehouder". In his absence his status and stature are emphasized in preparation for his first appearance. He is referred to as "Vorst Lucifer", "Heer" and "Meester" (3, 8 and 9). His very name, the name of the unfallen light-bearer, characterizes his stature and invites our awe. Locked up in it is the entire tragic potential of the situation: Lucifer is the morning star, the highest and the finest, and thus almost inescapably susceptible to pride, and a fall.

By keeping Lucifer out of the action and carefully paving the way for an impressive entrance, Vondel makes possible a relatively unbiased reception of him when he first appears and we see him reacting to the decree.

The final anticipation of Lucifer's arrival is Gabriël's advice to the angels: "Gehoorzaemt Lucifer" (258). He then departs with the warning:

Zoo luidt myn last, waer aen de Godtheit u verplicht.  
(280)

This is followed by an exemplary song of praise to God by the Rey, who in turn leave with the injunction:

Laet ons Godt in Adam eeren.  
(347)

Silence has fallen upon the impassioned malcontents. The first word to be spoken now in the wake of the decree is by Lucifer as he enters the stage (II.i). The entire focus shifts to him. Not only is his role as Archangel, the one whose example they are advised to follow, in the balance, but his stature as hero (both the fearless hero of the rebellion and the more complex hero of the tragedy) is at stake. The theatrical moment is his alone.

His entrance is glorious. Here is the full embodiment of all that is implied in his name. He is transported onto the stage, standing in his magnificent chariot drawn by a lion and a dragon.<sup>19</sup> These symbolize pride and jealousy, the vices that will undergird the rebellion; Lucifer's arrival is therefore immediately menacing and his fatal sin symbolically foreshadowed. But more important in this first moment is the fact that these beasts are impressive, enhancing Lucifer's own image of colossal pride which, while it is a cardinal vice, is also attractive. Lucifer is the

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<sup>19</sup>See Berecht 75-79.

morning star and he knows it (see 349). His sense of self-importance is evident in his theatrical entrance. His earlier, unprecedented and completely independent commissioning of an expedition to the earth is also evidence of great self-assurance. This is what makes greatness or eminence fatal - not the greatness itself, but one's awareness of it in oneself. It encourages ambition and a delusion of independence, an aspiration to the claim: "I am". So greatness exposes one to pride and inescapably to a fall. But an equally significant danger is that such a self-image is fragile. It is anchored in itself alone, in an illusory sense of individuality, and therefore can (and in God's presence must) be shattered, and with it one's personal integrity.

Lucifer's self-image has been challenged by God's announcement of the elevation of Man. This becomes evident in his opening words. After the magnificence of his entrance, his speech is really a lament for the glory he must forfeit, spoken from the pinnacle of that glory:

Al hoogh genoeg in top Godts Morgenstar gedragen;  
Al hoogh genoeg gevoert.

(349-50)

The histrionic organization of his language imitates the pattern of his career, evoking first this sense of elevation and eminence ("Al hoogh genoeg"), and then expressing the decline which he believes awaits him:

't is tyt dat Lucifer  
Nu duicke, voor de komst van deze dubble star [den Mensch],  
Die van beneden rijst.

(350-52)

He envisages the end of his glorious career:

Borduurt geen kroonen meer in Lucifers gewaet.  
Vergult zijn voorhoofd niet met eenen dageraet  
Van morgenstarre en strael.

(354-56)

These lines are truly moving, reminiscent of Othello's last retrospect to happier times in his farewell to arms,<sup>20</sup> and while they are largely theatrical

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<sup>20</sup>Othello III.iii.344-54

and indulgent they are in truth, like Othello's, a relinquishing of his self-esteem. Lucifer is surrendering his very birthright to an inferior: "Onze erfenis komt hun" (369). God's decree has called into question that in which Lucifer's assurance is anchored: his rank, and as he lays this down, he must also abandon his self-image.

Lucifer does not abdicate with good grace. Deep envy underlies his speech. He resents the good fortune of Man for the eclipse he believes it will cause him:

Een andre klaerheit komt in 't licht der Godtheit stygen,  
En schynt ons glansen doot.

(357-58)

In emotion and imagery this is almost identical to Satan's jealous complaint:

Another now hath to himself engrossed  
All power, and us eclipsed.

(V.775-76)

In his pride and envy Lucifer, like Satan, vastly exaggerates the implications of God's decree, even to the extent that he sees his personal eclipse as an eclipse of Heaven itself:

deze dubble star  
. . . [rijst] van beneden, en zoekt den wegh naer boven,  
Om met een' aertschen glans den hemel te verdooven.

(351-53)

The melodramatic language of Cyriel Verschaeve expresses this idea well:

Wat Vorstelijke ziel! Wat een koningsweedom! Hoe meet ze de  
afstanden, hoe omvademt ze de hemelen! Hoe weegt ze zichzelf  
tegen de gansche wereldorde af! Haar eigen lot verbreedt ze tot  
een wereldomwenteling.<sup>21</sup>

Lucifer's exaggeration of his plight culminates in such lines as:

't Is nacht met Engelen

(360)

and

Ons slaverny gaet in.

(363)

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<sup>21</sup>Cyriel Verschaeve, Vondel's Trilogie (Brugge: Zeemeeuw, 1941), pp. 30-31.

A bitter sarcasm dominates Lucifer's speech, especially as he turns to the angels and parodies Gabriël:

gaet hene, viert, en dient,  
 En eert dit nieuw geslacht, als onderdane knapen.  
 . . . . .  
 . . . met recht is hem gegeven  
 Den grooten staf, waer voor alle eerstgeboornen beven,  
 En sidderen.

(363-74)

Satan too relies on sarcasm to express his indignation,<sup>22</sup> but the quality and force of his tone is very different. Satan's promise, for instance, of "fit entertainment to receive our king" (V.690) is full of purposeful malice; his speech is a call to arms. By contrast Lucifer's tone is one of resentful resignation and his speech an histrionic unburdening of the heart. While Satan's sarcasm derives from angry indignation and adds thrust to what he has already conceived - action, resistance, rebellion - Lucifer's springs from injured pride, and for the moment he indulges the emotion. The situation has for him as much an aesthetic quality as anything else. And his sarcasm, theatrical though it be, has overtones of real despair. While the line: "hier gelt geen tegenspraeck" (374) is certainly part of Lucifer's theatrical "gesture", it is also partially an expression of resignation to his loss. In the course of his speech Lucifer has articulated the rapid process of personal disintegration that follows for him upon the shock of God's announcement. It is a speech full of smouldering resentment which ends in a sarcastic but sincerely mortified surrender.

This is obviously not the reaction of the typical Arch-fiend, the devil of Vondel's *Berecht*. Such a character's reaction would have been a headlong hurtle into un contemplated rebellion. It would have been unambiguously evil, like Satan's, without any hesitation or inner struggle, and therefore similarly without tragic potential. But Vondel chooses to create

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<sup>22</sup>See p. 35 above.

a character who hesitates and speculates and will therefore be the bearer of a protracted agony of decision, and whose ultimate choice and its consequences will evoke our pity and terror.

Milton and Vondel have both taken care to set against these reactions of the Archangels (different in important ways but basically the same in their sinful rejection of God's will) the ideal reaction of other angels. By this means they show up those characteristics that set the Archangel apart, and at the same time they place his behaviour within a framework of clear moral sanctions. In Paradise Lost the entire company of Heaven receive the announcement of Messiah's election with rejoicing: "that day. . . they spent /In song and dance about the sacred hill" (V.618-19). Their counterpart in Lucifer is the Rey who similarly exemplify the instinctive and joyful obedience due to God:

Heiligh, heiligh, noch eens heiligh,  
 Driemael heiligh: eer zy Godt.  
 . . . . .  
 Zyn geheimenis zy bondigh.  
 Men aenbidde zyn bevel.

(337-42)

Gabriël and Raphaël in Lucifer, and Abdiel in Paradise Lost, epitomize this attitude and bring it into direct and dramatic conflict with the attitude of the Archangel. What characterizes the behaviour of these good angels in each case is their implicit acceptance of the mystery of God's ways and the complete absence in them of any sense of self.<sup>23</sup> Our analysis in this chapter has shown that it is, by contrast, a proud sense of self that characterizes both Satan and Lucifer in their reactions to the decree and that lies at the root of their disobedience and evil. Satan acquires a self-image, and in this confidence and exhilaration he is propelled into energetic, epic action. Vondel reverses this process in order to create a

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<sup>23</sup> See pp. 23 and 65-71 (Gabriël), 83-88 (Raphaël) and 130-132 (Abdiel).

situation with tragic potential: Lucifer loses or renounces his self-image and withdraws into brooding inaction.

### III

It has been emphasized above that, for generic reasons, Vondel could not begin his play with the kind of devil whom the audience would find unequivocally damnable - the kind of devil which Lucifer becomes at the end of the play. On his first entrance Lucifer is therefore an attractive character and in his reaction to God's decree he is in many ways more pitiable than damnable. Satan's reaction to the decree is exactly the opposite. But we have been doing Milton the injustice here of disregarding the structure of his poem, and with this, distorting his treatment of Satan. If we now restore the events in Paradise Lost to their structural (as opposed to their chronological) sequence, it becomes evident that Milton has in fact been as careful as Vondel to begin the action with an attractive Archangel, but without compromising Satan's epically proud and energetic reaction to the decree. Milton's genre allows him (indeed almost compels him) to delay the morally and intellectually dubious rebellion in Heaven until much later in the poem and to begin with Satan in a context where his proud and defiant behaviour is morally and intellectually convincing. As S. Musgrove puts it: "Evil [is] magnificent . . . [only in] its native setting of smoke and flame".<sup>24</sup> Though Milton does not have to evoke our pity for Satan, he does have to begin his poem with a character who will capture our interest and admiration, and whose case will at least seem plausible and partly admirable. Therefore he begins in medias res, with Satan in Hell. And the first, perhaps most striking, observation with which the reader of Paradise Lost must come to terms is his sympathetic response to this Satan.

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<sup>24</sup>S. Musgrove, "Is the Devil an Ass?," Review of English Studies 21 (1945):305.

Milton begins the poem with the traditional Christian image of the Archangel who said in his heart: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God".<sup>25</sup> In the invocatio of the poem (I.1-49) he describes him as "the infernal serpent . . . / . . . [whose] pride /Had cast him out from heaven":

He trusted to have equalled the most high,  
 . . . and with ambitious aim  
 Against the throne and monarchy of God  
 Raised impious war in heaven and battle proud  
 With vain attempt.

(I.34-44)

This is the character whom we later see rebelling against God in Book V. It is also the same traditional figure as Vondel envisages in his *Berecht*. Indeed, the invocatio of the epic is comparable to the dramatist's "berecht" or notice in that it stands in relation to the poem much as the notice stands to the play. The invocatio is a generically peculiar part of the epic which, like the notice, conventionally contains the author's abstract of and personal attitude towards the action which is to follow. It is a moment of intimate conspiracy between author and muse before their mutual labour begins, and can therefore be regarded as a touchstone for the author's beliefs and attitudes. Musgrove points out that in *Paradise Lost* even the exordium (I.50-83) is "delivered almost in propria persona".<sup>26</sup> Milton's invocatio and exordium are loaded with emotive words, revealing in every line his attitude towards Satan: he is proud, ambitious, impious, infernal, guileful, envious and revengeful.

But when the action begins, the first we see of Satan is not the infernal or impious figure of this prelude (and of Book V). We see an Archangel vanquished and aware of his loss. Satan's first words in the poem are a lament spoken over his lieutenant "weltering by his side" (I.78) in the "fiery gulf" (I.52):

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<sup>25</sup>Isaiah 14.13.

<sup>26</sup>Musgrove, "Is the Devil and Ass?," p. 305.

O how fallen! how changed  
 From him, who in the happy realms of light  
 Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine  
 Myriads though bright.

(I.84-87)

The narrator describes him as casting his "baleful eyes" about him (56) and nursing an "obdurate pride and steadfast hate" (58), and introduces his speech as "bold words /Breaking the . . . silence" (82-83). Given this introductory portrait, Satan's opening words are a shock. At least the first eleven lines of this speech (if not the entire speech) should be read as a soliloquy. In this moment when Satan recovers from his fall and looks about him at the outcome of his rebellion, he is to all intents and purposes alone and his emotions therefore strictly and movingly honest. There is no bombast here, no malice or hate, no pride or meanness. There is, instead, a nostalgic awareness of good, beauty and divine glory, and an undeniable pain in the recognition of their loss. Nor is it his own loss but his fellows' which Satan spontaneously and sincerely laments. This is the utterance of an angel, fallen certainly, but not yet devil, and in this first moment of noble and honest suffering we are won to his side.

Here lies the crux of the difficult and much debated problem of the reader's response to Satan in the opening books. It is an undeniably sympathetic response, which has been most cleverly rationalized by appeals to the reader's own fallenness: if the reader admires Satan he is either, like the author, of the devil's party without knowing it,<sup>27</sup> or he has been shrewdly manipulated by the author to expose his own fallenness through his reaction to Satan.<sup>28</sup> Common to these theories is their unanimous acknowledgement of the reader's sympathy with Satan. But they are all

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<sup>27</sup>Blake to Empson.

<sup>28</sup>Chiefly Fish and Lewis.

founded on the erroneous presupposition that it is the devil to whom we are responding in Book I, hence their rationalizations. But what we see when the action begins is not "the infernal serpent" (I.34), nor even the impressive "arch-enemy" (I.81), but "the paradox of an angel in hell".<sup>29</sup> It is the "archangel ruined" (I.593) to whom we respond initially, and what we observe in the course of Books I and II is the process of an angel becoming devil. The authorial allegations in the invocatio and exordium emphasize, by force of contrast, Satan's surprizingly attractive nature at the start, and heighten the drama of the change which on the one hand he has suddenly undergone in his fall, and on the other he will steadily undergo as he becomes the devil.

The sudden change wrought by Satan's fall is only fully exposed when the events are viewed chronologically, but it is nevertheless clearly indicated in Book I by the startling difference between the authorial description of him (and, indeed, the reader's ordinary expectations of him) and his opening words. Now the question must obviously arise: how is it possible that the Arch-rebel can, after perpetrating his act of disobedience and violence against God and being hurled to perdition, still be more angel than devil? What has happened to the Satan who "raised impious war in heaven" (I.43)? In order to understand fully this stage in Satan's development it is necessary to return to the chronological approach, while keeping in mind that the pattern of Satan's personal development is obscured (but also enriched) by Milton's arrangement of the events.

The first important clue to what has happened to Satan is his peculiar forgetfulness (in Book I) of the real nature of the rebellion: he remembers the war but forgets or represses Messiah's decisive and crushing role in it. The second clue is in the allegory of his encounter with Sin

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<sup>29</sup>Broadbent, Some Graver Subject, p. 71.

at the Gates of Hell (II.643-889): he does not recognize her, his daughter and lover and image of himself. Something has happened to Satan's memory of the events in Heaven. Somewhere his self-awareness has become clouded, and to discover this point of relative disintegration we must consider the final stages of his rebellion.

As Satan marches into battle against the armies of God in Book VI his external appearance and behaviour reflect his sinful self-confidence:

High in the midst exalted as a god  
The apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat  
Idol of majesty divine, enclosed  
With flaming cherubim, and golden shields.

(VI.99-102)

In his last glorious moment as morning star Satan resembles Lucifer in his chariot (Lucifer, II.i), proud and magnificent. But while the dominant impression of Lucifer's appearance is its magnificence, the tone of the poetry here stresses instead Satan's damnable pride. Satan poses "as a god" but is false, an "idol"; he is "the apostate". His behaviour during the war is characterized by a scoffing and revelling glee. Abdiel, striking the first "noble stroke . . . /On the proud crest of Satan" (VI.189-91), and the loyal armies, battling valiantly against him, confirm his self-image by treating him as something formidable. They answer his military attacks with military defence and his scoffing with indignant responses. In stark contrast, Messiah's treatment of Satan is disdainful, swift and final:

So spake the Son, and into terror changed  
His countenance too severe to be beheld  
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.  
. . . . .  
. . . Full soon  
Among them he arrived; in his right hand  
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent  
Before him, such as in their souls infixed  
Plagues; they astonished all resistance lost,  
All courage; down their idle weapons dropt;  
O'er shields and helms, and helmed heads he rode  
Of thrones and mighty seraphim prostrate.  
. . . . .  
. . . [He] withered all their strength,  
And of their wonted vigour left them drained,

Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.

. . . . .  
 . . . as a herd

Of goats or timorous flock together thronged  
 [He] drove them before him thunderstruck.

. . . . .  
 . . . headlong themselves they threw

Down from the verge of heaven, eternal wrath  
 Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

(VI.824-66)

Whereas Satan's confident and mocking speeches and his proud figure dominates the war up to the moment of Messiah's entrance, he is now not only silent, but his very person has unceremoniously disappeared out of the narrative. There is now only unspecific mention of the collective foe; Satan is again submerged into the mass, as at the issuing of the decree. Unlike Abdiel and the loyal armies, Messiah has simply refused to recognize Satan, either as a military threat or as an identified being, and so by refusing to acknowledge Satan's self-image he has destroyed it, for the cruelest degradation is to be unrecognized or discounted. Messiah's presence abhors opposition (cf. "His countenance, too severe to be beheld"; 825) to the extent of annihilating all individuality but his own. And so Satan's sense of self, that in which he had gloried and in which his confidence and delusion of independence had been rooted, is instantly lost, and with it his personal integrity. Thus Messiah deals Satan the most effective blow by not dealing him a blow at all. God is the only Term of Reference for existence; in His presence sin can no longer avail and it is at this point, where Satan loses his sense of identity, that he forgets his offspring and lover, Sin. His fall is therefore as much a personal disintegration as it is a physical expulsion from Heaven, and it is from this as much as from the physical shock and oblivion of the fall that Satan has to recover when he finds himself "weltering" on the flood.

The most eloquent evidence of Satan's loss of his evil identity is his lament over Beelzebub which, far from being evil, is noble in its spontaneous concern for another and its conception of beauty and good. The

inversion and confusion of values which is to become the hallmark of Satan and of Hell does not yet inform these words:

O how fallen! how changed  
 From him, who in the happy realms of light  
 Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine  
 Myriads though bright.

(I.84-87)

Satan is indeed "thunderstruck" (VI.857). The fall has acted upon him like a drug:<sup>30</sup> "the sleepy drench /Of that forgetful lake benumb[s]him " (II.73-74). This "coma"<sup>31</sup> of unconsciousness is the extreme opposite of his delirious self-consciousness in Heaven, and he awakes from it now with something of a moral tabula rasa. For this briefest moment he is under the influence of "innocence, that as a veil / . . . shadow[s one] from knowing ill" (IX.1054-55).

Thus both Milton and Vondel overcome the difficulty of capturing our active, sympathetic interest in the Arch-fiend by beginning with a character who is in many respects more angel than devil. Both Satan and Lucifer are in states of considerable shock and personal disintegration when the action begins, and therefore neither is outright damnable. The concern of the following chapters is to trace their respective developments from here, to that point where they embark upon malicious evil and can both unreservedly be called Arch-fiend.

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<sup>30</sup>Empson, Milton's God, p. 43

<sup>31</sup>Cope, Metaphoric Structure, p. 92.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ARCH-REBEL: LUCIFER

#### I

Before leaving the stage after his announcement of God's decree, Gabriël directs our attention and anticipation towards Lucifer by his advise to the angels: "Gehoorzaemt Lucifer, verknocht aen Godts geboden" (258). This constitutes the integrity of the Archangel: that he is "verknocht aen Godts geboden"; he is the first among the angels, among all creatures, and leader of them in their obedience to God. And so Gabriël expects it will be on this occasion too. But God's decree has challenged Lucifer's primacy, and his first speech is, in its sarcasm and mortified rancour, a silent declaration: Non serviam, and in this he automatically loses his integrity as Archangel and withdraws into a brooding resentment, expressed in a sarcastic gesture of submission: "Hier gelt geen tegenspraeck" (374). With G. van Herpe we feel that "er is iets wezenlijks geknackt in dien held".<sup>1</sup>

The discussion in the previous chapter has shown that such a reaction was necessary (at least initially); Vondel could not allow Lucifer to be actively rebellious and malicious from the outset. But nor can he now, having started cautiously, shape a tragedy out of such passive material. The tragic hero must be wilful, courageous and guilty, characterized by a confident "rondbroestigheid",<sup>2</sup> and Lucifer's declaration that he will not serve (or will serve, but grudgingly) is by no means yet a declaration of rebellion. He must recover his active self-confidence, his image of himself as that leader of angels, though now no longer in obedience but in rebellion against the Almighty. Unless he relents (which God will give him ample opportunity

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<sup>1</sup>G. van Herpe, Het Grieks-christelijk dualisme in Vondel's Lucifer (Menen: Verraes-Pattyn, 1951), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

to do), he must evolve a new identity that will integrate his new manifesto: I will not serve.

Morally this is obviously a retrogressive development, the inexorable change from angel to devil, but it is simultaneously a gripping process of personal and emotional reintegration and this positive development becomes the central agon of the play and the means by which our sympathetic interest in Lucifer is sustained. By the time he marches into battle in Act V he will have become, though entirely damnable, also heroically determined, driven by a "valiant fury".<sup>3</sup> But the complexity of Lucifer's character also makes this development a protracted, agonized process, and one in which Lucifer is exposed to pressures so shrewdly applied that they steadily give shape to the devil in him. It becomes evident in the course of the play that Lucifer has, in the nature of the tragic hero, a much more responsible insight into the implications of the rebellion than his fellows have, and therefore he hesitates often before deciding to execute their plan. He must therefore be consistently encouraged and persuaded, even unobtrusively coerced, into actively embracing the role of rebel leader.

Vondel entrusts this function to his shrewd and independent second devil, Belzebub, making him the primary agent in Lucifer's development from angel to devil. From the beginning of the action Belzebub singlemindedly directs his energies towards that moment when Lucifer will accept the leadership and be restored in his own eyes as the true "Stedehouder" and be hailed by his followers as a god. Lucifer's progress in determination and Belzebub's encouragement of it can be traced in four stages, in which Lucifer is alternately absent and present: i) in Act I Lucifer is absent and the rebellion grows amongst the leaders to a point just short of action;<sup>4</sup> ii) in Act II

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<sup>3</sup>Macbeth V.ii.14. Lucifer's integration of evil into his personality is, especially in the final stages, much like Macbeth's ultimate achievement of integrity, however perverse.

<sup>4</sup>See pp. 21-22, above.

Lucifer is subtly led by Belzebub to overcome his passivity and subscribe to the rebellion, inspired by him but matured in his absence; iii) in Act III.i-iv Lucifer is again absent and the rebel legions are stirred to a pitch where all they lack and desire is a commander to lead them into battle; iv) in Act III.v Lucifer accepts this role which Belzebub has carefully prepared for him and is instantly caught up in the momentum which it is by now impossible to arrest.

Belzebub's strategy begins with his intercepting of Lucifer's messenger, Apollion, in Act I and so ensuring that he is the first to receive the news of Paradise. This is not an attempt to usurp Lucifer's position or rank. van Herpe points out that "Belzebub [neemt] liefst niet de opperste verantwoordelijkheid op zijn schouders".<sup>5</sup> This is merely the first shrewd step in his careful manipulation of Heaven's viceregent. Belzebub knows that he must have all the necessary information (including Apollion's report) at his disposal if he is to persuade Lucifer to lead the rebellion, and so he waylays Apollion and extracts from him what he needs to know of Man and his condition.

Belzebub's independence and intelligence in this play are theologically unorthodox and if misinterpreted will have unacceptable theological implications. But Vondel's careful handling of the role is another example of his skilful exploitation of generic necessities. van Herpe overstates the case when he says (paraphrasing Jonckbloet) that Belzebub is "de grote beweger der actie".<sup>6</sup> Lucifer is the author of sin and the symbol of the recalcitrant pride that inspires the rebellion. Belzebub merely coaxes him into actively pursuing his grand visions; he is to Lucifer the "tolck van zijn eigen hartstocht".<sup>7</sup> For theological reasons Vondel is careful through-

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<sup>5</sup>van Herpe, Grieks-christelijk dualisme, p. 48. <sup>6</sup>ibid. p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>A. Baumgartner, Leven en Werken, p. 196.

out the play to point explicitly to Lucifer's undeniable (and generically indispensable) personal guilt, but for equally important generic reasons he is careful to allow, indeed invite, sympathy for Lucifer. He is walking the tight-rope between keeping Lucifer "nochte heel vroom, nochte onvroom",<sup>8</sup> and the critic must negotiate it too. To oversimplify the case one way or the other would be to deny or obscure Vondel's triumphant orchestration of complexities and paradoxes, generic demands and theological necessities.

Following Lucifer's opening speech, Belzebub is faced with the monumental task of restoring to this passive giant his integrity and with it his ability and desire to act and lead. Belzebub has a shrewd knowledge of Lucifer's weaknesses; he knows, for instance, that flattery is the surest course to his goal, and he gambles on Lucifer's passion to reign as the one thing that can overcome his reluctance and stir the potential rebelliousness in him. And so he begins, by subtle exploitation of what is latent in Lucifer already (the pride, jealousy and mortification evident in his opening speech), to encourage Lucifer to recapture the image of his greatness. He addresses him emphatically as the viceregent of Heaven:

O Stedehouder van Godts opperheerschappyen.  
(376)

This title is a positive, challenging assertion of all that Lucifer is renouncing. But in thus reaffirming Lucifer's primacy, Belzebub must prevent it from simply encouraging his tendency to romanticize. This tendency is evident in Lucifer's grasp of the "threat" of Man's elevation: he conceives of it in grand, ethereal visions of, for instance, an eclipse of light and glory (357-59). Belzebub realizes that as long as Lucifer's visions remain vague and theoretical, his reaction to the "threat" will remain ineffectively theatrical. He therefore proceeds to inflame Lucifer's indignation by translating the theory of submission into glaring, even

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<sup>8</sup> Joost van den Vondel, Jeptha of Offerbelofte (Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik, 1971), Berecht, 51-52.

repugnant, realism, e.g.

Een aerdtworm, uit een' klomp vanaerde en klay gekropen,  
Braveert uw mogenheit.

(389-90)

He elaborates Lucifer's own vision of serving man "als onderdane knapen" (364) with details which the Stedehouder is bound to find intolerable:

ghy zult het Menschdom zien  
Zoo verre boven u, en vallende up uw knien,  
Met nederslaghtigheid en neêrgeslagene oogen,  
Aenbidden zyne maght, en hoogheit, en vermogen.  
(390-93)

In short, he says:

Wy zien den hemel haest veranderen van staet.  
(407)

A threat to the "staet" or order in Heaven is clearly a threat to Lucifer's own status, and Belzebub takes care to emphasize Lucifer's personal interest: "een aerdtworm . . . /Braveert uw mogenheit. ghy zult [hem] zien /Zoo verre boven u, en vallende up uw knien . . .". He carefully introduces a feeling of urgency by the coice of such words as "haest".

These are powerful appeals, and sure to rouse Lucifer's pride and jealousy, but Belzebub concludes with a paradoxical twist which by its very perversity pulls Lucifer up short. Having affirmed Lucifer's greatness and kindled his passion, he counsels him to resign after all:

. . . legt voortaan den scepter uit der hant,  
(402)

and

. . . legh af uw morgenstralen.  
(404)

He pretends to acknowledge the inevitability of their submission, agreeing that "hier gelt geen tegenspraeck" (374). Put to him as an actual proposition that he should resign his rank, this suggestion jolts Lucifer out of his lethargy and he swears:

Dat zal ick keeren, is het anders in myn maght.  
(410)

This oath is a curious and revealing combination of impulsiveness and caution, but Belzebub is quick to reinforce and encourage the sign of positive energy; before it can be sublimated or reconsidered he immediately interjects:

Daer hoor ick Lucifer, en zie hem, die den nacht  
Van 's hemels aengezicht verdryven kan.

