

‘AD FERRUM [. . .] AB AURO’: DEGENERATIVE AND REGENERATIVE PATTERNING IN THE FINAL BOOKS OF *PARADISE LOST*

The opening lines of the *Metamorphoses* announce the ambitious nature of Ovid’s poetic enterprise, his intention to evolve out of these tales of change a history of the world in one continuous narrative: ‘primaque ab origine mundi | ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen!’ (‘and bring down my song in unbroken strains from the world’s very beginning even unto the present time’, *Met.*, I. 3–4).¹ The chronological framework underpinning the epic is vast: it embraces an expanse of time from the world’s origins up to Ovid’s own lifetime, with the last book reaching the death of Julius Caesar and the rise of Augustus. Writing in a spirit of self-conscious rivalry with his classical predecessors in the epic genre,² Milton openly challenges comparison with even this comprehensive timescale: his epic starts before the creation of the world and, in the final books, looks steadily forward to the end of the world and beyond. While the contents of Milton’s vision of human history since the Fall are drawn exclusively from the Bible, the recurrent movement of degeneration succeeded by regeneration that shapes these final books is established and defined by the opening sequence of the *Metamorphoses*, in which the divinely created world, ruined by the actions of mankind, is purged of corruption and renewed once more through the human agency of Deucalion and Pyrrha.

Over half a century ago C. S. Lewis identified what he felt to be ‘a grave structural flaw’ in Milton’s epic. In an unforgettable indictment, Lewis dismissed the last two books, outlining ‘sacred history from the Fall to the Last Day’, as ‘an untransmuted lump of futurity’.³ Responding to the challenge, in what now seems to have been a concerted effort to rehabilitate the concluding books of the poem,⁴ critics seized upon the approach best exemplified by William G. Madsen’s seminal work⁵ in order to further understanding of Milton’s narrative strategy in Books XI and XII. Milton’s exploitation of the rhetorical possibilities of typological patterning to organize his survey of human history and propel

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from the *Metamorphoses* (henceforth *Met.*) are based on the text and translation of F. J. Miller in the Loeb Classical Library, rev. edn by G. P. Goold, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977). For the quotation from *Met.*, xv. 260 in the title of this article, see below, p. 670.

² The invaluable contributions of Louis L. Martz, *Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton’s Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), Charles Martindale, *Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), and, in particular, Richard DuRocher’s full-length study, *Milton and Ovid* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1985) advanced the discussion of Milton’s ‘dialectical imitation’ of Ovid, to borrow Greene’s useful phrase. For an informed discussion of the differing types of imitation in the Renaissance, see Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 37–48.

³ *A Preface to ‘Paradise Lost’* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942; repr. 1971), p. 129.

⁴ See Stanley Fish, ‘Transmuting the Lump: *Paradise Lost*, 1942–82’, in *Literature and History: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case Studies*, ed. by Gary Saul Morson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 33–56 (pp. 55–56).

⁵ *From Shadowy Types to Truth: Studies in Milton’s Symbolism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).

his narrative forward through time to eternity became a topic of close critical attention.⁶ However, since this basic progression 'From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit' (xii. 303),⁷ from Old Testament figures to New Testament fulfilment, would seem to have reached its completion with the life and death of Christ, this left the intervening period of historical time, which would only reach a final end with the Second Coming, as an awkward remainder. Accordingly, a number of more recent studies have sought to revise the reader's understanding of the nature of the typological framework in place here, extending it from a series of Old Testament types and their fulfilment in Christ⁸ to 'the triple typological structure which', as Joseph Galdon has pointed out, 'is seen in many of the early Fathers and especially in Augustine'.⁹ In this revision of typological theory the polarity of figure and fulfilment is replaced by a tripartite pattern in which 'the Christ of the eschaton rather than the incarnate Christ of the Gospel is the ultimate antitype for all the types'.¹⁰

This typological framework may prove to extend further still, however, once the prefigurative value attached by Milton to the Ovidian figures of Deucalion and Pyrrha is fully recognized.¹¹ Ovid's account of how this couple came to be the only survivors of a terrible flood had long been identified as a pagan ectype¹² of the preservation of Noah and his family from the biblical deluge.

⁶ See e.g. the essays by H. R. MacCallum, 'Milton and Figurative Interpretation of the Bible', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 31 (1962), 397–415, and 'Milton and the Sacred History: Books xi and xii of *Paradise Lost*', in *Essays in English Literature from the Renaissance to the Victorian Age*, ed. by Millar MacLure and F. W. Watt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974); and also B. K. Lewalski, 'Structure and the Symbolism of Vision in Michael's Prophecy, *Paradise Lost* xi–xii', *Philological Quarterly*, 42 (1963), 25–35.

⁷ All quotations from Milton's poetical works are taken from the edition by John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London: Longman, 1971; rev. edn 1998); those from the prose works are taken from the *The Works of John Milton*, ed. by F. A. Patterson and others, 18 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931–38) (henceforth *Col.*).

⁸ In his influential essay 'Figura', Erich Auerbach explained the relationship between type and antitype thus: 'figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfils the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both being real events or figures, are within time, within the historical stream of life' (trans. by Ralph Manheim, repr. in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridian, 1959), pp. 11–76 (p. 53)).

⁹ *Typology and Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Mouton: The Hague, 1975), p. 48. For a searching discussion of 'the problems posed by the reconception of the antitype (Christ's first coming) as another type and the reconception of fulfilment as what occurs outside history', see William Walker's closely argued article 'Typology and *Paradise Lost*, Books xi and xii', *Milton Studies*, 25 (1989), 245–64 (quotation from p. 264 n. 13).

¹⁰ B. K. Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 131. Edward Tayler's detailed study of Milton's typological method reflects this revised version of typology (*Milton's Poetry: Its Development in Time* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1979)), while Regina Schwartz has alerted readers to the way Milton 'exploits the provisionality characteristic of typology' ('From Shadowy Types to Shadowy Types: The Unendings of *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Studies*, 24 (1988), 123–39 (p. 133)).

¹¹ No mention of the flood is recorded in Hesiod's famous account of human origins in the *Works and Days*. A plain unvarnished summary of the story is provided in Apollodorus's compilation of Greek myths and heroic legends (*The Library*, 1. 7. 2), but Milton's treatment of the myth is unquestionably indebted to Ovid's detailed and imaginative account in the first book of the *Metamorphoses*. (See e.g. Martz, p. 92; DuRocher, p. 108, and Mandy Green, 'Softening the Stony: Deucalion, Pyrrha and the Process of Spiritual Regeneration in *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Quarterly*, 35 (2001), 9–21.)