(411-413)

With the words "hoor" and especially "zie", Belzebub encourages Lucifer to conjure up a vision of himself as morning star, resisting eclipse. "[Er] doet . . . in hem de schim zijner eigen glorie rijzen".<sup>9</sup> So Belzebub strives to direct Lucifer's elusive determination and goes on to sustain it by flattery which, in its effusiveness, foreshadows Lucifer's ultimate apotheosis and the peak of his fatal hubris in III.v:

De Godtheit wort in hem [Lucifer] gedient, en aengebden,  
Bewieroockt, en geviert.

(417-18)

Belzebub relies on such excessive flattery to reaffirm to Lucifer his image of himself and to cloud his reason. He carefully steers him towards active dissent by appealing to his emotions, for instance his jealous fear for his birthright (369):

Zou Godt een' jonger zoon, geteelt uit Adams lenden,  
Verheffen boven hem [Lucifer]? dat waer het erfrecht schenden  
Van 't alleroutste kint.

(420-22)

Belzebub's skill here is no less than Satan's before the Council in Book V of Paradise Lost. His rhetoric and his careful choice of words inject just the correct tone of righteous indignation into what masquerades as a reasonable question. He adapts Lucifer's vague, even melodramatic sense of being impaired to become the chief premise of the rebellion. Soon he is appealing not merely to their personal "erfrecht", but to a universal and sacred "Recht":

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<sup>9</sup>Baumgartner, Leven en Werken, p. 196.

Geen mensch verstoute zich onze orden om to wroeten,  
 En dit bezworen Recht 't ontwyden, zonder reên.  
 (425-26)

By this fallacy he seeks to ennoble their cause. After patient emotional and intellectual preparation Bezebub now circumspectly begins to introduce the language of rebellion: if their Right should be infringed, he suggests, "al de hemel raeckt in 't harnas tegens een" (427).

Lucifer is inspired by the emphasis on their Right. It appeals to a certain nobility and idealism in him, the Archangel's innate sense of good order:

het past rechtschape heerschappyen  
 Geensins hun wettigheit zoo los te laten glyen:  
 Want d'oppermaght is d' eerste aen hare wet verplicht.  
 (428-30)

Tragically, this ideal vision of sound, responsible conduct also contains the root of Lucifer's hamartia: the delusion that God is in error. His hubris readily leads him from here into his highest presumption, which is also his ultimate absurdity: the delusion that he is God's protector. God is jeopardizing the celestial order and must be protected against Himself. Lucifer lives so much in a world of visions and self-conscious dramatization that in some moments of transported illusion he really does believe that it is his duty to the Fatherland ("Vaderlant", 435) to rebel against God's will. Paradoxically, this absurdity does elevate Lucifer's motives slightly above the level of pure self-interest, making them at least partly idealistic, however deluded. And the whole grand vision is founded of course on his initial error of interpretation, "zijn kolossale vergissing":<sup>10</sup> his confusion of Christ and Man. Vondel is taking pains to make Lucifer's case at least partly plausible, to make him something more than just the father of lies.

But at the same time Vondel is careful to maintain the balance by

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<sup>10</sup>van Herpe, Grieks-christelijk Dualisme, p. 10.

consistently exposing the selfish motive that underlies Lucifer's ideal of championing the celestial order. Lucifer's maintenance of that order is also the maintenance of his own high rank in it, and his idealism becomes clouded by this baser emotion:

ben ick een zoon van 't licht,  
Een heerscher over 't licht, ick zal mijn Recht bewaren.  
(431-32)

No longer the Right, but my Right. His emphasis on "ick" begins to dominate his lines. Already there is much more confidence and determination here than in his earlier, qualified oath: "Dat zal ick keeren, is het anders in myn maght" (410). An energy approaching the demonic begins to stir in him:

Ick zwicht voor geen geweld, noch aertsgeweldenaren  
Laet zwichten al wat wil: ick wijck niet eenen voet.  
(433-34)

More and more his passion sweeps him along until he too envisages war:

Wy zullen sneven, of dien hoeck to boven komen.  
(437)

Like Macbeth's, his is becoming a "vaulting ambition" which causes him to regard the elevation of Man as "a step /On which [he] must fall down, or else o'erleap".<sup>11</sup> More and more Lucifer begins to behave like the traditional Arch-rebel:

En liever d' eerste Vorst in eenigh lager hof,  
Dan in 't gezalight licht de tweede, of noch een minder.  
(443-4)

This is an unreserved expression of his earlier, smouldering sentiment: Non serviam.<sup>12</sup> Here is also an inadvertent but unmistakable revelation of the "staetzucht" that lies behind Lucifer's idealism. Has he not in fact, even as Archangel, always been less than "d' eerste", always inferior at least to God? Like Satan at the Council in the North, Lucifer has been swept along on the flood of his own rhetoric until for him too service means

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<sup>11</sup>Macbeth I.vii.27 and I.iv.48-49.

<sup>12</sup>A commonplace among rebels and devils in literature. cf. PL I.263, and Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on I.263, p. 59.

"prostration vile, /Too much to one, but double how endured . . ?".<sup>13</sup>

In pride and renewed self-assurance he challenges fate:

Is 't noodlot dat ick vall', van eere en staet berooft:  
Laet vallen, als ick vall' met deze kroone op 't hooft,  
Dien scepter in de vuist.

(438-40)

Lucifer's obvious obsession with the idea of falling is evidence of a penetrating insight into the implications of his behaviour. His subconscious prophecy here of his own destruction combines with his massive hubris to evoke terror in the reader/spectator.

Within a matter of a hundred lines Lucifer has been transformed from inaction to a state of blind passion. Belzebub has skilfully motivated and guided this change, but we have noted that his modus operandi has simply been to activate what is latent in Lucifer already. He confidently relies on Lucifer's passion to do the rest. Clearly, therefore, Lucifer is the victim not only of those who manipulate him but also (and perhaps more) of his own emotional and proud nature. By no means is he converted to something foreign to his nature. W. A. P. Smit argues to the contrary that Lucifer is a neutral party in the play, torn one way and the other between two forces, the evil angels and the good ones, each urging him to align himself with something external to himself.<sup>14</sup> It is certainly true that Lucifer is, for much of the play, undecided and vacillating; (his present determination soon ebbs again). But Smit tends to overemphasize his case for the sake of illustrating a parallel structure with Vondel's immediately preceding play, Salomon, in which Salomo is torn between the influence of Sidonia, representative of Astarte, and Sadock, representative of God. We have seen above, however, that Lucifer is himself inherently ambitious and jealous and that Vondel is at pains to identify him as the

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<sup>13</sup>PL V.782-83.

<sup>14</sup>Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 2:104. In this interpretation Smit follows P. Maximilianus, "Fransiscaanse School," pp. 81-102.

original author of evil and thus clearly of the one party already. He vacillates, not so much because he is a pawn between two forces but because of his own complexity of character. He is an emotional being who acts and reacts impulsively from moment to moment, often even contradicting himself. It is also this complexity of character (rather than being an innocent victim of external forces) that makes Lucifer a tragic figure, and the essence and triumph of his final integration of character is that he accepts his own nature and where it has led him.

## II

Gabriël's return at this point, probably to investigate the causes of the unrest that is sweeping through Heaven and to invoke again the Archangel's exemplary faithfulness to quell it, interrupts but in the end paradoxically aids Belzebub in his strategy, so that the graph of Lucifer's development in pride and passion continues to rise during this encounter with God's representative.

Lucifer descends from his chariot (449) and approaches Gabriël humbly at first (451-55), but with the express purpose "hem nader t' ondervragen" (448). He asks Gabriël one question after another concerning the elevation of Man and, by implication, his own demotion. That it is his own demotion that he fears far more than any threat to an abstract ideal is evident from the way in which his language now echoes the tone of Belzebub, e.g. in the diabolically unfounded assumption that in elevating Man, God will "den hemel onderdruckt"(458), and in such precise echoes of Belzebub's use of imagery as:

Het Geestendom . . .  
 . . . zal voortaan een' aertworm, uit het stof  
 Gekropen, en gegroeit, ten dienst staen.  
 (462-64)

Lucifer's tone soon becomes that of a superior addressing an inferior:

"ontvou ons 's hemels wil," he demands (483). Gabriël is an inferior to

Lucifer and this tone is therefore not strictly incongruous, but Lucifer comes very close here to calling God to account. He demands ultimate knowledge. Traditionally this is an unmistakable manifestation of hubris, but Vondel complicates and elaborates this conventional characteristic to make Lucifer's hamartia a unique one, a peculiar combination of pride and perplexity. The question must arise: is Lucifer purely and simply proud when he asks that Heaven's will be revealed? Had he been just that, would he have questioned God at all? Would he not, like Satan, have returned a simple "No!" to God's command, instead of a puzzled "Why"? That God's command is puzzling there is no doubt. The union of God with Man, the "menschgeworden Godt" (547), is the central mystery of the play, as it is of Christianity. How is it possible "d' eeuwigheit [te] verknoopen aen 't begin? /Het hoogste aen 't allerlaeghst?" (471-72). This is the central theological problem:

. . . dees ongelyckenis  
 Van een oneindigheit en 't eindigh; de bepaelde  
 By d' onbepaelde maght.

(527-29)

What has possessed God that he should "zyn' aert en wezen storten in /Een lichaem" (470-71)? Lucifer is touching here, of course, the matter of the Incarnation, and though his formulation of the mystery is accurate, even acute, he appears unaware of the full implications even of his own formulation, for he is balking at the offensive surface details - the repugnant idea of a union of the spiritual with the physical and the elevation of this hybrid into Heaven, the sacred realm of pure spirit. Clearly Lucifer has erroneously reversed the central concept: he does not grasp the idea of the "menschgeworden Godt" because he is blinded by the imagined threat of a "godgeworden mensch". But whatever Lucifer's error, here lies the rub: he wants to treat God's will as a theological problem, one that may be understood, instead of as the mystery that it is, which can only be humbly and implicitly accepted in faith. van Herpe points out:

de vraag naar de reden van de Menswording schijnt onbewust vervangen te zijn door de vraag naar de mogelijkheid der Menswording. . . . Laten wij . . . luisteren naar de inwendige stem die wij [in Lucifer's vragen] horen: "Non credam!" en eerst daaruit "non oboediam".<sup>15</sup>

R. K. J. E. Antonissen concurs:

Lucifer se tragiek . . . is: dathy die misterie as probléem beleef.<sup>16</sup>

Lucifer sarcastically says:

Wy Geesten zyn te grof om dit geheim te vatten,  
(480)

but the irony operates at his own expense because, while he bitterly (and absurdly) implies that the angels are evidently more "coarse" than Man because God seems to favour Man, he misses the more accurate and salutary implication that they are in fact more "coarse" than God and therefore not in a position to question or understand His command.<sup>17</sup> In the very formula he employs to express his wish - "dit geheim te vatten" - he reveals the irony but also the tragedy of his position. It is not only contradictory to hope to "grasp" a "mystery", but this approach to God's decree - "uit dit besluit den zin te zamen [te] rapen" (473) - gives rise to the possibility of error, one of the first preconditions for tragedy. It is in the end fatally sacrilegious. And Lucifer will, for all his searching, be the last to understand. Lucifer's questioning is contrasted with (and frustrated by) Gabriël's repeated exhortations to obey and to accept, so that this scene also becomes a symbolic clash between their two attitudes. Gabriël refuses to, indeed cannot, meet Lucifer on his own grounds. He urges Lucifer to adopt the only attitude that he knows:

<sup>15</sup>van Herpe, Grieks-christelijk dualisme, pp. 32-33; my emphasis.

<sup>16</sup>R. K. J. E. Antonissen, Die Christelike en die Tragiese, Inaugural Lecture, Rhodes University (Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 1959), p. 16.

<sup>17</sup>The irony is lost in Kirkconnell's translation: "We spirits cannot grasp such mysteries", Celestial Cycle, p. 375. The absence of the irony here, highlights its impact in the original.

zich te schikken en te regelen  
 Naer [Godts] gestelde wet, dat voeght den onderzaet,  
 Die aen zijn meesters last en wil gebonden staet.  
 (489-91)

Gabriël reminds Lucifer here that, not only should he be, as Archangel, "gebonden aen zijn meesters last en wil", but as creature he is bound to and held in being by God's will:

Uw aenzien schiept zyn licht alleen uit Godts vermogen.  
 (508)

To condone Lucifer's attitude by suggesting that his misgivings merit consideration or discussion would be to condone his disobedience and flatter his self-image (as Abdiel inadvertently does for Satan), and would indeed imply a tendency towards disobedience in Gabriël himself. He and the Rey cannot conceive of existence apart from God or outside His will. He is therefore in no position to offer Lucifer any reply or advice that would satisfy his mind in its present clouded and impassioned state, but only frustrates him further with what appears to be self-righteousness. In M. S. B. Kritzinger's words:

Gabriël is, uit die standpunt van die ontevredenes beskou, nogal 18  
 duister, en dit moet die indruk wek dat hy opsetlik ontwykend is.

In this way Gabriël ironically facilitates Belzebub's task of preparing Lucifer for active rebellion.

Lucifer is not entirely unaware that he acts, even exists, by God's grace alone (cf. "is het anders in myn maght"; 410), but his delusion of independence obscures the fact of the relativity of his existence, and no amount of admonishing from an equal or inferior angel will persuade him of its vital truth; "Geen minder droome hier zyn' meerder te gebiën" (567). It is only in the relentless course of the tragic action that he will ultimately realize that his light is merely a reflection of God's (508).

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<sup>18</sup>M. S. B. Kritzinger, Die Opstandsmotief by Vondel (Pretoria: van Schaik, 1930), p. 99.

In his encounter with Gabriël, Lucifer's blind audacity traps him into moments of dramatic irony which contribute subtly to the sustaining of the audience's terror. As Gabriël is often the agent (though not always wittingly) of this irony, the sense of friction between him and Lucifer is heightened. For instance, in a moment of extravagant pride Lucifer says to Belzebub:

Laet vallen, als ick vall' met deze kroone op 't hooft.  
(439)

Moments later Gabriël, who was not present when this challenge was made, warns Lucifer:

De wederspanningheit verplet haer hooft en kroon.  
(506)

In the economy of the drama Lucifer's pride and defiance recoil proleptically upon him in the echo of language and imagery, and though the echo might escape Lucifer, the audience registers the implicit prophecy. The ironic effect of this is much the same as in Paradise Lost when the rebels, who had been taught by Satan to hate and defy the idea of prostration, are summarily prostrated by Messiah's presence:

O'er shields and helms, and helmed heads he rode  
Of thrones and mighty seraphim prostrate.  
(VI.840-41)

The simple echo of the word "prostrate" (from Satan's speech at V.782) brings a deflating irony and a sense of just retribution into play.

When Gabriël assures Lucifer that time will unfold the reason and sense of God's decree, he is again unaware of the irony (double irony) of his words. He attempts to placate Lucifer with the assurance:

De reden en het wit . . .  
. . . . .  
Verberght de hemel u: de tyt wil d'oirzaeck leeren,  
(492-97)

and

De menschgeworden Godt zal dit geheimnisboeck,  
. . . zelf ontsluiten.  
. . . . .  
Dan zal men d' oirzaeck zien, de reden, den waerom.  
(547-50)

Time will reveal all. The audience's hindsight informs these words with penetrating irony: we know that what Time will reveal is, firstly, the classical error upon which Lucifer's rebellion is founded, and secondly, that Lucifer's rebellious search to know God's reason is the very reason for which he is searching. It will be to expiate this very rebellion that there will be a "menschgeworden Godt" (i.e. Christ) and that Man will enter Heaven. Lucifer is therefore trapped into a cruel irony and by an inescapable destiny.

Lucifer's justification of his resistance is moving:

Ick zaegh den hemel blint, de starren overhoop,  
 Wanorden orden en geschickheit overrompelen,  
 Indien de bron van 't licht haer klaerheit quaem to dompelen  
 In 't graf van een moerasch.

(535-8)

The poetry of this vision of cosmic chaos suggests a genuine concern and does appeal to the sympathy of the audience. The poetic quality of Lucifer's language is obviously not an absolute measure of the sincerity of his public concern (even those visions where his personal ambition is undisguised are expressed in equally moving poetry, e.g. 575-81), but the poetry of his language does suggest a nobility of character which maintains our admiration for him.<sup>19</sup> By this point in the play, however, there are two characteristics of Lucifer that we cannot forget when we read such lines: his histrionic and indulgent manner, and his spontaneous identification of his own welfare with that of Heaven. So here too it is evident that his concern for Heaven, while it is noble, has at root a passionate concern for himself, e.g.

[De mensch] verdooft de majesteit en diamante stralen  
 Van onze morgenstar.

(517-18)

The "morgenstar" is none other than Lucifer himself. And Lucifer's vision of cosmic chaos also strikes us, for all its grandeur of conception and

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<sup>19</sup>cf. Macbeth's speeches.

expression (or perhaps because of that) as somewhat melodramatic, so that there is some ambivalence in the audience's reaction to him. Lucifer is indeed "nochte heel vroom, nochte onvroom".

His eloquent apology to Gabriël must obviously also be interpreted in this light. Again his sincerity, while it is questionable, is by no means entirely deniable. He excuses himself thus:

verschoonme, o Gabriël,  
 Indien ick uw baziun, de wet van 't hoogh bevel,  
 Een luttel wederstreve, of schyn te wederstreven.  
 Wy yvren voor Godts eere: om Godt zyn Recht te geven,  
 Verstout ick my, en dwael dus verre buiten 't spoor  
 Van myn gehoorzaemheit.

(538-43)

Some sincere confusion is evident. On the one hand he praises his own motives ("om Godt zyn Recht te geven"), and on the other he admits the error of these motives (" ick dwael . . . verre buiten 't spoor /Van myn gehoorzaemheit"). He is by no means convinced of the wisdom of God's ways, but he is also aware of the sin inherent in questioning those ways. Again Vondel is careful to stress Lucifer's awareness of his sin, for it is central to the concept of tragedy that the hero should be responsible for his action.

The result of Lucifer's confrontation with Gabriël has been, ironically, not to appease him and bring him to repentance, but to strengthen him in his resolve to resist God's will. Following Gabriëls departure, Belzebug is quick to renew his appeals to Lucifer's personal pride and ambition, e.g.

Men zal uw mogentheit aldus de vleugels fnuicken,  
 (565)

but this is hardly necessary. Lucifer's passion has not lapsed in Gabriël's presence. "Neen gewis . . ." (566), he exclaims, confirming his dissent, and far from carefully qualifying his resolve again as he did initially (410), he now offers his most defiant oath in his most magnificent vision yet:

Nu zweer ick by myn kroon het al op een te zetten,  
 Te heffen mynen stoel in aller heemlen trans,  
 Door alle kreitsen hene, en starrelichten glans.

Der heemlen hemel zal my een palais verstrecken.  
 De regenboogh een troon; 't gestarrente bedecken  
 Myn zalen: d' aertkloot blyft myn steun, en voetschabel.  
 Ick wil op een karros van wokcken, hoogh en snel  
 Gevoert door lucht en licht, met blixemstrael en donder  
 Verbryzelen tot stof, wat boven, of van onder  
 Zich tegens ons verzet . . .  
 Ja eerwe zwichten, zal dit hemels blaeu gewelf,  
 . . . . .  
 Te bersten springen, en verstuiven voor onze oogen.  
 . . . . .  
 Laet zien wie Lucifer durf trotsen, en braveeren.  
 (569-85)

This is a challenge to God himself ("wat boven [ons] . . . /Zich tegens ons verzet"), and the effect of its audacity is compounded by the biblical echoes, e.g. Lucifer assumes the posture attributed in the Bible to Christ:

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I  
 make thine enemies thy footstool.<sup>20</sup>

Our terror and anguish at this point are heightened by the irony that Lucifer's vision of the chaos and destruction which he will bring about will be fulfilled at his own expense; it is he who will be "burst to pieces and blown away".<sup>21</sup>

Lucifer's generals now combine their energies to prevent him lapsing into reflection or doubt. It is especially Apollion who now nurtures and encourages Lucifer's recovered self-assurance.<sup>22</sup> Like Belzebub, he begins by endorsing Lucifer's self-image and importance:

O Stedehouder van Godts onbepaelt gezagh.  
 (587)

Ironically, of course, this title proclaims not Lucifer's greatness but his subservience. The unlimited authority belongs to God; Lucifer is but its agent. Thus Apollion's words inadvertently define the terms of Lucifer's existence and echo Gabriëls warning: "Uw aenzien schept zijn licht alleen

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<sup>20</sup>Psalm 110.1

<sup>21</sup>Kirkconnell, Celestial Cycle, p. 378.

<sup>22</sup>Again, as with Belzebub, Apollion must in no way be seen as a prime mover who tempts Lucifer to evil. He merely joins Belzebub in striving to activate the evil already in Lucifer's heart. On the differentiation of the devils and the distribution of the action amongst them see p. 146, n. 18.

uit Godts vermogen" (508). Thus Lucifer's audacious outburst above is placed in proper perspective, ironically reducing instead of confirming his greatness. This subtle irony extends throughout Apollion's speech; his attitude towards Lucifer exemplifies, for instance, what should be both his and Lucifer's attitude towards their proper regent:

Ick offer u myn' dienst, en wacht up uw geboden.  
 Wat eischt de majesteit van haren onderdaen?  
 (589-90)

But far from serving as a reprimand to Lucifer, Apollion's words and manner rather endorse his delusion, and by his open assumption that Lucifer will lead ("Wat eischt [u]?"), Apollion begins to prevail upon him to accept that role. Apollion propels the rebellion out of the stage of abstract conception into pragmatic planning: how will it be done? (609-10); where? (617); what weapons will be used? (639). In this way Lucifer's passion is harnessed before it can be sublimated.

Apollion now changes his tactics and begins to play the hesitant, careful thinker, the prophet of doom:

geleende maght te wegen  
 In eene zelve schael met d' Almaght; haer gewicht  
 Weeght over. wacht uw kroon: wy vallen veel te licht.  
 (613-15)

The effect is as calculated: Lucifer sweeps aside these objections and fears, and in the process his own determination is fired. But his grasp of the situation remains characteristically abstract, the pragmatist's influence notwithstanding. For Lucifer the rebellion is still more a grandiose vision than a terrifying reality, e.g.

Ick zie ons vyanden gevluht, den hemel leegh  
 Met eenen slingerslagh.  
 (627-28)

The audience is not allowed to be transported by Lucifer's confidence, for we know Apollion's mock fears to be sound. While they make no impact on Lucifer, to the audience they are dire warnings, sustaining our terror. Thus Lucifer's audacity is coloured by pathos as we see him led into folly

by his own emotional nature as well as the guile of his generals. Lucifer himself describes this guile:

Ghy zyt een meester, tuck om Geesten in te luien,  
Te rygen aen uw snoer, te leiden, op te ruien.  
Ghy kunt bederven zelfs de vroomsten van de wacht;  
En leeren weifelen wat noit up weiflen dacht.  
(652-55)

Lucifer clearly suffers no illusion about the nature and skills of his generals; it is in his knowledge of himself that he is tragically blind. He does not realize that in many respects it is he who is being threaded like a bead (653) onto the string of his generals.

By the end of Act II Lucifer's moroseness and misgivings have been swept aside and he is confidently in command. He re-ascends his chariot (666) and issues orders, commissioning his generals to prepare the legions for rebellion. Such confidence and resoluteness suggest a high degree of personal integration, and van Herpe even suggests that here Lucifer's spiritual metamorphosis is complete:

De strijd is virtueel uitgestreden: Lucifer de lichtdrager is geworden vorst der duisternis. . . . hier is de duivel geboren.<sup>23</sup>

And again:

[Hier] heeft Lucifer het door bewuste zonde opgenomen tegen God: daarmede [is] virtueel zijn persoonlijke tragedie ten einde.<sup>24</sup>

But it has been obvious in this act that none of Lucifer's decisions has been taken with a clear mind, entirely "door bewuste zonde", or wholly on his own initiative. His present confidence is the culmination of a relentless campaign that started in Act I: out of the feverish emotions of the rebel leaders came the impetus for rebellion; Belzebub's manipulation of Lucifer's passions started the process of his conversion from lethargy to action; Gabriël's intervention provided the final impetus to this conversion; and finally Apollion placed the seal of positive planning upon it. Lucifer's new determination is therefore precariously founded, not upon a resolution

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<sup>23</sup> van Herpe, Grieks-christelijk dualisme, p. 43.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* p. 16

forged in his own soul, but upon passions exploited largely by others. Therefore when he reappears in III.v he will have lost much of this self-assurance. It is only when he personally and actively embraces his lot and commits himself consciously to evil (IV.iii, when it can truly be said that he has "zich aan de zonde overgeleverd"<sup>25</sup>) that his reintegration will be complete and his resolution firm. And only then will his transformation from angel to devil be accomplished (Act V).

At the end of Act II, then, though Lucifer's pride and rebelliousness have reached excessive proportions, the audience does not yet see him as diabolical. On the contrary: the audience sees, foreshadowed in the combination of the generals' guile and Lucifer's gullibility, an indication of the tragic struggle that must still follow.

### III

After Lucifer has left the stage (II.v), Belial and Apollion formulate the rest of their strategy, which will direct the action of Act III and set the final trap to secure Lucifer in the role of leader (705-28). This will not be done hastily or obtrusively, but descreetly (717). First they will circulate amongst the angels and encourage the existent discontent (713-14); Belzebub will lend authority to the cause by praising its justice (715-16); **finally Lucifer will**, by his presence, confirm the venture (718-19). Initially Lucifer will "dissemble for a space",<sup>26</sup> but in the end will give in to the rebels in their passion for a leader (721-22). This will signal the successful completion of their plan, for "aen 't hooft hangt al de zaeck" (722). According to their plan, therefore, the action and rising passions of Act III will drive relentlessly towards Lucifer's election.

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid.* p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> Kirkconnell, Celestial Cycle, p. 381.

Act III begins with the lament of the Luciferists, summed up in their refrain: "Helaes, helaes, helaes, waer is ons heil gevaren!"<sup>27</sup> This discontent is contrasted with the faith and obedience of the Rey, which here actively enters into the action. The difference soon develops into open antagonism, "een' stryt van tongen" (903), foreshadowing the titanic clash that must follow. Passions mount. When Belial and Apollion arrive they (the generals) behave strictly according to plan, feigning ignorance and so encouraging the Luciferists to articulate their grievance. The generals pretend it is the justice of the case that wins them, e.g.