¹² Godfrey Goodman had argued that many classical myths 'had some reference to the truth of

However, Milton's pivotal positioning of the myth, in the opening lines of Book 11, looks backwards as well as forwards: it gathers Adam and Eve into the same pattern of typological fulfilment—moving from death to new life, from destruction to recreation—in which the faithful few are set against the faithless herd. I hope to demonstrate how, through the controlled and imaginative use of typological patterning, the alignment of Adam and Eve with Deucalion and Pyrrha proves not to be an isolated, local effect, but the result of a more significant level of association in which these Ovidian figures are assigned a vital role in the progressive definition of salvation as the reader ascends 'by types | And shadows' (XII. 232–33) in three stages: from the first judgement and regeneration of mankind to the second judgement and renewal of the human race through Noah and his family, through to the Last Judgement and the resurrection to eternal life.

While Milton's vision of human history since the Fall is clearly shaped by this teleological movement forward to a final end in 'this world's dissolution' and the regeneration of 'New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date' (XII. 550), this is no longer to be achieved by a gradual evolution of mankind, 'Till body up to spirit work' (v. 478). Since the human race has become 'depraved from good' (v. 471) by the Fall, this upward movement is offset by the recurring cycle of creation, destruction, and recreation. As mankind continually lapses, the work of creation must be repeated and God's covenant with his faithful remnant renewed. This pattern of degeneration and regeneration seems destined to repeat itself until the Second Coming, when the Saviour in one final act of purgation will 'dissolve | Satan with his perverted world' (XII. 546–47) once and for all. Ovid's account of the origins of mankind in the first book of the *Metamorphoses* can help clarify this combination of progression and recursion (especially the latter), as I hope to show.

The classical and Christian traditions agree that in the beginning the human race lived in harmony with nature, which supplied all of mankind's wants from her abundant store. Wrongdoing and the changes of the season were then unknown: 'ver [. . .] aeternum' (*Met.*, I. 107)/'eternal spring' (IV. 268) prevailed. The Roman poets referred to this period of humanity's history as the Golden Age.¹³ Indeed, the similarities between Genesis and Ovid's highly influential account of the creation and ages of mankind in the opening book of

historie in Scripture; for', he reasons, 'as truth is most ancient, so falsehood would seem to bee the shadow of truth and to accompanie her' (*The Fall of Man; or, The Corruption of Nature Proved by the Light of Our Natural Reason* (London: F. Kyngston, 1616), pp. 398–99). Sir Walter Raleigh went further and claimed for these 'crooked images [of the] one true history' some 'Reliques of Truth', particularly from 'the Storie of the First age, with all the workes and marvailles thereof' (*The History of the World* (London, 1614), I. 1. 6, pp. 91 and 84, respectively).

¹³ In the *Works and Days* Hesiod wrote an influential presentation of five 'generations' of humanity: gold, silver, bronze, heroic, and iron. The early history of man is thus regarded as one of progressive decline—interrupted only by the race of heroes who fought in the Theban and Trojan wars—reaching its furthest point of deterioration in the race of iron, the current generation of mankind. The Roman poets of the Augustan period adopted this view, but spoke of the 'ages' of mankind, and looked towards a renewal of the Golden Age under Augustus (see e.g. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI. 791–94). Ovid, in a significant departure from Hesiod's account, describes the repopulation of the world by Deucalion and Pyrrha, following the destruction of the Age of Iron by flood. The current age, according to Ovid, is descended from this race created by Deucalion and Pyrrha.

the *Metamorphoses* were felt to be so remarkable that Arthur Golding, composer of the first popular English translation of the poem, could demand of his reader: 'What man is he but would suppose the author of this book | The first foundation of his work from Moses' writings took?'¹⁴ George Sandys, in his commentary on Ovid's description of the Golden Age, confidently drew the parallel: 'this happy estate abounding with all felicities, assuredly represented that which man injoyed in his innocency' (p. 59).¹⁵ Neither state of original human perfection endured.

The classical myth of the ages of mankind locates the Golden Age in the remote past and implies the progressive degeneration of the human race: 'man', as Sandys explains, 'grew not instantly superlatively wicked, but degenerated by degrees' (p. 59). Ovid chronicles a succession of races declining from the ideal or Golden Age through the ages of Silver and Bronze to the baneful Age of Iron:

de duro est ultima ferro.
protinus inrupit venae peioris in aevum
omne nefas fugitque pudor verumque fidesque.
(*Met.*, I. 127–29)

The age of hard iron came last. Straightaway all evil burst forth into this age of baser vein: modesty and truth and faith fled the earth.

As a last resort Jupiter determines to destroy this impious race of iron by a universal flood (*Met.*, I. 187–91, 260–61), and announces his intention of replacing it with another human race of wondrous origin, quite unlike those they were to succeed (*Met.*, I. 251–52). Jupiter preserves two human beings, Deucalion and Pyrrha, exceptional in their reverence for the gods, who were to be the instruments of this new creation. Following the advice of an oracle, the hard stones that Deucalion casts over his shoulder soften to become men and those thrown by Pyrrha become women (*Met.*, I. 411–13). Hence, Ovid concludes, comes the hardness of our race and our endurance of hard work; in this we give the proof of the origin of our species: 'inde genus durum sumus experiensque laborum | et documenta damus qua simus origine nati' (*Met.*, I. 414–15).¹⁶

At the start of Book XI Milton openly alludes to this Ovidian fable of Deucalion and Pyrrha. As this is the first and only time after the Fall that Milton uses a mythological simile to describe Adam and Eve, the comparison carries considerable imaginative weight. The singular appropriateness of the paral-

¹⁴ Taken from the prefatory Epistle of 1567 (ll. 342–43).

¹⁵ George Sandys's remarkable commentary offers a unique compendium of the moral and allegorical readings of the *Metamorphoses* still current in the seventeenth century, and it provides an invaluable resource for helping to establish the kinds of significance that contemporary readers might have attributed to the adaptations and extensions of the traditional allegorical readings of Ovidian myth with which Milton enriches his epic. See George Sandys, *Ovid's 'Metamorphosis': Englished, Mythologiz'd and Represented in Figures*, ed. by Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970).

¹⁶ While Apollodorus's account seems prompted more by the etymology that lies behind the aetiology (*laas*, the Greek word for stone, is very like the word for people, *laos*), Ovid encourages his readers to recognize themselves in this newly created race. For Milton this aetiological aspect suggests the inflexibility and hard-heartedness that characterize humanity after the Fall without the softening action of divine grace.

lelism between the two scenes has often been noted. Wayne Shumaker has helpfully summarized how the comparison openly operates on a number of mutually reinforcing levels: 'As visual image the comparison is relevant because Deucalion and Pyrrha are [like Adam and Eve] the sole human figures in the landscape, because each pair has prostrated itself, and because the attitude of each bespeaks entreaty.' A second and related parallelism of situation is that, 'like the Biblical pair, Deucalion and Pyrrha were, at the moment of praying, the only two human beings' alive on earth. While a third but more significant point of contact is that Adam and Eve 'also pray in a ruined world' and 'their prayer also effects a kind of restoration'.¹⁷

George Sandys, in his commentary on the scene from the *Metamorphoses*, describes it thus:

The desolate Earth now emergent, distressed *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha*, purging themselves with the holywater of *Cephisus* (an ancient custome among the *Pagans*) repaire to the temple of *Themis*; with prostrated bodyes and humble soules presenting their prayers to the Goddess. (p. 69)¹⁸

As Milton's penitent couple act on Adam's recommendation to Eve, they appear in the likeness of Deucalion and Pyrrha, who were similarly depicted by Ovid:

What better can we do, than to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent, and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
Watering the ground.

(x. 1086–90)

Through their association with the Ovidian couple, fallen Adam and Eve become imbued with the purity, humility, and faith that so strongly feature in Ovid's portrayal of Deucalion and Pyrrha. In this way Adam and Eve regain a measure of their lost stature, albeit on a more modest human scale:

yet their port
Not of mean suitors, nor important less
Seemed their petition, than when the ancient pair
In fables old, less ancient yet than these
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha to restore
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout.

(xi. 8–14)

Ovid introduces us to Deucalion and Pyrrha after their little boat has run aground on Mount Parnassus. At this point their characterization rests solely on their strong piety:

non illo melior quisquam nec amantior aequi
vir fuit aut illa metuentior ulla deorum.

(*Met.*, I. 322–33)

¹⁷ *Unpremeditated Verse: Feeling and Perception in 'Paradise Lost'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 199–200.

¹⁸ There are distinctly audible echoes of Sandys's commentary in the passage from *Paradise Lost* that follows; note the sequence: repaire/repairing; prostrated/prostrate; humble/humbly.

There was no better man than he, none more scrupulous of right, nor than she any woman more reverent of the gods.

They are described by Ovid as being ‘innocuos ambo cultores numinis ambo’ (‘both innocent and both worshippers of God’, *Met.*, 1. 327), and they are first seen at prayer. It is with fine irony that Milton grants Adam and Eve their most innocent moment, from the standpoint of mythological analogy at least, after they have fallen. The representation of Adam and Eve as Deucalion and Pyrrha establishes our faith in the spiritual potentiality of ordinary humanity. God works:

by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek.

(XII. 566–69)

Outwardly the mythical analogue likening Adam and Eve to Deucalion and Pyrrha works to restore their dignity, but inwardly and metaphorically it establishes their regeneration. The first stage of the Father’s promise to ‘soften stony hearts’ (III. 189) is fulfilled in the inward change that takes place in Adam and Eve, and which is symbolized, with characteristic subtlety and indirection on Milton’s part, in Deucalion and Pyrrha’s recreation of the human race through the miraculous softening of hard stones.¹⁹ Indeed, Ovid’s fable had long been invested with Christian significance and allegorized as a symbol of conversion, while Deucalion had even been identified as a pagan type of Christ, ‘saving the world from the flood-waters of sin and turning the stony-hearted’.²⁰

Unsurprisingly, Deucalion is more commonly associated with Noah. Sandys duly lists the correspondences between the two figures in his detailed commentary on the myth:

Both *Noah* and *Deucalion* are celebrated for their Justice and Religion: *Noah* was commanded to build an Arke by God; & *Deucalion* advised thereunto by *Prometheus*, which is, the divine Providence: both saved for their vertue, the one on mount *Ararat*, and the other on *Parnassus*, while the vitious are swallowed by their owne impieties. (p. 69)

At the same time, however, Sandys is at pains to distinguish the pagan from the biblical Flood:

The sinnes of men drewe on (in which our Poet [Ovid] concurreth with *Moses*) the generall Deluge, although he transferre it to *Deucalions*, wherein most of *Greece* was surrounded; which hapned seaven hundred and fourescore yeares after the other: yet in this he describeth the former, as appears by many particulars. (p. 67)

Sandys explains that Deucalion’s flood was confined to Greece and occurred several hundred years after the biblical Flood, but that Ovid, in his account, portrays it in terms of the earlier universal deluge.²¹ The line of argument, if a

¹⁹ For a fuller elaboration of this line of argument, see Green.

²⁰ Ann Moss, *Ovid in Renaissance France: A Survey of the Latin Editions of Ovid and his Contemporaries Printed in France before 1600*, Warburg Institute Surveys, 8 (London: Warburg Institute, 1982), p. 33.

²¹ Raleigh had similarly accepted the historical authenticity of Deucalion’s flood and had con-

little tortuous at times, provides a useful gloss on Milton's curious phrasing in lines 10–11 of Book XI, with its notable insistence on the chronological priority of the biblical over the Ovidian pair, where he refers to Deucalion and Pyrrha as an 'ancient pair' but 'less ancient yet' than Adam and Eve. Fowler in his note to these lines justly observes that 'Bentley and Empson [. . .] perversely take *less ancient* to imply that Genesis is an old fable too', but concludes that Milton is here intent upon exploding the Ovidian myth since 'In narratives professing to describe the origin of the present human race, juniority brings discredit.' However, Milton's wording seems rather to reflect an insistence on the historical existence of *both* couples. Moreover, Milton's concern to attribute some historical foundation to Deucalion's flood would be in keeping with what has often been felt to be the 'demythologizing' tendency of the last two books, where only those fabled myths which are pagan accounts of actual historical events are felt to be appropriate.²²

Deucalion and Pyrrha serve to mediate between the fallen Adam and Eve and their new role as types of Noah and his wife, drawing the two 'sources' of mankind into close thematic relationship. Once we acknowledge the possibility of such a relationship, a number of subtle structural, conceptual, and figurative links come into play. The repeated emphasis on Adam and Eve's tears 'watering the ground' (x. 1090, 1112) provides another point of contact between the scene of their repentance and the aftermath of the Ovidian deluge. Indeed, Shumaker has tentatively suggested that the 'initial impetus to the comparison' may have stemmed from 'a subcortical sensing' of the 'tactual likeness' of both scenes—'the dampness caused by Ovid's flood and the wetting of the ground by Adam's and Eve's tears'—but is clearly concerned that such a poetic identification may appear so hyperbolic as to be 'grotesque' (p. 199). However, the poetic equation of tears with flood water is widespread in the verse of this period.²³ Whether or not such an unconscious association first prompted the comparison, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the correspondence is not at all fortuitous, that Milton was well aware of the connection, and even concerned to forge such a link in the mind of his reader.