Beledight iemant uw? man zal uw Recht beschermen,  
(Belial, 911)

and

Wat raet? hoe paeit men hen? zy steunen op hun Recht.  
(Apollion, 921)

By the time Belzebub appears the rebels are raging:

Hier gelt alleen geweld, en kracht, en wraeck, en dwangk.  
(1057)

They lack only the authoritative command that will propel them into battle with the Almighty. When they offer the leadership to Belzebub<sup>28</sup> he declines, urging them to be reasonable but consciously pouring oil on the fire (in much the same way that Apollion fires Lucifer's anger by pretending to be hesitant):

Maer wie is zoo berooft  
Van zinnen, dat hy uw gerechticheit verdadigh',  
En's hemels heirkraft terge? . . .  
Verschoonme van dien last: ick kienze geene zy.  
(1077-80)

The curt, rhyming exchanges in the dialogue that follows emphasize the frustration of the Luciferists and the growing momentum of the action. The rebels are reckless and agitated. Belzebub's refusal stirs them to a greater desperation, ensuring an even more urgent and pressing appeal to the next candidate (who

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<sup>27</sup>807, 823, 859, 990.

<sup>28</sup>1041-45, 1076-77, 1089-90.

will be Lucifer). Whoever accepts the leadership now will concentrate in himself the rage of these scenes and automatically become the spearhead of the rebellion.

Michaël appears in order to quell the disturbance, but as on both previous occasions, God's ambassador incites rather than appeases. Michaël offers to negotiate with God on the rebels' behalf in order to obtain forgiveness and reconciliation, but his offer is not one of unconditional grace, as Raphaël's will be (IV.iii). Michaël the military general links his offer of reconciliation with a threat:

Wy willen uwen zoen bemiddelen by Godt,  
Of anders wacht uw hooft,  
(1125-26)

and a command:

'k Gebiede u datghe flux de wapens nederleght.  
(1149)

This tone merely causes outrage amongst the already agitated rebels, who now cling blindly to their cause:

Zoudt ghy met wapenen ons heligh Recht verdrucken?  
.....  
Wy steunen up ons Recht: Rechtaerdigheit is stout;  
(1127-29)<sup>29</sup>

Their desire for a leader, frustrated by Belzebub's refusal, now begins to focus on Lucifer who has been urgently summoned (1157-58). Everything begins to point to his arrival. The Luciferists argue on his behalf for the justice of his cause (1163-67) and take the rebellion in his name to the point where Michaël declares it irrevocable:<sup>30</sup>

ghy zyt geen zonen meer van 't licht.  
(1168)

Michaël orders the Rey to leave the rebels and in this, rebellion and obedience are polarised into two distinct and opposing groups and the issue is clarified beyond equivocation or pretence. By this command Michaël finally welds the

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<sup>29</sup>The irony of this claim is exposed later when the Rey beg God not to deal with the rebels according to their Rights: "gena, gena, o Heer, geen Recht" (1370).

rebels into an isolated and therefore united and zealous group, ready for war and clamouring for a leader. Belzebub now carefully directs this passion towards Lucifer:

Schept moedt: Vorst Lucifer, gestegen up zyn' wagen,  
Wort herwaert aen gevoert. ghy moet op kort beraên.  
Een heirkraft, zonder hooft, kan nimmermeer bestaen.  
(1179-81)

He clearly links "Lucifer" and "hooft". Lucifer walks into this situation.

#### IV

The last time we saw Lucifer (II.v) he was issuing commands and urging warfare. When he reappears now his first utterance is one of caution:

De gansche hemel waeght en dreunt van uw geschillen.  
De keurebenden staen gereuten en gedeelt.  
Het oproer slaet al voort. de hooge noot beveelt  
Hierinne te voorzien, en onheil voor te komen.  
(1183-86)

This is perhaps the most problematic scene in the play, for Lucifer's motives are here more elusive than ever, and at times even appear to be contradictory. The problem is most clearly expressed in the question: Is Lucifer feigning or is he not? Are his misgivings about the rebellion sincere, or is he playing the Belzebub game in order to incite the angels? The only acceptable answer is that Lucifer's words and behaviour in this scene are a combination of pretence and sincerity, emanating as they evidently do from an inner conflict between his passion and reason, his proud dissent and his lucid insight. van Herpe speaks here of "het wonderlijk gemengde van den gemoedstoestand waarin wij . . . Lucifer terugvinden"<sup>31</sup> and "zijn sphinxentaal, . . . echt de spiegel van zijn ziel".<sup>32</sup>

According to the formulated plan (though it is important to note that

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<sup>30</sup>Though in truth it is not yet: see Raphaël, IV.iii, see pp. 83-87 below.

<sup>31</sup>van Herpe, Grieks-christelijk dualisme, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup>ibid. p. 59. van Herpe contradicts himself when he initially sums up Lucifer's behaviour (simplistically) as "niets anders dan handig bedrog", p. 2.

it was made in his absence), Lucifer is to "veinze voor een poos, en geve in 't endt de sporen /Aen 't opgeruide heir" (II.v.721-22). He certainly does appear to be feigning, and when he declines the role of leader and defender of their Right, claiming that he knows no right other than to obey God (1212-18), he is certainly playing the diabolical game of pretence. He baits the rebels in order to establish the extent of their commitment to him, and to incite them. That he might be serious in claiming to know no right but God's is unimaginable. We may be sure that Lucifer has not changed in his conviction about his Right. Where he has changed is in his determination to take up arms. Underlying his pretence of diffidence about the rebellion are signs of this real uncertainty. It becomes evident that while he has been away he has lost his audacity and his commitment to the war, made under subtle coercion and in the heat of emotion. Conscience does make cowards of us all and the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. Alone and unharrassed, Lucifer has again glimpsed something of the awful implications of rebellion, and begun to experience the dilemma he is in:

hoe men 't vat, dit loopt van wederzy gevaer,  
 Het zy men zwichte uit schroomte, of moedigh wederstreve.  
 (1229-30)

To submit ("zwichte") violates not only his pride but his sense of honour and right, while to oppose the decree ("wederstreve") and assert his right, courageous and awe-inspiring though this may be, is folly. The rebels, by contrast, see the situation in simple terms of all or naught:

Wy willen sneuvlen, of zeeghaftigh triomfeeren.  
 (1235)

They see it as simple alternatives: die or triumph, win or lose. Lucifer knows it to be lost either way. This deeper insight informs his words and actions in this scene and inspires his later stoicism. It is this sensitive and rational side of his nature, this capacity for doubt, that condemns Lucifer to experiencing the dilemma, and makes him the bearer of the tragedy and the object of our sympathy.

But warring with his reason is his excessive passion. Lucifer combines within himself these conflicting characteristics of the tragic figure. He is sufficiently rational to perceive and understand and to suffer mental anguish, and sufficiently emotional to prevent the full light of his reason to direct him through the situation. The strategy of his generals is to exploit this emotional side of his nature. The rebels press the leadership upon him, their passionate appeals rising to a crescendo of urgency (1199-1211) and culminating in Belzebub's supreme exaggeration:

Wy hebben 't heiligh Ryck alleen in onze maght.  
(1252)

The overwhelming power of the rabble, and ultimately the prospect of commanding such power as Belzebub describes here, undermine Lucifer's reason and he is soon persuaded again:

Ick troostme dan gewelt te keeren met gewelt.  
(1256)

But Lucifer's tone at this point demands closer attention. Though he commits himself to violence, the pendulum of his emotion has clearly not swung right back to the point of his earlier outburst, "nu zweer ick" (569). It is with much less energy and bravado that he now commits himself. Indeed, he does not so much commit as resign himself: "ick troostme dan" - "I resign myself to it".<sup>33</sup> This is indeed a "passieloze en weinig enthousiaste vers".<sup>34</sup> Along with his insight into the dilemma has come an increasing acceptance of his own inescapable role in it. Satan too appeals to an inescapable necessity as the force that directs his career ("necessity, /The tyrant's plea, IV.393-94), but Milton is careful to expose this as part of his folly.<sup>35</sup> In a tragedy, however, such a

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<sup>33</sup>Kirkconnell's translation changes the meaning and loses the essential tone: "I agree then to answer force with force" (Celestial Cycle, p. 396). "I agree" is much more positive than "Ick troostme". On the other hand, "to answer force" is much more defensive than "gewelt te keeren". Lucifer does not undertake to reply to violence already (or even now being) perpetrated, but to prevent the violence which Man's elevation will do to the celestial order, which is a far more urgent undertaking.

<sup>34</sup>van Herpe, Grieks-christelijk dualisme, p. 62.

statement of resignation to necessity goes beyond simply expressing the character's folly, despair or stoicism. It is also an enunciation (not necessarily consciously made) of the tragic principle that gives the drama its shape and power:<sup>36</sup> the "fataàl-tragiese kringloop",<sup>37</sup> the relentless unwinding of a spring initiated chiefly by the hero's hamartia, and impossible to arrest once it has started. In this terrifying momentum and the subsequent catharsis the tragic action finds its uniquely powerful consummation.

It would not be accurate to suggest that Lucifer is consciously aware of this tragic pattern, or even fully aware of the course he is bound upon, but he is aware that he can no longer decline the role that is offered him; he knows that he is bound to lead the rebellion.

With Lucifer's resignation to the inevitable course of the action, the process of his personal reintegration begins in earnest, finding expression in a growing and finally an heroic stoicism. He calls his companions to bear witness to the necessity of his action:

Vorst Belzebub, getuigh, en ghy, doorluchtste Heeren,  
 Apollion, getuigh, getuigh, Vorst Belial,  
 Dat ick, uit noot en dwang, dien last aenvaerden zal,  
 Tot voorstant van Godts Ryck, om ons bederf to keeren.  
 (1259-62)

The incantatory "getuigh, getuigh, getuigh" highlights the tragic moment and calls the audience to witness too. This is almost a direct appeal to our pity for Lucifer.

But as the rebel angels enthrone him and hail him as a god (1257-91)

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<sup>35</sup> See Burden, Logical Epic, passim, on Satan, "the apostle of randomness" (p. 94) and his "unprovidential way" of interpreting what happens to him.

<sup>36</sup> At a number of points Vondel's play is, as it were, conscious of itself as tragedy. At such points the characters' words have (as do Lucifer's here) a deeper implication which points to the consummate pattern that underlies the action, e.g. 407 and 579-81.

<sup>37</sup> Antonissen, Christelike en Tragiese, p. 5

he takes refuge again from his uncanny sense of the unavoidable, in the comfortable rationalization that he is striving "tot voorstant van Godts Ryck" (1262). Only in his encounter with Raphaël will he abandon this last delusion.

## V

War is no longer avoidable. The first scene of Act IV dramatizes its imminence. Against the background noise of bugles and drums and to the accompaniment of Gabriël's descriptions of off-stage skirmishes, Michaël is seen arming himself for battle. Gabriël heightens this tension with prophetic glimpses of Lucifer's ineluctable fall, e.g.

hoe bitter wil de wraeck  
Hem treffen!

(1359-60)

Everthing is now overshadowed by his statement (albeit mistaken): "Gena had uitgedient" (1378). The baroque style of the drama is epitomized in the rapid switch of scene from one camp to the other, and this movement between extremes enhances the sense of an impending clash. But in the opposing camp Lucifer, far from appearing as a worthy military counterpart for the armed and harnassed Michaël, is troubled:

Hoe staet het met ons heir? hoe is 't 'er me gelegen?

. . . . .  
Hoe talryck is het heir? waer in bestaen ons maght?

(1400-7)

Lucifer obviously lacks the confidence that would accompany an absolutely blind pride and that characterizes Satan's scornful tone in the War in Heaven in Paradise Lost (Book VI). Nor has Lucifer yet reached that point of complete and active acceptance of (as opposed to resignation to) his lot that would finally propel him into action.

Belzebub, fearful that Lucifer may waver at this crucial moment, is quick to mislead him with an exaggerated report of their forces. He reassures Lucifer:

Ghy draeght alree de kroon des hemels op uw kruin.  
(1422)

But Belzebub is unnecessarily afraid that Lucifer will change his mind again. From the moment when he resigned himself to being crowned as leader of the rebellion he has sunk into a spirit of despair beyond hope of redemption or even of retreat. This despair is transformed ultimately into a stoic courage, but in the meantime Lucifer's tone is listless and devoid of hope. And as he articulates this hopelessness now he again calls those around him (including the audience) to witness:

Hoort toe en geeft gehoor, beneden dezen trappen.  
Hoort toe, ghy Oversten; hoort toe, ghy Ridderschappen,  
En luistert wat wy u vermelden, klaer, en kort.  
Ghy weet hoe verre wy alree zyn uitgestort,  
In wraeckzucht tegens 't Hooft der opperste palaizen,  
Dat het een dolheit waere, op hoop van zoen, te deizen,  
En niemant denckendurf deze onuitwischbre smet  
Te zuivren door gena: dies moet de noot een wet,  
Een wisse toevlugt van te wancken, noch te wycken  
Verstrecken.

(1424-33)

That necessity which he instinctively knows must soon overtake him has become his law and refuge:

Het ga zoo 't wil: volhardt groothartigh, onverdrietigh.  
(1436)

Raphaël comes to offer Lucifer that grace which Lucifer believes can no longer purge him and which even Gabriël, the interpreter of God's will, believes to be "uitgedient" (1378, and 1363ff.). But Vondel's God exceeds all expectations, and so Raphaël's appearance at this point has the dramatic function of offering Lucifer another (and final) chance to repent, and the thematic function of celebrating God's mercy before proceeding to the final damnation. Raphaël is mercy incarnate. He humbles himself before Lucifer and begs him to repent:

Ick valle ootmoedigh dus uw majesteit te voet.  
(1575)

Antonissen describes this most moving scene as an "intiem-persoonlike liefde-bejeëning".<sup>38</sup> Raphaël's offer of the balm of reconciliation must be very

alluring to the harassed Archangel:

ick koom, met medecyne  
En balsem van gena.

(1465-66)

Nevertheless, Lucifer can no longer accept even God's grace. The fateful momentum of the action has carried him to the point where neither his followers nor his own nature will allow him to turn back. Theatrically this point is made by the fact that he is already clad in battledress (1500-1). He knows that things have gone too far and that he is bound to endure it:

Ghy weet hoe verre wy alree zyn uitgestort,  
.....  
Dat het een dolheit waere, op hoop van zoen, te deizen.  
(1427-29)

Like Macbeth, Lucifer is "in [disobedience] /Stepp'ed in so far that, should [he] wade no more, /Returning were as tedious as go o'er".<sup>39</sup> But for the moment, Raphaël's admonitions (like Gabriël's) strengthen the obstinacy of Lucifer's delusion:

ick vecht,  
En oorloge onder Godt, tot voorstant van zyn kooren,  
De hantvest, en het Recht, hun wettigh aengeboren.  
(1515-17)

To the audience of course the underlying selfishness ("nydigheit") of this argument is as evident now as ever; Lucifer's real reluctance is

Myn Star te dorpelen in duisternisse, en schande.  
Myn vyanden te zien braveeren op den stoel!  
(1625-26)

Paradoxically, however, "duisternisse" and "schande" await him, not if he submits, but if he refuses to submit. Thus Lucifer falls victim to a black dramatic irony which began to envelop him from the moment of his first tragic error and which causes his rebellion to be recoiling upon him each moment in the language and imagery as well as in the larger pattern of the action. All things have conspired to trap him into his present dilemma.

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<sup>38</sup> Antonissen, Christelike en Tragiese, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Macbeth, III.v.136-38.

Raphael's tone is one of patience and charity, and through his nostalgic reminiscences of the earlier majesty of the Morningstar we are reminded of Lucifer's past glory:

Ghy blonckt in 't paradys, voor 't aenschyn van de zon  
 Der Godtheit, uit een wolck van dau en versche roozen.  
 Uw feestgewaet stont styf van perlen, en turkoozen,  
 Smaragden, diamant, robyn, en louter gout.  
 De zwaerste scepter wert uw rechte hant betrouwt,  
 Zoo dra ghy steeght in 't licht.

(1475-80)

Raphaël conjures up this vision not, like Belzebub, to reinforce Lucifer's self-image but that Lucifer may see himself again as he was before his disobedience, and relent. In the moment before his fall, therefore, this image of magnificence emphasizes the tragic loss and waste, especially **as we already see before us** no longer this jewel-bedecked angel but a "verdwaelde Morgenstar" (1538). Raphaël's lament captures the essence of the change:

Lucifer, waer is uw glans gebleven?

(1568)

For all his compassion, Raphaël penetrates to the heart of Lucifer's stubbornness and exposes his delusion:

Och Stedehouder, wat verbloemt ghy uw gepeinzen  
 Voor 't alziende oogh? ghy kunt uw ooghmerck niet ontveinzen.

(1532-33)

His insight is incisive and wise, pointing directly to the abomination of the rebellion. Like the Rey (1320-29) he unequivocally defines Lucifer's motivation as pure "staetzucht" (1535) and rhetorically summarises it as follows:

Wat hebt ghy in uw harte al heimelyck gesproken?  
 Ick wil in 's hemels top, door alle wolcken heen,  
 En boven Godts gestarnte opstygen, van beneên,  
 Godt zelf gelyck.

(1541-44)

This is the conventional image of the devil driven by sheer pride, and it serves here to maintain a balance in our emotional response to Lucifer's situation. It is obviously the only view that a loyal angel can take of Lucifer's action and it is, in the end, the judgment that Vondel passes on Lucifer. But it is an enormous oversimplification of Lucifer as we have come

to know him in the course of the play. When Raphaël asks, for instance: "Wat hebt ghy in uw harte al heimelyck gesproken?" we do not think first (as Raphaël does) of Lucifer's pride and ambition (they have been far from "heimelyck"), but rather of his secret doubt and despair. These are what have characterized his words and actions. The Lucifer of Vondel's creation does speak with pride and conceive schemes of great arrogance, but in his innermost heart he harbours doubt, fear and genuine confusion, making him far more than the conventional devil - rather, the eminent tragic hero.

Raphaël's pleas paradoxically begin to translate Lucifer's resignation into a stoic resolve. Lucifer cannot beg for mercy:

Wat baet het, schoon men zich op 't uiterste bera?  
Hier is geen hoop van pais.

(1622-23)

The alternative to mercy is clear:

Och Lucifer, waeck op. ick zie den zwavelpoel,  
Met opgespalckte keel, afgryslyck naer u gapen.  
Zult ghy, het schoonst van al wat Godt oit heeft geschapen,  
Een aes verstrecken, voor het vratige ingewant  
Des afgronts, nimmer zadt, en nimmer uitgebrant.

(1627-31)

As Raphaël reaches out and offers the olive branch of God's grace: "Ontfang dien tack van pais: wy offren u Godts vrede", (1633) the play reaches its emotional climax. Lucifer's fate, and all of creation, hangs in the balance. This "korthheit, tusschen heil en endeloos verdoemen" (1653) is a moment of existential choice for Lucifer, and in turning away from Raphaël's outstretched hand he takes "die onherroeplike stap":<sup>40</sup> he consciously and independently chooses the inevitable. What he was earlier coerced into he now actively wills: he chooses to be the devil. And in refusing to accept grace ("te deizen", 1429), even in the face of hell, he achieves his perverse but real integrity, and it is in the strength of this new self-image that he is finally able to act.

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<sup>40</sup>Kritzinger, Opstandsmotief, p. 139.

Vondel has a shrewd psychological insight, however. He makes this moment of Lucifer's reintegration also the moment of his severest misery and despair. As he turns away from Raphaël he utters his most wretched words:

Of ergens schepsel zoo rampzaligh zwerft als ick?  
(1634)

This is no longer a merely intellectual realization that "het ga zoo 't wil" (1436), or a cold, "groothartigh" resignation; this is the deep emotional experience of misery as he recognizes his audacity. Now he himself finally sees through his delusion:

Hoe zynwe nu zoo wyt verzeilt uit onzen plicht!  
Ick zwoer myn' Schepper af. hoe kan ick voor dat licht  
Myn lasterstucken, myn verwatenheit vermommen!  
(1646-48)

Acknowledging God as Father and Creator, he instantly recognizes his sacrilege, and in this moment of agnitio he admits that he has no Right, only obligation, and he has strayed from that.

Lucifer's experience of an agnitio at this point in the action is unorthodox. In the classical sequence of events the agnitio occurs after the peripeteia, and always too late, hence the sense of tragic waste. But this sequence is impossible in Lucifer. Thematically, Lucifer's insight must occur before his fall because once he has become the devil, he can no longer feel remorse; structurally it must occur before the fall because the fall has to take place off-stage and after that we cannot see Lucifer in Heaven again. But far from allowing this necessary deviation to detract from the tragedy, Vondel makes the agnitio the central and most powerful moment in the play by causing it to coincide with Lucifer's final (though perverse) achievement of a new personal integrity, i.e. the culmination of the process of his personal development from Archangel to Arch-fiend. Until this moment when Lucifer is unequivocally convinced of his sin and integrates it into his self-image, casting off all pretence and actively embracing his role as devil, he is unable either to make an absolute choice, or to act. But from this point on he recovers his command of himself, and the power of the tragedy now lies in

the fact that he recognizes his guilt and anticipates his fall, even goes consciously to meet it, knowing that it is already too late. Thus Vondel again turns generic and structural demands to advantage, using as tools what might have been chains and converting the peculiar difficulties of his material into the peculiar strengths of his play.

Ultimately then Raphaël's love is a two-edged sword. His offer of mercy clarifies the issue of Lucifer's sin beyond further deception or pretence, and forces a choice. And in forcing Lucifer to choose he causes him both to condemn himself and to find himself. Lucifer's agnitio has the double effect of plunging him into wretchedness and confirming his resolve. Recognizing his evil, he nevertheless embraces it as his lot. This desperate integrity is such that he is prevented from repenting:

't is te spa . . .  
De hoop is uit.

(1654-55)

Hier baet geen deizen: neen, wy zyn te hoogh geklommen.  
(1649)

This image recalls Lucifer's first words in the play: "Al hoogh genoeg . . . /Al hoogh genoeg gevoert" (349-50), and with this echo we realize, retrospectively, that in a sense it has been "te spa" since the opening moments of the drama. But the slight difference of emphasis is also significant. In the beginning he still acknowledged limits to his ascent: "hoogh genoegh"; now he has transcended all limits and gone beyond the bounds of grace: "te hoogh". Lucifer must go into battle. And he goes with a crushing awareness of his personal guilt.

The force of the inevitable is finally unleashed. Everything points now, no longer just to the war, but beyond it to the inevitable outcome: "endeloos verdoemen" (1653). Lucifer no longer shares the blind confidence of his generals. "Treck op, treck op met ons:" they call, "wy zien den strydt gewonnen" (1660). Lucifer alone knows that the struggle is already lost:

Men weegh' dien zwaren slag en oorlogh niet te licht.  
(1662)

Nevertheless he gives the order for the trumpets and clarions to sound (1668) and marches into war. Like Macbeth in the face of damnation, Lucifer translates his despair into an awe-inspiring, pagan energy: "Blow; wind! come, wrack! /At least we'll die with harness on our back".<sup>41</sup> During the war our admiration for him, even as he marches against the Lord of mercy, is sustained by Uriël's description of his heroic fortitude.

Vondel has achieved the seemingly impossible. He has made of the Arch-fiend a hero we can admire while we censure him, one who terrifies us but who also moves us to pity. Vondel's art is justified for him in this achievement of "het wit en ooghmerck der wettige Treurspelen . . . : de menschen te vermorwen door schrick, en medoogen".<sup>42</sup> In the space of three acts we have come to know Lucifer as a complex, unpredictable and often elusive character and we have seen him change dramatically from uncertainty through proud confidence to a stoically resigned determination. As he marches against God he openly identifies with evil and in this newly integrated personality he regains, like Macbeth, something of his earlier magnificence.

In Act V his development from angel to devil is rapidly completed and he finally becomes the damnable fiend.

## VI

The war towards which everything has inexorably moved takes place off-stage and is reported in V.i to Raphaël by the messenger-angel Uriël. Uriël's vivid narrative sustains the terror evoked in the previous acts, while Raphaël's function is to balance this by maintaining, for a time at least, our sympathy for Lucifer. He fulfils a choric role, simultaneously prescribing

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<sup>41</sup>Macbeth V.v.51-52.

<sup>42</sup>Berecht, 187-88.

and articulating our response to Lucifer's fate. Thus the war is made as dramatically immediate as form and convention would allow Vondel to make it. But the third line of the scene pre-empt's the entire narrative of the war:

de veltslagh is gewonnen.

(1710)

Consequently Lucifer's courage in the battle is tempered with the pathos of futility, and the descriptions of his magnificence injected with nostalgia and a sense of irreparable loss (e.g. 1791-95). Just as the end of Uriël's narrative is already known and inevitable before it has even begun, so Lucifer's fate has been inescapable from the start of the action. In this way the structure of this scene imitates the tragic situation Lucifer has been in throughout the play.

Uriël, though he faithfully reports the facts of the battle including Lucifer's heroism, has only contempt for Lucifer and the rebels and through his narrative Lucifer's final transformation from angel to devil is made explicit. He describes Michaël's mission as "al dit meinedigh schuim /Te vaegen, al dit spoock in duisternis te dompelen" (1741-42). The half-moon formation of Lucifer's army suitably identifies him (Lucifer) with the Islamic threat to Christendom and this shape also prefigures the two horns of the traditional Satan, which Lucifer is soon to become. Uriël supplements this implied censure with the employment of animal imagery as he elaborates on the formation:

Het [the rebel army] groeide snel, en wies gelyck een halve maen.  
 Het wet zyn punten, zet twee horens op ons aen;  
 Gelyck 't gestarrent van den Stier de hemeldieren  
 En andre monsters, die rontom hem henezwieren,  
 Met goude hoornen dreight.

. . . . .  
 De Stedehouder . . .  
 Verzeerde den buick des legers.

(1760-69)

(Michaël, by contrast, is said to be in the heart of his triangularly formed army, which represents the Trinity, 1746-48.)

Raphaël, unlike Uriël, experiences anguish and remorse at these events, sharing Lucifer's sufferings so personally and immediately that he cries out, as though to deter Lucifer:

O hoeft der Engelen, niet hooger: keer weêrom,  
(1796)

pathetically longing to undo what is already done. When Lucifer finally strikes at the adamantine shield that symbolizes God's divinity and is thrown from his chariot, followed in his fall by the whole army of rebels (1907-36), Raphaël's sense of justice is all but obscured by his compassion:

Gelooft zy Godt: valt neêr: aenbidt hem up uw knien.  
Och Lucifer, helaes, waer blyft uw valsch betrouwen?  
Helaes, in welck een' schyn zal ick u lest aenschouwen?  
Waer is u klaerheit nu, die allen glans braveert?  
(1937-40)

In his fall Lucifer suffers a literal peripetela ("gestaltverwisseling", 1973), physically becoming the devil he has chosen to be. This transformation is the external expression of the internal change that finally occurred at the point of his conscious identification with evil. He is transformed into a repulsive combination of seven beasts symbolizing the evil passions (1941-61), a typically Medieval picture of the devil,<sup>43</sup> and a change anticipated in Uriël's description of Lucifer's army as a monster. The cathartic effect of this fall is exemplified in Raphaël's changed reaction; his comment now on the dreadful transformation is a summary dismissal:

Dat leert de Staetzucht Godt naer zyne kroon te steken.  
(1962)

It serves him right; things are as they should be. The audience's terror and pity at once find relief in the justice of the action:

Zoo moet het gaen, die Godt, en zynen stoel bestormt.  
(2017)

This emotional relief is expressed in the hymn of praise sung by the Rey (1982-2001).