The pressure of the association is at first carefully held in check; its full force is only released with the account of the biblical Deluge at the end of Book XI. It rises up slowly to our conscious minds as we watch Adam's descendants lapse

cluded that it occurred 'after *Noah's* flood ended 782. yeare' (p. 102). So too Golding concedes that a 'mighty flood' did befall 'the greater part of Greece' 'Eight-hundred winters since Noy's flood or thereupon well nigh', but claims that here Ovid is following 'the glorying Greeks' who had appropriated the account of the 'universal flood' and 'in fabling wise doth make | It happen in Deucalion's time' (ll. 493–504). This common assumption would also confer additional propriety on Milton's evident reliance upon Ovidian material to provide poetic detail for his own account of the 'general Deluge' (xi. 738–53). The extent of Milton's indebtedness to Ovid here has been thoroughly documented by D. P. Harding, *Milton and the Renaissance Ovid*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 30 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1946), pp. 80–84.

²² See Fowler's note to xi. 621–22. J. H. Collett has contended that a critical distinction is to be made between Milton's use of 'feign'd', or fictitious myth, and 'fabl'd' truth, accounts 'set down by the ancients' that have some factual basis ('Milton's Use of Classical Mythology in *Paradise Lost*', *PMLA*, 85 (1970), 88–96 (p. 95)).

²³ For a similar use of the teardrop as a microcosmic counterpart of a macrocosmic flood, see Donne, 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' (l. 6), 'A Valediction of Weeping' (ll. 17–18), and 'The Canonization' (l. 12).

into sinfulness, for which, Michael darkly hints, 'The world erelong a world of tears must weep' (xi. 627), breaking the surface only with the Flood itself. The narrator's apostrophe to Adam, as the latter weeps at humanity's apparent destruction, repeatedly insists on the parallelism between the 'flood | Of tears and sorrow' that overwhelms the father of mankind and the flood that is to drown 'His children, all in a view destroyed at once' (xi. 761):

How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation; thee another flood,
Of tears and sorrow, a flood thee also drowned,
And sunk thee as thy sons.

(xi. 754–58)

However, to appreciate fully the prefigurative value of Milton's allusion to Deucalion's flood in the opening lines of Book xi, we must reassess its implications in terms of the typological patterning of the final two books of the epic. Michael's words at xii. 303, outlining the progression 'From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit', give pointed expression to the way in which Milton drew upon the rhetorical possibilities of typological symbolism in order to organize his survey of human history and propel his narrative forward through time and beyond to eternity. That Milton exploits Deucalion's typological suggestiveness has long been recognized. Fowler briefly acknowledges that Deucalion is included as a 'mythical analogue of Noah' (note to xi. 10–14), while Collett more closely observes that 'through the comparison Milton prefigures the story of Noah, "a Reverend Sire", with which the book closes and [...] [which begins] the typological procedure that characterizes the last two books' (p. 95).

Yet it is rather at this point, in the closing lines to Book x and the opening lines of Book xi, that the typological pattern begins to unfold. Milton's allusion to the Ovidian myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha is located in a theologically significant context, taking its place in the progressive definition of salvation found in the final books as we ascend by types and shadows from the first judgement and regeneration of mankind, through to the Last Judgement and the final resurrection into eternal life. Indeed, Ovid's myth is arguably the hinge upon which this typological structure turns. The inclusion of Deucalion and Pyrrha, 'saved for their virtue [...] while the vitious are swallowed by their owne impieties', looks forward to the 'general Deluge' in which 'one whole world | Of wicked sons is destroyed' (xi. 874–75) and its survivors, Noah and his family, for whom God 'relents, not to blot out mankind' (xi. 891) and decides to 'raise another world' (xi. 877). The story of Noah in turn looks directly towards the Last Judgement, when fire rather than water will 'purge all things new' (xi. 900) and 'dissolve | Satan with his perverted world' before 'New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date' are raised 'From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined' (xii. 546–49).²⁴ The triad of Deucalion (pagan), Noah (Old Testament), and Christ (New Testament) looks towards the Saviour's Second Coming and thus

²⁴ The two judgements and accompanying cataclysms, which would purge the world by flood and fire respectively, were linked in Scripture (Luke 17. 26–30). Milton expressly associates the two at xi. 892–901, as does Ovid at *Met.*, 1. 256–58, where Jupiter reflects upon the general conflagration that is to end the world.

provides a graded typological framework for the historical vision recorded in the concluding books of the epic.

Indeed, Milton extends the pivotal function of the myth still further: it leads backwards as well as forwards, gathering Adam and Eve into the same pattern of typological fulfilment, moving from death to new life, from destruction to recreation. This pattern, in which the 'faithless herd' is set against the 'faithful few', appears in its most condensed form at this point in the narrative. Since Adam and Eve are the only extant examples of mankind, they represent both corrupt humanity in their Fall and, as their offensiveness to God is washed away in a flood of tears, the faithful in their regeneration.

That Milton intended the two recreations to be considered together is suggested by the way in which one forms the natural pendant to the other, forming an enclosing frame to the eleventh book. Between the final lines of Book x and the opening lines of Book xi the narrative stands poised between the destructive effects of the Fall and the restorative effects of regeneration until the allusion to Ovid's myth tips the balance and confirms Adam and Eve's second chance of life. Turning to the close of Book xi and the beginning of Book xii, the archangel likewise pauses 'Betwixt the world destroyed and the world restored' (xii. 3), and the same structural pattern is repeated.²⁵ The narrator's comment—though physically located in Book xii (lines 1–5)—stands as a self-contained paragraph, interposed between the two visions of destruction and recreation, and forms one of the more important additions to the original text that Milton made when he recast the tenth and final book of the first edition into Books xi and xii of the second. Since one of the most obvious effects of this new arrangement was to thrust the story of Noah into greater prominence and thereby tighten the structural parallelism between the first and second judgments of mankind, it provides evidence of an unusual kind of Milton's concern to deepen the correspondence between the two, evidence that cannot be lightly dismissed.

Again, the Flood's purging of the world's corruption as a necessary preliminary to a new creation²⁶ casts a retrospective light on Adam and Eve's flood of tears. Adam and Eve, like Noah and his family, are 'saved by water'.²⁷ Their tears become a 'sign | Of washing them from guilt of sin to life | Pure' (xii. 422–44), as they are thus symbolically baptized 'with water unto repentance'.²⁸ Again, Michael's revelation ('Such grace shall one just man find in his sight, | That [God] relents, not to blot out mankind', xi. 890–91) looks back to where the Father, accepting Adam and Eve's prayers, had similarly relented and turned from his displeasure, via Ovid's account in the *Metamorphoses* of how

²⁵ The archangel pauses once more, of course, when the pattern reaches its final completion: 'at the world's great period' (xii. 467).

²⁶ Fowler discovers in xi. 852–54 echoes of vii. 285 ff., describing 'the receding waters at the Creation', and finds the underlying connection to imply that "one whole world" (l. 874) has been destroyed, and that God is creating afresh a New Creation based on the Covenant'.

²⁷ Compare 1 Pet. 3. 20–21: 'in the days of Noah [. . .] few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us'.