The tragedy has run its inevitable course and it remains only for

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<sup>43</sup>See Haslinghuis, Drama der Middel Eeuwen, Chapter 8.

order to be restored. Michaël and the Rey do this in their reaffirmation of God's supremacy, following Lucifer's disruptive questioning and denial of it. The angels' praise of Michaël and his humble reaction to it serve as an exemplary counterpart to the rebels' perverse apotheosis of Lucifer. Rebellion is thus exorcised and obedience and praise, entreated by Gabriël in his first exhortation, are again the order of the day. The final couplet of the scene contains the moral of the story and returns the focus to Man, the axis of the drama and the prime cause of the rebellion (I.i); the ends are neatly drawn together:

Zoo moet het gaen, die Godt, en zynen stoel bestryden,  
Den mensch, naer 't hemelsch beelt geschapen, 't licht benyden.  
(2018-19)

On the classical pattern, the action is complete.

But from Vondel's emphasis throughout the play on the mystery of God's ways, it is clear that Lucifer is not exclusively a Greek tragedy. It is also a Christian Mystery play, the aim of which is the glorification of Christ. On the pattern of the Christian scheme of history, the scheme with which Vondel's audience is familiar and which it anticipates, Lucifer's fall is not yet fully accomplished. He has yet to become, in more than just physical appearance, the fiend who spoils the Creation, and on this pattern too the promise of Man's redemption through Christ has yet to become a reality. The internal dynamics of the play too require a final movement. In the action of the play the mystery of the Incarnation is a major dramatic element, indeed the chief cause of Lucifer's tragic confusion and his ultimate rebellion. And that rebellion is in its turn the motivation for the Incarnation. This ironic circle of action has yet to be completed. Christ's redemptive role in the scheme of history is imbedded in the action (cf. especially Gabriël's words, II.ii), albeit for the most part only obscurely, and with the chief effect of intensifying the irony of Lucifer's error. Now its truth must be demonstrated and Lucifer's error finally revealed. Through this final move-

ment also the didactic impact of the myth is restored. Though Vondel has been triumphantly successful in marrying two apparently conflicting genres (comparable with Shakespeare's marriage of the Revenge Tragedy and the Tragedy of Inaction in Hamlet), it must be admitted that the Greek-tragic emphasis has tended to outweigh the Christian, to the extent that the audience's wholehearted emotional (if not intellectual) sympathy has been won for Lucifer. But ultimately Vondel's zeal to glorify Christ informs this drama as it does most of his work, and in this final scene he restores the balance. He does not end with the heroic (though defeated) Lucifer of V.i, but pursues him until he actually becomes the devil.

After the sense of restored emotional equilibrium created by V.ii, Gabriël's sudden lament cuts through the celebration and destroys the impression of peace restored:

Helaes, helaes, helaes, hoe is de kans gekeert!  
 Wat viert men hier? 't is nu vergeefs getriomfeert:  
 Vergeefs met wapenroof en standerden te brallen.  
 (2020-22)

By echoing the lament of the malcontents ("helaes, helaes, helaes, III.iii) Gabriël instantly reintroduces that whole atmosphere of disorder into the action; though the rebels are fallen, evil is not yet defeated. In the baroque style of the play, a new assault is made on the purged emotions:

och Adam is gevallen.  
 (2023)

The centre of attention shifts from Heaven to earth, and a whole new tragedy begins: the temptation, fall and redemption of Man. Renewed demands are made on our pity and terror. Such extreme emotional leaps are typical of the baroque spirit of the drama and of the time in which it was written.<sup>44</sup> But shrewdly, Vondel casts the tragedy of Man's fall<sup>45</sup> in the form of reportage

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<sup>44</sup>Compare for instance the emotional capacity of the Elizabethan audience for whom King Lear was written, who could endure in one sitting the blinding of Gloucester, the madness of Lear and the death of Cordelia.

<sup>45</sup>Fully developed in Adam in Ballingschap.

and reduces and compresses it in such a way that its emotional demands are not of the same intensity as those made by the central tragedy of Lucifer's fall. This scene is in every intellectual way necessary for the completion of the drama.<sup>46</sup> Mythologically, logically, structurally and thematically, Christ's victory and Man's elevation form the culmination of the action and nadir of Lucifer's fall. V.iii balances I.i (Apollion's report on the blessedness of Man, symbolized in the fruit which he brings back with him from Paradise), and so provides the structural conclusion of the central Christian theme by returning the focus to Paradise, Man and the fruit. In this scene Lucifer loses all sympathy. He swears "wraeck /Te nemen" (2037-38) and his pursuit of this intention is devious and entirely unheroic: he undertakes

Met onverzoenbren wrock den hemel te gervolgen,  
In zyn verkoren beelt, en 't menschelyck geslacht  
Te smooren in zyn wiegh . . .  
. . . . .  
Myn wit is Adam en zyn afkomst te bederven.  
(2039-43)

This rapid degeneration of his character and motivations is the logical conclusion of the coice he made in refusing God's grace in Act IV, and is the inevitable outcome of his development from angel to devil. His physical fall is now endorsed by a fall into the spiritual and psychological hell of "Wanhoop, zonder troost, de prickel van 't geweten, /En Onverzoenbaerheit" (2170-71). At this low point Lucifer's metamorphosis is complete. He has become, in every way, the devil.

The play ends with the promise of Christ (2136-38), who in his redemptive role becomes a classical Dionysus figure who restores order and renews life and prosperity (2181-82). Christian history will reach its consummation when Man, in Christ, enters Heaven and ascends the throne vacated

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<sup>46</sup>Though most critics agree on this, they do not all agree that the final movement is dramatically appropriate or successful. See Molkenboer, De Werken Van Vondel (Amsterdam), Inleiding p. 11; Maximilianus, "Franciscaanse School", p. 96 ; Kritzinger, Opstandsmotief, p. 26.

by Lucifer:

't beloofde Zaet, verzoenende Godts toren,  
Herstelle uit liefde al wat in Adam wert verloren.  
(2174-75)

The mystery that baffles Lucifer and spurs his rebellion is unlocked in the end: he has caused what he wished to prevent. In his rebellion and fall he has provided the necessary condition for the Incarnation and the ultimate elevation of Man.<sup>47</sup> The Christian theme comes triumphantly into its own as it is revealed that God will bring good out of Lucifer's evil. In the prospective ascension of Man in spite of, indeed thanks to, Lucifer's rebellion, Lucifer's bitter damnation is complete. In the end he is pathetic and helpless (2166-73), a symbol of the folly of disobedience and the lack of faith in the mystery of God's ways. Essentially this drama is (again according to classical precedence) not so much about a person as about a whole action, not so much about Lucifer as about the folly of rebellion and the metaphysics of God's providence. In Vondel's own words:

[Lucifer stort ter helle], ten klaren spiegel van alle ondangkbare staetzuchtigen, die zich stoutelyck . . . durven verheffen.<sup>48</sup>

The concept of Lucifer's metamorphosis from the Prince of Light to the Son of Darkness is full of potential for the baroque artist, and Vondel has exploited it fully, pursuing Lucifer to the extremity of his damnation, and Creation to its essential consummation.

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<sup>47</sup>Antonissen, *Christelike en Tragiese*, p. 7: "God se besluit wat [Lucifer] se opstand veróorsaak, kry sin deur die resultaat van sy opstand. Misterie!"

<sup>48</sup>Berecht, 226-28.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ARCH-REBEL: SATAN

#### I

The action of Paradise Lost begins with Satan in a state of "dazed enervation",<sup>1</sup> "confounded" (I.53) by his fall. The defiance of the Arch-rebel who "raised impious war in heaven" (I.43) is, for the moment, extinguished. Instead he is tormented by "the thought/ . . . of lost happiness" (I.54-56), movingly expressed in his lament over Beelzebub (I.84-86). Details of the War in Heaven are blurred in his memory. He makes unspecific mention of Messiah, e.g. ". . . so much the stronger proved /He with his thunder" (I.92-93), but does not fully admit Messiah's victory nor the full implications of his having suffered God's thunder. With one part of his mind he does acknowledge God's omnipotence and sovereignty,<sup>2</sup> but with the other he recalls the War in Heaven as a "glorious enterprise" (I.89), a "dubious battle" in which the terror of his arm shook the throne of God (I.104-5 and 113).<sup>3</sup> The reader, of course, does not yet know the details of the war as Milton recreates it, so that initially Satan's view of it seems credible to him (reader). Milton clearly could not afford to expose Satan's folly so early in the poem.<sup>4</sup> But the truth is that, though the battle did indeed appear "dubious" for a time, on the third day Messiah rode forth and no resistance availed against Him. He "hurled [Satan] headlong flaming from the ethereal sky /With hideous ruin and combustion down /To bottonless perdition" (I.45-47). Though the evidence is all around him, Satan forgets or represses the memory of this blow.

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<sup>1</sup>Cope, Metaphoric Structure, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup>See I.245-47 and 178-79. Clearly, however, Satan believes God's sovereignty to be acquired, not inherent; see also I.143-44 and 257-58, and p. 133 below.

<sup>3</sup>The fact is, to the contrary, that "the steadfast empyrean shook throughout, /All but the throne it self of God", VI.833-34.

<sup>4</sup>See Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics, pp. 65-67.

In this condition he has, for the moment, no knowledge of evil. He has forgotten Sin.<sup>5</sup>

Milton's organization of the material encourages a close empathy between Satan and the reader from the first moments of the action. Through a combination of the kinetic verse which describes Satan's fall (I.44-47), the unobtrusive change in perspective and tense half-way through line 54, and his unexpected sympathy with Satan when he (Satan) begins to speak (I.84), the reader finds himself in Hell alongside Satan, sharing his spiritual agony. We feel the agitation of his words to Beelzebub: "If thou beest he . . . if he . . ." (I.84-87). This agitation indicates more than Satan's surprise at Beelzebub's physical change; it reflects also an existential uncertainty or confusion about his own identity.<sup>6</sup> We experience something of the angst and despair of this moment. Great then is our wonder when a defiant energy manifests itself as Satan ends his lament with the vow:

Yet not for those [blows already suffered],  
Nor what the potent victor in his rage  
Can else inflict, do I repent or change.  
(I.94-96)

His "fixed mind /And high disdain" (I.97-98) lift him out of the physical and spiritual quagmire and, although he knows that Heaven and all that is good is lost to him (I.84-92), he asserts:

What though the field be lost?  
All is not lost.  
(I.105-6)

He puts what is lost behind him and begins to derive new values from his new terms of existence. For defying the order of things, God expelled him from that order.<sup>7</sup> By the force of his "unconquerable will" (I.106) Satan will

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<sup>5</sup>See p. 54 above, and II.737-814, where Sin has to remind Satan who she is, and how she is related to him; also pp. 117-19 below.

<sup>6</sup>See Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on I.86, p. 49, on Satan's agitation and his "doubt whether Beelzebub is present".

<sup>7</sup>See Rajan, Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader, p. 64.

build a new order, construct a new moral system and shape a new identity for himself. He will consciously and actively become the devil.

As with Lucifer, this is obviously a retrogressive process, a moral degeneration after his impressive and noble opening lines, and this process in Satan has been extensively debated and elucidated.<sup>8</sup> But as with Lucifer, it is also a positive process of personal reintegration after the oblivion of the fall, parallel to and concurrent with his degeneration. This dual process begins in the first moments of Satan's consciousness in Hell, even while he is still rolling on the fiery gulf, and it continues throughout the poem, complicated and enriched by the unchronological structure, until it reaches at once both its zenith (personally/psychologically) and its nadir (morally) in Book X. The major stages of this dual process - the points at which Satan commits himself progressively more firmly to active evil - are marked by serpent images<sup>9</sup> and these culminate in his physical metamorphosis into a serpent in Book X. Thus Satan's development from angel to devil is, like Lucifer's, both positive and negative, both spiritual and physical, and it is a protracted one; he does not lose his angelic nature instantly, but in proportion as he takes on the nature and form of the devil. And finally, the anguish of Satan's sense of loss remains evident throughout this process. In Helen Gardner's words: "There remains always, untouched by the argument, the image of enormous pain and eternal loss".<sup>10</sup> It is these two facts - i) that there is a positive movement of integration (a counterplot) which is always balancing or counteracting the negative one of degeneration, and ii) that Satan

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<sup>8</sup>Notably by Lewis, Preface and Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics.

<sup>9</sup>See Satan's serpentine form as he recovers consciousness on the lake of Hell (I.194-197), his encounter with the serpentine Sin at Hell Gate (II.643ff.), his change into the amphibious form of the toad (IV.800), his voluntary metamorphosis into the serpent that tempts Eve (IX.180-90), and finally his involuntary metamorphosis into a serpent in Hell (X.504ff.).

<sup>10</sup>Helen Gardner, "Milton's 'Satan' and the theme of damnation in Elizabethan Tragedy," English Studies New Series 1 (1948): 46.

experiences the agony of his protracted metamorphosis - that maintain our fascination with him throughout the poem.

The business of this chapter will be to trace the process of Satan's spiritual development (integration and degeneration) which culminates in his address to the sun in Book IV. The physical completion of this process occurs mainly in the second half of the poem, where he operates no longer as rebel but as fiend, and this will be explored in Chapter Five.

## II

It is of course generically necessary that Satan should revive rapidly from the psychological shock of the fall. The epic demands a character of dynamic heroism acting on an ample and external scale. If Satan is to be such a hero, he must recover himself. But just as his fall and his metamorphosis are not accomplished instantaneously, so his recovery of a sense of identity and purpose, however rapid and impressive, is not instantly complete. The new order that he will evolve is not yet evident, either to him or to us, in his first speech. All that is evident is the reawakening of energy and defiance. Throughout this speech he is still "chained on the burning lake" (I.210), and yet he resolves "never to submit or yield" (I.108). Barely seventy lines after regaining consciousness he swears "to wage . . . eternal war /Irreconcilable, to [his] grand foe" (I.121-22).

Beelzebub valiantly follows his leader in this sentiment:

the mind and spirit remains  
Invincible, and vigour soon returns,  
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state  
Here swallowed up in endless misery.  
(I.139-42)

But how different in tone! Compare Satan's oath:

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.  
(I.94-98)

The firm iambic march of Satan's lines and the defiant negatives ("not . . . nor") bear witness to his invincible spirit. However acutely he may realize his loss, he only mentions it parenthetically ("Though changed in outward lustre"). He begins immediately to transcend the spiritual perdition inherent in the fall and admits only his physical loss; his "fixed mind /And high disdain" remain. By contrast Beelzebub, though he too claims that "the mind and spirit remain", shows nothing of this return of vigour. The less forceful anapaests scattered through his speech deny the invincibility he claims. He dwells at length upon their dreadful change; ideas of loss and endless misery dominate his thoughts. For Satan the prospect of eternity means "eternal war" (I.121); for Beelzebub it means "to undergo eternal punishment" (I.154).

Out of this miserable immobility Satan rouses Beelzebub. He does it, not by subtlety or guile (as does Belzebub with Lucifer), but frankly, by the magnetism of his own courage, the courage of a mighty and heroic but also peculiarly compassionate general:

Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable  
Doing or suffering.

(I.157-58)

It is not suffering (though it be eternal) that is wretched, but to suffer weakly and submissively; "that were an ignominy and shame beneath /This downfall" (I.115-16). Similarly the spiritual aspect of Satan's fall, the withering contempt which he received from Messiah, is an ignominy and shame more degrading than the physical downfall, and as he recovers from that insult (partly suppressing it and partly transcending it) so each speech, though it reveals moments of despair and pain, culminates in an assertion of determination and force. In this very place where "hope never comes" (I.66), Satan resolves to hope (I.120-21). Out of his defiance he begins to formulate his new terms of existence:

of this be sure,  
 To do aught good never will be our task,  
 But ever to do ill our sole delight.

(I.158-60)

Satan talks in absolutes, and predominantly in negative absolutes: "never", "sole", "irreconcilable". On these negative foundations he will construct his new order; it will be "contrary to his high will /Whom [they] resist" (I.161-62). Contrariety becomes the essence of his existence, and of Hell:

If [God's] 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.

(I.162-65)

Thus Satan's manifesto has developed from the purely defiant "I will not repent" (I.94-96 and 108), to the more perversely positive "I will be evil". With this "resolution [gained] from despair" (I.191) he rears himself with a titanic surge of energy from the flood (I.221-28).

For a moment when "on dry land /He lights" (I.227-28) and he sees his surroundings from a new perspective, Satan is again sharply aware of his loss:

Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,  
 . . . this the seat  
 That we must change for heaven, this mournful gloom  
 For that celestial light?

(I.242-45)

But whereas for Lucifer such anguish leads to a dissolution of will (see Lucifer, 348-75), for Satan it becomes the source of a renewed resolve; he consciously arrests his emotion and despair with his own spontaneous amen: "Be it so" (I.245). He bids a poignant farewell to Heaven:

Farewell happy fields  
 Where joy ever dwells.

(I.249-50)

Obviously Satan's situation in Hell is desperate and therefore more conducive to heroism than Lucifer's is in Heaven, but a comparison here of their spontaneous emotional laments at the loss of glory is nevertheless

mutually illuminating. Lucifer's farewell to past glory ("Borduurt geen kroonen meer", 354) is a dramatic relinquishing of his self-image;<sup>11</sup> for Satan it is a moment of confirmation in his new, perverse self-image. Satan turns the adversity of the situation to advantage, the anguish to action. He does not only accept his new life, but applauds it:

hail horrors, hail  
Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell  
Receive thy new possessor.

(I.250-52)

This soon reasserts itself<sup>12</sup> as the single most important driving force in Satan's character: the will to be "possessor". For him

To reign is worth ambition though in hell:  
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.

(I.262-63)

If he cannot reign in Heaven he would rather forfeit that entire order and invert it (see the antithetical balance of his lines, e.g. 263 and 255) that he might at least reign in Hell: "Here at least /We shall be free . . . /Here we may reign secure" (I.258-61). For Satan, to be free is to reign.<sup>13</sup> But in his phrase "here at least", Satan reveals a significant weakness, a "flaw" which will never allow him to be completely impervious to the influence of Good: he implicitly concedes that his new kingdom remains second best. He will always know and be reminded that the Heaven he has lost, is supreme (I.85 and 245). Though he claims that "the mind is its own place, and in itself /Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven" (I.254-55), and though his mind will indeed become his profoundest Hell, his callousness is never such that sight of Eve or the sun will not make him long for Heaven again. Thus beneath Satan's intrepid determination is this potential capacity for suffering, this tendency towards weakness which militates against a process

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<sup>11</sup>See pp. 45-46 above.

<sup>12</sup>cf. V.802.

<sup>13</sup>A perversion of the order in the Scale of Nature, where obedience and service to an hierarchic superior mean freedom. See VI.172-85.

of personal reintegration.

Also underlying Satan's heroism and detracting from the positive aspect of his development is of course his unquestionable disobedience. The way of life which he conceives is impressive, certainly, but it remains evil, and the narrator does not allow us to lose sight of this. Woven into the narrative is a "muted running commentary . . . which consistently suggests that the prevailing impression of grandeur is false".<sup>14</sup> Waldock objects to this "commentary" as false or misleading, the first stage in an unfair process of systematic degradation of Satan, a "running fire of belittling commentary".<sup>15</sup> Musgrove (above) does indeed overstate the case if he implies that we are persuaded by the narrator's commentary that Satan's grandeur is false. Satan's impressiveness in Hell can never be denied, even by authorial comment; all that such commentary can do is to qualify progressively the effect of his grandeur (as indeed it does).

We find Satan's heroic disobedience in the opening books problematic, and hence seek to rationalize or deny it, because it occupies two extremes of our value scale at once: the disobedience is a vice but the heroism a virtue. As Satan degenerates in the course of the poem, we begin to recognize this virtue as itself a vice, but once we have made this moral adjustment we may not retrospectively "correct" our judgment of Satan's opening speeches, or deny our response to them. Fowler is in danger of making this error when he says that the Leviathan simile (I.200-8) warns us against "the danger of trusting [Satan's] false appearance of greatness in the early books".<sup>16</sup> It warns us against Satan's falseness, certainly, but to reflect this warning

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<sup>14</sup>S. Musgrove, "Is the Devil an Ass?," p. 305.

<sup>15</sup>Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics, p. 83.

<sup>16</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on I. 200-8, p. 56.

back onto the opening action and so to deny intellectually the effect that Satan has had on us, would again be to distort the facts of the poem retrospectively. Satan's greatness in Book I is not merely a "false appearance", and little of what he has said and done thus far in the poem has in fact been deceptive. He has, on the contrary, been daringly frank; his rebellion and malice have been open and heroic. As Broadbent points out, "Satan's prototype is not the villain, but the epic hero".<sup>17</sup>

Throughout Books I and II, as Satan begins to change from angel to devil, our judgment of him vacillates between the extremes of admiration and condemnation. Milton himself walks this tightrope (much as Vondel does with Lucifer), maintaining a tension between an heroic and a purely diabolic Satan. Until his transformation is complete Satan occupies two moral worlds, Heaven and Hell, and two orders, the angelic and the diabolical, and through this bipolarity of his character he becomes his own foil: "his own best self is foil to his worst",<sup>18</sup> and vice versa. His worst self (the damnable) is consistently detracting from his best (the admirable). Even in his initial heroic resolve to wage eternal war there is an undertone of meanness: "To wage by force or guile eternal war" (I.121). At this earliest stage in Satan's reintegration, his degeneration also begins, with the introduction of the unheroic idea of guile. His force we can - indeed must - admire, it is so audacious. But guile we cannot accommodate within our conception of heroism. Thus the narrator's negative introductory comments on Satan begin to find echoes in his actions and words.

But this actual degeneration of Satan's character is always compounded by the narrator's treatment of him, for instance in comparing him to Leviathan:

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<sup>17</sup>Broadbent, Some Graver Subject, p. 73.

<sup>18</sup>ibid. p. 71.

Him haply slumbering on the Norway foam  
 The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,  
 Deeming some island, . . .

. . . . .  
 Moors by his side under the lea, while night  
 Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.

(I.203-8)

Having been alerted by Satan himself to the guile and cunning which we are to expect of him, we are struck primarily by the deceptiveness implied in this image. It evokes all the power of the Christian mythology of ships upon the sea, storms, night, and safe havens, and our feeling is one of apprehension on behalf of the "night-foundered" pilot. For the moment we are in sympathetic alliance with him, and opposing Satan.<sup>19</sup>

Also emphasizing the decline of Satan's character is the irony to which he is subject throughout Book I. Isabel MacCaffrey comments on the effect of this irony:

Irony is fundamentally tragic; it calls out simultaneously our sympathetic emotions and our critical intellects. Above all the ironic vision . . . refuses to permit a simple attitude.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the irony in Book I both degrades Satan and evokes our sympathy for him; it colours his words and actions sometimes with the tincture of Nonsense,<sup>21</sup> sometimes of pathos. When Satan cries "amen" to profoundest Hell, for instance, positively willing (rather than just accepting) that what is, should be, we admire his courage, but not without an awareness of the pathos of the situation. The irony of his phrase "Be it so" cannot escape us; God alone can speak a fiat of this kind with any meaning or effect. It will be so, not because Satan has either willed or accepted it, but because God wills it. Satan's presumption here is of the order of Faustus's "Consummatum est",<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>This "polarization" of our sympathy (see Peter, A Critique of Paradise Lost, pp. 60-62) occurs on a decisive scale when Satan enters Paradise and becomes the antagonist of Adam and Eve.

<sup>20</sup>Isabel Gamble MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as 'Myth' (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 183.

<sup>21</sup>Lewis, Preface, p. 95.

<sup>22</sup>Christopher Marlow, The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus (London: Methuen and Co., 1962), scene v, line 74.

but whereas Faustus's utterance strikes terror into his audience, the fallen Satan's cry is, for all its existential courage, tinged with pathos.

Our reaction to Satan's courage is similarly tempered by the narrator's qualification of the surge of energy by which Satan rears himself from the flood. The description includes some of the most muscular lines in the poem, imitating the titanic action and forcing the reader to participate in it:<sup>23</sup>

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool  
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames  
Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and rolled  
In billows leave i' the midst a horrid vale.  
(I.221-24)

Satan's every is dynamic, but the full power of these lines, and hence of his magnetism, is curtailed by the qualifying exposition that precedes them:

the arch-fiend lay  
Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence  
Had risen or heaved his head, but that the will  
And high permission of all-ruling heaven  
Left him at large.  
(I.209-13)

Thus the narrator controls and checks Satan's attractiveness, and when he scorns Satan and Beelzebub for "glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood /As gods, and by their own recovered strength, / Not by the sufferance of supernal power" (I.239-41), we find his tone not out of place.

Even the reintegration of Satan's personality does not escape the qualifying touch of irony. When he pledges himself to his fate, "ever to do ill . . . , /As being the contrary to [God's] high will" (I.160-61), he is trapped in a circular irony which reveals the futility of this spiritual feat:

If then his providence  
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,  
Our labour must be to pervert that end,

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<sup>23</sup> See Cope, Metaphoric Structure, on kinetic verse and the theme of PL.

And out of good still to find means of evil.  
(I.162-65)

It is absurd to acknowledge providence and yet to talk about perverting its ends. Satan can do little more than "grieve" (I.167) and "offend" (I.187) God. Thus his "eternal war" (I.121) is, if we consider it intellectually, reduced to a mere contrariness.

Nevertheless the fact that Satan refuses to yield, even to God, enhances the emotional impact of his defiance and contributes to his greatness. And if challenging providence is illogical, the courage and determination with which he does it is impressive. Though his whole existence henceforth will be a spiralling reductio ad absurdum of good to evil and evil again to good, a perpetual round of "highly . . . rag [ing] /Against the highest (I.666-67), yet will Satan persist in his revolt. "With reiterated crimes he [will] /Heap on himself damnation", and the sum of his career will be to "see /How all his malice serve[s] but to bring forth /Infinite goodness" (I.214-18), and yet Satan will remain determined that "that glory [of seeing him yield] never shall [God's] wrath or might /Extort from [him]" (I.110-11). The overriding impression that Satan makes on us in these opening speeches is of energy, courage and heroism. Waldock sums it up:

We hear about Satan's pride [and] see something of it, . . . we see something of his malice, we deduce his folly, and we know that theoretically he and his mates are in misery. But what we are chiefly made to see and feel in the first two Books are . . . fortitude in adversity, enormous endurance, a certain splendid recklessness, remarkable powers of rising to an occasion, extraordinary qualities of leadership . . . , and striking intelligence in meeting difficulties that are novel and could seem overwhelming. What we feel most of all . . . is his refusal to give in - just that.<sup>24</sup>

Through the therapy of his speeches to Beelzebub, Satan has recovered himself and reoriented himself in relation to his new surroundings and condition. Out of defeat and despair he has evolved a whole new cosmology, stoically

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<sup>24</sup>Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics, p. 77.

converting Hell into a heaven (I.255) and his fate into a mission. He has conceived a purpose for life, adapted to his new condition. In this environment of uncreation and anti-matter, "where all life dies, [and] death lives" (II.624), Satan has recognized evil as the only viable way of life and made it his raison d' être. Parodying God's ways, he has converted his own fall into a felix culpa.<sup>25</sup>

The speeches to Beelzebub reflect the major part of Satan's psychological metamorphosis. By the time he turns to rouse his legions from "the oblivious pool" (I.266), his ontological shock is over and he is relatively confirmed in identity, philosophy and purpose. Apart from moments of spiritual agony, no tormented internal debate or vacillation has preceded his resolve to seek evil; once the choice is before him, his commitment is immediate and absolute. But he does not immediately become Evil. This change occurs progressively as he "confirms his soul in the practice of evil".<sup>26</sup>

### III

Upon turning to the fallen angels, Satan becomes a public and political figure, and it is especially his voice that dominates the next few moments of the action. Beelzebub ascribes the morale of the rebels during the War in Heaven to "that voice, their liveliest pledge /Of hope . . . /Their surest signal" (I.274-78), and that voice now again rings out "so loud, that all the hollow deep /Of hell resounded" (I.314-15). The narrator notes specifically that it is "to their general's voice" (I.337) that the fallen angels respond. Milton is illustrating Satan's hypnotic influence over his followers and emphasizing the means of that influence or control -

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<sup>25</sup>cf. Cope, Metaphoric Structure, p. 92.

<sup>26</sup>Rajan, Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader, p. 97.

it is the control of the demagogue over the masses, through the power of the word.

But the effect of Satan's first speech to his vanquished army does not lie entirely in emotional rhetoric and the power of the word. It is in essence an unequivocal command: "Princes, potentates, /Warriors . . . / . . . /Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen" (I.315-30), and is spoken from a real conviction that "to be weak is miserable /Doing or suffering" (I.157-58); therefore, to continue "astonished on the oblivious pool" (I.266) is to be doubly fallen, to be "lost /In loss itself" (I.525-26), while to wake and rise is to undo something at least of the fall. Thus the crux of this speech is Satan's courage. The rest of the speech is syntactically subordinate, with the appearance of being incidental, but here lies its political impact. It is a mixture of sarcasm (cf. the rhetorical questions) and urgency, with reminders of Heaven and appeals to their lost grandeur to sting the hearers into life and action. The effect of the parenthetical nature of most of the speech and the delay of the main verb until the last line is to evoke the anticipation of the listener and create a mounting tempo in the lines themselves. The syntax gives way to the momentum and rhetoric, as subordinate clauses and conjunctions are piled upon one another: if, or, or, who, till. This conveys Satan's sense of urgency, but most importantly and effectively it sweeps the listeners along as it re-enacts their headlong fall, culminating in the image (in the present tense) of them fallen and transfixed to the bottom of the gulf:

His swift pursuers from heaven gates discern  
The advantage, and descending tread us down  
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts  
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf.  
(I.326-29)

Then follows Satan's dynamic cry: "Awake, arise", instantly and aggressively reversing the downward movement and fulfilling the expectancy created by the suspension of the verb. The courage and rhetoric of this speech have combined

to turn it, for the listeners, into a re-experience of their fall, an acute awareness of their fallenness, and suddenly, a salvation. For this final call seems, by the power of its sudden counter-movement, to raise them from their transfixed condition:

They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung  
Upon the wing.

(I.331-32)

The liveness of their activity proves the efficacy of Satan's speech as more than just a command.

Two factors make Satan the undisputed leader of the fallen angels: i) the survival (ironically) of the hierarchy as it existed in Heaven, and ii) his courage and heroism, which raise him in every respect above the others. He is the first (and the only one) to rise spontaneously from the flood; it is he who conceives the new order by which evil becomes a viable way of life for the rebels; and it is his voice that conjures them to life, much as "the potent rod /Of Amram's son" conjured locusts (I.338-43). Though Milton persistently qualifies Satan's actions (e.g. 594-600) and reminds us that Satan is in fact more an agent than the principal mover (e.g. I.211-20), yet the overriding impression is that Satan's actions are independent, and his energetic drive spontaneous. He certainly requires no prompting. When Beelzebub urges him to rouse the fallen angels, for instance, he is already doing so:

[Beelzebub] scarce had ceased when the superior fiend  
Was moving toward the shore.

(I.283-84)

The rebels respond to Satan with obedience and awe (I.332-34). His control of them is firm, again much like that of a conjurer over the conjured:

So numberless were those bad angels seen  
Hovering . . .  
. . . . .  
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear

Of their great sultan waving to direct  
 Their course, in even balance down they light  
 On the firm brimstone.

(I.344-50)

The narrator's subtle degradation of Satan is again evident here. Even while this picture of Satan illustrates his influence over the legions, it also shifts the emphasis away from the magnetism of his personality to a cruder kind of power, almost a kind of magic. The title "sultan" has a persuasive effect in achieving this shift;<sup>27</sup> Satan instantly becomes the symbol of the threat of Islam to Christendom, a symbol of all that is anti-Christ. The fallen angels are compared with fallen autumn leaves (I.302), floating carcasses (I.310), "a pitchy cloud of locusts" warping on the wind and hovering on the wing (I.340-45), and the Barbarians invading Europe (I.351-55). These comparisons range from "morally unfavourable",<sup>28</sup> through sinister, to disgusting, and through them Satan's position as leader gains very negative connotations.

Once Satan's vitalizing influence has operated on the angels and they are regrouped under his banner, the picture changes again. Their order, "united force" and "fixed thought" (I.560) turn them again into a great army; "never since created man, /Met such embodied force" (I.573). Typically, this fills Satan with pride:

And now his heart  
 Distends with pride, and hardening in his strength  
 Glories.

(I.571-73)

He has risen to become, once more, a "dread commander" and

he above the rest  
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent  
 Stood like a tower.

(I.589-91)

In standing again at the head of an army, Satan has regained his full stature. This is a significant step in the process of his re-integration. But at this climax there follows a moment, the effect of which Fowler calls "shocking",<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>cf. the effect of the crescent image in Lucifer V.i, p. 90 above.

but which is shocking only in the degree that the reader has forgotten or originally misread Satan's opening lines. As Satan prepares to address the rebels gathered about him and bending towards him, mute in attention (I.615-18), "tears such as angels weep burst forth" from him (I.620). This moment of emotion for Satan represents a glimmering of that angelic nature which he has not yet entirely shed, and as such is neither shocking nor improbable. Nor are these tears unprepared for. Only moments earlier, as the rebels "light /On the firm brimstone" about him (I. 349-50), he speaks to them words which, though they are described as "high words, that bore /Semblance of worth, not substance" (I.528-29), nevertheless "gently raised /Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears" (I.529-30). This tenderness recalls the sorrow with which Satan recognized and mourned Beelzebub's loss of glory (I.84-87). As Fowler explains: "the hardening of Satan's heart is not yet complete",<sup>30</sup> and it is psychologically accurate that the significant stages in his progress from angel to devil should be attended by such moments of spiritual pain. This also makes sense of the passage immediately preceding. As Satan surveys his legions,

care  
 Sat on his faded cheek, . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . cruel his eye, but cast  
 Signs of remorse and passion to behold  
 The fellows of his crime, the followers rather  
 (Far other once beheld in bliss) condemned  
 For ever now to have their lot in pain,  
 Millions of spirits for his fault amerced  
 Of heaven, and from eternal splendours flung  
 For his revolt, yet faithful how they stood,  
 Their glory withered.

(I.601-12)

At the beginning of the passage the point of view is that of Satan as he surveys the ranks. No change in point of view is indicated and when the

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<sup>28</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on I.351-55, p. 64.

<sup>29</sup>ibid. note on I.620, p. 80.

<sup>30</sup>ibid.

remorseful thoughts arise, they must be taken as Satan's own. Milton carefully qualifies this passage ( e.g. I.594-99), calling Satan's sincerity into question, but the evident erlebte Rede allows us a moving insight into Satan's thoughts which no amount of qualification can entirely undercut. This scene is a foreshadowing of and preparation for Satan's almost tragic speech to the sun in Book IV.

Characteristically, however, Satan's remorse does not consume his energy or pervade his thought. His next speech is said to be "interwove with sighs" (I.621), but these are not very evident. The rhetoric is based on exaggeration and delusion (the delusion that God is not almighty), with a militaristic emphasis, its aim being to boost morale. Satan encourages his legions with the audacious hope that they may "re-ascend /Self-raised, and repossess their native seat" (I.633-34). The abstract evil which he has conceived has not yet been shaped into any specific strategy; he only suggests that their "better part remains /To work in close design, by fraud or guile /What force effected not" (I.645-47), and that a mission to the rumoured world, "if but to pry, shall be perhaps /[[Their] first eruption" (I.655-56). This scheme is not yet specifically directed against Man; Satan still considers the earth primarily as a stepping stone in their re-ascension. But his recourse to fraud, guile and prying reveals the origin of the eventual plan to attack God through Man.

Satan is playing his hand prematurely, but with calculation. During the Council in Pandemonium he will adopt an apparently democratic procedure, leaving the choice between "open war or covert guile" (II.41) to the generals, but by then his scheme will already have been "in part proposed" (II.380), and his lieutenant will merely wait for the opportune moment to return the debate to Satan's plan. Suffice it to note here that the initiative is entirely Satan's own.

Book II begins with a description of Satan upon his throne in

## Pandemonium:

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 with heaven.

(II.5-9)

Satan's exaltation is so high as to be impossible and his ambition, expressed in this emulation or parody of the Father (cf. III.56-58), clearly so excessive as to be absurd. The awkwardness of the verse enacts this. It reflects ironically upon himself and upon the heroism of his determination, pre-empting his action in Book II.

In his address to the Council Satan continues to encourage the rebels with the rhetoric of bravery and hope:

I give not heaven for lost. From this descent  
 Celestial virtues rising, will appear  
 More glorious and more dread than from no fall.

(II.14-16)

The reader recognizes this as propaganda, for we know that Satan has in fact given Heaven up for lost, and recognized and accepted Hell as his eternal kingdom (cf. I.249-53). But he is "insatiate to pursue /Vain war with heaven" (II.8-9) and seeks the necessary concurrence of his generals. The evident deception in his speech to them alerts us to the tone of his other public speeches.

Indeed, his tone towards the rebels changes noticeably now. Thus far his concern, often moving in its compassion, has been to revive them and to see his army restored. That done, his modus operandi must change, for now that the house of evil is established and its internal dynamics will begin to operate, Satan's position as leader will be in jeopardy. As the father of jealousy and suspicion, he intuitively knows that evil will divide against itself and that there will always be a potential strife and rebellion against which he must guard (as is already evident in the frenzy that characterizes the devils in contrast with God, the still centre of the wheel).

Until now Satan's leadership has been based on the heavenly hierarchy and on the merit of his own personality, but in hell such criteria do not validate anything. If Satan is to remain leader, the premises of that leadership must adapt to the new, perverse order. And so Satan alters his approach from encouragement to guile, and begins consolidating his position in order to forestall dissension. He publicly claims his right to leadership (II.18-21), ironically invoking those standards ("just right", "fixed laws", "free choice" and "merit") which he rejected in his rebellion and which he has steadily perverted and inverted. But he hastens to add how unenviable this office is. He speaks as the self-sacrificing leader or martyr (II.26-30), but we who have heard his manifesto: "in my choice /To reign is worth ambition though in hell" (I.261-62), recognize not only the dubious logic but also the dishonesty and deceit and the "desperate irrationality".<sup>31</sup> Thus Satan degenerates yet further as he adapts himself to the more petty aspects of his new existence. From here on his leadership is founded on deceit and propaganda. He opens for debate the question of how they will "return /To claim [their] just inheritance" (II.37-38), a shrewd political manoeuvre which enables him to assess his opposition. The argument among Moloch, Belial and Mammon in which they propose their different philosophies and strategies is potentially a threat to Satan, but correctly exploited it sets him up as redeemer, a travesty of the Son's sacrifice.

It is Beelzebub who exploits the situation. He has been in "mutual league" (I.87) with Satan since before the rebellion in Heaven (see V.676-78). He has witnessed Satan's transformation since they awoke on the flood, and seems to have absorbed evil from him (just as in the rebellion Satan "infused /Bad influence into [his] unwary breast", V.694-95). His mind is attuned and receptive to Satan's devious influence, and it becomes evident now that

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<sup>31</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on II.30-38, p. 92.

Satan's earlier revelation of his scheme was meant chiefly for Beelzebub's ears. (It appears to have made no impact on the other generals; at that early stage it was still Satan's personal magnetism and rhetoric that impressed them, rather than his reasoning.)

Beelzebub has been silent since the start of the debate, and he chooses his moment carefully, when the crowd is on the point of approving one of the proposals (see the general and sustained murmur of applause that follows Mammon's speech, II.284-92). The influence of Satan's earlier, private speeches to him is evident in Beelzebub's words. "What if we find /Some easier enterprise [than war]", he circumspectly suggests (II.344-45). God's new creation "lies exposed" (II.360); there they may at least "interrupt [God's] joy" (II.371-72). Beelzebub does not envisage either war or peace, but simply that they should plot "how the conqueror least /May reap his conquest" (II.338-39). This "devilish counsel [was] first devised /By Satan" (II.379-80), but the seed of Satan's suggestion has matured in Beelzebub's mind. Even as he speaks we observe the plan becoming more refined in conception and strategy, until he conceives the idea of seducing Man to their party (II.368); "this would surpass /Common revenge" (II.370-71). It is this idea that wins the full assembly and saves the day for Satan. (Ironically, of course, no-one is aware of the full implications of this scheme: the ruin they will cause will be far greater than they can even imagine, but at the same time God will bring that much greater good out of it, II.382-86.)

Beelzebub continues to arrange the situation for Satan. He calls for a volunteer to undertake the "excursion" (II.396) but paints a daunting (and ironically not at all inaccurate) picture of what awaits the traveller (II.404-13). This "dismays" and "astonishes" his listeners (II.422-23), and creates a politically expedient silence of "expectation" and "suspense" (II.417-18).

When Satan stands up he is the image of courage and self-sacrifice. But his "monarchal pride" (II.428) is coupled now with a jealousy which stops just short of being manifestly grasping, only because his political prudence teaches him to maintain a facade of calm and nonchalance. To all around him it seems that "for the general safety he despise [s] /His own" (II.481-82), while in truth it is "glory . . . , /Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal" (II.484-85) that excites him to bravery.

Having grasped the leadership by cunning, Satan brings the assembly to a rapid close, preventing last-minute opposition (II.467-73). Satan the politician judiciously fear rivalry, but Satan the egoist also jealously disapproves of anyone besides himself winning "high repute". Through his jealousy and these questionable motives, Satan's courage and heroism have become seriously tainted. All that remains at this point to sustain our admiration is a courage which has been reduced to brute boldness and audacity. When the rebels now "towards him . . . bend /With awful reverence prone" (II.477-78), we are considerably more disturbed by the perversaion (a travesty of the angels' worship of the Son) than at any point in his earlier speeches.

## IV

In Satan's association with Sin and Death this perversion achieves its most shocking expression. In their company Satan is truly in the realm of monstrous Hell and our earlier reactions of disapproval translate into horror and disgust. At this moment when Satan sets out actively to seek the evil which thus far he has only theoretically conceived, he encounters Sin and Death. Sin has changed physically since her birth in Heaven and has become hideously deformed. Being Satan's image, her amphibious and serpentine nature (enhanced by the repellent shapelessness of their son) is a symbol or spiritual mirror of Satan's inner character and its decline and deformity,

an image of the loathsome and irredeemable end to which his duplicity and perversion are bringing him. As such it anticipates his later metamorphoses in Paradise (Book IX) and in Hell (Book X), the outcome of his present enterprise. Ultimately the image of evil will no longer be extraneous; Satan will become Evil (Book X), his spiritual deformity becoming physically manifest in his own form.

Satan's process of moral degeneration thus reaches one of its lowest points in the encounter with Sin. But from the other perspective, the process of his reintegration into a new creature, this is also a significant moment, marking an important step in his commitment to the way of life he has chosen.

In spite of his intimate relations with Sin in Heaven, Satan does not recognize her when he encounters her at the gates of Hell. With his fall from Heaven and the attendant disintegration, he lost her from memory.<sup>32</sup> Dramatically and allegorically it is inevitable that Satan should now meet her again on his way out of Hell, for as Fowler explains: "access to hell is by sinning, so that it is difficult to think of any other guardian who could have been chosen" to guard the gates.<sup>33</sup> But it is also psychologically fitting that Satan should meet Sin, the "perfect image" (II.764) of himself, and recognize her again at this particular point in his development, for it is here that he actually sets out on his journey into active evil and in so doing rediscovers a self-image and confirms his new identity. Setting out from Hell is the most significant threshold that he will cross both in his journey and in his development.

While Satan is cripplingly degraded by his association with the loathsome creatures Sin and Death, the positive counterplot prevents him

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<sup>32</sup>See p. 54 above.

<sup>33</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on II.746, p. 125.

losing our interest. And to strengthen this positive plot Milton uses Sin and Death, on the dramatic level, not as mirrors but as foils for Satan, initially at least. In contrast to their "foul", "miscreated", "grisly", "horrid" and "execrable" shapes (II.648-726), Satan is clad in "bright arms . . . tempered heavenly" (II.812-13), and is "undaunted" (II.677) and "disdainful" (II.680). His initial approach to them is bold and proud:

Through [these gates] I mean to pass,  
That be assured, without leave asked of thee:  
Retire, or taste thy folly.

(II.684-86)

He soon discovers, however, that he is dependent upon them for passage through the barred gates. And so he begins instead to employ that "lore" which he has conceived as his surest stratagem against God and has already employed in dealing with his own legions - guile:

the subtle fiend his lore  
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth.

(II.815-16)

His manner becomes ingratiating. That "double-formed thing" (II.741) and her "miscreated" son (II.683) now become "dear daughter" and "fair son" (II.817-18), and he wins them by that same show of selfless magnanimity that swayed the devils in Pandemonium (II.822-28).

Satan's determined progress towards his goal bears him through this obstruction. Milton now restores our sympathy with Satan by encouraging, through the movement of the verse, our active participation in the various stages of the voyage through Chaos. The narrator endorses this sustained participation by claiming at the end of the journey that he too has "escaped the Stygian pool . . . / . . . [by] flight /Through utter and through middle darkness borne" (III.14-16).

Having passed through the Gates of Hell, Satan hesitates on the brink of the abyss which he must traverse, and the "mimetic syntax"<sup>34</sup> imitates his

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<sup>34</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on II.917-18, p. 132.

gasp of horror, causing the reader to hesitate with him:

Into this wild abyss,  
 The womb of nature and perhaps her grave,  
 Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,  
 But all these in their pregnant causes mixed  
 Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,  
 . . . . .  
 Into this wild abyss the wary fiend  
 Stood on the brink of hell and looked a while.  
 (II.910-18)

The first impulse towards flight ("Into this wild abyss", 910) fades into an extended description of the abyss, while the second attempt (917) is followed not by the expected verb of action or movement but by verbs of stasis: "stood and looked". This is followed by the understatement: "no narrow frith /He had to cross" (II.919-20); the horror of the abyss defies full description.

After the initial hesitation the reader participates in the smooth and speedy ascent:

At last his sail-broad vans  
 He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke  
 Uplifted spurns the ground, thence many a league  
 As in a cloudy chair ascending rides  
 Audacious.  
 (II.927-31)

When Satan meets a "vast vacuity" and "all unawares /Fluttering his pennons vain plumb down he drops /Ten thousand fathom deep" (II.932-34), the alliteration ("p" and "d"), the lexical register (down, drop, deep, falling) and the metre (Fluttering his pennons vain plumb down he drops) conspire to rouse in the reader a sickening sensation of falling, so that his own being wills that the plummeting should by some good fortune cease. But when Satan's fall is suddenly halted and reversed by the "rebuff of some tumultuous cloud" (II.936), the reader is abruptly reminded that this, far from being good fortune, is in fact bad luck; for Satan would "to this hour /Down [have] been falling" and "all our woe" (I.3) would have been spared, had it not been for the "ill chance" of the cloud saving him (II.934-38). Emotionally "ill chance" jars, but intellectually of course it makes clear sense. Thus the reader continues to be balanced between condemnation and sympathy.

There follows the struggle through the "crude consistence" (II.941) of Chaos, re-enacted by the throng of monosyllables, commas and conjunctions:

so eagerly the fiend  
O'er bog or steep, through straight, rough, dense, or rare,  
With head, hands, wings or feet pursues his way.  
(II.947-49)

Satan meets the monarch of this realm of uncreation (II.959-1009) and him too he deceives in order to procure the aid he needs to reach creation, bribing him with an appeal to his lust for empire (II.980-84). Satan's attitude of humility and helplessness before the throne of Chaos is not entirely false: "Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek" (II.975). The reader readily endorses this with his sympathy.

When Chaos recalls Satan's fall from Heaven, his brief description of it (like the plummeting through the "vast vacuity") counteracts the movement of the whole of Satan's laborious voyage thus far, undercutting his present effort (II.993-98). But this present effort is itself ultimately contradictory and therefore deflating: Satan seeks passage "up to light" (II.974) in order that all things may be "reduce[d] /To . . . darkness" (II.984). Thus his own perverse intention prefigures his entire career. At the same time, however, the repeated minor falls and reversals that Satan experiences enhance the impact of his courage as he perseveres through them all, striving to undo his first, precipitous fall. He continues in spite of what seems often to be futile, circular progress, as imitated here by the chiasmic structure of the verse:

So he with difficulty and labour hard  
Moved on, with difficulty and labour he.  
(II.1021-22)

In the end he does indeed undo at least part of the physical aspect of his fall when he finally arrives on the shores of light. Again the verse encourages the reader to share the relief:

Satan with less toil, and now with ease  
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light

And like a weather-beaten vessel holds  
Gladly the port.

(II.1041-44)

But the journey done, our sympathy with Satan abruptly ceases, for what he sees when he looks about him is:

Far off the empyreal heaven, . . .  
 . . . . .  
 And fast by hanging in a golden chain  
This pendent world.

(II.1047-52)

A sudden shift in point of view takes place. The dominant perspective is still Satan's, to whom the world is "in bigness as a star" (II.1052), but the narrator now identifies himself and the reader, no longer with Satan as he gazes at that "star", but with the "star" itself: "this world" (the universe), to whose light and beauty we are spontaneously attracted after the gloom of the journey. We do not peer with Satan, but are being peered at by him; we are suddenly the victim. As Isabel MacCaffrey points out, this moment is "his journey's end and our beginning woe" (III.633).<sup>35</sup> After this shift, the closing lines of Book II have a special impact and urgency:

Thither [to this world] full fraught with mischievous revenge,  
Accursed, and in a cursed hour he hies.

(II.1054-55)

## V

In Book III the perspective changes again, now to Heaven<sup>36</sup> where God "from above, /From the pure empyrean where he sits /High throned above all highth, bend[s] down his eye" (III.56-58) and across a vast epic distance sees Satan "stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet, /On the bare outside of this world" (III.73-74). God's regal, detached and even deriding manner casts a new perspective on the journey. He says to Messiah:

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<sup>35</sup> Isabel MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as 'Myth', p. 205.

<sup>36</sup> cf. the view of the battlefield from Mt. Olympus, Iliad IV.

Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage  
 Transports our adversary?

(III.80-81)

From such an angle and such an untroubled height, Satan appears ridiculous. The "rage" which bore him through the vicissitudes of the journey and which inspires his onslaught on Heaven, leaves Heaven unmoved.

The genuine selflessness of Messiah's offer to expiate what Satan is even now embarked upon (III.227-65) retroactively shows up the parody of Satan's offer of himself in Book II, and prospectively renders futile all Satan's schemes. "So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate" (III.298). Even as Satan lands safely on the shore of light, approaching his goal, his success is proleptically thwarted, "redound[ing]/Upon his own rebellious head" (III.85-86).

When we join Satan again as he approaches the sun (III.418ff.), the effect of Books I and II is largely broken and very little identification with Satan remains. We are reminded, through the subtlety of the simile, of Satan's malice and our own vulnerability:

As when a vulture on Imaus bred,  
 . . . . .  
 Dislodging from a region scarce of prey  
 To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids  
 On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs  
 Of Ganges or Hydaspes, . . .  
 But in his way lights on the barren plains  
 Of Sericana, . . .  
 . . . . .  
 So on this windy sea of land, the fiend  
 Walked up and down alone bent on his prey.

(III.431-41)

When Satan lands on the sun we have been so far distanced from him that we observe him as though through Galileo's telescope, our point of view now being from the earth:

There lands the fiend, a spot like which perhaps  
 Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb  
 Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.

(III.588-90)

References to Satan are now consistently negative: "the devil" (III.613), "the fiend" (III.430, 440, 498, 588), "the spirit malign" (III.553) and "the fraudulent imposter foul" (III.692). Out of his "native setting of smoke and flame",<sup>37</sup> evil ceases to be magnificent. Nor are these epithets unfair to or incongruous with Satan's present behaviour. In his encounter with Uriel he does indeed degenerate into a "false dissembler", "hypocrisy" incarnate, an "evil that walks /Invisible" (III.681-84). This deceit began in Pandemonium and at the Gates of Hell, and is now no longer confined to Satan's words and manner (as also before the throne of Chaos), but he now executes the first of his physical changes, prefiguring his deception of Eve and his ultimate transformation. In order to deceive Uriel and so obtain the final assistance he needs to reach the earth and Man, he hides his person in the beautiful and graceful form of a "stripling cherub" (III.636-44) and his intention in honeyed words:

Unspeakable desire to see, and know  
 All these his wondrous works, but chiefly man,  
 . . . . .  
 Hath brought me from the choirs of cherubim  
 Alone thus wandering. Brightest seraph tell  
 In which of all these shining orbs hath man  
 His fixed seat, . . .  
 . . . . .  
 That I may find him, and with secret gaze,  
 Or open admiration him behold.

(III.662-72)

The ironic contrast between these words and what we know is Satan's true intent, and between the cherubic form and what we know of Satan's inner deformity, illustrates the extent of Satan's deception and the immensity of the threat to Man. But some of the irony will recoil upon Satan: he pretends that his wish is to admire Man, and later he will be shocked to find himself involuntarily doing just that (IV.358-65 and IX.424-66).

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<sup>37</sup>Musgrove, "Is the Devil an Ass?", p. 305.

A major function of Book III is to reduce Satan's stature and to break his power of fascination over the reader. Even when Satan finally locates the earth his infectious relief and elation as he "throws his steep flight in many an airy wheel" (III.741) are not enough to recapture the spell which has bound us throughout the journey. The character whom we see searching his heart in Book IV is also so vastly different from the hero of Books I and II that the break effected by Book III is very necessary if we are to find his speech to the sun convincing.

## VI

Since raising himself from the oblivion of his fall and determining to wage eternal war upon God, Satan has had little opportunity or inclination to reflect upon the course which he has chosen. Upon deciding to pervert God's work, he began immediately to pursue this end, rousing his army, securing their support for his scheme, obtaining passage through the Gates of Hell and through Chaos to the shores of light, and thence to the earth. When finally "on Niphates' top he lights" (III.742) the peril of his journey is past, and it is at this moment of rest after the vicissitudes of his flight, when he has achieved the first major goal in his plan, that Satan "falls into many doubts with himself, . . . but at length confirms himself in evil" (Argument, Book IV). Just as Lucifer suffers his severest spiritual agony at the point when he "confirms himself in evil",<sup>38</sup> so at this point when Satan's "dire attempt [is] nigh the birth" (IV.15), his scheme

boils in his tumultuous breast,  
And like a devilish engine back recoils  
Upon himself; horror and doubt distract  
His troubled thoughts.

(IV.16-19)

Fowler explains that "the imminence of the actual aggression . . . causes [Satan] to shrink in horror".<sup>39</sup> His speech addressed to the sun represents

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<sup>38</sup>See p. 87 above.

<sup>39</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on IV.13-19, p. 191.

the death-throes of the angel in him, the last review of his position before he finally surrenders hope, fear and remorse (IV.108-9) and reaffirms "what [he] must be" (III.25). At this point he "leaves behind all that is angelic".<sup>40</sup> His better nature will appear again only when he views Man, and especially when he is momentarily awed by Eve's loveliness (IX.424ff.),<sup>41</sup> but that involuntary lapse excepted, this speech to the sun is the watershed between angel and devil, rebel and fiend. In briefly reliving here his earlier process of converting remorse and despair to epic determination and choosing evil as his way of life, the choice is finally consolidated and the change complete.