²⁸ Matt. 3. 11. John the Baptist declares that the baptism he performs with water is a sign of the baptism 'with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire' that Christ will administer, which in turn looks towards the Last Judgement and the final purgation by fire (Matt. 3. 11–12).

Iuppiter ut liquidis stagnare paludibus orbem
 et superesse virum de tot modo milibus unum,
 et superesse vidit de tot modo milibus unam,
 innocuos ambo, cultores numinis ambo,
 nubila disiecit nimisque aquilone remotis
 et caelo terras ostendit et aethera terris.

(*Met.*, I. 324–29)

When Jove saw that the world was all one stagnant pool, and that only one man was left from those who were now so many thousands, and that but one woman too was left from those who were now so many thousands, both innocent and both worshippers of God, he rent the clouds asunder and when these had been swept away by the North-wind he showed the land once more to the sky, and the heavens to the land.

So too, since the appearance of the rainbow betokens ‘peace from God, and Covenant new’ (XI. 867), the descent of God’s messenger Michael in raiment ‘dipped’ by ‘Iris’ (XI. 244) too acquires a special significance in retrospect as a ‘pacific sign’ (XI. 860) and token of God’s ‘Covenant in the woman’s seed renewed’ (XI. 116).²⁹

As a result of the attractive power of such associative links, the forward movement of the narrative is counter-sprung by references backward to other new beginnings, milestones on the journey to mankind’s resurrection and the final regeneration to ‘new life’ (III. 294). While Adam and Eve’s regeneration may only be ‘a miniature microcosmic anticipation of what the human race will experience through the Son’s future incarnation’, as Harry Blamires observed,³⁰ it is, none the less, instrumental in furthering the spiritual redemption of mankind.

Although critics have recognized the typological function of the story of Noah, they have tended to underestimate the way in which Adam and Eve have become part of this ascending sequence, completed and fulfilled in Christ as mankind’s ‘second root’ (III. 288). Cherrell Guilfoyle, for example, notes that ‘in the opening lines of Book XII Michael—apparently echoing the earlier prediction by the Father to the Son that, “In thee | As from a second root shall be restored, | As many as are restored” (III. 287–89)—tells Adam of the “second stock” (7), “This second sours of Man” (13) which will rise from the eight survivors on the ark, led and redeemed by Christ, the greater Noah’.³¹ Fowler too comments on the significance of ‘stock’ in his note to line 7 of Book XII, regarding it as

An ambiguity, referring not only to the literal replacement of one source of the human

²⁹ Compare v. 283, where we are simply told that Raphael appears in ‘colours’ that were ‘dipped in heaven’. This answers Douglas Bush’s complaint that ‘the reference attracts attention to itself as a small but superfluous patch’ (*Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932), p. 285).

³⁰ *Milton’s Creation: A Guide Through ‘Paradise Lost’* (London: Methuen, 1971), p. 271. Lynn Veach Sadler has perceptively commented on Milton’s dynamic view of history, ‘in which each dispensation progressively unfolds God’s Providence and the way by which each man may be regenerate in his own day’ (‘Regeneration and Typology: *Samson Agonistes* and its Relation to *De doctrina Christiana*, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*’, *Studies in English Literature*, 12 (1972), 141–56 (p. 144)).

³¹ “‘If shape it might be call’d that shape had none’: Aspects of Death in Milton’, *Milton Studies*, 13 (1979), 35–58 (p. 48).

line of descent (Adam) by another (Noah), but also to the grafting of mankind onto the stem of Christ according to the Pauline allegory of regeneration. (*Rom.* xi).

However, it is important to remember that the regeneration of Adam and Eve had already been included in this 'Gardening metaphor', of incorporation in Christ as an engrafting, 'used by St. *Paul* often, *Rom.* xi. v. 17, 19, 23 etc.', as Patrick Hume in his note to line 35 of Book xi makes clear.³² Consequently, both the renewed covenant with Adam and Eve and the Covenant with Noah become types of the New Covenant and, as such, not only prefigure but in some way further mankind's salvation. Herein, then, lies the value of the parallels we have been tracing between Adam (via Deucalion) and Noah. The skilful patterning of interrelated images and themes suggests Adam's prefigurative significance: Adam, Noah, and Christ become key abutments in the bridge spanning human history.

The effect is cumulative, progressing from type to truth in a powerful crescendo movement. As we move in ascending order from the Old Adam to the New, the fullest structural and poetic emphasis naturally comes to centre, not upon pious couples, but examples of the 'one just man' (xi. 818) found 'so perfect and so just' (xi. 876), for whose sake 'man shall find grace' (iii. 227). After the poem has been put aside, the epic undergoes a retrospective rearrangement, as the reader becomes more fully aware of these recurring patterns of emphasis. The underlying design of the final books is seen to develop in a way that proves to be not only linear but also cyclical in arrangement.³³ It is, of course, linear because from line to line, page to page, and book to book the narrative follows the course of human history to its final end in 'this world's dissolution' (xii. 459) and the raising of a 'New heaven and earth' (iii. 335). But it is also cyclical because, until this culminating act of recreation, human nature continually lapses, and after each successive reversion to chaos or 'uncreation' the work of creation must be repeated and God's covenant with his faithful remnant renewed.

However, while on the one hand the cyclical pattern and linear progress seem to combine fruitfully together in a spiral of progression, on the other hand these two readings of human history are perhaps ultimately irreconcilable, and the ambivalence of the poem's close may be in part due to this. St Paul's application to mankind's salvation of Isaiah's prophecy, 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved' (*Rom.* 9. 27), inevitably led to a pessimistic view of human history. While Milton held that God's mercy is freely offered to all,³⁴ he also clearly accepted

³² From *The Poetical Works of John Milton: Together with Explanatory Notes on Each Book of the 'Paradise Lost' by P. H. [Patrick Hume]* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1695). Compare *De doctrina Christiana*, where Milton observes that the regenerate are said to be engrafted in Christ: *INSITIO IN CHRISTUM* (l. 18 (*Col.*, xv, 366)). See also *De doctrina Christiana*, l. 21, *DE INSITIONE IN CHRISTUM, EIVSQUE EFFECTIS* ('OF BEING INGRAFTED IN CHRIST, AND ITS EFFECTS' (*Col.*, xv, 3-4)).

³³ See Thomas Amorose's contrasting of the Judaeo-Christian linear model of history with the Graeco-Roman conception of history as cyclical in 'Milton the Apocalyptic Historian: Competing Genres in *Paradise Lost*, Books xi-xii', *Milton Studies*, 17 (1983), 141-62.

³⁴ See iii. 173-75, 185-93. For Milton's Arminian modifications of the rigorous Calvinist position on predestination, see *De doctrina Christiana*, l. 4. 12-20 (*Col.*, xiv, 102-03).

that only a small proportion would avail themselves of grace.³⁵ Again and again, the salvation of the faithful few is contrasted with the fate of the general mass of humanity. The pattern is clearly prefigured by Abdiel's stand against Satan and his train. The seraph is the only angel 'faithful found, | Among the faithless, faithful only he' (v. 896–97). However, the theme of the faithful remnant, the minority remaining faithful to God out of a group, nation, or race who have fallen away, recurs as a leitmotiv in the last two books with increasing structural and poetic emphasis. We find: Enoch, 'The only righteous in a world perverse' (xi. 701); Noah, 'the only son of light | In a dark age' (xi. 808–09), the 'one just man' (xi. 890) among 'one whole world | Of wicked sons' (xi. 874–75); and all those who follow Christ after the Resurrection and before the Second Coming are described as 'the few | His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd' (xii. 480–81). Indeed, with the failure of the Commonwealth and the restoration of the monarchy, the poet's own dark age, in which he can only hope to find a 'fit audience [. . .] though few' (vii. 31), is itself subtly drawn into this pattern.

In spite of Marjorie Nicolson's protestations to the contrary, Milton's vision of human history shows many features in common with the 'degenerative' theory, implied to some extent in the classical four ages and frequently read into Genesis, a pessimistic theory often very acute among Reformation teachers.³⁶ We watch as the prelapsarian world of mankind's innocence ends with the image of the divine 'defaced' (xi. 522) by sin. We witness too how 'from that sin' man derives 'Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds' (xi. 427–28) till 'all [. . .] turn degenerate all depraved' (xi. 306), while even after the Flood, the 'latter, as the former world, | Still tend from bad to worse' (xii. 105–06). It seems that only with the final end will the degenerative process of human history come to a halt.

The pessimistic strain that emerges in Ovid's famous account of the creation of man readily accommodates itself to such a view.³⁷ The initial emphasis certainly falls upon mankind's exalted position as the culmination of creation:

Sanctius his animal mentisque capacius altae
deerat adhuc et quod dominari in cetera posset.
(*Met.*, I. 76–77)

A living creature of finer stuff than these, more capable of lofty thought, one who could have dominion over all the rest, was lacking yet.

Man is created in the image of the gods and his upright stance is designed to elevate him above the other creatures of the earth, indicating his fitting sovereignty over them:

³⁵ See *De doctrina Christiana*, I. 4. 15–22 (*Col.*, xiv. 116–17), where Milton argues that since only those who will believe are chosen, Christ's words '*multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi*. Matt. xx. 16. idem valeat, ac si diceretur, pauci vero credentes' ('"for many be called, but few chosen" only signifies that they which believe are few').

³⁶ *John Milton: A Reader's Guide to his Poetry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964), p. 311.

³⁷ Sandys points out in passing that 'nothing is here spoken of the creation of Woman'. It is interesting to note that Ovid omits any mention of the myth of Pandora with its strongly misogynistic associations. Hesiod's accounts of the creation of the first woman in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* are both openly hostile. In contrast Pyrrha, the first woman to appear in Ovid's epic, is an exemplary wife, devout and devoted to her husband, who is equally devoted to her.

finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum,
 pronaque cum spectent animalia cetera terram,
 os homini sublime dedit caelumque videre
 iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

(*Met.*, I. 83–86)

moulded into the form of the all-controlling gods. And, though all other animals are prone, and fix their gaze upon the earth, he gave to man an uplifted face and bade him stand erect and turn his eyes to heaven.³⁸

However, such an emphasis on mankind's godlike potential rapidly disappears with the Golden Age itself. Mankind steadily degenerates until the Age of Iron, when 'protinus inrupit venae peioris in aevum | omne nefas' ('Straightaway all evil burst forth into this age of baser vein', *Met.*, I. 128–29), and the original stock is finally eradicated to be replaced by 'subolem [. . .] priori | dissimilem populo [. . .] origine mira' ('another race of wondrous origin far different from the first', *Met.*, I. 251–52), as we have seen.

In his survey of human history after the Fall, rather than focusing on fallen Man's spiritual potential, his kinship to God, and his ability to refine himself 'By faith and faithful works' (XI. 64), Milton dwells on his weakness and limitations, his capacity for violence and evil, and his forgetfulness of his Maker. With Adam we behold 'The image of God', once 'So goodly and erect' (XI. 508–09), more often 'degraded' (XI. 501), 'debased' (XI. 510), and 'defaced' (XI. 522) by sin³⁹ than raised 'eminent | In wise deport' (XI. 665–66). Moreover, Milton does not allow us to take any consolation from the technological progress that results as a consequence of the Fall. This is given added point if we bear in mind that the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha and the transformation of stones into the new human race had often been interpreted as an aetiological myth explaining the origin of civilization, or how 'salvage men' were 'made civill', as Sandys had put it (p. 70). Indeed, in his account of the myth in the *Georgics*, Virgil had contrasted unfavourably the soft primitivism of the Golden Age with the cultural advancements that attended the change from the ease and abundance of the first age to the hard lot of the race originating from Deucalion and Pyrrha:

pater ipse colendi
 haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
 movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda
 nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.

(*Georgics*, I. 121–24)⁴⁰

For the Father of agriculture
 Gave us a hard calling: he first decreed it an art
 To work the fields, sent worries to sharpen our mortal wits
 And would not allow his realm to grow listless from lethargy.

³⁸ Milton's account of the creation of the first man (VII. 505–16) tellingly shares the same points of emphasis: his erect posture not only sets him apart from the animal kingdom he was to rule, but also links him with his creator, being in some way expressive of his 'image, not imparted to the brute' (VIII. 441).

³⁹ Although, as Michael is quick to correct Adam, mankind's sinful actions serve to disfigure 'not God's likeness, but their own' (XI. 521).

⁴⁰ Quotations from Virgil's *Georgics* are taken from *P. Vergili Maronis opera*, ed. by R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); translations are by C. Day Lewis, *The 'Eclogues', 'Georgics' and 'Aeneid' of Virgil* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

According to the theodicy outlined by Virgil in the first book of the *Georgics*, the change was an example of divine providence, 'ut varias usus meditando extunderet artis | paulatim' ('So thought and experiment might forge man's various crafts | Little by little', *Georgics*, I. 133–34), and not a punishment for mankind's wickedness, as in Ovid's version of the myth. By setting in train the cycle of the seasons, Virgil suggests, Jupiter bestirred mankind, compelling them, 'to labor, to think, and to invent':⁴¹ 'tum variae venere artes. labor omnia vicit | improbus et duris urgens in rebus egestas' ('Then numerous arts arose. Yes, unremitting labour | And harsh necessity's hand will master anything', *Georgics*, I. 145–46).