Two stages are discernible in Satan's speech. The first half (IV.32-80) is an articulation of sincere agony prompted by the sight of the glory of the sun:

O thou that with surpassing glory crowned,  
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the God  
Of this new world.

(IV.32-34)

This brings to Satan "the bitter memory /Of what he was" (IV.24-25):

how I hate thy beams  
That bring to my remembrance from what state  
I fell, how glorious once.

(IV.37-39)

He is plunged into guilt and self-accusation, and progresses through despair and hopelessness to a low point of misery (IV.73). His self-accusation and confession (IV.40-57) are characterized by a remarkable clarity of mind and memory, unlike the first moments after his recovery in Hell. He now condemns his rebellion as "pride and worse ambition" (IV.40, 49-50 and 60). He confesses God to be supreme, good and worthy of praise (IV.41-48), and acknowledges his own creatureliness (IV.42-44). In this moment of crisis Satan admits the falseness of his illusion that he is "self-begot" (V.860).

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<sup>40</sup>Cope, Metaphoric Structure, p. 110.

<sup>41</sup>See pp. 158 and 166-67 below.

The blindness of the rebellion and the forgetfulness of the fall have worn off and give way in this lonely moment to a clarity of insight which elicits complete honesty from him. He is brought face to face with his real self and the despair which overtakes him now is a sense of helplessness in the face of fate - not only helplessness to undo what is done but doubt that he had the freedom to avoid it in the first place, for while he admits that God has given him free will (IV.66-67 and 71-72), he despairs of real freedom from necessity. Even had he not been a superior angel (which he now regrets and denounces, IV.58-61), yet sin would have been inescapable to him, for "some other power /As great might have aspired, and [him] though mean /Drawn to his part" (IV.61-63). Satan is trapped by hopelessness, articulated most eloquently, not in the round of curses and questions by which he comes to a rational confession of his guilt (IV.71-72), but in the spontaneous cry of emotion:

Me miserable! Which way shall I fly . . . ?  
 . . . . .  
 Which way I fly is hell; my self am hell.  
(IV.73-75)

This is the same low point of despair and misery that Lucifer experiences and articulates at the ultimate moment of his choice and integration, when he submits to the inevitable: "Of ergens schepsel zoo rampzaligh zwerft als ick?" (1634). At this point Lucifer also recognizes and confesses his sin and God's goodness (1646-48). What Satan earlier boasted of is now fulfilled: "The mind is its own place" (I.254), and he is trapped in it: "within him hell /He brings, and round about him, nor from hell /One step no more than from himself can fly" (IV.20-22).

As Lucifer is dramatically confronted with the olive branch of God's forgiveness and grace, so Satan's internal struggle brings him to the point where the challenge also confronts him: repent. The hopeless, spirally sinking way in which he finally arrives at this extremity is imitated in the verse; it is as though his thoughts and emotions are being sucked down a vortex:

in the lowest deep a lower deep  
 Still threatening to devour me opens wide,  
 To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.  
 O then at last relent.

(IV.76-79)

From the moment of this challenge there is an upward movement away from the despair of impotence to the more positive despair of defiance as Satan squirms away from the issues of repentance and submission; such things "disdain forbids [him]" (IV.82). Just as Raphaël's challenge forces Lucifer's choice and so urges him into the final stage of his personal integration, so here the extremity of Satan's wretchedness is creative or productive in that it confronts him with a choice and so forces him up again from the quagmire of despair and disintegration. The same "high disdain" that prevents him from repenting in Hell (I.94-98) now saves him (though at the same time it confirms his condemnation). Even in "the lowest deep" (IV.76) Satan scorns the idea of submission, appealing to the duty he owes to "the spirits beneath" (IV.83).

A significant modulation in the quality of Satan's agony is discernable from this point on. He now dramatizes. His earlier groan of genuine torment, "Me miserable" (IV.73), is now submerged in talk about torment and groaning:

Ay me, they [the spirits beneath] little know  
 How dearly I abide that boast so vain,  
 Under what torments inwardly I groan.

(IV.86-88)

A sincere internal struggle turns into a soliloquy of justifications and rationalizations as Satan objectifies his misery and avoids the challenge to which it leads. He appeals again to his impotence in the face of his inherent propensity to sin, but now with a philosophical air rather than the listless despair of moments earlier:

But say I could repent and could obtain  
 By act of grace my former state; how soon  
 Would highth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay  
 What feigned submission swore; ease would recant  
 Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

(IV.93-97)

Rhetoric and rationalization have replaced emotion. Satan soon convinces himself that "all hope [is] excluded" (IV.105), and as he hardens his heart he submits to the same despair of defiance that drives Macbeth to "try the last"<sup>42</sup> and Lucifer to march against the Almighty. With the nihilism inherent in this kind of despair, Satan turns his back on hope, but also on doubt, cries "hail" again to the horrors of his existence and reaffirms his hard-won integrity in a final umwertung alle werte :

So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,  
Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost;  
Evil be thou my good.

(IV.108-10)

This conscious identification with evil is his final, existential acceptance of what is already accomplished: "my self am hell" (IV.75). Having achieved this inversion Satan is content to end rationalizations and pretence and admit the true reason why he will not yield:

by [evil] at least  
Divided empire with heaven's king I hold.

(IV.110-11)

It is not an inescapable, malicious necessity that ordained Satan for sin, but this self-importance and lust for power, the same passion that inspires him from beginning to end: in his rebellion against God, his flight from hell and his invocation of evil as his good.

Satan's spiritual<sup>43</sup> metamorphosis from angel to devil is complete. From here the degeneration of his character is rapid. From introspection he turns his eyes again to the goal before him: "man . . . , and this new world"; they "ere long . . . shall know" (IV.113) the tyranny of his rule. This renewed sense of purpose in Satan injects a new impetus into the action as it propels him into the next phase of his mission: seeking the means to begin

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<sup>42</sup>Macbeth V.viii.32.

<sup>43</sup>Not yet his physical metamorphosis. See Chapter 5.

that which he conceived in Hell and for which he has journeyed thence. And significantly, this decisive stage in Satan's process of personal integration is followed by a physical metamorphosis from the angelic form in which he deceived Uriel, through "now one /Now other" (IV.397-98) of the beasts, to a toad, in which low and ugly form he finally approaches Eve and begins his fiendish business.<sup>44</sup> Satan no longer strives through cosmic spaces and against immense powers, but against vulnerable Man, with whom we now identify especially after the distancing and sobering effect of Book III.

## VII

It is at this stage in Satan's development, when he has degenerated from rebel to fiend, that Milton places the narrative of the War in Heaven. At this point in the poem, Satan's original rebellion is cast in the disparaging light of the decline which we have witnessed in his character. We have seen the proud rebel angel degenerate to a demagogue and deceiver; we have seen the once majestic Archangel snooping in the garden, and he is even now circling the globe, meditating fraud and malice (cf. Book IX.53ff.). The narrative of the rebellion and war also contributes now to this decline, chiefly through the roles that Abdiel and Messiah play.

During the rebellion a whole new concept of heroism is introduced, which opposes and surpasses Satan's military valour. It is the heroism of obedience and fidelity, the "better fortitude" (IX.31) with which Christ will oppose and overcome Satan in Paradise Regained, and it is represented here by Abdiel, who bravely resists Satan's argument at the Council in the North.<sup>45</sup> Abdiel daringly interrupts Satan:

Thus far [Satan's] bold discourse . . .  
Had audience, when among the seraphim

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<sup>44</sup>See Chapter 5.

<sup>45</sup>See p. 40 above.

Abdiel . . .

. . . . .

Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe  
The current of his fury thus opposed.

(V.803-8)

Abdiel alone is

faithful found  
Among the faithless, faithful only he;  
Among innumerable false, unmoved,  
Unshaken, unseduced unterrified.

(V.896-99)

Fish points out that Abdiel's exemplary Christian heroism here is the culmination of a process which starts as early as Book I and which steadily "debunks" the ideal of epic heroism which Satan represents<sup>46</sup> and which we have admired. Helen Gardner adds, however, that Abdiel is also heroic in an epic sense;<sup>47</sup> he does not only "stand and wait"; he furiously defies Satan, and so his attitude becomes an epic "counterpoise" to Satan's heroic enterprise. Milton graphically calls attention to Abdiel's courage and to this opposition between him and Satan by placing the first mention of Abdiel's name at the beginning of a line (V.805), a position otherwise reserved consistently for Satan.<sup>48</sup> But in the end Abdiel wins honour in Heaven, not because he challenges Satan or because he is the first to strike a blow for God in the war, but simply because he is faithful and yields to the mysterious paradox that to serve is to be exalted (V.841-42). This attitude inverts and makes nonsense of the crux of Satan's argument: that the angels are "ordained to govern, not to serve" (V.802). Echoing the Psalmist,<sup>49</sup> Abdiel declares his

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<sup>46</sup>Fish, Surprised by Sin, Chapter 4. Fish uses as examples of this, the pigmy and giant similes applied to Satan's army in Hell (I.571-88), the burlesque battle between Satan and Death (II.674-722) and the judgment delivered on martial valour by God's scales in the sky (IV.990-1015).

<sup>47</sup>Helen Gardner, A Reading of Paradise Lost, p. 65.

<sup>48</sup>e.g. V.658, VI.414, VI.557.

<sup>49</sup>See Psalm 84.10.



It is all a put-up job, a careful performance to exhibit [the] Son in the very best light possible.<sup>56</sup>

The most obvious evidence of God's control of the "performance" is His careful physical balancing of the armies. He sends out an army "equal in number to [the] godless crew" (VI.49). They are favoured with no military advantage but their immunity to pain. But the moral imbalance between the armies, pointing by extension to the moral contrast between Messiah and Satan, is evident from the start. God's army is described as "bright legions" and "perfect ranks", joined in "union irresistible" and advancing "indissolubly firm" (VI.63-69), while Satan's "banded powers" are "thronged", "various" and "furious" (VI.83-86). The passion and chaos in their ranks is indicative of their moral inferiority. Satan is proud and haughty (VI.99-100 and 109) and he deludedly interprets the situation on the level of military strife alone. Divinity, for him, consists in military superiority, and on these grounds he presumes "to try /In battle, what [God's] power is, or [His] right" (V.727-28). Satan is blind to moral or inherent quality or any criterion but "deeds" (VI.283) of strength. When after a day of battle he is still not vanquished, he imagines this to be proof of God's fallibility and his own divinity (VI.418-30). The obvious fallacy in his argument is that he has not yet encountered God.

Thus the stage is set for Messiah. The war is indeed a "controlled and formal display",<sup>57</sup> and in proportion as it favours Messiah, it is loaded against Satan. At the climax of the war (which is also the centre of the poem and the middle of the events in Heaven), Messiah stands victorious, dislodging Satan both from Heaven and from his position of dominance in the poem. At the centre of the poem, Satan is cast into Hell:

Nine days they fell . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . hell at last

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<sup>56</sup>Peter, A Critique of Paradise Lost, p. 81.

<sup>57</sup>ibid. p. 71.

Yawning received them whole, and on them closed.  
(VI.871-75)

This strongly echoes the description of the fall at the beginning of the poem, but the reader does not participate in it again, either through empathy with Satan or through any especially orchestrated versification. By this fall the Satan of the opening books is exorcised.

Although Satan's supreme enterprise (the assault on Man) has yet to be undertaken and his final defeat yet to follow, in a very real sense he is defeated already. The structure of the first six books enacts that defeat and prefigures the structure of the next six books and of the poem as a whole. The first half of the poem, dominated by the image of the heroic Satan, ends not with the successful completion of his hazardous journey and the achievement of his perverse integrity, but rather with a reversal of that journey and of the painstaking process of integration as he ends, "thunderstruck" (VI.858), back in Hell. Though chronologically Satan does not suffer this ignominious fall at this central point in the poem, the dramatic effect of its placement undoes again the psychological sense of identity and purpose achieved in Books I to IV. This is the eternal pattern of Satan's career: he strives, only to be defeated; he constructs a system of meaning and achieves an integrated identity (both before and after his fall), only to have it shattered in the charismatic presence of Messiah; he works evil, only to see it turned to good. Ultimately this is the pattern of God's ways; thus are they justified to men.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## ARCH-FIEND

When Satan and Lucifer achieve that point of psychological and emotional integrity when each turns finally and irrevocably away from good and embarks upon the pursuit of evil,<sup>1</sup> they cease to be angels, or even rebels, and rapidly become Arch-fiends. For Satan this role begins after his address to the sun in Book IV, as he leaps over the walls of Paradise and begins to search for Man. For Lucifer it begins in the course of his fall in V.i, as he is physically transformed into a hideous devil and starts plotting against Man (V.iii). This last action becomes the subject of a new play, Adam in Ballingschap (of Aller Treurspeelen Treurspel), and in this play Lucifer's role as fiend is elaborated.

The obvious difference between Lucifer and Satan in this section is that in Adam in Ballingschap Lucifer is, to almost all intents and purposes, a completely new character while the Satan who arrives in Paradise in Book IV and again in Book IX is the same whom we saw in Hell and with whom we journeyed thence. Vondel is not bound to take account of Lucifer's earlier career and character, while Milton's treatment of Satan in Heaven, Hell and Paradise has to be consistent and has in the end to add up to a justification of the ways of God. In our analysis of Satan's character and behaviour in Paradise, therefore, we continue to trace the process of his degeneration and witness the inexorable physical fulfilment of his psychological integration, until his development culminates in his ignominious metamorphosis in Hell (Book X).

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<sup>1</sup>"Evil be thou my good", PL IV.110, p. 129 above, and "De hoop is uit", Lucifer 1655, p. 88 above.

This final humiliation of Satan introduces a further important distinction between Lucifer and Satan in this section. Lucifer in Adam in Ballingschap is the agent of woe, and that woe is unmitigated. Vondel includes a "heilsverskiet"<sup>2</sup> at the end of Lucifer, but does not allow any such hope or promise in Adam in Ballingschap. Evil and its effects brood over this play from beginning to end, and ultimately the play affirms the triumph of evil. As Maximilianus points out:

Het stuk heet dan ook niet eenvoudig . . . Adam, maar Adam in Ballingschap. Het accent light op de zonde, waarom Adam uit het paradijs werd verdreven. Het is aller treurspeelen treurspel.<sup>3</sup>

Paradise Lost, on the other hand, looks (like Lucifer) to the redemption beyond the fall and the Victory that turns the triumph of evil to defeat. Once on earth, Satan is neither hero nor victor but is progressively deflated and finally overcome, as much by ridicule as by judgment and defeat. Instead of Satan's influence, God's providence illuminates the entire action of the poem.

These clear differences in the overall concerns of the two works direct this analysis of Satan and Lucifer in their respective roles as Arch-fiend.

## I

In Lucifer V.iii all factors co-operate to break Lucifer's carefully won and maintained command of our sympathy and admiration. In Gabriël's compact narrative of Man's temptation, fall, judgment and redemption, spanning barely one hundred lines (2029-2143), Vondel allows no less than thirty lines for Lucifer's speech to his fallen army (2036-69), in which the "hoovaerdy" of the middle acts is replaced by "nydigheit". The scene is

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<sup>2</sup>Antonissen, Christelike en Tragiese, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Maximilianus, "Franciscaanse School", p. 97.

cast in darkness:

[Lucifer] zette zich, om 't licht van 't alziende oogh te schuwen,  
In eene holle wolck, een duistre moortspelonck  
Van nevlen.

(2031-33)

The Prince of Light has become the Son of Darkness and now declares his new and devious intention:

nu is het tyt om wraeck  
Te nemen van ons leet, en listigh, en verbolgen,  
Met onverzoebren wrock den hemel te vervolgen,  
In zynverkoren beelt, en 't menschelyck geslacht  
Te smooeren in zyn wiegh . . .

. . . . .  
Myn wit is Adam en zyn afkomst te bederven.

(2037-43)

In the closing scene of the drama he at last takes over the role of active and wilful instigator, commissioning Belial "op dat hy datelyck de menschen breng' ten val" (2073). This order is infinitely more purposeful than his first act of disobedience, when he sent Apollion to earth (I.i), which was simply "op dat hy eens nader kennis naem'" (4).

While the degeneration of Lucifer's character and the consequent loss of sympathy are the logical and necessary culmination of his entire development, they are also necessary because his role in the all-embracing drama of the celestial cycle has changed. V.iii evokes a sense of the ultimate fulfilment of the celestial cycle and the justice of Lucifer's damnation. His role as tragic hero is played out; his stature diminishes, both morally and dramatically, as other heroes take precedence.

This is also how we must consider his role in Adam in Ballingschap. He is not cast as the hero and there are therefore certain expectations which we may not in fairness have of him. John Peter tends towards this error of illegitimate expectations when he remarks on Adam in Ballingschap: "There is a marked withdrawal of the poet's sympathy from [Lucifer], a new and hostile coolness in his appraisal".<sup>4</sup> He compares this with Milton's

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<sup>4</sup>Peter, A Critique of Paradise Lost, p. 60.

withdrawal of sympathy from Satan once he reaches Paradise, explaining as follows:

The crucial point about this change in Vondel's attitude is that in Lucifer all the characters are angels, whereas in Adam in Ballingschap the two chief characters are human beings. The presence of Adam and Eve has polarized the poet's attitude towards the devils and now prevents him from identifying himself with them to the extent that he found possible in the earlier play.<sup>5</sup>

This theory of "polarization by human contact"<sup>6</sup> makes excellent sense of what happens in Paradise Lost, but it can only be applied to Vondel's plays if Lucifer and Adam in Ballingschap are considered as one, or at least as intentionally continuous, which they are not.<sup>7</sup> The reason for the absence of sympathy for Lucifer in Adam in Ballingschap is simply that this is, as I have pointed out, an entirely new play, and one in which Lucifer is not the hero. He has a prominent and serious role, but as antagonist and not protagonist. Adam in Ballingschap is also not as closely modelled on classical tragedy as Lucifer is, but is in many respects much closer to the Medieval miracle plays<sup>8</sup> in which the devil commands no sympathy. This generic difference accounts for the important switch in the author's attitude to Lucifer in the two plays.

It should be noted here that an examination of Lucifer's character and role in Adam in Ballingschap will in no way necessitate as comprehensive a discussion of the whole play as in the case of Lucifer. Adam in Ballingschap is a lyrical drama about Man and his lamentable fall. Its main emphasis is therefore, as Smit points out, the antithesis between Man's condition before and after the fall, enhanced by the wedding-motif.<sup>9</sup> The scenes with Adam

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<sup>5</sup>Peter, A Critique of Paradise Lost, p. 60.      <sup>6</sup>ibid.

<sup>7</sup>See Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 3:358 and Maximilianus, "Franciscan School", p. 97.

<sup>8</sup>Except in the omission of a final vision of redemption.

<sup>9</sup>Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 3:362-66.

and Eva and the angels are the ones that determine the impact of the play and ensure the effect of the perpeteia. Though Lucifer and his lieutenants obviously have a significant role in this (their influence broods over the action), it is not as all-embracing a role as in Lucifer, nor are the devil-scenes always of the same dramatic quality as the rest of the play.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, for our purpose it is necessary to concentrate on them rather than on the more central scenes.

## II

In Adam in Ballingschap the "Stedehouder van Godts opperheerschappyen" (Lucifer, 376) has become the "Vorst des afgronts" (Personaedjen), banned from eternal light and condemned to darkness (2). He and his accompanying aura of darkness possess the stage:<sup>11</sup>

Ick, eerst geheilicht om de kroon van 't licht te spannen,  
 En nu van 't eeuwich licht in duisternis gebannen,  
 Koome uit den zwavelpoel opdondren van beneên.  
 (1-3)

These opening lines embrace the preceding action in the celestial cycle (Lucifer's rebellion and expulsion), linking it with the present action and so emphasizing the relevance of cosmic and spiritual events on the fate of Man. The egocentricity of these lines is reminiscent of the confidence and importance of the Stedehouder, but in the darkness that envelops the stage it is a rather pathetic fulmination against anonymity and nonentity, an emphatic assertion that he is there though we cannot see him. Besides further emphasizing the invisible, spiritual nature of the forces that threaten Man,<sup>12</sup> these

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<sup>10</sup>Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 3:422-23.

<sup>11</sup>It appears from line 7 (a direct address to his "Helleraet") that Lucifer is accompanied by a number of the legion of devils. This is obviously intended as a dramatic device to justify the opening monologue, but nowhere in this scene is there any evidence of their active presence - indeed, Asmode is explicitly summoned as late as Act III (546). Lucifer's speech in I.i is most satisfactorily read as an extended soliloquy.

<sup>12</sup>Throughout the play we see very little of Lucifer, but are always aware of his invisible presence and his influence.

few moments in darkness also suggest a brief identity crisis for Lucifer who, like Satan on the threshold of evil (IV.32-113), finally consolidates and confirms his identity as fiend before beginning his fiendish business.<sup>13</sup>

As he begins his monologue, Lucifer cannot see anything. He deduces his surroundings from the sounds he hears: a lark (15-16), a breeze in trees (17-18), streams and a waterfall (19-20). "Dit tught one klaer genoeg wat bodem wij betreden" (21). The garden springs up in our imaginations, all the more innocent and vulnerable for being tantalizingly hidden. And Lucifer's presence is all the more ominous for being initially discernable only through his voice.

It soon becomes evident from the inglorious image that emerges from Lucifer's language, that the glory of the Stedehouder is lost:

[Ick] koome uit den zwavelpoel opdondren van beneën,  
 . . . . .  
 Hier boven spoocken: want hoe gruwzaem en verwaten  
 d' Erfvyant my misschiep, noch wortme toegelaeten  
 . . . . .  
 Te heerschen over zee, het aerdtrijck, en de lucht.  
 (3-8)

For all his pride in the extent of his domain, it has been dismally diminished. His person too is transfigured ("gruwzaem . . . misschiep"); indeed, he is almost depersonalized, a mere spectre in the dark ("ick koome spoocken"). In the confusion of personal pronouns that follows the assurance and self-esteem of the first "Ick", it is evident that the confidence and sense of identity of the morning star are lost.<sup>14</sup> Lucifer strives against this depersonalization by speaking objectively of himself:

def) grootvorst van de weerelt . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . [Kiest] den nacht tot dezen optoght . . . .  
 En schoon de nanacht nu allengs het velt verliest,  
 Noch kan de haeter van het licht in schaduw duicken.  
 (9-13)

<sup>13</sup>See pp. 125-29 above.

<sup>14</sup>Ick koome (1), mijn' Helleraet (7), den grootvorst en zijn' luister (9), hy kiest den nacht (11), waer ben ick? (15), 'k hoor' (17), men hoort (19).

But this attempt to infuse his person with some dignity and stature fails sadly when he is forced to admit that he who was the herald of the morning, must now dive into the shadows when the morning breaks. This causes a momentary psychological crisis: "Waer ben ick hier?" (15). This question is obviously a dramatic device to locate the action, and logical, as Lucifer orients himself in a new and still largely invisible environment. But it is also a moment of existential angst as he assimilates the truth of his fall and his transformation. His conscious mapping out of his environment also has the dual function of physically locating the action and psychologically and morally orienting him and summing up his condition:

Hier vloeit d' Eufraet. hier bloeit de hof in 't Oostersch Eden,  
 Het rijck van Adam en zijn gade aen hem getrouwt.  
 Hier most ick schuilen met mijn schiltwacht in een woudt.  
 (22-24)

Here the Euphrates flows, here Eden blooms, here Adam reigns, here all is free and unimpeded, yet here he must hide. This humiliation is enhanced by the rising effect of the repetition of the adverb "hier". But Lucifer's crisis is not protracted or intense; unlike Satan's speech on Mt. Niphates, the main function of Lucifer's monologue is to evoke an atmosphere of foreboding, not to highlight the Arch-enemy's development. And so Lucifer submits to his humiliation and accepts his new role as the stealthy and devious fiend:

Hier most ick schuilen . . . in een woudt,  
 . . . . .  
 Dan achter uitzien, dan van vore, dan ter zye,  
 En letten hoe men best berockene eenigh quaet.  
 (24-27)

Within twenty lines Lucifer has relived his degeneration from the lightbearer to the "haeter van het licht" (13) and is now a typically Medieval devil, misshapen and furtive. Much like Satan in Hell, he turns his back on the past ("ick [ben] veraert van 't goet", 28) and turns to his new business: "quaet". This acceptance of his new identity and role coincides with the dawning of light on the stage<sup>15</sup> and his becoming visible to us. When light

breaks, the visual contrast between Lucifer and his surroundings has been imaginatively anticipated; in this contrast, now becoming visible, Lucifer's fall and his transformation are revealed and confirmed. From here on he paradoxically achieves a certain stature through the threat that he, in his singleminded devotion to revenge, becomes. Through the imagery of his own language we have been made aware of his pernicious evil and in spite of the ridiculous creature in the bush, we do not find the hyperbole of his vision incongruous:

Zoo [Godt in zijn geschapenheên te schenden] wort het helsche rijck  
 Dat eeuwigh duuren zal. . . . . van Lucifer gebout,  
 . . . . .  
 Zoo neemt mijn wraeckzucht al de weereit op haer tanden,  
 En ruckt dit groot heelal uit zijnen winckelhaeck,  
 Dat 's hemels as noch eens van mijne heirkraecht kraeck'.  
 (31-36)

The play is about the fulfilment of this vision of chaos and destruction, and from these first moments it casts its foreboding gloom over the action. With the growing light and the influence of the language and rhetoric, Lucifer has slowly taken shape before us and the sense of impending danger has steadily crystalized, enacting the physical entry of evil into the world. Our horror of Lucifer increases in the course of the monologue. It is from such pre-emptive warnings and threats as "Wy [slaepen niet], als'er roof te haelen is" (55) that the ominous atmosphere emanates. Lucifer's strategy becomes progressively more clear to himself (and with this its threat increases), but it remains unspecific with regard to the means of its execution. Such details will be left to Asmodé and Belial, practical agents of the abstract evil which Lucifer conceives and embodies.<sup>16</sup> The only strategy that Lucifer evolves is "bedeckt /Te wercken" (59-60):

zachter toetreên, en gelegenheit belaege  
 Van waer, en hoe men best den Schepper . . .  
 In eenigh schepsel . . . bestormen magh.  
 (74-76)

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<sup>15</sup>Lighting effects would have been achieved with candles, oil lamps, torches, and lenses made with jars of water. See Fr. W. S. van Thienen, Het Doek gaat op, 2 vols. (Bussum: W. de Haan, 1969), 1:128, 134, 219 and 251.

<sup>16</sup>See p. 146, n. 18 below.

His role is limited to surveying the scene. He plans, for instance, to discover the terms of Man's existence:

Bespie wat middelen den schepselen tot scha  
 En afbreuck dienen. let, in eenen hoeck gescholen,  
 Wat hun verboden wert, en wat hen wort bevolen,  
 Op lijf - en zielstraf.

(88-91)

One cannot ignore the cowardice of this scheme, especially remembering that just recently Lucifer had the audacity "den hemel aen te randen" (33). Now he will slink about and turn his stealthy attack on a victim much weaker than himself. Even now, as he becomes fully visible, he immediately hides himself:

duickt, 't is tijt, zoo kunnenze ons niet zien,  
 Wy hen, en hun gespreck, en wezen, en gebaeren  
 Al stil beluisteren, en gaslaen door de blaêren.