As critics have come to recognize, the idea of 'effortless innocence' is totally alien to Milton's idea of paradise.⁴² Only the animals in Eden 'Rove idle unemployed' (IV. 617); 'Man hath his daily work of body or mind' (IV. 618). Unsurprisingly, there is nothing passive about Milton's concept of life before the Fall, and in this, as John M. Evans perceptively observes, he 'revolutionized the traditional view of Eden and pre-lapsarian Man'.⁴³ Milton's commitment to his belief that humanity's original condition was perfect and contained all things that were necessary for their dignity and happiness led to the unique balance struck between Ovidian *mollior otia* ('soft ease') and Virgilian *durus labor* ('hard work'). In paradise, Adam and Eve's 'sweet gardening labour [. . .] made ease | More easy' (IV. 328–30), but was also essential in a garden whose 'wanton growth' is naturally 'Tending to wild' (IX. 211–12). Once again the unfallen couple's role as gardeners demonstrates that innocence is to be regarded as a state of equilibrium in which all the energies proper to human life have full expression and are held in balance.

The apparent advantages and benefits of civilization exist, Milton repeatedly insists, only as measures to repair the damage caused by the Fall and would, in an unfallen world, be unnecessary and superfluous. This view is expressed at various points in the narrative but nowhere more strongly than in Raphael's visit to the nuptial bower. Adam and Eve greet and entertain their guest without any of the trappings of civilization, and the simple but dignified perfection of their state of innocence, where there is 'No fear lest dinner cool' (V. 396), is repeatedly contrasted with the superficial refinements of fallen cultures.⁴⁴

Indeed, in the hands of those 'Unmindful of their maker' the 'arts that polish life' (XI. 610) are shown by Milton to be 'depraved from good'. The innovations of the sons of Lamech—Cain's descendant—Jubal, 'the father of all such as handle the harp and organ', and Tubal-Cain, 'an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron' (Gen. 4. 21–22), had often been regarded as important advances in the history of civilization.⁴⁵ Adam likewise is initially impressed by the

⁴¹ Anthony Low, 'Milton, *Paradise Regained* and *Georgic*', *PMLA*, 98 (1983), 152–69 (p. 153).

⁴² See e.g. B. K. Lewalski, 'Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden', in *New Essays on 'Paradise Lost'*, ed. by Thomas Kranidas (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 86–117.

⁴³ *'Paradise Lost' and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 249.

⁴⁴ So Adam's naked majesty is found to have more natural dignity and solemnity than the 'tedious pomp' (V. 354) of princes whose 'rich retinue long | Of horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold | Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape' (V. 355–57).

⁴⁵ See Sylvester's effusive celebration of the manifold advantages accruing from 'the invention of

accomplishments of his descendants, hearing 'the sound | Of instruments that made melodious chime', the 'harp and organ' (XI. 558–60), and then observing how

In other part stood one who at the forge
 Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
 Had melted [. . .]
 [. . .] the liquid ore he drained
 Into fit moulds prepared; from which he formed
 First his own tools; then, what might else be wrought
 Fusile or graven in metal.

(XI. 564–66, 570–73)

The response of Milton's reader is, on the other hand, immediately qualified by our recollection of the moral descent associated with the Ages of Bronze and Iron, and also by the earlier episode where once before the arts of music and metalwork had been so closely associated: the raising of Pandemonium by the fallen angels in Book I (lines 700–12). Significantly, the erection of Pandemonium is directly preceded by a passage that reproves those unreflecting readers who would overvalue human achievement by pointing out that the monumental triumphs of humanity, such as the building of Babel or the pyramids, had been anticipated and easily surpassed by the activities of devils in hell (I. 692–99).

This implicit criticism of these ungodly 'inventors rare' (XI. 610) is confirmed by the narrative sequel: 'A bevy of fair women' singing 'Soft amorous ditties' 'to the harp' (XI. 582–84) succeed in ensnaring 'that sober race of men' (XI. 621), the descendants of Seth. These beautiful but corruptly sophisticated daughters of Eve have inherited only her softness and beauty, and are

Bred only and completed to the taste
 Of lustful appetance, to sing, to dance,
 To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye.

(XI. 618–20)

A comparison of 'these fair atheists' (XI. 625) with Eve herself in all her rich complexity highlights the difference. In the state of innocence Eve is able to unite wifely virtues concerned with household good—here described as 'Woman's domestic honour and chief praise' (XI. 617)—with the graces of Venus, and to attend to her garden without seeming in any way primitive or *rustica*.⁴⁶ In the fallen world no trace remains of the possibility that 'hard' and 'soft' may be complementary rather than opposing valences. In the fallen world the feminine principle, with its values of 'softness and sweet attractive grace' (IV. 298), becomes a powerful force that threatens to ensnare and emasculate the 'manliest and resolute breast' (*Paradise Regained*, II. 167), while the mascu-

ron' (*Du Bartas Divine Weekes and Workes*, II. 1. 4. 517–21, 526–35). Significantly, the gardening tools that Eve uses before the Fall are 'Guileless of fire' (IX. 392).

⁴⁶ A peculiarly Ovidian reproach: see *Amores*, III. 10. 17–18, where Ovid explains that however much Ceres loves her fruitful fields, she could never be thought of as *rustica*. So Eve 'due at her hour' prepares 'For dinner savoury fruits' (v. 303, 304) 'with hospitable thoughts intent' (v. 332), but later leaves the bower to garden, 'With goddess-like demeanour [. . .] | Not unattended, for on her as queen | A pomp of winning graces waited still' (VIII. 59–61).

line principle of 'contemplation and valour' (iv. 297) rapidly degenerates into a one-sided, military ethic of 'valour and heroic virtue' (xi. 690).

And indeed, the 'rediscovery' of metallurgy by mankind proves even more ruinous. While Milton had passed over in telling silence 'what else' besides 'tools' might 'be wrought | Fusile or graven in metal' (xi. 72–73), it brings us closer to the time when, prompted by Mammon, 'Men also' will have

Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid.

(l. 686–88)

These lines in turn lead us directly back to Ovid's account of humanity's degeneration in the first book of the *Metamorphoses* and the tradition that the impious Iron Age began when first

itum est in viscera terrae,
quasque recondiderat Stygiisque admoverat umbris,
effodiuntur opes, inritamenta malorum.

(*Met.*, I. 138–40)

[men] delved as well into the very bowels of the earth; and the wealth which the creator had hidden away and buried deep amidst the very Stygian shades, was brought to light, wealth that pricks on men to crime.

Mammon's crew rapidly 'Opened into the hill a spacious wound | And digged out ribs of gold' (l. 689–90), and, in a 'witty variation on Ovidian wit', first noted by DuRocher, Milton thereby links 'Mammon's perverse pursuit of gold with the Iron Age, the last and most degenerate of human epochs'.⁴⁷

The lines may also remind us of how Satan had 'digged up' the 'entrails' of heaven for firearms (vi. 516–17). Moreover, while 'the brazen throat of war' (xi. 713) seems reminiscent of Ovid's portrayal of the Golden Age as a time of peace when there were 'non tuba directi, non aeris cornua flexi' ('no trumpets straight, no horns of curving brass', *Met.*, I. 98), it also appears, as Blamires suggests, to be an 'image of seventeenth-century cannon' (p. 285), and thus looks back to Satan's 'hollow engines long and round' (vi. 484) with 'their balls | Of missive ruin' (vi. 518–19) which wreaked havoc in heaven. In this way Milton subtly suggests that Tubal-Cain has taken the first step towards rediscovering this pernicious 'invention' (vi. 498)⁴⁸ of the fallen angels, a possibility that Raphael had grimly conceived (vi. 501–06). The Civil War had left its mark on Milton and his epic.

Further support for this general line of interpretation is presented by the dark vision that immediately unfolds. The scene opens to reveal mankind fully armed and already bent 'on war and mutual slaughter' (vi. 506), as Raphael had forewarned. There are obvious similarities between the 'Giants of mighty bone'

⁴⁷ Richard DuRocher, *Milton among the Romans: The Pedagogy and Influence of Milton's Latin Curriculum* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001), p. 161.

⁴⁸ See vi. 464–506, where Milton continually plays upon 'invent' and 'invention' (ll. 464, 470, 498, 499). Moreover, Michael's reference to 'the tents | Of wickedness' (xi. 607–08), wherein dwell Tubal-Cain and his brothers—these 'inventors rare'—seems to contain a glancing allusion to the 'wicked tents' of Satan and his camp (v. 890), and so deepens the association between the descendants of Cain and the fallen angels.

(xl. 642) of this violent age, when 'Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch | Of human glory' (xl. 693–94) and 'illa propago' ('that stock of men') will emerge, 'contemptrix superum saevaue avidissima caedis et violenta' ('contemptuous of the gods, very greedy for slaughter, and passionate'), which thereby testified to its origin from the blood of the Giants (*Met.*, i. 160–62). Once again Ovidian imagery strengthens the link between these 'Destroyers [. . .] of men' (xl. 697) and the fallen angels.⁴⁹ The emphatic references to the 'Giants'⁵⁰ relate pointedly to the descriptions of the Fallen Angels in the first book of the poem, where, as Collett once pointed out, 'all the mythological references, with the exception of Mulciber at the end, are to the Titans' (p. 89)⁵¹ and to the 'Earth-born' Giants that 'warred on Jove' (i. 198), and also to Book vi (lines 639–66), where, as Fowler observes in his note on the passage, Milton 'makes the most direct of his many allusions to the war of the Giants against Jupiter—the chief pagan analogue of the angelic rebellion'. Like his poetic predecessors from the Roman Augustan period, Milton treats the revolts of the Titans and Giants as virtually synonymous,⁵² forming together an inclusive poetic symbol of evil, violence, destruction, and disorder.⁵³ Moreover, while Ovid hailed the Golden Age as a time of peace and serenity 'sine militis usu' ('[with] no need at all of armed men') in which 'mollia securae peragebant otia gentes' ('nations passed the years in gentle ease', *Met.*, i. 99–100), in Milton's vision of a world thrown out of balance even 'peace' now harbours its own evils and is as likely 'to corrupt as war to waste' (xl. 784).

Ovid's vision of human history is subtly ironic rather than darkly pessimistic. From the initial, grand conception of a divinely ordained cosmos, the universe of the *Metamorphoses* steadily declines into purposeless flux in an inexorable movement 'ad ferrum [. . .] ab auro' (*Met.*, xv. 260). In the final books this underlying theme forms a stridently ironic counterpoint to the narrative movement that ostensibly works towards the culmination of Jupiter's plans for mankind in the rise of Rome and the renewal of the Golden Age under Augustus.⁵⁴ The ascent of Rome to world dominion is silently but deliberately subsumed into the larger rhythm that dictates: nations grow in strength and greatness only to fail and fall as others rise in their stead (*Met.*, xv. 420–35). Ovid undoubtedly casts a sly ironic glance at the Augustan myth in the final lines of the poem. Augustus' reign, the very empire itself, like all things in this

⁴⁹ In his commentary, Sandys had speculated that 'this fall of the Gyants [was] perhaps an allusion to that of the Angells' (p. 60). For further discussion of the allegorical tradition that identified the Gigantomachy with the revolt of the angels, see Harding, pp. 85–87. In Ovid's own lifetime, the Gigantomachy was commonly held to parallel the ravages of the Civil War and Jupiter's victory to anticipate the triumph and peaceful rule of Augustus.

⁵⁰ See 'Giants of mighty bone' (xl. 642); 'gigantic deeds' (xl. 659); 'prodigious', or unnatural, 'births' (xl. 687); 'giants' (xl. 688).

⁵¹ Compare i. 195–200 and i. 230–37 with *Met.* v. 319–26 and 346–49. Note too Milton's reference to the 'giant angels' (vii. 605).

⁵² For a different view, see Albert C. Labriola, 'The Titans and the Giants: *Paradise Lost* and the Tradition of the Renaissance Ovid', *Milton Quarterly*, 12 (1978), 9–16.

⁵³ See Horace, *Odes*, iii. 4. 41–80.

⁵⁴ Ovid had already mischievously heralded the renewal of the Golden Age under Augustus in the *Ars amatoria* (ii. 277–78) as an era corrupted by the vices of the Age of Iron: 'aurea sunt vere nunc saecula: plurimus auro | venit honos, auro conciliatur amor' ('Now is the true stil'd Golden Age: for Gold | Honour is bought, and love it selfe is sould': Sandys, p. 60).

world of endless change—except, of course, for the *Metamorphoses* itself—is doomed to pass (*Met.*, xv. 868–76).

In the *Reason of Church Government*, Milton likewise trusted in his own epic poem to have left a work ‘so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die’ (*Col.*, III/1, 237), even if the fit audience in his own age would prove few. Moreover, his confidence in the promised reward of the faithful and the transcendent meaning of human history is evident in the ‘joy and wonder’ (xii. 468) that attend Adam’s expression of the *felix culpa*:

Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
To God more glory and more good will to men.
(xii. 473–77)

However, the value of human achievement and the advances and benefits of civilization are cast into doubt through their association with Ovid’s account in the opening pages of the *Metamorphoses* of the moral descent from the Golden Age to the Age of Iron, being, at worst, ‘depraved from good’ and, at best, measures to repair the damage done by the Fall. Although Milton’s use of the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha establishes the progressive pattern of typological fulfilment that shapes the final books of the epic, moving from death to new life and from destruction to recreation, the cycle of degeneration and regeneration is destined to repeat itself till the end of time, as humankind continually lapses, and God’s covenant with his faithful remnant has to be renewed in each successive generation. Milton uses this Ovidian myth not to contrast with Christian truth but for the elements of truth in myth itself and its implications for the degenerative and regenerative processes at work in human history.

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