(112-14)

As the light dawns, Adam and Eva arrive. Their appearance too is presented as something of a slow materialization rather than an abrupt arrival. Lucifer's references to them before they appear evoke them in his own imagination and ours, in increasing detail and concreteness, e.g. his fantastic attack on them (63-71), their imagined approach through the garden (83-84), his anticipation of their appearance as the light increases (99-103), the description of them and their attire as they come into his view (106-9) and the final announcement of their arrival still before we see them: "Zij komen" (112). At this point Lucifer leaps into the bush, and from there he gives a commentary on Adam and Eva as they come into view:

Hy zwaeit een myrt; zy riekt een roos, versch afgepluckt,  
 En noch geloken. al 't geboonte neight en buckt  
 Eerbiedigh neder, waerze aendachtigh heenetreden.  
 De hemel luistert naer hunne aendacht en gebeden.

(115-18)

In their context, these are chilling lines. Adam and Eva's innocence and the reverent attention of all creation to their song and prayer, heighten the moment.

At this point of convergence, when the exposition, scene-setting and evocation of atmosphere have been masterfully achieved and when both protagonist and antagonist have materialized before us, the drama begins. Hell has actively entered Paradise and all that follows - the arcadian bliss, the songs of praise and the wedding feast itself - stands in relief against and is heightened by this anterior fact.

The first two acts are without any overt conflict, but Lucifer's watchful presence makes it dramatic. Even in Adam's opening words as he welcomes the light, Vondel exploits the tension inherent in the situation:

Daer rijst het alverquickend licht,  
Dat, laegh gedaelt beneên de kimmen,  
De schaduwen en bleecke schimmen  
Verdrijft van 's aerdtrijx aengezicht.  
(119-22)

Contrary to other spectres and shadow, Lucifer has not been driven away by the coming of the light; rather, he has assumed visible and substantial shape and is even now "in eenen hoeck gescholen" (89), watching and listening. This exploitation of simultaneous action becomes especially effective when Adam and Eva innocently and unsuspectingly expose their vulnerable natures. Lucifer is on the alert for a flaw or weakness in their nature "[die] den schepselen tot scha /En afbreuck dienen" (88-89), hence the tension when Eva says to Adam:

Ghy zweemt naer d' edelste natuure,  
En hebt met aerdscheit iets gemeen.  
d' Alwijze wist twee ongelijcken,  
De ziel en 't lichaem door een' bant  
Te binden met zijn stercke hant,  
Een' bant, die nimmer zal bezwijcken.  
(161-66)

It is precisely this duality of their nature, "de ziel en 't lichaem", that makes them vulnerable; the devil will direct his appeal to the physical aspect and the consequent imbalance will result in sin. Adam further exposes their nature in his prayer to God:

Ghy dommelde uwen heldren luister  
 In onze ziele, een majesteit  
 Van vrijen wille, onsterflijckheit,  
 En reden, noit bewolckt noch duister.

(155-58)

Man is blessed with free will, immortality and reason, but these are precisely the "middelen" (88) that will serve to work his ruin.

The scene before him must provoke Lucifer almost beyond endurance, for the pervading atmosphere is of harmony and love: within Man, between man and woman, between Man and nature and between Man and God. This harmony is quietly and sincerely expressed in Eva's pledge to Adam, all the more moving for its dramatic irony:

Wat u, mijn lief, alleen vermaeckt,  
 En anders niet, zal my behaegen.  
 . . . . .  
 Gevolghzaemheit, bescheit, en stilte,  
 Een vrolijck hart, een blijde geest  
 Voeght d' eerste bruit, op 't eerste feest.

(203-9)

Adam and Eva's trust and naivety make them confident almost to the point of hubris, heightening the irony. Adam, for instance, is sure that their reason will never be clouded or darkened (158), while the Prince of Darkness is crouching in the bush no more than a few feet from him; Eva is confident that the balance in their nature will never be disturbed (166), but we know that Lucifer is intent on chaos far more universal than just in their nature (35). The angels share Adam and Eva's ignorance. Raphaël remarks that "de Godtheit wandelde in de lommer van dees blaên" (343), while in fact Lucifer is sneaking about there. A guard has been mounted "op dat geen helsch gespan, zich in de bruiloft minge" (374), but we know that the leader of the "helsch gespan" is already there. Michaël the warrior's confidence is perhaps the most ironic:

Al quaem hy [Lucifer] brullende van onder opgedondert,  
 . . . . .  
 Wy staen voor geen gewelt verbijstert noch verschrickt.

(385-88)

Lucifer has already thundered up from the deep (3) and his attack will be far more subtle than Michaël anticipates.

At the end of Act II, when Adam and Eva are escorted off for the wedding backstage, a note of uneasiness enters the song of the Rey. While they are still filled with praise and wonder at the perfection of Man, a distinct modulation of tone enters their words as they conceive of the possibility of a fall. It soon becomes almost obsessive:

Och dat geene aerdscheit dit [het kleet van Erfrechtvaerdigheid]  
 Noch vuile vleck het schende in ij't praelen beklaed,  
 (488-89)

Man zagh het bruiloftskleet aen flarden,  
 En al die schoonheit gansch vergaen.  
 (515-16)

This undertone of anxiety anticipates the action of Act III and prepares psychologically for Lucifer's reappearance.

Act III dramatizes the process by which the devil was believed to have evolved the details of his strategy.<sup>17</sup> In order to treat it dramatically, Vondel distributes the action among several devils.<sup>18</sup> Instead of Lucifer evolving the strategy in the course of a long monologue, he and Asmodé formulate it together. Asmodé and Belial in turn finalize the details. Smit points out that each of these devils represents or personifies a specific aspect of evil,<sup>19</sup> a necessary differentiation of nature and function if the dialogue is to have any dramatic sense. Lucifer, he suggests, personifies the will to do evil; Asmodé's wily practicality makes him the bearer of the devil's cunning; Belial, in implementing the plan, represents the active temptation

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<sup>17</sup>See Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 3:368-70.

<sup>18</sup>See also the distribution of action in Lucifer, and see Haslinghuis Drama der Middel Eeuwen, p. 133, who points out that in Medieval miracle plays the chief devil is the least free of all; the most he can do is curse and roar and rattle his chains; his subordinates have to carry out his schemes for him.

<sup>19</sup>Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 3:387.

of hell. Thus the action moves by degrees out of Lucifer's hands, though he remains its source and its inspiration. In Act V the report of the successful temptation is brought to him and all the varied extensions of evil are focussed in him as its single symbol again.

In Act III the demonic plot is matured and the traps are laid for Man. The act is suspended in the middle of the play between joyful scenes of dancing and singing. It is a period of unreality and horror, isolated from life and joy. Lucifer's stamping as a summons to Asmodé ushers in this "awful parenthesis",<sup>20</sup> and this sense of suspension is heightened throughout the act by the constant sounds of the wedding feast in the background.

Lucifer sets the wheels of evil in motion by invoking Asmodé's help:

O Asmodé, nu help ons 't rijck des afgronts bouwen.  
 . . . . .  
 . . . nu willenwe, als bandyten,  
 Geduurigh tegens 't rijck van dien erfvyant wrijten,  
 . . . . .  
 . . . door bedrogh, en list, en heimelijcke laegen.  
 (550-61)

This is a vague design, emotive and impractical, and Lucifer has summoned Asmodé specifically to cast it into a practicable form:

Nu giet dien aenslagh eens in een' rechtschapien vorm.  
 (563)

It is clear that when it comes to systematic planning, Lucifer recognizes Asmodé's talent and willingly depends on him as the specialist. He does not

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<sup>20</sup>See Thomas de Quincey, "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth," in A Book of English Essays, ed. W. E. Williams (Penguin, 1951), pp. 165-171. Compare Lucifer's stamping with the ringing of the bell in Macbeth (II.i.61) and the striking of the clock at midnight in Dr. Faustus (Scene v.29), signals that usher in similar periods of suspension and unreality when the unnatural deeds (the murder and the pact with the devil) are performed. These end abruptly when the real and natural world breaks again into the consciousness of actors and audience with the knocking at the gate (Macbeth, II.ii.57) and the sudden, vivid impinging of the stars on Faustus's awareness (Scene vi.1-3). cf. Adam and Eva's return to the stage, III.iii and p. 151 below.

hesitate to admit: "Wy zoecken hulp en steun aen uw' doortrapten raet" (551).

Asmodé's formulation of a strategy is concise and crisp: "Het allerreetste is dat men listigh [Godt] bestorm, /In zijn volschape beelt" (564-65). He develops the plan of exploiting God's ban on the fruit and thus activating the damnation already decreed by Him (568-71). And as an alternative to the indignity of hiding in bushes he proposes what is obvious to the more practical mind: disguise. Given this stimulus, Lucifer's imagination romps naively ahead, conceiving the most unsubtle disguises: the eagle or the elephant (600-13). He chooses them for their majesty, pride and power and imagines a brutal kind of sporting with his victims, like an unsubtle Medieval devil. The elephant, he says, is "maghtigh met zijn' snuit . . . / . . . Adam, in de lucht geslingert, op den tant /Te vatten" (611-13). Asmodé suggests the serpent (or dragon, "geschubde draeck", 618) for exactly the opposite characteristics: he is clever, subtle, silent and sly (616-21). Prefigured in the form of the serpent Lucifer instantly sees, with great relish, the nature and extent of the misery which he will bring:

. . . d' aenslagh [zal] zulck een' langen staert  
Van jammernissen, door alle eeuwen, na . . . sleepen.  
(632-33)

Asmodé, however, is not transported by abstract visions.<sup>21</sup> He proposes that they attack their victims one at a time, (634-35) and Eva first (645). Asmodé's inexplicably shrewd knowledge of man's nature<sup>22</sup> informs this scene with tragic irony; he accurately predicts, for instance, that Eva will succumb to a sensual temptation (647-51), that tempting Adam will be superfluous, as Eva's tears and pleas will accomplish that (662-63), and that

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<sup>21</sup>cf. this difference between Lucifer and his lieutenants in Lucifer.

<sup>22</sup>See p. 150 below.

because of their close unity, Eva will drag Adam to his doom (638-39).

Lucifer confidently delegates the scheme to Asmodé, but not without one last order: he insists that Adam be attacked first (691). Compared with Asmodé's nonchalance, Lucifer's excitement about the scheme is comically unsophisticated (again a characteristic of his Medieval prototypes). His ideas are naive and unsubtle. For instance, he orders Asmodé:

Begin. en voer het uit. zie toe, beleigh uw banden  
Aen alle kanten vast, op dat hy 't niet ontspring'.  
Is u een spook of tien te weinigh en gering,  
Man zal een regement oppressen hier ter stede.  
(674-77)

But far from a regiment of clumsy and clamouring devils, Asmodé needs only "de schalcke Belial" (678).

Belial's first words return our attention to the context within which the plotting proceeds: he enquires about the sound of merrymaking in the background (696) and remarks on the beauty of the garden (698-703). Through his words the natural world of life and joy impinge sharply again upon our consciousness, enhancing by contrast the evil of the foreground activity. When the scheming now continues, it is in an atmosphere of increased horror and tense anticipation.

As with the transfer of the diabolic scheme from Lucifer to Asmodé, so Belial needs from Asmodé only the barest sketch of what is required, for the momentum to be transferred to him and the plot to come to full maturity and detail in his mind. Asmodé gives him an outline of the plan:

[Lucifer] begeert dat gy dit paer gelieven helpt verrucken,  
Om stout door snoeplust dit verboden ooft te plucken,  
(709-10)

and

Gy moet u in een slang . . .  
Vermommen.

(722-23)

Prompted by these bare suggestions, Belial instantly conceives the whole scenario and every detail of the seduction: the music of his words (785-88) will subdue and deceive Man's reason and attract him to the tree; the tree will charm both hand and eye and awaken the desire to taste; thus will Man succumb to "snoepkoorts" and unknowingly kiss death (735-40).

Asmodé is faced with a dilemma created by Lucifer's final order that Adam is to be attacked first. He doubts the wisdom of this, but he shrewdly avoids the responsibility of deciding against it. By his pretended tone of uncertainty: "de grootvorst vint geraên den man eerst om te zetten" (745),<sup>22</sup> he lures Belial to overrule Lucifer (745-68). They agree to approach Eva first.

As with Asmodé, Belial's knowledge of human nature and of the conditions of Man's existence is inexplicably shrewd (e.g. 746-49). Lucifer discovered most of his information about Man while spying from the bush, but there is no evidence of his having passed it on to the other devils. They seem therefore to assimilate knowledge from him in an uncanny way. Though the devils are differentiated for dramatic purposes, all their evil seems to spring from his pervading mind and thus to be, in the end, extensions of Lucifer himself.

With each transfer of the plot from one devil to the next, it increases in precision of conception and in devilish cruelty. At the end of the line, then, Belial embodies evil in its most concentrated, precise and active form. Asmodé says of him: "Gy weet uw ooghmerck net en op een punt te treffen" (741), to which Belial answers with relish: "Dan zal 't vernederen kort volgen op 't verheffen" (742). Belial articulates the central theme of the play, the dreadful change, and much of his pleasure in this cruel peripeteia is the neat antithesis it implies.

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<sup>22</sup>See also line 757.

The one extreme of the antithesis, the peak of Man's joy and elevation, is dramatized in the next two scenes, the dance in honour of the couple (III.iii) and Adam and Eva's spiritual reverie when they are finally alone (IV.i). The return of the wedding party at this point ends the period of eerie suspension, and their joy and innocence reflect an added awfulness onto the diabolical scheming.

Ironically, the angels encourage Adam and Eva's spiritual reverie to the point of excess, and so they promote a disturbance of the delicate equilibrium in the nature of the "volschape paer" (851), which exposes them (Adam and Eva) to mortal danger. At the end of the dance Eva is ecstatic:

Waer staenwe, in 't paradijs, of daer de starren blaecken?  
 Wat treck verrukt mijn' geest om hoog? mijn voeten raken  
 Geene aerde . . . .  
 De goddelijcke galm van 't heiligh bruiloftsliet  
 Ontknoopt den bant, die ziel en lichaem hiel gebonden.  
 (932-36)

Foreshadowed in her readiness to leave Adam and soar to Heaven (941-42) is her later infidelity. In the dance too, the tragedy is presaged: she represents the moon, whose light is dependent on the sun (Adam, 894-96), but he invites her to "dans vooruit" (898). Once this hierarchy between man and woman and the harmony of body and soul is disturbed, chaos is inevitable. Thus Belial's task of tempting Eva to succumb to her physical nature is ironically facilitated by her excessive spiritual joy.

From the first moment of the temptation, Belial's onslaught is on Eva's senses. Initially she is aware of him only as a voice, seductively wafting "uit dichte bladeren /En schaduwen" (1042-43) in "een' gloet van liefde" (1044). This "gloet" rouses in Eva a complementary glow of spontaneous pleasure and a burning curiosity to see her admirer: "Ontmom, vertoon u . . . Ontwolck u" (1046 and 1050). Belial tunes the serpent's tongue to charm and enchant Eva (789). His words and images are chosen "Eva [te] omweven . . . met een sfeer van lichte sensualiteit"<sup>23</sup> and the lyrical tetrameters

with the alternating, interwoven rhymes and flowing rhythm provide an admirable medium for this seduction, e.g.

Ghy ziet dees vogels om u zweven,  
 En hoe de dolfijn d' oevers streeft  
 En strijckt met zijnen staert, en vinnen,  
 Uit liefde om 's menschen hart te winnen.  
 Het zou den wilde' eenhoren lusten  
 In uwen zuivren maeghdeschoot  
 Noch van geen hant gerept, te rusten,  
 Gaeft gy uw aenschijn voor hem bloot.  
 (1068-75)

Smit comments on Vondel's substitution of tetrameters for his usual alexandrine couplets:

Het gaat hier . . . om de suggestie dat in deze scène niet de rede maar het gevoel<sup>24</sup> domineert; dat Eva deur Belial meer verlokt wordt dan overtuigd.

In addition to their melifluous quality, the tetrameters have a more measured tempo which enhances the persuasive force of Belial's words and tone and compounds the sense of the inevitability of the tragic action. By the music of his words Belial does indeed subdue Eva's reason to succumb to his flattery. He then explicitly lures her to the tree:

ick noode u uit  
 Op dezen boom, waerin de prijs leit  
 Van alle wetenschap en wijsheit.  
 (1089-91)

This stirs Eva's guilty conscience (intuitively guilty at having succumbed to flattery) and she jumps to the conclusion before Belial has even suggested it: "Zwijgh stil . . . /Dees appel wert mijn mont verboden" (1092-94). The erotic spell is broken by this resort to argument and reason. Belial feigns surprise that God should have forbidden Man anything, and appeals to the injustice of such a prohibition: "dees wet is strijdigh / Met recht en reden" (1112-13). This was the foundation of the angels' rebellion, but such an intellectual argument cannot have the same appeal for Eva as it did for

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<sup>23</sup>Smit, Van Pascha tot Noah, 3:401.

<sup>24</sup>ibid. 3:373; Smit's emphasis.

the politically threatened Lucifer. Belial does therefore not rely on this argument but diverts Eva's attention again as soon as he can, clothing his references to the apple in images of sensual pleasure and recapturing the erotic atmosphere:

[Deze appels] smilten lieflijck op de tong,  
Verheugen 't hart, als hemelwijnen. (1123-24)

The idiom is not in the first place aimed at Eva's pride and aspiration but at her "snoeplust" (710), and its effectiveness is soon evident, for instance in Eva's anxiety, revealed in the desperate note of her reply:

Men magh zich aen geen quaet vergaepen.  
't Verboên te smaecken is een smet. (1132-33)

The sound pattern in these lines turns them into an incantation, as though Eva is hoping to exorcise the desire already within her.<sup>25</sup> She tries to compel Belial into argument, but he returns repeatedly to the fruit and its sensual attraction. Through the enchantment of her senses he robs her reason of its scruples (735-36) until she no longer says plainly: "dees appel wert mijn mont verboden" (1094), but asks: "Waerom is my dien boom verboden?" (1141). On this cue Belial begins to appeal to her curiosity, promising to "unfold" the reason for the prohibition (1150-51). Attracted by the secretiveness of the situation (see also 1154-59), Eva grasps at the "wetenschap en wijsheit" (1091) that Belial promises. She now demands: "Ontvoume Godts geheimenis" (1153). Thus Eva makes her "hemelsprong" (793), aspiring to probe the mystery of God's ways. She is already falling. But Belial continues to couch his onslaught on her ambition in tempting sensual terms:

Tast toe . . .  
Ick schud den boom, om zulck een lot,

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<sup>25</sup>The long, open vowel sound (ae) that rings through the first line returns in the middle of the second (instead of in the rhyming position at the end) only to be curtly broken (exorcised) by the short, sharp word "smet" at the end of the line, which deceptively begins to echo "smaecken" (see the alliteration) but abruptly counteracts that expectation.

Een Godtheit, in uw' mont te storten.  
 . . . . .  
 Dien gouden appel, milt van sappen,  
 Hy schenckt u hemelsche eigenschappen.  
 (1174-81)

She need not act; she need only submit - he will shake the fruit into her mouth. Eva's sighs (1177) are eloquent evidence of the effectiveness of Belial's words and her yielding to the erotic seduction. These sighs culminate in her poignant plea to the apple: "Hou op, hou op mijn lust te tergen" (1191). Belial has wound the spring of the tragic action. It begins to unwind before him as Eva approaches the tree (1189), plucks the fruit (1195) and eats (1201).

The victory is won; Eva will draw Adam after her (see 638-39). But before disappearing Belial promises Eva: "Ick helpe uw rede zoo beleggen, / . . . / [Dat hy] u innevolgen, en believen" (1208-11). Again she need only yield to his manipulation. Thus it is the devil's mind that directs the fall from first to last. Though he is not present in the next scene, his pervasive influence is manifested in Eva's speeches and especially in the gradual return of darkness, signalled in the language. When Adam appears, for instance, he finds Eva "in schaduwe gezeten / By dien verboden boom" (1222-23).

Through sin Eva enters into the common mind of evil and begins to echo the words, tone and style of the devils. Her first excuse, for instance, is an uncanny echo of Asmodé: "'t Verbodt ontstack de lust" (1232; cf. Asmodé: "Oock terght verbodt de lust", 664). Eva is now an agent of the devil's influence, but she is obviously also inspired by a very human anxiety, the desperate terror of being condemned alone. Her initial appeal to Adam's "smaecken" is pathetically human in its hope that he will succumb to the same weakness as she did. But as the urgency mounts the devil's influence becomes manifest, now in an overriding intellectualism (1242-51),

now in devilish subtlety and perverse charms and pleas (1267-79). Her trump-card is perverse in the extreme: she composes herself and walks away (1309-25). This desperate gamble is rewarded with Adam's capitulation and the promise of at least his company in her wretchedness (1349).

The scale of the devil's triumph is immediately emphasized in the Rey's lament on the cosmic implications of Adam's choice:

Hoe leght de stamheer van 't geslacht  
Met al zijn zaet verschoven,  
En in der eeuwigheit berooft  
Van zulk een heilkroon, hem belooft!  
O feest van weinige uren!  
De hemel zelf gevoelt dien krack.

(1359-64)

In finding his mark, Adam, the devil has wrenched "dit groot heelal uit zinnen winckelhaeck" (35). Now evil is let loose throughout creation (e.g. 1465). From his blessedness and bliss, Man has been brought low: "Och Adam, hooge ceder, /Hoe ploftge dus ter neder!" (1410-11), and in Man's defeat is Lucifer's triumph: "Nu spant Vorst Lucifer de kroon" (1409).

Darkness (moral and physical) descends in Act V as Asmodé returns to Lucifer to report on the fall, with special emphasis on the dreadful peripeteia. In the background there is now a different song, the "rouklagt" (1412) of the fallen pair. Amplifying this is Asmodé's description of them, e.g.

zy jammeren en krijten.  
Men hoortze elckandere de schult der misdaet wijten,  
En vloeken. Eden galmt van jammerlijk misbaer.  
(1438-40)

But droning beneath this lament is another sound, the sound of hell jubilating and preparing to receive its heroes back. Lucifer congratulates Asmodé:

O Asmodé, het rijck des afgronts wil u loven,  
En innehaelen, op de schorre nachtklaeroen.  
Ons hof wort met tapijt van spinragh, en feestoen  
Van dorre blaen bekleet, om 't zegefeest te houwen.  
(1415-18)

In this drama of simultaneous strands of action and background noises, this

"helsch getoet" (686) is the final undertone. "Nu triomfeert de hel" (1460). Lucifer triumphantly surveys the future:

Laet al de weereelt vry van Adams erven krielen:  
 Uit sestigh eeuwen bergh [Godt] pas een hantvol zielen.  
 (1474-75)

This prospect of a handful of souls saved is the extent of the hope which Vondel allows at the end of this "aller treurspeelen treurspel".

Following immediately upon this dismal prophecy of the future Adam and Eva, shapers of that future and first bearers of its woe, enter, and in both their physical appearance and their changed behaviour is mirrored "de(n) groote(n) ommezwaie" (1479). Evil has ravished them (1432-36) and entered their very beings; even as Lucifer in his fall became "veraert van 't goet" (28), so they now proceed "van 't geboden goet tot quaet" (1468). Bitterness and blame characterize their exchanges. Adam especially is tortured by inner guilt, despair and darkness (1490-96) and taunted by the awful and unceasing aural reminder:

De hemelsche bazuin houdt op het feest te groeten.  
 De helsche horen houdt nu aen met vreeslijck toeten.  
 (1506-7)

The antithetical structure of the couplet imitates the complete reversal that they have experienced.

Though we do not see Lucifer again we know that for the duration of this scene at least (V.ii) he is again hidden in the bush, this time gloating (1478-80). Even when Adam and Eva rise above their bitterness to a new and noble heroism of honesty, forgiveness and mutual commitment (1573-1601), evil and chaos are not banned from Eden but are rather confirmed in the raging tempest that breaks upon the earth (1602-9), as though to scorn (and yet to make more poignant) Adam and Eva's reconciliation. And even in the judgment handed down by Uriël the impression is that Lucifer escapes. The snake alone is cursed (1655-63).<sup>26</sup> It is probable that Lucifer physically leaves

Paradise during the storm which announces the judgment.

But for a few very obscure references to the hope of salvation in Christ,<sup>27</sup> the play ends with Man's utter desolation in a comfortless universe ("waer heen? waer heen?", 1692) and his woe, enhanced by the poignant sense of unity and the new humility that follows upon Adam and Eva's agnitio:

Een reuckeloos bestaen heeft ons ten val gebraght.  
Helaes, wie onderstut mijn twijfelende stappen?  
Mijn weêrgade, onderstutme in droeve ballingschappen.  
(1697-99)

They sadly but humbly accept their expulsion:

Hier heeft de zomer uit. de winter klamptme aen boort.  
Godts slagzwaert volght ons op de hielen. spoenwe voort.  
(1708-9)

They leave the stage with flickering torches (see 1691-92), for darkness reigns again, and for the first time since their first appearance there is silence. The "eeuwigh treurspel" (1479) has but begun and "[zal] een' langen staert /Van jammernissen, door alle eeuwen, na . . . sleepen" (632-33).

### III

Adam in Ballingschap presents a complete action beginning with Lucifer's entry into Paradise, reaching its climax in the temptation and fall of Eva and then Adam, and ending with Lucifer's departure and a view of the unmitigated woe left in his wake. It is dominated by an atmosphere of foreboding and everything, from Lucifer's threats to the angels' songs of joy, contributes to his atmosphere. Satan's dealings in Paradise do not form such a self-contained dramatic action but represent just a phase in a larger

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<sup>26</sup>This is of course Biblical, but Vondel makes no attempt to link the serpent's punishment with Lucifer, as Milton does; see pp. 171-74 below.

<sup>27</sup>See "De Godtheid, die het al beheerst, /Zal niemand hierom deerlijck /Van zijn gena verstootten" (1401-3) and "Het hoog gerechte zal een' onuitbluschbren haet /Ontsteecken tusschen u, en tusschen 't vrouwezaet, /Dat u het hoofd verplet" (1660-62). See also 1377-78.

action. Nor does the misery brought by him remain unmitigated. For these reasons the tension roused by Satan's presence in Paradise is never so high nor the sense of foreboding so strong as in Adam in Ballingschap. The poem's impact is more intellectual than that of the play. The main function of Satan's speech before he enters Paradise, for instance, is not so much to evoke atmosphere and tension as to illustrate Satan's development and the decline of his character. Here he consolidates his choice of evil and confirms his new identity,<sup>28</sup> and from here on his struggle is no longer upward, out of the oblivious pool, but rather against a relapse into the spiritual quagmire which he has escaped and renounced. He now sets his mind on evil (he defiantly leaps into the arena, scorning due entrance, IV.180-83) and pursues it relentlessly, in spite of the "foul descent" (IX.163) that it implies.

The first test of this new determination and integrity is severe. It comes by way of the "sight hateful, sight tormenting" (IV.505) of Adam and Eve. Satan is momentarily confounded again by the "divine resemblance" that "so lively shines /In them" (IV.363-64) and by their joy "imparadised in one another's arms" (IV.506). His eyes and thoughts pursue them with "wonder" (IV.363) and with "grief" (IV.358). He feels that he "could love" (IV.363) or "could pity" (IV.374) them and, were conditions different, "should abhor" (IV.392) harming them. A certain weariness and wry irony characterize his words: "league with you I seek" (IV.375-81). The heroic energy of the opening books and the determination at the end of the speech to the sun give way to the weariness of despair. Rather than being eager to harm man, he feels fatally compelled to do so (IV.389-92). But he resists the impulse to "melt" at Adam and Eve's "harmless innocence" (IV.388-89); some animation becomes evident again when his mind begins to explore the possibilities of evil:

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<sup>28</sup>See pp. 125-29 above.

Yet let me not forget what I have gained  
 From their own mouths; all is not theirs it seems:  
 One fatal tree there stands . . .  
 Forbidden them to taste . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 O fair foundation laid whereon to build<sup>29</sup>  
 Their ruin!

(IV.512-22)

At the prospect of bringing ruin into creation, Satan's lethargy turns into renewed enthusiasm as he plans his strategy to tempt Man to "taste and die" (IV.527). He no longer views Adam and Eve with wonder and grief but with new malice as he pronounces a perverse benediction upon them:

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

Thus Satan resists the tendency to disintegrate, and this progress in evil is confirmed in his transformation into a toad and his secret entry into the bower of bliss where "other creature . . . , /Beast, bird, insect, or worm durst enter none" (IV.703-4). For his devious temptation of Eve in her sleep (more devious than the later attempt) Satan appropriately adopts a form more base and despicable even than the serpent - certainly more loathsome than the beautiful creature who lures Eve to the tree (IX.498-510). But the serpent, ultimate image of the brutishness<sup>30</sup> of Satan's inner self, is nevertheless prefigured even in this transformation, as is evident in the sibilant sounds in the toads speech as reported by Eve:

Now is the pleasant time,  
 The cool, the silent, save where silence yields  
 To the night-warbling bird, that now awake  
 Tunes sweetest his love-laboured song.  
 (V.38-41)

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<sup>29</sup>For this line I have used Douglas Bush's edition instead of Fowler's, which renders it as follows: "Of fair foundation laid . . . ."

<sup>30</sup>See John M. Steadman, "Heroic Virtue and the Divine Image in Paradise Lost," Journal of the Warburg Institute 22 (1959): 88-105, on brutishness as the opposite of heroic virtue.

A serious challenge to Satan's new integrity follows when, at the touch of Ithurial's spear he "returns /Of force to [his] own likeness (IV.812-13) but is not recognized. "Which of those rebel spirits adjudged to hell /[Art] thou?" the angels ask. From their perspective Satan is, as at his expulsion from Heaven, simply one of the hordes; his whole process of personal reintegration has come to naught. Satan replies with incredulous shock and indignation: "Know ye not then . . . /Know ye not me?" (IV.827-28). The word "know" rings through the rest of his brief reply as he anxiously affirms, if for no-one but himself, his identity. But Zephon confirms what should have been evident to Satan since he saw how Beelzebub had been transformed by the fall, and especially since he saw Sin's hideous deformity:

Think not . . . thy shape the same  
 . . . . .  
 As when thou stoodst in heaven upright and pure.  
 . . . . .  
 . . . thou resemblest now  
 Thy sin.

(IV.835-40)

Apart from his voluntary transformations, Satan is also involuntarily changing more and more into the image of his sin, the shape of his offspring, Sin. His evil is naked before the angels; "abashed the devil stood" (IV.846). But in the presence of Gabriel, who recognizes him, Satan is able to recover his boldness again; challenged in frank military terms he is able to regain his full stature:

Satan alarmed  
 Collecting all his might dilated stood,  
 Like Teneriff or Atlas unremoved:  
 His stature reached the sky, and on his crest  
 Sat horror plumed.

(IV.985-89)

But Satan is not allowed the glory of a military clash. Instead, God intervenes by "[hanging] forth in heaven his golden scales" (IV.997) by which he foreshadows Satan's "lot" (IV.1011), not only in this present clash but in his whole endeavour. Insulted and divinely reprimanded, Satan skulks off, disappearing in a shroud of darkness just as the morning breaks - the morning star, fleeing at the coming of the morn:

[he] fled  
 Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.  
 (IV.1014-15)

## IV

Chronologically this is the last we see of Satan until he reappears in Book IX. Structurally the last we see of him before Book IX is his expulsion from Heaven, when in Messiah's presence his person simply disappears from the narrative and he is unceremoniously cast into oblivion (VI.864-77).<sup>31</sup> On both these occasions he disappears rather than makes an exit. Satan constantly has to struggle against such annihilation of his personality. When he reappears in Book IX it is in keeping with his disappearance: in the dark and in a disembodied, depersonalized way, "wrapped in mist /Of midnight vapour" (IX.158-59). Milton makes this correspondence explicit: "By night he fled, and at midnight returned" (IX.58). Chronologically this is simply a stealthy return to Paradise to continue his interrupted scheme, but structurally and dramatically it is a stubborn return to the cosmic stage in defiance of his expulsion by Messiah. The structure of the poem juxtaposes the expulsion and the return; Satan's fall is not followed by his protracted recovery from it but by his act of bitter revenge. Thus Milton emphasizes Satan's stubborn evil and centres the action around his two great sins, the rebellion in Heaven and the temptation of Man.

At this point in the poem the stage is being set for the central action, the temptation. Burden maintains that all else has been background to this "simple centre".<sup>32</sup> The encounter between Satan and Eve is the balance of the poem, and of the whole of Christian history. Satan's quest, begun in Book I and pursued despite endless vicissitudes, now approaches its goal.

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<sup>31</sup>See pp. 53-54 and 132-34 above.

<sup>32</sup>Burden, The Logical Epic, p. 79.

An interval of two books (VII and VIII) exists between Satan's expulsion from Heaven and his midnight return to Paradise. During this interval the centre of gravity of the poem changes, and with this Satan's role finally alters. The shift in the reader's sympathy occurs as early as Book IV, and Satan's role as fiend begins then, but during his complete absence from the poem in Books VII and VIII an even more decisive and all-embracing switch occurs. When he returns, it is into a radically altered universe: with the invocation to Book VII and Raphael's narrative of creation, the universe of the poem has become geo- and anthropocentric and the reader's perspective has changed for the last time. When Raphael departs from Paradise, leaving Adam and Eve alone (VIII.652-53), we are left "standing on earth" (VII.23) with them.

Satan has spent the time since his departure from the garden in Book IV in frustration, "compassing the earth" (IX.59). By the pattern of his flight he has been ensnaring the earth in his demonic influence and diabolically enthralling it by his necromantic journey of uncreation:<sup>33</sup>

thence [from the garden] full of anguish driven,  
The space of seven continued nights he rode  
With darkness, thrice the equinoctial line  
He circled, four times crossed the car of Night  
From pole to pole, traversing each colure.  
(IX.62-66)

During all this time he is driven by the feverish passion of the hell within him, "meditat[ing] fraud and malice, bent /On man's destruction" (IX.55-56). Dramatically this journey recalls the voyage from Hell and in preparation for the final attack it recaptures the force and momentum of the earlier journey.

On the eighth night of his flight Satan returns to Paradise. Milton stipulates the hour, midnight (IX.58), but not without prelude:

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<sup>33</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on IX.63, p. 440.

The sun was sunk, and after him the star  
 Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring  
 Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter  
 Twixt day and night, and now from end to end  
 Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round:  
 When Satan [fearless returned].

(IX.48-53)

We feel Satan's return even before he is mentioned. The fleeting reference to twilight before the dark of night has a profound effect in this regard. This is the hour which heralds midnight, and Satan's return. It is a brief moment, a moment of balance and stasis between light and dark, and it is through this narrow gap "twixt day and night" that Satan's presence enters the poem again and his influence slips stealthily back into creation. Though his element is midnight darkness, he chooses the grey areas, the narrow gaps in time and space to enter the forbidden realms. Similarly "by stealth / [He finds] unsuspected way" (IX.68-69) back into the garden through the underground gulf of the Tigris:

In with the river sunk, and with it rose  
 Satan involved in rising mist.

(IX.74-75)

The syntax and versification imitate the stealthy sinking and rising movement by which Satan slips into Eden, his involution in the grey mist and at the same time his resumption of physical form as he seems to condense from the mist and stands firmly at the beginning of the line.

His restless wandering continues as he searches for a "fit vessel . . . in whom / To enter, and his dark suggestions hide" (IX.89-90). At last he chooses the serpent:

[he] found  
 The serpent subtlest beast of all the field.

(IX.85-86)

At this point the weight borne by the image of the serpent is immensely increased by its being the longed-for point of stasis at the end of the journey (as the earth is, at the end of the journey through Chaos). Now it is not only Satan who enters the serpent but all of that "hot hell" (IX.467) of passion

and energy which Satan has borne within him and which in turn has borne Satan through some forty feverish lines to this point of arrival: "[he] found /The serpent".

Complementing this sense of arrival and fixity is Satan's direct address to the earth on which he has once again lighted (IX.99). He hails it as supreme in beauty and centre of all the universe (IX.99-113), underlining the geocentricity of the poem at this point. But Satan's geocentric cosmology here is characteristically perverse in its exaggeration; it rates Heaven second in worth and influence, which is of course never the intention of nor the impression made by the poem's cosmology. But to Satan, to whom Heaven is lost, the earth is the land of promise, his only hope of shared dominion with God. It is to be his domain, and it is as such that he hails it with this hyperbolic eulogy, though in his heart of hearts he knows it to be second best (IX.123).

The address to the earth, made just before Satan enters the serpent, is not another resurgence of doubt about the choice made in Hell and confirmed on Mt. Niphates, but shows Satan's struggle to adapt to the fulfilment of that choice. All around him and within him things have become inverted and perverted. As he surveys the goodness of the earth he experiences the bitter inverse of his invocation to evil to be his good: "all good to me becomes /Bane" (IX.122-23). In wry fulfilment of his choice he has become beleaguered by a "hateful siege /Of contraries" (IX.121-22). The more he sees of pleasures around him, the more he feels torment within himself (IX.120-21); only in destroying does he find ease (IX.129). But even as he seeks this perverse ease and hopes through it to win company for himself in his wretchedness (IX.127-28), he knows that "thereby worse to [him] redound[s]" (IX.128). By the principle of that very order which he has invoked, his evil recoils in every detail upon himself.

This fulfilment of Satan's choice of evil is physically enacted in the metamorphosis that follows this speech (just as the metamorphosis into a toad follows the speech to the sun). With his assuming the form of the serpent, the decline of his character is sealed. He personally underlines that decline:

O foul descent! That I who erst contended  
 With gods to sit the highest, am now constrained  
 Into a beast, and mixed with bestial slime,  
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,  
 That to the highth of deity aspired;  
 But what will not ambition and revenge  
 Descend to? Who aspires must down as low  
 As high he soared. (IX.63-70)

In this inversion of the principle by which all creatures are destined to progress upward through the Great Chain of Being to God (see V.469-90), and the travesty of the Christian teaching that he who wants to be the highest must be the lowest,<sup>34</sup> Satan is clearly rationalizing his descent, pretending that it is merely external, expedient and temporary. But his obsession with soaring and descending, aspiration and humiliation reveals his insight into and struggle against the truth of his spiritual degeneration. Allan Gilbert questions why Satan should be so reluctant to be incarnate on this occasion, when he showed no hesitation at his earlier transformations into lion, tiger and toad,<sup>35</sup> and Arnold Stein points out that Satan apparently forgets that he has already had this experience before, without indignation.<sup>36</sup> But in the light of what is happening generally in this speech, the reason for Satan's reluctance and indignation is clear: he is experiencing in every way the bitter fulfilment of his choice, and this present physical change will be the culmination, the final external expression of what that choice

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<sup>34</sup>e.g. Mark 10.44.

<sup>35</sup>Allan H. Gilbert, On the Composition of Paradise Lost: A Study of the Ordering and Insertion of Material (Chapel Hill, 1947), cited by Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on IX.166, p. 447.

<sup>36</sup>Arnold Stein, "Satan: The Dramatic Rôle of Evil," PMLA 65 (1950): 226.

has wrought within him. And Satan knows this: "I am now constrained / . . . / This essence to incarnate and imbrute". This time his essence, his very self, is to be incarnated; that which he is, that personal integrity which he has painstakingly achieved in defiance of oblivion, is to be revealed and will find in the form of the serpent, not a hiding place, as he hopes (IX.90), but rather visible, undisguised expression or manifestation. More than on any previous occasion, this external form will be an organic manifestation of his inner self, the ultimate enactment and realization of his protracted spiritual decline, and when it is done he (if no-one else) will see himself for what he is, recognize, as in a mirror, what he has become, and what Sin's physical shape presaged. So also in this most subtle and painful detail evil "ere long back on itself recoils" (IX.172).

But as in his speech to the sun, Satan reaches a point of defiant despair: "Let it; I reck not" (IX.173), and returns his attention (and the focus of the poem) to his "quest" (IX.414) and its goal, "this man of clay" (IX.176), and in him "the whole included race" (IX.416).

Almost from the moment of his regaining consciousness on the burning lake, this quest has been Satan's compulsion, his "fierce intent" (IX.462). It has driven him physically through Hell and Chaos to the shores of light, and thence in feverish orbit about the earth until he has reached Paradise and found the serpent. Psychologically it has propelled him through a relentless progress in confidence, determination and integrity to this point: "I reck not". This entire quest, with the whole force of its accumulated momentum, now "light[s] well aimed" (IX.173) upon "Eve separate" (IX.422), "fairest unsupported flower" (IX.432). Everything now tends to her ruin; the stage is set for the central episode in the poem. But at the point of the onslaught becoming a reality the quest is, for all its force, momentarily suspended as Satan is overcome by the sight of Eve:

her heavenly form  
 Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,  
 Her graceful innocence, her every air  
 Of gesture or least action overawed  
 His malice.

(IX.457-61)

Satan is especially awed by Eve's appearance and form, the extreme opposite of his own incarnation. At the mention of Eve, the narrator himself seems to gasp, lapsing from his narrative into an extended pastoral simile of a city dweller surprised and delighted by the sight of a nymph-like virgin in the country (IX.445-54). For this moment of delighted suspension the poem stands abstracted from its narrative course just as "that space the evil one abstracted stood /From his own evil" (IX.463-64), caught in a rapturous spell and, for the first time since his recovery in Hell, completely unselfconscious. In this interim the dominating, compulsive quest, the relentless onslaught of Hell on Man, is momentarily arrested.

Eve's unconscious goodness does not confront and engage the force of Satan's evil; (that struggle occurs later in the temptation scene, and is lost.) By its very presence it simply overaws him, much as Messiah's presence simply annihilates him in the war. For Satan therefore this pause is not a moment of renewed doubt and torment or a struggle against his better self in an attempt to sustain his purpose, but a moment of total abstraction from that purpose, indeed from evil. The absolute and decisive triumph of good and the complete defeat and emptiness of evil is suggested in the rhetoric of the verse:

Her graceful innocence . . .  
 . . . overawed  
 His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved  
 His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.  
 That space the evil one abstracted stood  
 From his own evil, and for the time remained  
 Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,  
 Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.

(IX.459-66)

Eve is unconscious of Satan's presence; the encounter is not between personalities, but an abstract one between pure good and pure evil, illustrating the effortless power of the one over the other. On this abstract level the fall cannot occur, for here good is impregnable, unalloyed by personality or free will. To pervert good, Satan must shift the encounter out of the abstract, cosmic arena into the human realm. If any strength of personality or stealth of approach is to avail against Eve, it must happen on the level of conscious choice. And so Satan rouses himself (or is roused by the hell within him) from the spell of awe and delight ("the hot hell that always in him burns, / . . . soon ended his delight", IX.467-68), "recollects" (IX.471) himself and his purpose (IX.473-93) and begins his temptation of Eve by attracting her conscious attention:

[He] curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,  
To lure her eye.

(IX.517-18)

Like Eva in Adam in Ballingschap, Eve is first attracted to the serpent by his appeal to her senses. Satan's voluptuous "play" (IX.528) before Eve has every mark of the behaviour of the courting male of a species, aluring and charming the female. The sexual overtones in the verse are evident:

He bolder now, uncalled before her stood;  
But as in gaze admiring: oft he bowed  
His turret crest, and sleek enamelled neck,  
Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.  
His gentle dumb expression turned at length  
The eye of Eve to mark his play.

(IX.523-28)

But whereas the compact and more dramatic temptation in Adam in Ballingschap is entirely designed to seduce Eva's physical nature and so to sever body and soul, Satan's appeal to Eve's sense is only a preliminary step in a more metaphysically temptation, in keeping with the more intellectual tone of the poem. Satan's goal is "to attempt the mind /Of man" (X.8-9). Satan claims that he can "tell thee all /What thou command'st" (IX.569-70). His erotic appeal has induced a confusion of reason and passion in Eve and now he

begins to stir her intellectual aspiration:

to speculation high or deep  
I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind  
Considered all things visible in heaven,  
Or earth, or middle.

(IX.602-5)

Broadbent points out that, given the fundamental lie that the snake has eaten the fruit, Satan's argument is intellectually unanswerable<sup>37</sup> (see especially IX.679-732). Ultimately then, Eve is deceived, not just seduced like Vondel's Eva, but this successful onslaught on her reason is nevertheless achieved via her passion.

By tempting Eve consciously to disobey God, Satan is essentially tempting her to claim an independent selfhood,<sup>38</sup> an identity apart from God, as he had done in his first moments of disobedience. In her words to the tree (IX.745-79) Eve rationally "resolves" (IX.830) to disobey God. The dramatic effect of this is not as great as the impact of Eva's corresponding struggle against her rising passion, but the point is the same: in both cases the "mother of mankind" (V.388) assumes independence from God.

His "heinous and despiteful act" (X.1) performed, "back to the thicket slunk /The guilty serpent" (IX.784-85). This is the last, brief mention of Satan until he returns to Hell in Book X. The focus of the poem now shifts to the consequences of his deed. Like Lucifer, Satan stays in the garden to witness these results, but flees with the arrival of God (see X.332-39).

At this point Vondel ends his play, with destruction and woe reigning upon the earth. But Milton's intention is not yet achieved and the "contract"<sup>39</sup> of the poem not yet fulfilled. If he is to justify the ways of God, Milton cannot leave evil victorious. And so he completes the celestial cycle (as

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<sup>37</sup>Broadbent, Some Graver Subject, p. 248.

<sup>38</sup>See Lewis, Preface, p. 68.

<sup>39</sup>Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics, p. 90.

Vondel does in Lucifer), pursuing Satan to his humiliation in Hell (Book X) and ending with a vision of human history and the ultimate restoration of Man by Christ (Books XI and XII).

In Adam in Ballingschap Vondel's genre allows him only to allude to the scene in Hell following Man's fall (1415-19), but even then it serves to amplify Lucifer's triumph. In Paradise Lost, however, the climactic scene of Satan's return to Hell, in which he and his devils are transformed into serpents and eat the ashen fruit of their sin, turns Satan's "triumph to shame" (X.546) and seals the process of his degeneration. In addition to this it represents the culmination of his perverse process of integration.

The episode begins with Satan's journey back to Hell. He is disguised again "in likeness of an angel bright" (X.327). We meet him, significantly, "steering /His zenith" (X.328-29). He is met with joy and jubilation by Sin and Death on their broad highway between Hell and earth (X.345-51). They hail him victor and monarch of earth (X.372-75) and joint monarch of the universe (X.379). As Satan enters Hell we are briefly reminded of his earlier glory as morning star, or "Lucifer, . . . / . . . that bright star to Satan paragoned" (X.425-26). In Hell his legions are "reduced in careful watch /Round their metropolis" (X.438-39), and yet "he through [their] midst unmarked, /In show plebeian angel militant /Of lowest order, passed" (X.441-43). He emerges with quiet stealth from the middle of the line (X.441). So he slips into Hell and "invisible /Ascend[s]his high throne" (X.444-45). Satan's disguised entrance, the expectancy of the crowd (X.439-41) and the silence which hangs over the verse as over Pandemonium, build up a tension which greatly enhances Satan's final moment of glory as he appears on his throne:

At last as from a cloud his fulgent head  
And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter, clad  
With what permissive glory since his fall  
Was left him, or false glitter.

(X.449-52)

The ironic qualifications of his glory notwithstanding, this is a magnificent moment. The tone of the verse here (IX.449-58), in contrast with the earlier silence, further enhances the sense of triumph. But in allowing Satan this unorthodox and triumphant return to his angelic form, Milton is manipulating the scene in order to be able to repeat in a few lines the entire process of Satan's decline from angel to devil and thereby to give maximum effect to the humiliation.

The jubilation culminates in Satan's "satanic epic",<sup>40</sup> "the account /Of [his] performance" (X.501-2). Before his awestruck legions and in the atmosphere of amazement and joy, he reviews his heroic enterprise. It is an exaggerated and not entirely faithful account, appealing to the admiration and perverse humour of the devils; it is really an attempt by Satan to recapture the real heroism of the opening books, long since lost and obscured by his degeneration. But perhaps the most important function of this speech is the role it plays in the compact re-enactment of Satan's decline. By recalling what was indeed an heroic voyage across "the unreal, vast, unbounded deep /Of horrible confusion" (IX.471-72), it ties in with other reminders such as the reference to Lucifer, the morning star, to recall Satan's glory and so highlight his fall.

At the peak of Satan's triumph, as he proclaims the devils "gods" (X.502), he and they undergo the sudden and humiliating metamorphosis into a brood of serpents. Even as he acclaims them, his final word betrays his fate, which is even now overtaking him:

what remains, ye gods,  
But up and enter now into full bliss. (X.502-3)

The last word spoken by Satan in the poem introduces the "dismal universal hiss" (X.508) that issues as applause from the throng, the inverse (appro-

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<sup>40</sup>Burden, The Logical Epic, p. 142.

priately) of what he and we expect. By its sound this final word also signals the start of the dreadful metamorphosis. From his "star-bright" (X.450), angelic form he changes, within the space of five lines that brilliantly imitate the physical contortion of the transformation (X.511-15), until "down he fell /A monstrous serpent on his belly prone, /Reluctant, but in vain" (X.513-15). Here Satan's fate is reminiscent of the fate of the traditional Medieval devil, who is always ultimately made ridiculous. Waldock objects to this:

The technique of this famous scene is the technique of the comic cartoon . . . the essence of [which is] to bring your adversary to grief by unfair means- . . . by some form of practical joke . . . . What happens to [Satan] parallels in the exactest manner what used to happen in religious plays to the Devil . . . . To treat [this] scene . . . as if it were . . . the conclusion and climax of a valid development is surely to lapse into a critical absurdity . . . . The scene is amusing and the writing of it is superb: but about Satan it proves literally nothing whatever.<sup>41</sup>

The purpose of this thesis has been to trace the dual process of Satan's integration and degeneration, and if we have understood this process as psychologically accurate, its significant stages marked by serpent forms, each a wry revelation of Satan's inner consciousness and a presage of his fate, then this final, involuntary metamorphosis is the logical and inevitable conclusion of the entire process, an organic (and dramatically anticipated) culmination of a "valid development". In that case it would be a "critical absurdity" to describe the scene as extraneous cartooning with no integral connection with the theme, or as a more "charade".<sup>42</sup> As a punitive measure (i.e. from God's point of view) this final metamorphosis makes eminent sense of the judgment handed down to the serpent in the garden:

Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,  
And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.  
(X.177-78)

We may also partially agree with Waldock that this scene is externally

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<sup>41</sup>Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics, pp. 91-92.

<sup>42</sup>Peter, A Critique of Paradise Lost, p. 143.

engineered: it is the narrator's final and most cruel degradation of Satan. But if one sees only these layers of significance one misses (as indeed Waldock does) the climactic effect of the scene. Stein provides an eloquent (though not complete) formulation of this idea:

[In this scene] recognition [is] forced upon Satan from outside himself. Taken alone, it is a virtuoso passage, a psychological anti-climax. But it is also a physical climax, an external confirmation (necessary in drama) of the internal failure.<sup>43</sup>

Stein recognizes the scene as a climax, but only of an internal failure, i.e. Satan's degeneration and his protracted fall. But this scene is also the climax of a formidable internal achievement, the positive movement of the poem. Contrary to Stein's claim, it is also the psychological climax of Satan's development towards total integrity. And it is all the more climactic for being entirely perverse. Stein points out the organic function of this scene as an external expression of an internal change, accurately describing it as a "recognition" on Satan's part, i.e. Satan is not here unfairly turned into something which he does not deserve, but rather made to recognize (know again, and acknowledge) what he is, or has steadily become. In Fowler's words: "At the moment of acclaim Satan is revealed in his true brutishness".<sup>44</sup> This is an inescapable, hence involuntary recognition. Now Satan's re-integration is accomplished and his self-awareness complete; he has proudly claimed his identity: "Satan (for I glory in the name, /Antagonist of heaven's almighty king)" (X.386-87). Full recognition, i.e. an awareness not only of identity but also of its implications, is no longer avoidable.

In the mass metamorphosis of the whole population of Hell into "a crowd /Of ugly serpents" (X.538-39), Satan sees mirrored his own dreadful

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<sup>43</sup>Stein, "The Dramatic Rôle of Evil", p. 226.

<sup>44</sup>Fowler, Paradise Lost, note on X.517, p. 533.

change and the wry fulfilment of his choice of evil and perversion. Milton and God add insult to injury in the scene that follows when, "parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce" (X.556) and tempted by "fruitage fair to sight" (X.561), the devils pluck and eat, and "instead of fruit /Chewed bitter ashes" (X.565-56). So their scorn at the manner of Man's fall (see X.485-88) rebounds upon themselves as they repeat (and will for all time, X.575-77) that fall.

## V

Adam in Ballingschap is not about the career of the devil, hence the absence of such a scene to seal that career. But in Lucifer, which is concerned with the rise and fall of the Arch-enemy, Lucifer suffers a fate similar to Satan's, in his metamorphosis into a multiple monster in V.i.

This, however, is only part of the doom appointed for the serpent /devil. What remains unfulfilled is the promise that "[Eve's] seed shall bruise [his] head" (X.181, and Lucifer 2136-38). Lucifer ends therefore with the prospect of the devil's defeat in the Rey's song to the "Verlosser, die de Slang het hooft verpletten zult" (2176), and beyond Adam's vision of misery in Paradise Lost there is also the final defeat of Satan:

this act [Messiah's death and resurrection]  
 Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,  
 Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,  
 And fix far deeper in his head their stings  
 Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel.  
 (XII.429-33)

In both Paradise Lost and Lucifer, however, this promise of the "goodness infinite, goodness immense" (XII.469) that will come out of the devil's evil is, inevitably, a proleptic anticipation rather than a dramatic experience. In the larger pattern of each work this felix culpa theme is obviously indispensable to the meaning, but in both cases it makes a far less immediate impact than the rest of the material.<sup>45</sup> As far as the dramatic treatment

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<sup>45</sup>See pp. 93-94 above.

of the Arch-enemy is concerned his metamorphosis (Book X and Act V.i), rather than his ultimate defeat, represents the climax of his development.

Satan and Lucifer both rebel against their submergence in the Being and Will of God. In this rebellion they achieve a new identity and perverse integrity as the antagonist of God, and even become heroic and sympathetic characters. But for all the epic grandeur or stoic courage of their stand against the Almighty, the logical and dramatically anticipated end of such a career is the hideous transformation that each suffers - the ineluctable exposure of the brutishness which is the essence of Evil. Ultimately Evil is "punished in the shape [it] sinned" (X.516). Of both Satan and Lucifer it can in the end be said: "Thou resemblest now /Thy sin" (IV.839-40). The reader or spectator spontaneously applauds the consummate justice of this outcome.

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